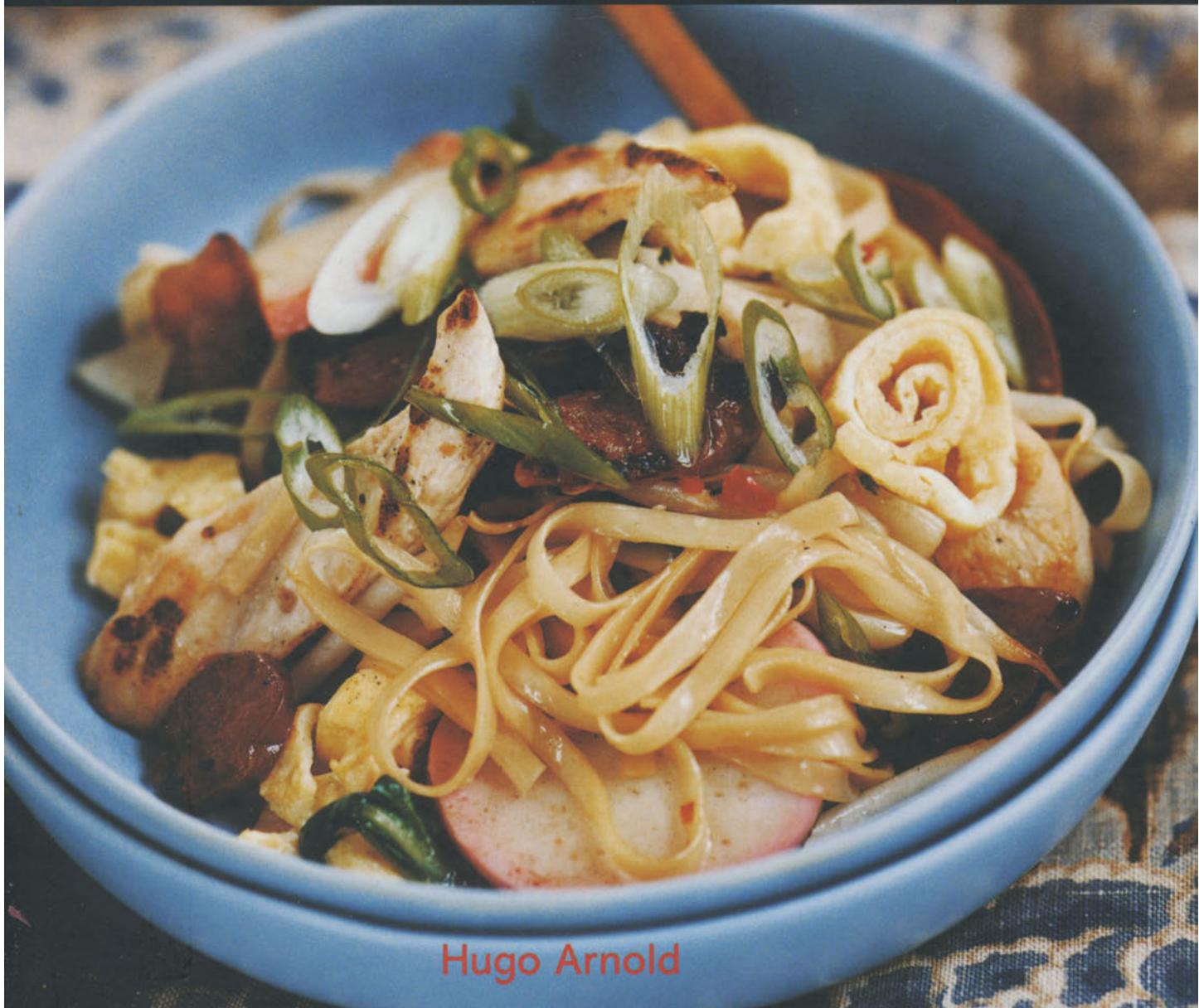
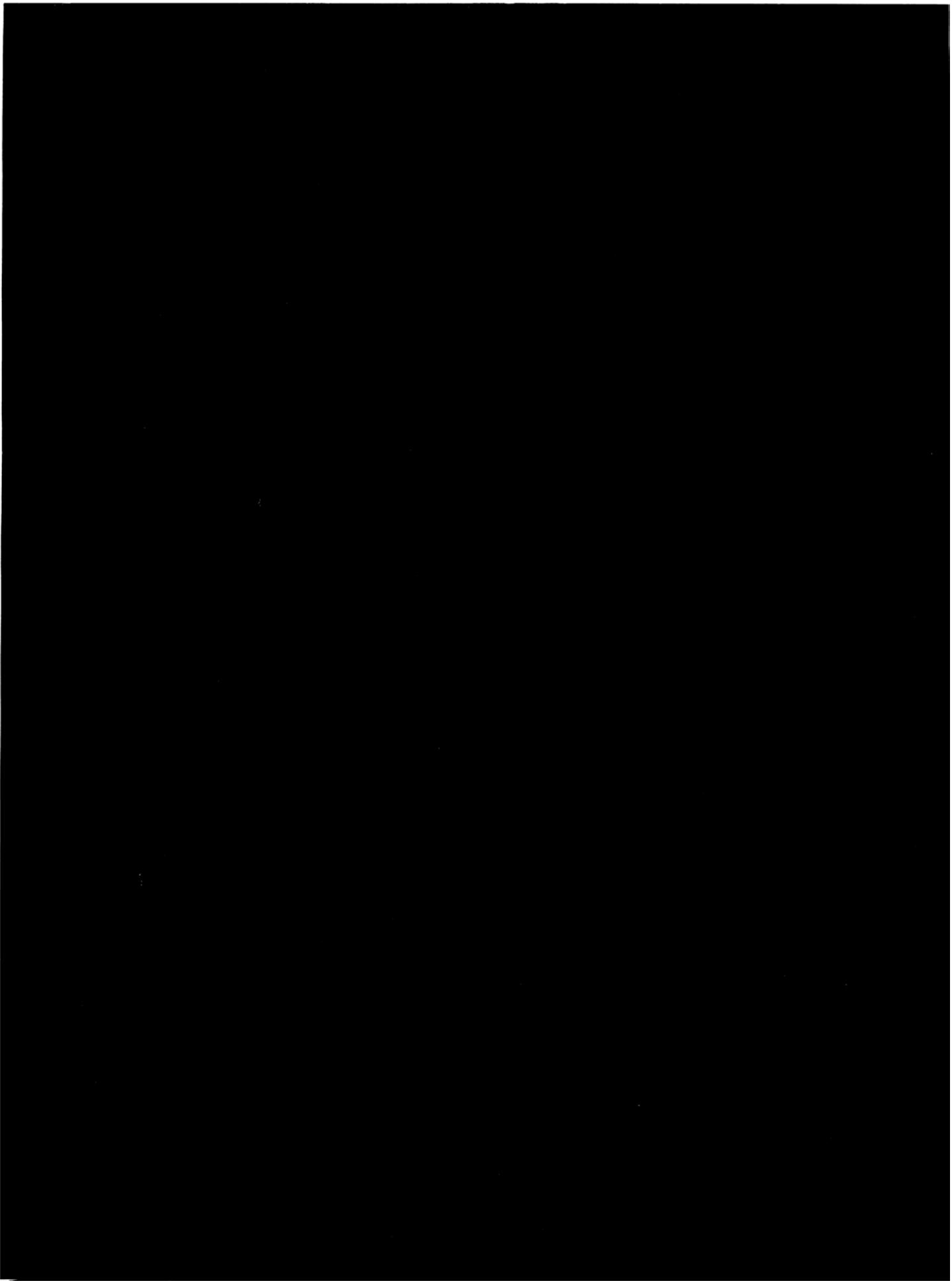


