

# Introduction

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Thank you for reading this book! This has been a long time coming. Over the last several years I have tinkered with the idea of making a book, to help everyone- from hardcore ramen-lovers to those simply intrigued by interesting food- find an all-inclusive resource of recipes and ideas on how to make ramen. I felt like it would make sense to make this as widely accessible as possible. An e-book format made the most sense, free for anyone to view at any time.

Many of you probably have never had ramen beyond the dry noodle packages found regularly at your local grocery store. This book is not about that kind of ramen, which is more akin to instant noodles. While tasty in its own right, instant noodles aren't quite the same thing as the dish discussed in this book. Ramen, a dish originating from Japan, is a complex soup that is challenging to make and, even to this day, still has quite a bit of mystery. I'm hoping I can at least break apart the ambiguity a little, primarily through the discussion of appropriate concepts rather than solely relying on recipes.

As for the rest of you, I know what you are thinking. A book on ramen? That sounds awfully specific. Who is this guy? Why should I even care? Why is an American making ramen? Is this a poor man's Ivan Orkin?

Not exactly.

My name is Mike. I'm a food nerd who lives in Chicago, and I am particularly obsessed with ramen. Most folks know me by the name "Ramen\_Lord" on Reddit, which is pretty ostentatious, I know. The username was tongue-in-cheek at first. I thought I might post some of my creations to the ramen subreddit, /r/ramen, have some fun in the process, and learn along the way. I did not, however, expect my posts to catch on at all. And despite this, people started paying attention.

But what sparked this weird obsession? In all sincerity, it was kind of a coincidence. I had been eating ramen with some mild regularity in Chicago. Usually, this involved going out to a local Japanese market called Mitsuwa and splurging on miso ramen. It was cool, but nothing that sparked my interest. It wasn't until I lived in Japan that I tried the real stuff. I lived in Sapporo as part of a study abroad program at Hokkaido University, and, coincidentally, miso ramen was designed, created, and invented in that city. I thought I ought to get a taste of the real deal.

I tried a few bowls in touristy destinations like Ramen Yokocho. Felt fine. Packed it up.