

Miso Hot Pot with Oysters and Mushrooms



This is another wonderful family-style dish that the Japanese love so much. The unusual presentation comes from applying the miso paste to the sides of the serving pot to form a crust. Then, taking turns, everyone scrapes a bit into the pot as they scoop out the lovely poached oysters and mushrooms from the broth. Delicious and fun!

Serves 6

Ingredients

- 4 cups (1 L) shucked oysters, about 2 1/4 pounds (1 kg)
- 1 generous tablespoon (15 mL+) kosher salt
- 3 Japanese long onions (or 2 small leeks), washed and trimmed
- 2 bunches enoki mushrooms
- 10 to 12 fresh shiitake mushrooms, wiped clean and stems removed
- 1/4 head napa cabbage
- 3 medium carrots
- 15 snow peas
- 6 tbsp(90 mL) red miso paste
- 6 tbsp (90 mL) white miso paste
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) mirin (Japanese cooking wine)
- 4 1/2 cups (1 L) dashi stock (see the tip **here**), at room temperature, divided, plus more as needed
- 1 piece of kombu (dried kelp), 3 by 5 inches (8 x 12 cm)
- Electric hot plate or gas burner

Directions

1. To clean and “whiten” the shucked oysters, place in a large bowl and all the salt. Mix thoroughly with your hands. (Or wash in generously salted water.) Carefully rinse the oysters one at a time under running cold water, and drain. Transfer to a serving dish and set aside. (If preparing a few hours ahead of time, keep it in the fridge.)
2. As you prepare the vegetables, transfer them to a serving platter. Cut the long onions (or leeks)

diagonally into 1 1/2-inch (4 cm) lengths. If very thick, halve or quarter lengthwise before slicing diagonally.

3. Cut off the spongy ends of the enoki mushrooms, and leave in small bunches. Wipe the shiitake clean, remove the stems, and notch decorative crosses into the caps (or if large, simply cut in half).
4. Cut the cabbage crosswise into thin 1 1/2-inch (4 cm) lengths. (The volume of cabbage will decrease by 80 to 90 percent when cooked.) Peel and cut the carrots into 1/4-inch (6 mm) ribbons. Finally, add the snow peas, left whole, to the platter.
5. Heat about 1/2 cup (125 mL) of the dashi until warm. In a small bowl, mix the 2 types of miso together, using a fork or the back of a spoon. Add the mirin and the warm dashi to soften the miso; mix well. On the inside rim of a 9- or 10-inch (23 or 25 cm) shallow pot or skillet, spread the paste in a smooth layer using a rubber spatula, about 1/4 inch (6 mm) thick and 2 inches (5 cm) wide. (Ideally you'd be using an earthenware casserole called a donabe, so please use it if you have one.)
6. Set up the hot plate (or gas burner) at the table, and place the pot or skillet on top. Score the kombu a few times with a knife so that its flavours release during cooking. Place it in the skillet, then pour in the remaining 4 cups (1 L) dashi. Bring it quickly to a boil over high heat, then reduce the heat to medium.
7. The vegetables and oysters may now be added to the simmering stock in whatever order you wish, a few servings at a time. The miso will not melt nor completely run into the stock; each diner scrapes as much miso as he or she wants into the dashi while scooping out a serving.
8. Take care not to overcook the oysters, or they will be tough; do these a few at time. Add more dashi, as needed.
9. No sauce accompanies this dish, but cooked morsels may be dipped in beaten egg in individual bowls.