wagamama

Ways with noodles



Hugo Arnold



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contents

introduction **6**

sauces **14**

souped up **24**

wrapped **50**

quick **64**

entertaining **84**

one-pot **106**

noodles for children **144**

salads **156**

drinks **180**

index **190**

useful addresses and acknowledgments **192**



noodles, topping, broth...

this is where we started.
it defines what wagamama is all about.
a bench. a bowl. nutritious food.
speedy service. satisfaction. simplicity.

We are wild about noodles. Sure, we do rice dishes—and adore them too—but noodles are what really get us going. wagamama may be known for *ramen*, but our enthusiasm doesn't stop there: stir-fries, salads, quick ones, child-friendly ones. There really is no end to the variations.

Noodles epitomize fast food. They are easy to prepare and utterly versatile. It might be *ramen* or soup tonight, stir-fry tomorrow, and the next night something more like a stew. We like to call these one-pots. The topping might be meat or fish or vegetables—sometimes a combination of all three.

Cooking noodles is simple. They are invariably softened in boiling unsalted water, refreshed under cold water, then combined with other ingredients. Which also makes them fast. And easy to control. If you like more chile, less ginger, or lots of garlic, it is easy to dress your noodles accordingly. Or not at all. Some people like to dip their noodles in sauce, and why not?

You may like a thick noodle, or a thin one. It is up to you to choose. We have some rules, but they are not very strict. You may not be able to make a *gyoza* out of a strip of *udon* noodle, but there is nothing wrong with substituting *ramen* for *somen*, if that is what you prefer.

Noodles have been eaten for centuries, and while the debate continues over whether noodles or pasta came first, we like to keep

East. It is something about the soy and ginger, the fresh mint and greens that we find hard to resist. One bowl containing these ingredients is enough to refresh and invigorate, soothe and comfort.

Whereas Italy seeks variety through shape, Asia provides interest through type: egg, rice, wheat, buckwheat, beanthread, and potato. Uses vary, but as with any cuisine there are preferred partners and techniques (see pages 8–9). Noodles provide infinite combinations of taste, texture, and flavor, given the various starches they contain. They partner with ease, never complaining, always willing. Try beef with black beans and egg noodles, then the next time with rice noodles. You may have a preference (we certainly do), but both work equally well. As do egg or buckwheat noodles in spiced duck, asparagus, and noodle soup (along with a healthy dose of soy, cilantro, and toasted sesame seeds).

Noodles are central to Asian cuisine. They stretch through Japan, Korea, China, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, and into Indonesia, turning up in soups, side dishes, as nests or packaging for meat, fish, or vegetables, as beds for curry, or in a salad. They can be stir-fried or dressed, or poached in a heady broth, with aromatics provided by freshly chopped herbs.

Add convenience to this versatility. Most noodles have a shelf-life of at least a few weeks—longer if they are dried. They are inexpensive, easy to cook, and nutritious. No wonder they are found in such diverse settings as remote mountain villages in China, downtown Tokyo, and the beaches of Thailand.

