Soups / Japan

Dashi Stock

The foundational umami broth of Japanese cuisine — kombu steeped in cold water and brought to the brink of a simmer, then finished with katsuobushi that blooms and sinks in golden clouds, yielding a clear, delicate stock in under twenty minutes that tastes of ocean and smoke.

Time 50 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 20 g Kombu (dried kelp), wiped clean
- ☐ 30 g Katsuobushi (bonito flakes)
- ☐ 1000 ml Cold filtered water

Let's make it.

01 Wipe the kombu with a damp cloth to remove any surface grit — do not wash it, as the white powdery coating (mannitol) is part of its umami. Place the kombu in cold filtered water in a wide saucepan. Let it soak for 30 minutes minimum (1 hour is better) — the water will gradually turn pale golden-green and faintly oceanic. Then bring the pot slowly to 60–65 C over medium-low heat — this takes about 10 minutes. Hold at 60–65 C for 10 minutes. The kombu releases its glutamate most fully below boiling; heat above 80 C extracts bitter compounds from the seaweed. Remove the kombu just before the water simmers.

02 Bring the kombu-infused water to a full boil after removing the kombu. Turn off the heat entirely. Add all the katsuobushi at once — scatter it across the surface. Let it steep undisturbed for exactly 3–5 minutes. Do not stir. The flakes will bloom on the surface, absorb the liquid, and then slowly sink. Once they have mostly sunk and the liquid smells deeply of smoked fish, strain through a fine-mesh strainer lined with paper towel or a thin cloth. Do not squeeze the flakes — pressing extracts harsh, bitter compounds.

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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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