

Nana's Osaka Style Okonomiyaki (Taemi Westernoff)

Okonomiyaki – In Japan it is made on a metal grill or hotplate and there are two main styles of Okonomiyaki in Japan. Osaka style is made with a batter of flour and water mixed with various ingredients such as sliced meat or pork, seafood and/or vegetables (lots of shredded cabbage) and fried like a pancake; and then covered with traditional toppings such as mayonnaise, Okonomiyaki sauce, dried Bonita fish shavings and/or seaweed. Hiroshima style is made by layering the ingredients beginning with a crepe base and then piling the ingredients on top. After turning and cooking this first layer it is stacked on top of fried noodles, a fried egg, and then topped with the traditional Okonomiyaki toppings as noted above. A third style is Tokyo Style where a thin layer of batter is cooked on a grill until golden brown. Using small Okonomiyaki spatulas, all people scrap the batter from the grill to eat family style.



Dashi (Optional):

Dashi is a category of soup and cooking stocks essential to Japanese cuisine.

Dashi ingredients are:

- 1- 4 inch piece Dashi Konbu (Dried Kelp)
- 4 cups cold water
- 1- cup of katsuobushi (Shaved Bonita Flakes)



Dried Kelp – Found in Asian stores. Look for packages containing thick and glossy pieces.



Prepared Dashi – Found in Asian stores. Packaged like tea bags and ready to use. Saves lots of time and is almost just as tasty as making your own Dashi. Just boil in Water.

Main Ingredients:

- 100 ml or 1/3 – cup Dashi or water
- 1 ½ cups of all purpose flour
- 1 Egg
- 780 grams or approx ½ cup grated nagaimo (Japanese Mountain Yam)
- 1 pinch salt
- 2 cups finely chopped green cabbage
- 1 Tablespoon mayonnaise
- Oil (vegetable) for frying
- 1 Tablespoon sliced scallions (optional)
- 1 Tablespoon sliced pickled ginger (optional)
- Thin sliced pork belly or bacon (optional)



Sauce and Topping:

- Okonomiyaki Sauce
- Mayonnaise (Squeeze Bottle)
- Nori (dried seaweed) seasoning of choice
- Shaved Bonita Flakes (See Below)



Bonita and shavings in Japan

Dashi Preparation:

Rinse the kelp and cook in the water to a simmer and remove from heat. Add the dried Bonita flakes and cover. Let steep for approximately 15 minutes before straining and discarding the solids. Let cool.

Any remaining dashi can be refrigerated for a few days.

Okonomiyaki Preparation:

Make a batter by combining the dashi or water with the flour, egg, grated yam, mayonnaise and salt in a mixing bowl. Whisk until smooth. Add the cabbage and other optional ingredients and mix with a spatula or fork until cabbage is evenly coated.

Over medium-high heat, heat a frying pan with about 1 Tablespoon of oil. When the oil is hot add approximately ½ of batter into a pancake shape about ½ thick. If using the pork belly, place 3 pieces on top. When the edges of the batter begin to dry and form bubbles (approximately 2 minutes) turn over. When pancake is golden brown and/or the pork is cooked, turn the pancake over again, and heat for 1 to 2 minutes. Press the pancake and if it is resilient it's done. Make another pancake with the remaining batter or cook both at the same time. Place on a plate to keep warm.

Plating and eating:

Place the pancakes on individual serving plates. Toppings are optional but recommended for a traditional taste. First spread on the Okonomiyaki sauce. Then squeeze Mayonnaise onto the top creating swirl design. Sprinkle with seaweed seasoning of choice. And lastly sprinkle with the dried Bonita flakes. Ideally the pancakes are hot enough so that the Bonita flakes begin to move and shrivel up. Very beautiful to watch.

Using chop sticks are the best way for eating Okonomiyaki but forks are acceptable.