Noodles are the fast food of today. You can stir-fry in minutes, conjure a broth in less time than it takes to make a cup of tea, even fashion a salad in mere moments. And they are nothing if not healthy: high in complex carbohydrates, low in fat, and essentially free from additives, while most if not all recipes make much use of fresh vegetables. The emphasis on fish and only a small quantity of meat is in keeping with dietary advice of the twenty-first century.

At wagamama noodles are a way of life: fun—sexy, even. Slurping noodles is one of those simple pleasures. The sort that leaves you with a smile of satisfaction. In our restaurants we encourage the slurping, a practice that is considered proper in Japan. Whether you want to slurp at home is entirely up to you, but these recipes provide ample opportunity whichever way you decide to go.



noodle knowledge

Noodles excel in a soup and get dressed in a sauce with real style. They come hot. They come cold. They are dipped in sauces, deep-fried, wrapped, and, on occasion, are fashioned into nests for other ingredients. They come fat and thin, and are made from rice, wheat, and even beans and potatoes. They are quick, versatile, and healthy—a perfect food in many ways. They also calm and restore. And excite.

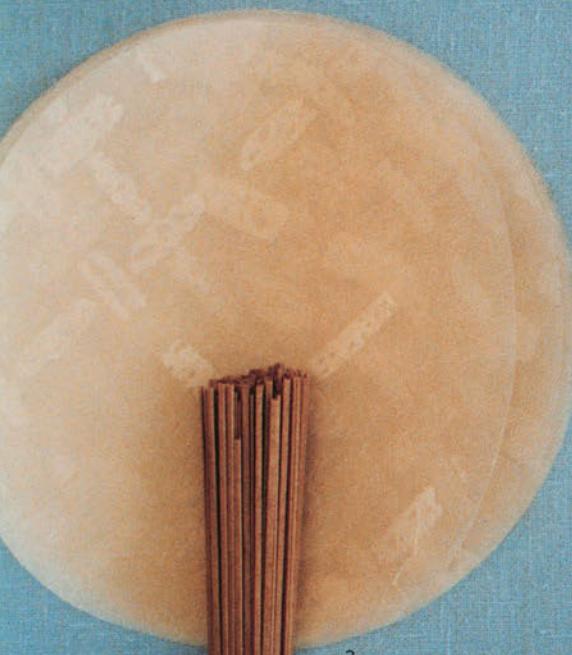
At wagamama we use the word *ramen*, which refers to the noodle, but also to the bowl where the noodle is combined with broth and vegetables and often fish or meat. Sometimes it may include all of these ingredients—as in wagamama *ramen*, a dish that we are rather proud of. *Ramen* is pretty key at wagamama. Served at noodle stalls throughout Asia, this hot, fresh, tasty, near-instant food is what started the wagamama way.

Noodles are very like pasta. Their shape is not crucial, but it does help. How you cook them is important too. In a *ramen* you want the starch in the noodle to combine with the broth. In a dish where the noodle is dressed, you want the starch inside the noodle to stay there. That way the dressing sticks and everyone is happy. Including the noodle.

Noodles have soul: they need to be handled carefully. Not timidly, but with respect. Noodles don't like salted water for example. The seasoning should happen in the dish. It's just their way. Some like to be boiled, others are happy in hot water. Almost all like to be precooked, which makes your job so much easier. And quicker.

You can be neat and tidy with noodles, but it's much more fun not to be. At wagamama we like to slurp—it feels more relaxed. What's more, the oxygen enhances their flavor. We are often asked how we decide on which noodle to use. The answer is not easy. We could say it doesn't matter too much. But it does. Sort of.

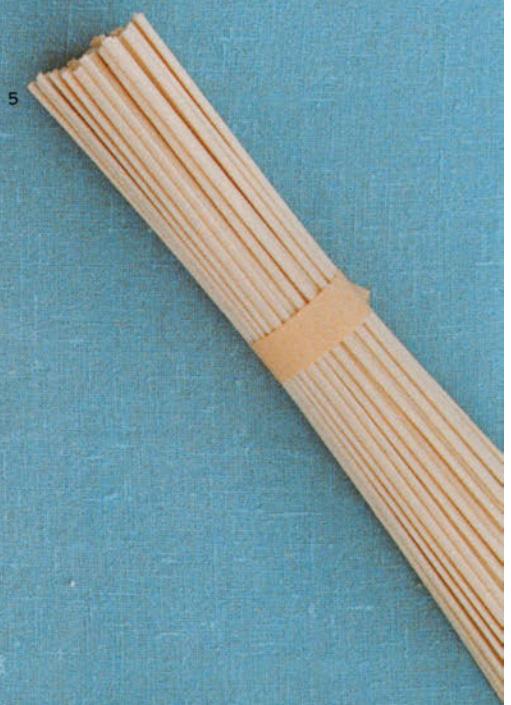
Rice ones (1) Often called rice-stick noodles, but also vermicelli. The difference is thin or really thin. The latter only require soaking in hot water to soften and are then used in salads, soups, and stir-fries. Rice-stick noodles, or "sticks," as they are known, come as medium and wide. If this sounds a bit confusing, it is, not helped by each noodle company seemingly at odds over what is medium and wide. There are also the really wide ones, which are used in stir-fries. Rice noodles tend to suit lighter dishes such as those with a broth rather than a heavy sauce. Gluten-free and wheat-free, they are usually sold dried, in nests.



