Sauces / Japan

# Shoyu Tare

A small, concentrated spoonful of this ink-dark reduction transforms any bowl of plain broth into Tokyo ramen — soy sauce cooked down with mirin, sake, and kombu until it thickens to a glossy, complex liquid that carries salt, umami, and a low backbone of sweetness all at once. A few tablespoons season an entire batch.

**Time** 30 min **Servings** 4

## What you'll need.

- ☐ 150 g Soy sauce (koikuchi, dark)
- ☐ 60 g Sake (dry, cooking or drinking grade)
- ☐ 8 g Dried shiitake mushrooms (2 whole)
- ☐ 60 g Mirin (hon-mirin, not mirin-fu)
- ☐ 10 g Kombu (dried kelp, 10 cm piece)
- ☐ 12 g Garlic (2 cloves, lightly smashed)

## Let's make it.

**01** Combine all ingredients in a small, heavy-bottomed saucepan. The kombu and shiitake should be submerged. Place over low heat and bring very slowly to just below a simmer — the liquid surface should shiver with tiny bubbles (about 60 to 70 C) but never boil. Maintain this temperature for 15 minutes. This low-temperature infusion extracts glutamates from the kombu and shiitake without driving off aromatics or turning the soy sauce bitter. Remove the kombu before the liquid reaches a full simmer — cooked kombu turns slimy and imparts a sea-mud flavour if boiled.

**02** Remove the kombu. Increase the heat to medium and bring the mixture to a gentle simmer. Cook uncovered for 10 to 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the liquid has reduced by approximately 30 to 40 percent and has thickened slightly — it should coat a spoon in a thin, glossy film. The alcohol from the mirin and sake will cook off, leaving their sweetness behind. Remove and discard the shiitake and garlic. Let the tare cool completely before using — it thickens further as it cools. Store refrigerated in a sealed jar for up to 3 months.

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