

Udon Noodle Soup with Mushrooms

Serves 2 as a main course

I picked-up the technique of finely grinding the dried shiitake mushrooms from a David Chang recipe. It's essential as it imparts much more flavor to the broth than just using dried whole mushrooms.

- 1 large sheet (about 1/2 ounce) dried kombu (kelp)
 - 8 cups (2 quarts) water
 - 1 ½ ounces dried shiitakes, ground finely in a food processor
 - 1 (1-inch) piece ginger, peeled and sliced into thin sticks
 - 2 tablespoons soy sauce
 - 2 tablespoons mirin
 - 6 ounces fresh shiitake mushrooms, stems removed and thinly sliced
 - 1 cup chopped fresh spinach
 - 1/2 lb fresh udon noodles
 - 2 green onions, roots trimmed, white and green parts thinly sliced
- Special equipment:** cheesecloth or fine mesh strainer, food processor

Wipe the kombu off with a damp cloth. Place the kombu in a large pot and cover with the water. Heat the water over medium heat until bubbles form on the kombu. Reduce the heat and simmer the kombu for 30 minutes; don't allow the water to boil. Remove the kombu from the water using tongs and discard.

Add the ground shiitakes and ginger to the broth. Bring to a boil then remove from heat and let sit for 30 minutes. Strain the broth through a fine mesh strainer or a strainer lined with cheesecloth. Discard the solids and rinse the pot. Return the strained broth to the pot and heat over medium heat.

Stir in the soy sauce, mirin, sliced shiitake mushrooms, and fresh spinach and bring to a gentle simmer. Simmer for about 5 minutes or until the mushrooms are tender. Taste the broth and adjust seasonings if needed. Add the udon noodles and return the broth to a simmer. Serve the soup in a large bowl garnished with the green onions.

This recipe came from Minced at www.mincedblog.com.