Wrapping ones (2) Some call them wontons, we call them *gyozas*. But they all amount to the same thing: wrappers. You might call them sandwiches, but that would be missing the point. These are generally rather more delicate—a thin skin covering anything from meat to fish to vegetables and even noodles (see the slippery ones below). You can bake, steam, deep-fry, or boil these noodles according to your mood, or to what stuffing you are using. Wrappers or skins come in wheat and rice versions and are also known as spring roll wrappers or skins. Buy fresh or frozen.



Bucking ones (3) Buckwheat lends a brown-gray color to noodles, and a wonderful nutty flavor. In Korea they call them *naengmyon*; in Japan they are known as *soba*. These noodles are often served cold, and are dipped in sauces for breakfast in Japan. But they also turn up in soups. There are some who think *soba* noodles work in salads, but they need careful handling. They need lots of other ingredients and a good dressing or they can show up too worthy, too healthy by far. We are all for healthy eating. But it should be fun too. Buckwheat noodles are usually sold dried and the 100 percent buckwheat version have the virtue of being gluten-free and wheat-free.



Slippery ones (4) Often referred to as cellophane noodles, but also as beanthreads, these crunchy, slippery, translucent, gelatinous strands deliver little in the way of flavor but bags of texture. The trick is to get the typically light sauce to coat each strand, that way they perform as noodles (lumps are not a good thing when it comes to noodles). Also fantastic in salads, cellophane noodles are sold dried.

Wheaty ones (5) The richness of egg noodles is not always what you are looking for, particularly when the other ingredients are high in the protein stakes. Wheat noodles are said to be the oldest form of Chinese noodle, and have a firm but somewhat silky bite. In their thin form (*somen*) they find their way into soups. The thicker version (*udon*) gets dressed in rich dishes where the heart and soul is as much in the sauce as the other ingredients. *Udon* noodles are fat, white, unctuous, slippery, and utterly delicious. They turn up in soups of a robust nature and a few stir-fries. Wheat noodles are sold dried (the *somen* often delightfully wrapped).



Eggy ones (6) These come both thick and thin, and are the typical, some might say archetypal Chinese noodles. They have a rich firm texture, not unlike egg pasta come to think of it. But we would not suggest that you substitute one for the other. Pasta for noodles that is. The process is different—which will be explained later. *Ramen* are classed as eggy noodles and have a defined place in Japanese cooking (see facing page). Available both fresh and dried.



ingredients

Chinese flowering chives

Stronger than normal chives and flat rather than round-stemmed. Often referred to as garlic chives. Available in Asian markets. If substituting normal chives, double up on the quantity.

Dashi

A light fish stock made from *konbu* (see right) and dried bonito flakes.

Dashi no moto

An instant powdered version of *dashi*, commonly used in domestic kitchens in Japan.

Enoki mushrooms

Tight clusters of long-stemmed, creamy-colored mushrooms, enoki should retain a crunchy texture when cooked correctly. The flavor is delicate rather than full-bodied.

Fermented black beans

Salted black soybeans, traditionally used as a seasoning. You can buy them preprepared.

Fish sauce (*nam pla*)

A thin liquid extracted from salted, fermented fish. It deteriorates once opened and darkens with age. Fish sauce should be light golden brown with a tangy and salty flavor.

Flowering greens (*choy sum*)

A type of brassica related to bok choy and mustard greens. The flower looks pretty in cooked dishes.

Galangal

Galangal is from the same family as ginger but has a drier taste and is significantly more peppery and spicy. You can substitute one for the other, but be aware of their differences.

Hoisin sauce

Thick, dark, and spicy, this soy-based sauce is easily obtainable.

Kaffir lime leaves

The leaf of a citrus tree. Dried or frozen ones are practically useless. Buy fresh and store in the fridge, wrapped in plastic wrap.

Kamaboko-aka

Japanese fishcakes, bought in rolls (see photograph on page 176), which are traditionally white with a pink outer crust. Available from Asian markets.

Katsuo bushi

Dried fish flakes from the bonito fish (similar to tuna). You can add to salads or directly onto finished dishes, but it is most commonly used to make *dashi* (see left).

Kimchee

Korean in origin, *kimchee* is pickled vegetables, most often Chinese cabbage, and fish. Most Koreans make their own, but you can buy commercial versions in Asian markets.

Konbu

Sold both dried and ready soaked, *konbu* is kelp seaweed. It delivers a fruity saltiness to dishes.

Mirin

Sake that is combined with sugar, so it has a sweet, tangy flavor. It's used in small quantities to give a smooth roundness to dishes.

Miso

Miso varies enormously from one brand to another. Essentially a paste made from fermented soybeans and combined with other ingredients. General all-purpose *miso*, made with brown rice, has a big, rich flavor while sweet white *miso* is much lighter and more delicate. It is best to experiment until you find one you like.

Oyster sauce

Thick, dark, and brown, this meaty-flavored sauce is made from a concentrate of oysters cooked with soy sauce. It is used both in cooking and as a condiment. For vegetarians there is an alternative made with mushrooms. Widely available.

Rice vinegar

Usually a light bronze color, rice vinegar typically tastes sweet and mildly sour rather than sharp.

Sake

See page 187.

