

## GINGERY SOY-SEARED SQUID

イカの生姜焼き (*Ika no Shōga Yaki*)



In Japan most supermarkets carry whole, glisteningly fresh squid, skin intact. It is a staple, especially in coastal communities. Elsewhere (in the world) it may be challenging to find whole squid with skin on, but I urge you to find your own local source so that you can enjoy this dish. Without the skin you cannot achieve the striped pattern nor the rich, burnished color of the sauce. Squid (and octopus and cuttlefish) have chromatophore organs that enable them to rapidly adapt their coloration, used for a wide range of communication and camouflage. The squid skin is especially rich in melanin, a known flavor enhancer that adds savoriness to dishes.

Searing squid over high heat in a skillet then dousing it with gingery soy sauce sends inviting aromas wafting throughout the kitchen.

Serves 4.

4 whole, fresh squid each with 10 appendages (8 arms and two longer “legs” called tentacles), two wings (these are fins), and skin intact, each about 5 ounces/200 grams, cleaned according to instructions provided (see **Cleaning Whole Squid**).

marinade:

- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon saké
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil

gingery-soy glaze:

- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 2 tablespoons saké
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon ginger juice (extracted by pressing grated fresh ginger)

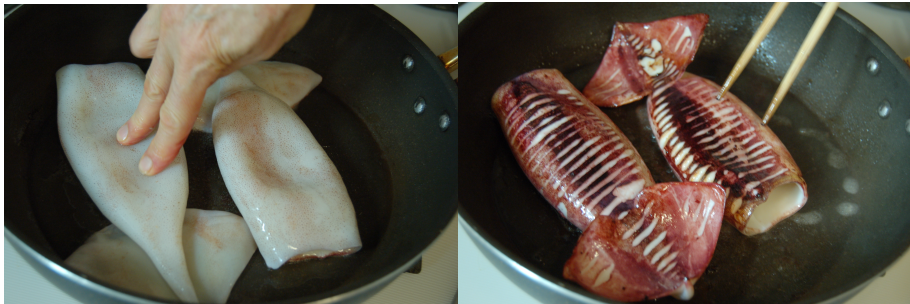


With the tip of a sharp knife, LIGHTLY score the squid mantles and wings. Use the tip of your knife as though it was a pencil and you were drawing lines on paper. Apply very little pressure.

Remove suction cups from the tentacles and arms.

Combine the soy sauce and saké and marinate the squid in it for at least 5 minutes at cool room temperature, or up to an hour, covered in the refrigerator. Pour off excess marinade just before you sear the squid.

Heat a heavy-duty skillet over high heat and drizzle in the oil. Place the squid mantles (body sacs), scored surface facing down, in the skillet and press on them to keep them from curling. Use a broad spatula, or your fingertips when pressing on the squid.



When the edges of the squid appear opaque, flip the mantles (the scoring will now be visible) and sear the other side. Press again on the squid to prevent excessive curling. Add the legs, searing them briefly. Sprinkle the sugar over the seared squid and then add the saké, pouring it in a circular motion from the outer rim towards the center of the skillet. Jiggle the skillet and pour in the soy sauce and ginger juice in the same manner. Jiggle the skillet as the glaze sizzles and reduces rapidly. Remove the skillet from the stove.



To make eating with chopsticks easier, transfer the seared squid to a cutting board and slice into rings. Serve immediately, pouring any glaze that remains in the skillet over the squid.



If you have an outdoor grill and will be using that instead of a skillet, combine the glaze ingredients and use them **INSTEAD** of the marinade listed in the main recipe. Toss the squid in the gingery-soy marinade before placing it in a flat grill-basket. Set the grill-basket over hot coals. As soon as you see the squid shrink slightly and lose its translucency (usually within a minute), flip and cook for another minute. While grilling, brush the squid with the glaze.

