



Bobbi Misiti, FMCHC

Aromatherapy, Yoga, & Health Coaching

[bobbi@befitbodymind.org](mailto:bobbi@befitbodymind.org) 717.443.1119

[www.learnandthrive.org](http://www.learnandthrive.org) [www.befitbodymind.org](http://www.befitbodymind.org)

# Miso Soup Basics :)

Good link to making dashi soup stock and miso recipes: <http://www.savoryjapan.com/recipes/soup/soup.html>

## Dashi - base for Miso Soup

### INGREDIENTS

4 cups water

5" x 5" piece of kombu



This all important soup stock forms the base for almost all of Japanese cooking, and imparts umami to anything it graces. Luckily, it is very easy to make and fills the house with a wonderful aroma.

Place *kombu* in the water, and

place on a burner set to medium. The longer the water takes to get to hot, the better. Watch the pot carefully, as the *kombu* should be taken out when it floats to the surface and before the water boils. You'll notice little bubbles forming at the rim of the pot.

**Optional extra step Note:** The Kyoto method of making *dashi* involves soaking the *kombu* in a jar for at least eight hours, and preferably overnight, beforehand. This is done at room temperature during the cold season, and in the fridge when it's hot. The resulting water becomes noticeably viscous. This method brings another level of richness and complexity to the *dashi*, which is especially important for Kyoto style seasoning, which is very light on salt.

(The most common route is **traditional dashi** made with kombu (dried seaweed) and bonito flakes (dried tuna) -- make it and you'll essentially be reconstituting an ocean, leeching these ingredients of their umami and salt. If you avoid fish -- or you feel like



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buying one fewer specialty ingredient -- **I recommend nixing the bonito and go kombu-only, or bolster the broth with dried or fresh mushrooms.**

## Basic Miso

### INGREDIENTS

4 cups dashi

3 tbsp miso paste

fresh sliced ginger, mushrooms, scallions, watercress  
or other greens

**Prepare your dashi.** (If you're in a hurry, you can skip this step and make your soup with plain old water; the miso carries enough weight that it can stand on its own, especially when padded with mix-ins and garnishes.)



**Prepare your mix-ins.** Roast or sauté any vegetable that are sturdier than leafy greens. I like to sauté mushrooms in a little butter. Slice the scallions. Wash and prep the greens. If you are making a sturdier soup you can boil some soba noodles to add as well.

Add the ginger, scallions, and mushrooms and anything sturdier than greens (fish or noodles if you are adding.)

**Make a Miso slurry - start with 1/2 to 1 tablespoon for each cup of liquid.** I prefer **white miso**. Brown miso is easier to find but I find brown miso has too woody of a flavor for my liking. There is also a red miso.

Since the miso paste is refrigerated and quite thick, it takes a while to dissolve in the dashi. Therefore, you must thin the miso in a large soup ladle full of dashi (while it is still partially immersed in the pot), whisking with chopsticks to a smooth consistency first. If you don't follow this step, it is likely that clumps of miso will remain undissolved when serving. Usually this requires 3-4 slurry making ladle fulls. (A really handy item is a miso koji; a small sieve with a wooden pestle that is made just for this purpose. It works wonderfully and makes quick work of this task, and is a great time saver if you serve miso soup regularly.) **Miso should not be boiled, because it loses its flavor medicinal benefits.**



Taste your miso and add more miso to your liking.

Add your greens and keep it warm for a few minutes — but do not let it boil.

Serve your soup adding whatever garnishes (or none!) you prefer such as pepper flakes, soy sauce, herbs, sriracha . . .

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