Shichimi or seven-spice pepper

A hot kick of chile and black pepper combined with sesame, hemp, and poppy seeds as well as orange zest and *nori* seaweed. Widely available in Asian markets, this seasoning gives an extra kick, particularly to *soba* and *udon* dishes.

Shiitake mushrooms

Available in both a fresh and dried form. When fresh, the flavor is quite muted with a pleasant crunchy texture. When dried, the flavor is much more concentrated and meaty and the texture is more firm. If dried, they generally need to be soaked in hot water for 15 to 20 minutes.

Soy sauce

Light soy sauce is generally best for cooking and is suitable for most of the recipes in this book. Dark soy sauce gives a stronger color and flavor and can also be used as a condiment.

Thai basil

Purple-stemmed but with green leaves. Thai basil has a strong anise flavor, which both sweetens dishes and adds a welcome aroma. Available from Asian markets.

Tofu or bean curd

Made from soybeans, tofu is rich in protein. There are essentially two kinds, firm and silken. The former is the one to use if any cooking is involved, the latter if it is being dressed and used in a salad or similar style of dish.

Yellow bean sauce

A mixture of yellow beans and salt, thickened with flour. It comes in two versions, whole beans and crushed or broken beans. The latter tends to be saltier. Available in Asian markets.

stocks and preparations

It is impossible to overemphasize the importance of good stock. It is a yardstick against which chefs are measured. In Japan, for example, a miso soup is a defining dish. A stock has to work on many levels, to satisfy so many criteria. It has to be well seasoned, but not too much. It has to be sweet, but not cloying. It has to have body, but only when it is in balance with everything else.

All this requires time, a commodity most of us severely lack. At wagamama we get around the issue by making stock in large batches to our own specification. This is not really possible at home, though, hence the recipes that follow.

Taking shortcuts is not something we entertain. But then we are not looking to try to put food on the table in the same way as you are. We may deliver dishes in minutes, but hours of work beforehand go into making that possible. What is important about the quicker versions of these stocks is that you realize what you are going to get. Something less, certainly, but also an experience that is tailored to the circumstances at the time.

There is nothing wrong with bouillon cubes. But not all cubes are the same. Some taste decidedly better than others. And there are other useful stock products out there. Fresh stock sold in cartons for example, or powder granules. What makes one good, or better, than another? Only you can decide.

As you work your way through this book you will find the recipes involve preparation that is then followed by the cooking. At first this may seem an odd way of working, frustrating even, as little seems to be happening. In practice, however, this route is tried and tested.

other bits and pieces

How you chop is very important. Avoid right angles; they are difficult on the eye. And in the mouth. Diagonal slices are pleasing to look at and expose a greater surface area to heat and to other flavoring ingredients. Generally a good thing.

A wok is useful. But not essential. A skillet will also work. There is no need to rush out and buy the kit. A fork, after all, will do the job of chopsticks. Only differently.

Stir-frying is different from frying. You cook over a high heat. And quickly. Moving everything around. Either by tossing or using a scoop. Don't fall shy of this technique. It is key.

These dishes have generally been specified for two people on the basis that a meal will be made up of two or three dishes. You might, of course, choose to double up one recipe for four. There are no hard-and-fast rules. It depends rather on what you like.

chicken stock (1) *when you're not in a hurry*

2½ pounds chicken bones • ¾ pound pork bones • 1 onion, peeled and chopped • 2 carrots (scant ½ cup), chopped • 4 leeks (¾ pound), sliced • 2½ tablespoons sliced fresh ginger • 4 Chinese cabbage leaves, roughly chopped

Put the meat bones in a large pot, cover with cold water, and bring almost to a boil. Turn the heat right down and simmer for 2 hours, skimming off any froth that rises to the surface.

Add the vegetables and another 1 quart of water and bring almost to a boil again, then lower the heat and simmer for another hour. Remove from the heat and let cool. Strain off the liquid, return to the pan, and simmer for 1 hour to reduce further. Season with the chicken stock seasoning below.

chicken stock seasoning

**2 teaspoons salt • 2 teaspoons sugar • small pinch of white pepper
1 teaspoon dashi no moto (see page 11)**

chicken stock (2) *when you need to make stock at the same time as cooking*

2 good-quality chicken bouillon cubes • 1 pound uncooked chicken thighs or wings • 1 leek, finely chopped • 1 carrot, finely chopped • 1 quart water

Combine all the solid ingredients in a pan, add the water, and bring almost to boiling point. Lower the heat and simmer for 30 minutes. Strain and proceed.

chicken stock (3) *when you want something to eat now!*

2 good-quality chicken bouillon cubes • 1 leek, finely chopped • 1 carrot, roughly chopped • 1-inch piece of fresh ginger, roughly chopped • 1 quart water

Combine all the solid ingredients in a pan, cover with the water, and bring to a boil. Strain and proceed.

vegetable stock (1) *when you're not in a hurry*

1 pound potatoes • 1 small sweet potato • 2 carrots • ½ small butternut squash, seeded • 1 white onion • 1 red onion • 4 Chinese cabbage leaves • 1 leek • 2 tablespoons canned tomatoes • 3 quarts water

Peel the root vegetables, squash, and onions, then roughly chop all the vegetables. Put in a large pot with the water. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat to a gentle simmer and cook, uncovered, for 3 hours. Turn off the heat, let cool, and strain. Season with the vegetable seasoning below.

vegetable stock seasoning

2 teaspoons salt • 2 teaspoons sugar • pinch of white pepper

vegetable stock (2) *when you need to make stock at the same time as cooking*

2 good-quality vegetable bouillon cubes • 2 Chinese cabbage leaves • 2 carrots, roughly chopped • few sprigs of flat-leaf parsley • 3 quarts water

Place all the ingredients in a large pot and bring to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes if you have time, then strain.

wagamama



sauces

You can dip, dress, marinate, soak, or season with a sauce. You can use a lot or a bit, it's all up to you. Which we rather like. A sauce can come out of a container, and some of the best do. But making your own is not only enjoyable, it also gives you control. Soy sauce may be one to buy. Barbecue sauce on the other hand tends to be rather better when fashioned in your own kitchen.

