

Zaru Udon

This simple noodle dish is a favorite Japanese lunch. The dip can be served hot or at room temperature, but for a cooling lift on a hot summer day, serve chilled.

Submerge the shiitake in the water for 30 minutes or longer, then quarter the mushrooms. Place mushrooms, soaking water, and kombu in a pot. Bring to a simmer, uncovered, over medium heat. Simmer briefly, then remove kombu and reserve it for another use. Add the salt and ginger, cover, and simmer for 10-15 minutes. Remove the shiitake and reserve for another use. Add shoyu and mirin and cook 1 minute more. Prepare the condiments and garnishes.

Preparation List:

Serves 4

- 2-3 dried shiitake
- 3 cups water
- 5-inch piece kombu
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt
- 2-3 slices fresh ginger root
- 4 tablespoons shoyu
- 3 tablespoons mirin
- 14 - 16 ounces udon, cooked, rinsed, and drained

Condiments and Garnishes:

- ½ sheet nori, toasted, cut into 1-inch wide strips, and slivered
- 2 green onions, thinly sliced on the diagonal
- finely grated daikon or ginger (optional)

Traditionally this dish is served in attractive bamboo noodle baskets (zaru), but if you don't have these, divide the cooked noodles and put them in soup bowls or on plates. Garnish with a sprinkle of slivered nori. Pour dipping broth into separate small individual bowls. Set out green onions, daikon, ginger, and remaining slivered nori on the table so everyone can add them to the broth to their own taste. Dip each bite of noodles in the broth. If broth becomes weak, replace it with fresh broth.