



Miso

Written by Elizabeth Byars
Photography by Marty Snortum Studio

Miso (pronounced mee-so) is a delicious all-purpose, high protein seasoning which has played a major role in Japanese culture and cuisine for centuries. It is most often made from a combination of soybeans, cultured grain, and sea salt using a unique Japanese fermentation process.

Miso is best known as a seasoning for soup, but is used for flavoring a wide variety of other dishes as well. Miso can be used to make salad dressings, marinades, dips or an incredible seasoning on all sorts of dishes. Today miso is gaining popularity as a healthful ingredient in many kitchens, not to mention this natural food itself can be our best medicine.

Miso offers a nutritious balance of natural carbohydrates, essential oils, minerals, vitamins, and protein of the highest quality, containing all of the essential amino acids.

Choosing organic miso and other soy products is very important because of the rapidly increasing production of genetically modified soybeans. The color of miso is an indication of the quality. Long-aged, salty miso (marketed as brown rice miso, barley miso or red miso) should be a rich, russet or earthy brown color - not black. Sweet miso (marketed as mellow barley, white or chickpea miso) should be light in color, but not brown.

Miso Soup Recipe

Makes 6 (8 oz.) servings

- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 2 cloves garlic, mashed
- 2 green onions, sliced with tops
- 1 teaspoon fresh gingerroot, grated
- ½ cup carrots, thinly sliced
- 1 cup Shitake mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons miso
(found in your favorite health food store)
- 1 tablespoon dry sherry
- ½ teaspoon of Kombu
(found in oriental markets) - optional
- 4 cups Pacific Brand Vegetable Broth

1.Heat the sesame oil in a saucepan over medium heat. Add garlic and onions and sauté until soft. Add fresh gingerroot, carrots and mushrooms. Cook an additional 5-10 minutes or until vegetables are crisp-tender. Reduce heat. Dissolve miso in ¼-cup broth and add to vegetables and Kombu when cooled. Add remaining broth and sherry and heat through. Be careful not to boil the soup after you've added the miso. To make your Miso Soup a complete meal, you can add cooked rice noodles or diced tofu just before serving.

Nutrients per serving:

Calories: 36	Sodium: 219 mg
Total fat: 1 grams	Carbohydrate: 5 grams
Saturated fat: trace	Protein: 1 gram
Cholesterol: 0 mg	Dietary fiber: 1 gram



MISO TOFU DIP RECIPE

Makes 3 cups

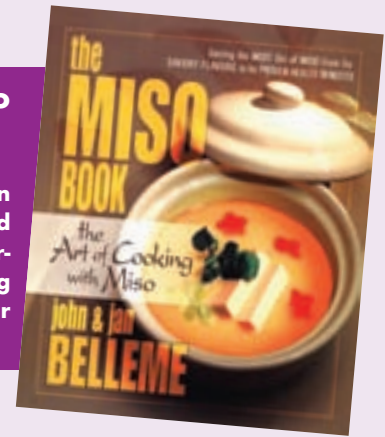
- 1 pound fresh tofu
- 3 tablespoons miso
(found in your favorite health food store)
- 3 tablespoons toasted sesame seeds
- 1/3 cup green onions, minced
- 2 cloves garlic, finely minced or pressed
- 2 tablespoons of rice vinegar or lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 1/2 cup carrots, thinly sliced
- 1 teaspoon Chinese mustard

Bring about 2 inches of water to a boil in a 2 or 3 quart saucepan, and gently slide the tofu into the boiling water. Make sure the water covers the tofu. When the water returns to a boil, remove from the heat, cover the pot and let sit for 3 to 5 minutes. Drain the hot water and cover the tofu with cold water and let sit for several minutes to cool. Remove the tofu from the cold water and place in cheesecloth or a thin, clean kitchen towel and gently squeeze out the excess liquid.

Place the tofu, miso and sesame seeds in a mixing bowl and mash thoroughly. When fully blended, add in remaining ingredients. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes to allow the flavors to blend. The dip will keep up to three days and can be prepared ahead.

The Art of Cooking with Miso by John & Jan Belleme

Includes 140 delectable recipes and an excellent discussion on the history and making of miso. Discusses the importance of miso as a health promoting and healing food. A great book for miso adventures.



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A great appetizer is an assortment of fresh vegetables served with a Miso-Tofu Dip

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