The same is true of a green or red curry paste. Fresh ingredients pounded together tend to sing in a way that those in a container do not. It is something about the care, love, and attention. There is likely to be more of that in your kitchen than a factory. At least, that's what we've found.

All these sauces are good keepers. Fridge-friendly, they will happily sit things out for a while and then add zest and spice to a dish on demand. Maybe a dish that calls for them directly, or another one that does not. You never quite know how useful a good sauce can be. A dipping sauce, for example, does not always need to be dipped into. A splash or two over a bowl of *ramen* noodles can make for interesting eating.

You'll find other sauces in this book linked to specific dishes. In general these are more tailored to individual recipes, but this doesn't mean they can't be used elsewhere. After all, if you like a sauce, it seems a shame not to eat it.

makes about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup

$\frac{1}{2}$ pound red chiles, trimmed
3 garlic cloves, peeled and roughly
chopped
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup light brown sugar
2 teaspoons white wine vinegar
scant 1 teaspoon salt

sweet chili dipping sauce

In a small saucepan, combine everything in a small pan with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water, bring to a boil, and simmer over medium heat until soft, about 5 minutes. Blitz in a blender and season with the salt. Return to the pan and simmer for another 10 minutes, taking care not to let it catch on the bottom. Let cool, cover, and refrigerate.

Many store-bought sweet chili sauces deliver too much sweetness and not a lot of character in the chile, two things that you maintain control over when you make this all-purpose sauce at home. It will last indefinitely in the fridge and is, according to some, rather good on a bacon sandwich in place of ketchup.

makes enough for 2 to 3 recipes

10 dried red chiles, soaked in
hot water and roughly chopped
 $1\frac{1}{4}$ -inch piece of fresh ginger or
galangal, peeled and finely
chopped
2 lemongrass stalks, outer leaves
removed, finely chopped
finely grated zest of 2 limes
1 tablespoon finely chopped
cilantro stems
1 tablespoon chopped shallots
1 tablespoon chopped garlic
1 teaspoon light brown sugar
salt and white pepper
vegetable oil

makes about 1 cup

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup teriyaki sauce, home-made
(see page 19) or bought
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup yellow bean sauce
1 lemongrass stalk, outer leaves
removed, finely sliced
1 tablespoon peeled and grated
fresh ginger

red curry paste

Pound each ingredient, adding them one after the other, in a pestle and mortar. Season with salt and pepper and stir in enough oil to form a paste.

You can always buy curry pastes (red and green), but none will be as fresh-tasting and invigorating as making your own. This will last for a few weeks in the fridge covered with a slick of vegetable oil.

yasai soba dressing

In a small bowl, combine all the ingredients until well blended.

You can dress noodles with this sauce, or put a blob on the side or top of a dish. You can dip a gyoza in it, or add a bit to a salad dressing. It's very Asian in taste and attitude. It will keep for months in the fridge.



makes about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup

- 6 green chiles, roughly chopped
- 1 lemongrass stalk, outer leaves removed, thinly sliced
- 3 kaffir lime leaves, finely sliced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch piece of fresh ginger, peeled and grated
- bunch of cilantro, stems finely chopped (leaves reserved for another dish)
- 1 teaspoon cumin seed, roasted in a hot, dry skillet
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and roughly chopped
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped shallot
- 1 teaspoon shrimp paste (available from Asian markets)
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon vegetable oil

green curry paste

Blitz all the ingredients in a blender or food-processor or pound in a pestle and mortar to a fine paste.

As with the red version (see page 16), making this at home ensures a vibrant lively paste that will make no end of difference to your finished dish. You can buy green curry paste, but it rarely makes the grade. At least we don't think so. This will keep indefinitely in the fridge.

makes about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup

- 2 scant teaspoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons malt vinegar
- 3 tablespoons store-bought sweet chili sauce
- 5 tablespoons fish sauce (*nam pla*)

chili ramen sauce

In a small pan, dissolve the sugar in the vinegar over gentle heat. Let cool, and then combine with the other ingredients.

Using sugar as a seasoning is widely practiced in Asia and this sauce is no exception. It brings a real meatiness to dishes and is generally lightly drizzled over food. It will keep for several weeks in the fridge.

makes about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar
4 tablespoons light soy sauce
2 tablespoons sake
1 teaspoon dark soy sauce

teriyaki sauce

In a small saucepan, heat the sugar and light soy sauce over low heat and stir until the sugar has dissolved. Simmer until thick, 5 minutes, add the sake and dark soy sauce, and let cool.

