

# Vegetable Tempura

Who can resist delicious and crispy homemade vegetable tempura? When making tempura at home, the goal is a crispy yet airy coating that doesn't absorb oil when deep-fried. I'll teach you how to achieve excellent results in this recipe.



4.68 from 92 votes

## Prep Time

25 mins

## Cook Time

45 mins

## Total Time

1 hr 10 mins

**Course:** Main Course **Cuisine:** Japanese **Keyword:** deep fried, tempura **Servings:** 2

**Calories:** 652kcal **Author:** Namiko Hirasawa Chen

## Ingredients

### For the Dipping Sauce (*Tentsuyu*)

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup dashi (Japanese soup stock) (use standard Awase Dashi, dashi packet or powder, or Vegan Dashi)
- 3 Tbsp soy sauce
- 2 Tbsp mirin
- 2 tsp sugar

### For the Tempura

- 1 Japanese sweet potato (Satsumaimo) (unpeeled)
- $\frac{1}{8}$  kabocha squash (unpeeled and seeded)
- 2 inch lotus root (renkon) (peeled and precooked; I used boiled lotus root (renkon no mizuni) from a Japanese grocery store)
- 2 king oyster mushrooms (eringi)
- 1 Japanese or Chinese eggplant
- 4 shiso leaves (perilla/ooba)

### For Deep-Frying

- neutral oil (enough for 1½ inches or 3 cm of oil in the pot; or use a 10-to-1 ratio of neutral oil to sesame oil)
- flour (for dusting the shiso leaves)

### For the Batter

- 1 cup all-purpose flour (plain flour) (chilled; weigh your flour or use the “fluff and sprinkle” method and level it off)
- 200 ml iced water ( **$\frac{3}{4}$  cup + 4 tsp**)
- 1 large egg (50 g each w/o shell) (chilled)

### For Serving

- 2 inches daikon radish (grated)

## Instructions

### Before You Start...

1. **I encourage you to weigh your flour** in metric using a kitchen scale. Click on the “Metric” button at the top of the recipe to convert the ingredient measurements to metric. If you’re using a cup measurement, please follow the “fluff and sprinkle” method: Fluff your flour with a spoon, sprinkle the flour into your measuring cup, and level it off. Otherwise, you may scoop more flour than you need.

### To Make the Dipping Sauce (*Tentsuyu*)

1. Gather all the ingredients.



2. Combine  **$\frac{3}{4}$  cup dashi (Japanese soup stock)**, **3 Tbsp soy sauce**, **2 Tbsp mirin**, and **2 tsp sugar** in a small saucepan and bring it to a boil. Then, lower the heat and let it simmer until the sugar is completely dissolved. Remove from the heat and set aside.



### To Prepare the Ingredients

1. Gather all the ingredients.



2. Slice **1 Japanese sweet potato (Satsumaimo)** into ¼-inch (6 mm) rounds and soak in water for 15–30 minutes to remove the excess starch. Then, pat dry them with paper towels.



3. Cut **⅓ kabocha squash** and **2 inch lotus root (renkon)** into ¼-inch (6 mm) slices. Soak the lotus root in vinegar water (2 cups water + 1 tsp vinegar) for 5 minutes and pat dry them with paper towels.



4. Cut **2 king oyster mushrooms (eringi)** into thin slices.



5. For **1 Japanese or Chinese eggplant**, set it aside for now and prepare it right before you deep-fry. Cut off and discard the stem and calyx, then cut in half lengthwise. Place the halves flat side down on the cutting board and cut lengthwise into very thin slices ( $\frac{1}{8}$  inch or 3 mm), leaving 1 inch (2.5 cm) of the bottom tip intact so the slices stay connected. Then, gently press down to fan out the slices. Keep **4 shiso leaves (perilla/ooba)** whole.

To get crispy tempura, **make sure your ingredients are dry**; pat them dry with a paper towel, if needed. Any excess moisture will make the tempura soggy.



