

Miso Soup

2-inch piece of dried wakame

2 dried shiitake mushrooms

5 cups spring water

1/2 medium onion, sliced into half-moons

1 inch daikon, thinly sliced

4 teaspoons barley miso, aged at least 2 years

1 scallion, thinly sliced for garnish

Soak wakame and shiitake mushrooms in 1 cup of the spring water for 10 minutes. Cut the thick wakame stem away from the soft “frond”. If it is not too tough, slice the stem into tiny pieces and the rest of the wakame into bite-sized pieces. Remove and discard the tough stems of the shiitakes and slice the caps into thin strips. In a saucepan, bring the spring water (4 remaining cups), wakame, shiitake, onion, and soaking water to a boil. Reduce heat and let simmer 10 minutes.

Remove about 1/4 cup of the broth and add the miso to it. Using a suribachi and surikogi (or a spoon), puree the miso until it is smoothly integrated into the broth. Pour the miso liquid back into the soup. Let it simmer for 3 more minutes. Do not let it come to a boil--that will overcook the live enzymes. Serve in individual bowls and garnish with sliced scallion.

Serves 4

Noodles in Broth

6 cups spring or filtered water

1/4 cup shoyu

A 3-inch piece of kombu, soaked until tender, thinly sliced

2-3 teaspoons fresh ginger juice

8 oz of noodles, cooked al dente

For garnish: grated ginger, finely chopped scallions, sliced nori, toasted sesame seeds, bonito flakes.

Prepare broth by combining water, kombu, soy sauce and ginger and simmering for 15-20 minutes. Prepare noodles by bringing a large pot of water to a boil and cooking the noodles until tender. Drain and rinse well, as Japanese noodles are coated with salt during the drying process and it's best to remove this excessive salt.

Mound noodles in a deep individual bowl and cover liberally with broth. Top with small amounts of grated ginger, scallions, sliced nori, toasted sesame seeds and bonito flakes.

Serves 2-4

Butternut Squash Soup

with Roasted Pumpkin Seeds

2 large butternut squash, skin and seeds removed, cut into 2-inch pieces

Sea salt to taste

1 tablespoon maple syrup, if needed

1/2 cup pumpkin seeds

1/3 up chopped chives or parsley

Place squash in a heavy saucepan and cover with water. Cook until tender, about 20 minutes; drain and reserve liquid.

Puree squash, in batches, in a food processor or blender until smooth--I prefer to use handheld blender in the pot. No matter how you do it, be careful, the squash is hot!! Add some reserved liquid to the processor if the squash become too thick to puree.

Return pureed squash to saucepan in which it was cooked and slowly reheat. If soup is too thick, stir in some of the reserved cooking liquid. Season to taste with a pinch of salt, and sweeten if necessary.

Place pumpkin seeds on a baking sheet in a 350 degree oven and roast about 10 minutes until fragrant, or dry roast in a skillet, stirring or sauteing almost constantly until most of the seeds have popped.

Ladle soup into warm bowls and garnish with pumpkin seeds and chives.

Variation:

You can use a combination of different squashes, or you can use squash and root veggies. Ginger is a nice addition. Add soy milk for creamier taste. Saute onions first, with a little curry.

Split Pea Soup

1 cup split peas
4 cups spring water
3-inch piece of wakame
1 onion, diced
1 carrot, diced
1 leek, sliced
light miso to taste
parsley for garnish

Add split peas to water and cook with wakame. After 20 minutes, add onions and carrots. Continue cooking for another 10 minutes. Add leek and cook for 5 more. Add miso and simmer 5 more minutes. Garnish and serve.

Serves 4