This sauce is most commonly used to brush meat with so that it can marinate before it is broiled. You can also use it as a dipping sauce or to drizzle over noodles in broth. It will keep for a few weeks in the fridge.

makes about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup store-bought yellow bean sauce
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup store-bought hoisin sauce
2 teaspoons sugar
2 garlic cloves, peeled and minced
1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil
pinch of white pepper
1 tablespoon dark soy sauce
2 tablespoons light soy sauce

barbecue sauce

Combine all the ingredients in a small bowl.

There are lots of brands of barbecue sauce, each one with its advocates. Making your own allows for variation (alter the amounts of each ingredient used) but most importantly makes you realize how bright and vibrant this sauce can be. Keeps in the fridge for several days.



makes about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup

2 lemongrass stalks, outer leaves removed, roughly chopped
1-inch piece of fresh galangal, peeled and roughly chopped
2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
2 onions, peeled and roughly chopped
1 red bell pepper, seeded and roughly chopped
1 teaspoon sweet paprika
1 teaspoon fennel seeds
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon chili powder
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon turmeric
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon curry powder
1 teaspoon shrimp paste
(available from Asian markets)

kare lomen sauce

Combine all the ingredients in a blender or food-processor and blitz to a smooth consistency.

This is a bright and invigorating sauce (see picture on left). It has a Thai theme with all that lemongrass and galangal. It will keep for a few days in the fridge.

makes about 3 cups

1-inch piece of fresh ginger, peeled and grated
3 cups light soy sauce
 $3\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons sake
1 teaspoon sugar
1 tablespoon oyster sauce

tori kara age sauce

In a saucepan, combine all the ingredients and heat gently to dissolve the sugar. Set aside to let cool.

Ginger and soy, soy and ginger. The combination is a winning one whichever way you say it. This is a marinade, a dipping sauce, and something to drizzle over pretty much anything, from grilled or broiled fish and meat, to noodles sitting in a scant broth with or without other things. Keeps for several weeks in the fridge.

makes about 1½ cups

2 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 lemongrass stalks, outer leaves removed, finely chopped
1 teaspoon peeled and grated fresh ginger
1 chile, finely chopped
1 red onion, peeled and finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon sugar
1 tablespoon light soy sauce
1 red bell pepper, seeded and finely chopped
1 tablespoon store-bought sweet chili sauce
1 tablespoon ketchup
1½ cups water

chili sauce

In a small saucepan, heat the vegetable oil over low heat until hot. Add the next 8 ingredients and sauté for 7 to 8 minutes without coloring. Add the red bell pepper and continue cooking gently for 8 to 10 minutes. Add the remaining ingredients, bring to a boil and simmer for 10 minutes. Blitz in a blender or food processor and use.

There is a rounded fruitiness to this sauce allied to a hefty kick, which, if you choose, you can down-play simply by reducing the amount of chile used. Generally used as a dipping sauce. It will keep for a few days in the fridge.

makes 2 servings

2 tablespoons soy sauce
1 tablespoon water
½ teaspoon sugar
½ teaspoon peeled and grated fresh ginger
2 shallots, finely chopped
dash of toasted sesame oil

soy dipping sauce

In a small bowl, combine all the ingredients, stir to dissolve the sugar, and serve.

Light, bright, and full of interest, this sauce is for dipping certainly, but can also be used as a finishing sauce for other dishes. Keeps for several weeks in the fridge.

makes about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup

2 tablespoons *mirin* (see page 11)
2 tablespoons sake
4 tablespoons sugar
110g *miso* paste (see page 11)
1 tablespoon chili oil
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
2 teaspoons *shichimi* (see page 11)

sweet miso dressing

In a small saucepan, combine the *mirin* and sake and bring to a boil. Lower the heat, add the sugar, and stir until dissolved. Pour onto the *miso* paste in a small bowl and beat until smooth. Add the oils and *shichimi* and mix thoroughly.

Miso brings a deliciously meaty quality to dishes. Here it is used in a dressing, so it is designed to enhance dishes. But a dish of noodles dressed in this sauce makes for quite a nice snack. It will keep for several days in the fridge.