### To Prepare the Oil

1. Once the ingredients are ready, add **neutral oil** to a deep fryer or pot to a depth of 1½ inches (3 cm) and heat to **320°F (160°C)**. Use a thermometer for precise temperature control. To check with wooden chopsticks, dip them in the oil; when small bubbles form around the tips, the oil is ready. **Tip:** For enhanced aroma and taste, I like to add 1 part sesame oil for every 10 parts neutral oil.



### To Make the Batter



1. While the oil is heating up, prepare the tempura batter. **We'll use a 1-to-1 ratio (by volume) of flour to egg + water.** Gather all the ingredients.



2. Sift **1 cup all-purpose flour (plain flour)** into a large bowl.



3. Add **200 ml iced water** to a measuring cup or bowl. Then, add **1 large egg (50 g each w/o shell)**.



4. Whisk the egg and water mixture vigorously and discard the foam on the surface.



5. Slowly pour the egg mixture into the flour while mixing the batter with chopsticks in a figure 8 pattern for about 15–20 seconds. Do not overmix to avoid activating the wheat gluten; it's fine to leave some lumps in the batter. **Keep the batter cold** at all times by adding 1–2 ice cubes to the batter or by putting the batter bowl in a larger bowl of iced water.



### To Deep-Fry

1. Deep-fry starting with the root vegetables, which need a lower oil temperature than the non-root vegetables. For the root vegetables, deep-fry at 320°F (160°C) for 3–4 minutes. For the other vegetables and mushrooms, deep-fry at 338–356°F (170–180°C) for 1–2 minutes. Deep-fry the shiso leaves for 15–20 seconds.

When the oil reaches the right temperature, dip one piece of vegetable in the batter, let the excess drip off for a second or two, and very gently place it into the hot oil.



2. Continue dipping and adding one piece at a time. Do not add too many ingredients at once, and make sure to maintain the right temperature at all times. **Tip:** When you deep-fry, **do not crowd the pot** because the oil temperature will drop quickly. Your ingredients should take up **no more than about half of the oil surface area** at any one time. For more helpful hints, read my post on how to deep-fry food.

To batter the **shiso leaves**, sprinkle a bit of sifted **flour** on the back of the leaves and dip only the back of the leaf into the batter. **Tip:** Dusting the shiso with extra flour before dipping helps the batter adhere better. We do this with Shrimp Tempura and Kakiage, too. The flour acts as a glue and the batter tends to stay on the ingredients better.



3. Deep-fry until golden and remove from the oil. Transfer the tempura to a wire rack or paper towel to remove the excess oil.



4. Continue to deep-fry until you've cooked all your ingredients. Between batches, use a fine-mesh strainer to remove the tempura crumbs, which will burn and turn the oil darker if you leave them in the oil.



### To Serve

1. Peel and grate **2 inches daikon radish** and gently squeeze out some of the liquid.





2. Prepare **3–4 Tbsp of warm tentsuyu** in each individual dipping bowl with **1 Tbsp grated daikon** per serving on the side. Serve the tempura immediately. Mix some grated daikon into the dipping sauce for a refreshing taste and dip the tempura pieces in the dipping sauce to enjoy.



### To Store

1. If you have unused dipping sauce, you can store it in the refrigerator for up to 1–2 weeks.

You can keep the leftovers in a single layer between paper towels and put in an airtight container or a resealable plastic bag. Store in the freezer for 2 weeks. To reheat, place the tempura on a wire rack in the preheated oven (400°F or 200°C) or the toaster oven for 5 minutes or until crisp on the outside and heated through on the inside.

### Nutrition

Calories: 652 kcal · Carbohydrates: 82 g · Protein: 16 g · Fat: 30 g · Saturated Fat: 23 g · Polyunsaturated Fat: 1 g · Monounsaturated Fat: 4 g · Trans Fat: 1 g · Cholesterol: 65 mg · Sodium: 843 mg · Potassium: 1559 mg · Fiber: 12 g · Sugar: 16 g · Vitamin A: 16993 IU · Vitamin C: 14 mg · Calcium: 93 mg · Iron: 6 mg