

Mochi Soup (O-zoni)

Symbolizing longevity and wealth in Japan, mochi is traditionally included in the first meal of the New Year, usually in soup or stew.

Prepare stock. Scrub burdock, cut in 2-inch-long julienne strips and immediately place in cold water to prevent discoloration. Cut carrot similarly but a little thicker. Drain burdock and add to stock along with salt. Simmer 10-15 minutes, then add carrots and mushrooms. (If dried shiitake are used, they must be soaked and stemmed before slicing.) Simmer 10 minutes. Add mirin, scallions, and cabbage. Cook 5 minutes more.

While soup is cooking, cut the mochi squares into bite-sized pieces and place on lightly oiled cookie sheet. Bake at 350°F until slightly brown and puffy. (Check frequently to avoid overcooking.) Remove and set aside.

When cabbage is just tender, add mochi and shoyu (if using), and gently simmer 1 minute more. Dissolve miso in a little of the broth before adding it to soup. Let soup sit 1-2 minutes before serving.

Preparation List:

Serves 5-6

- 8 cups Shiitake Dashi (see Shiitake recipes) or Kombu Stock (see Sea Vegetable Recipes)
- 1 burdock root
- 1 large carrot
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- 8 fresh shiitake or white mushrooms, sliced
- 1 tablespoon mirin
- 3 scallions, trimmed and cut in 1-inch lengths
- 4 Chinese cabbage leaves (or other tender greens), chopped
- 6 pieces mochi (2 x 2½ inches)
- ¼ - 1/3 cup mellow white miso (to taste), or 2 tablespoons shoyu