

(Classic Soy-Simmered) **Kabocha** with Crumbly Chicken Sauce  
(かぼちゃの鶏餡掛け) *Kabocha no Tori an Kaké*



The slightly sweet soy-flavored broth remaining in the pot after simmering *kabocha* can be used to jumpstart a meaty sauce. I like to use the sauce to dress up leftovers a few days after I've soy-simmered a lot of *kabocha*. The sauce stores well in the refrigerator for several days or you can freeze it for several weeks. If you know you'll be using the sauce on a future date, hold off on adding the cornstarch mixture until ready to serve.

Makes 4-6 servings.

Ingredients for Soy-Simmered Kabocha:

- 1/2 *kabocha* (pumpkin squash), about 1 pound (450 grams)
- 1 cup *Dashi* stock (see **KITCHEN NOTES** pg 3)
- 1 tablespoon *saké*
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 to 1 and 1/4 tablespoon soy sauce

Ingredients for Crumbly Chicken Sauce:

- 3/4 cup liquid remaining after preparing soy-simmered *kabocha*
- 1/4 cups *Dashi* stock
- 3.5 ounces/100 grams ground chicken or turkey (preferably dark meat)
- 1/2 teaspoon each sugar and *saké*
- 1 teaspoon soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch mixed with 1 tablespoon cold water to make a paste

Soy-simmer the *kabocha*:

Wash the *kabocha* skin and pat dry. Scoop out seeds and cut into 12 pieces. To keep the vegetable from crumbling as it cooks, bevel the edges of each piece. Use a vegetable peeler or a knife to trim off a narrow strip of peel at the edge.



Arrange the pieces skin-side down in a pot, in a single layer. Add enough stock to barely cover the *kabocha*, about 1 cup. Place an *otoshi-buta* (dropped lid) over the *kabocha* OR cover the pieces with paper towel. Place the pot on the stove over medium-high heat. Bring the stock to a gentle simmer and cook for 2-3 minutes.

Test for tenderness: insert a toothpick or thin bamboo skewer in a piece of *kabocha*. It should meet with some slight resistance at this stage.

Because there is a broad range of cooking times for different varieties of *kabocha* be prepared to add up to 2 or more minutes to reach the “some slight resistance” stage. Carefully flip all the pieces of *kabocha* over so that the skin faces up.



Add the *saké* and sugar. Replace the dropped lid (or paper towel) and simmer for about 2 more minutes until barely tender. (Test again with a toothpick; you should be able to pierce the skin without much difficulty, but it should not be so soft that the *kabocha* crumbles.)

Add the soy sauce and continue to simmer for another minute. Add more stock if needed to keep the *kabocha* covered while it simmers. Test again. The toothpick should meet no resistance whatsoever now.

Remove the pot from the heat. It is in this cooling down stage that the flavor of the simmering broth is drawn in to the *kabocha*.

Add 1/4 cup *dashi* to whatever liquid remains in the pot after removing the simmered *kabocha*, typically 3/4 cup.

Add the ground meat, stirring to break up lumps. Bring the liquid to a simmer, stirring. At first the liquid will look cloudy, but as the meat cooks, the liquid will clear (and the meat will turn white). Skim the liquid to remove excess fat. Season with the sugar and *saké* listed in the ingredients, above, and cook for 1 minute. Add the soy sauce and cook for one more minute; the meat will darken as it absorbs the soy sauce.



Re-stir the cornstarch and water together to make a paste. Pour the cornstarch mixture into the pan with the simmering meat and continue to cook over high heat, stirring constantly to keep the sauce lump free as it thickens. Top each portion of *kabocha* with some sauce. Serve with a spoon, as well as chopsticks.

## Classic Soy-Simmered Kabocha (with variations)

かぼちゃ煮物 (色々)  
*Kabocha no Nimono (Iro iro...)*



Classic Soy-Simmered *Kabocha* is delicious on its own... but there are also many wonderful variations, too.

**(Variation #1): served with a briefly blanched green vegetable such as okra ...**

**(Variation #2): sauced with savory ground chicken or turkey...**

**(Variation #3): simmered in stock infused with cinnamon and ginger**

Separate recipes for each of these posted to KCCC Projects.

### **KITCHEN NOTES**

Recipes for *dashi* stocks can be found at a Taste of Culture's website:

#### **Kelp Alone Stock:**

<https://tasteofculture.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Kelp-Alone-Stock.pdf>

**Standard Sea Stock:** <https://tasteofculture.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Standard-Sea-Stock-Smoky-Sea-Stock.pdf>