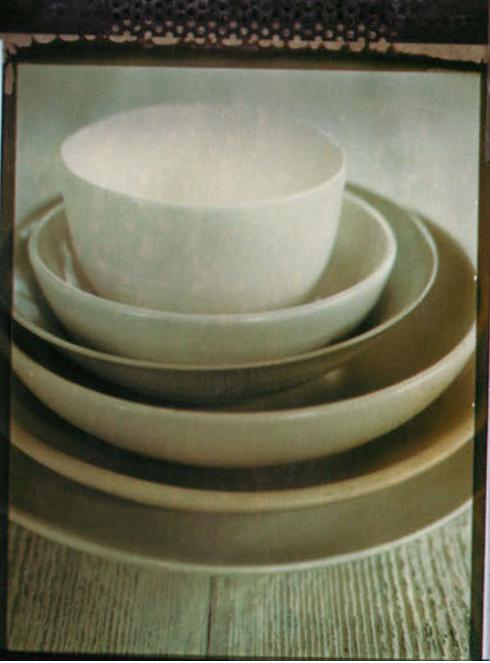
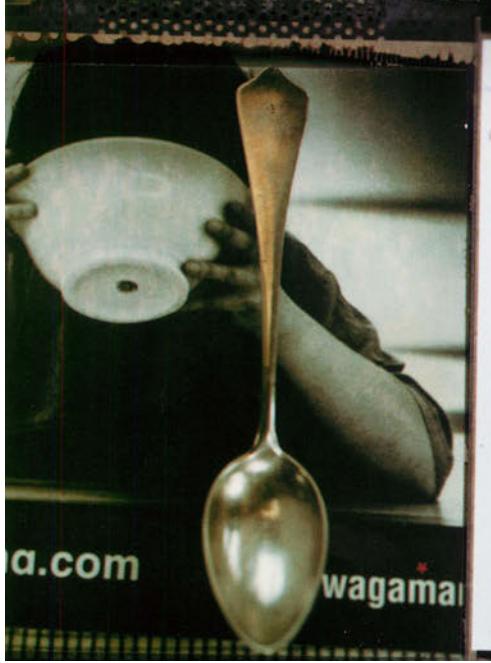
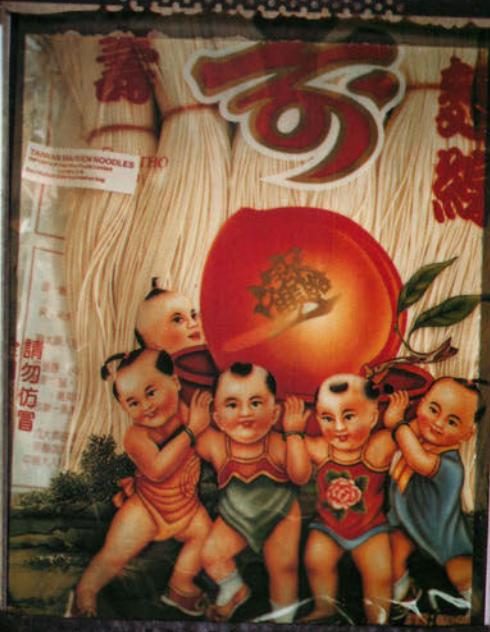
makes about $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups

1 large garlic clove, peeled and finely chopped
1 large red chile, finely chopped
salt
2 tablespoons sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup malt vinegar
1 cup light soy sauce
1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil

gyoza sauce

Mash the garlic and chile together with a little salt with the side of your knife to form a paste. In a small saucepan, dissolve the sugar in the vinegar over low heat. Combine everything and store in a sealed container.

A great dipping sauce. It also adds interest to finished dishes and is good for dipping grilled or broiled fish and meat into. It will keep for several weeks in the fridge.



souped up

wagamama *ramen* is the sort of food wagamama was built on. Noodles and a delicious broth along with some select vegetables and meat. Easy to cook. Simple to serve. Delicious. And good for you.

We cannot claim to have invented this combination. It has existed in the East for centuries. Noodle stalls are an original fast food source. Maybe the original fast food. Simplicity at its best.

It is easy to soup things up. We do it all the time. But only once in a while do we come up with a real winner. A few of these appear in the following pages. What makes a soup win? It's something to do with satisfaction. A licking of the lips. A sigh of contentment.

Noodles have this effect. Particularly when the broth is good. You can cut corners with the broth. Some do. But we don't advise it. This is the one chapter when a really good stock will show off its best. This is not to forget the other ingredients. But don't skimp on the stock.

What is your soup about? If you don't know, how are your noodles expected to? There needs to be a plan. Which is why we are very careful when working on new soups. A wagamama *ramen* is quite hard to beat, or at least to equal. Which is sort of where our benchmark lies. A marker that makes us happy. Proud even.

A word about your bowls. We use *ramen* bowls, which are large, wide, and made from melamine. This allows you to pick them up, the closer to slurp from without burning your hands. Any big bowl will suffice. It rather depends on how much slurping you wish to do.

serves 2

3½ ounces *somen* noodles
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
salt and white pepper
3½ ounces firm tofu, cut into
½-inch cubes
1 red onion, peeled and finely
sliced
1 small potato, peeled and
thinly sliced
1 medium carrot, grated
1 red chile, seeded and finely
sliced
1 green chile, seeded and
finely sliced
1 cup chicken stock (see
page 13)
2 tablespoons white *miso* paste
(see page 11)
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 sheet of *nori* seaweed
2 scallions, white part only,
thinly sliced (to serve)

tofu and miso soup with *somen* noodles

Soften the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

In a hot wok, heat 1 tablespoon of the vegetable oil. Season the tofu and stir-fry until golden on all sides, remove, and drain on paper towels.

Heat the remaining oil in the wok, add the red onion and potato, and stir-fry over medium heat for 2 minutes. Add the carrot and red and green chiles, and cook for another minute. Add 1 cup water, the chicken stock, *miso* paste, and reserved tofu. Season with soy sauce and salt and pepper.

Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer until the potato is cooked, about 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, cut the *nori* into strips. In a dry skillet, cook over medium heat to crisp up, a scant minute.

Divide the noodles into 2 bowls, pour over the soup, and serve topped with the slices of *nori* and scallions.





serves 2

3½ ounces egg noodles
4 tablespoons vegetable oil
salt and white pepper
3½ ounces tofu (smoked if possible), cut into ½-inch cubes
1 carrot, peeled and julienned
2 scallions, finely sliced
1 tablespoon finely sliced shallot
2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely sliced
2 cups vegetable stock (see page 13)
1 teaspoon soy sauce
2 teaspoons fish sauce (*nam pla*)
scant teaspoon sugar
2 teaspoons *mirin* (see page 11)
1 small head of Bibb lettuce, shredded

tofu, lettuce, and egg noodle soup

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water. Heat the wok on high heat and add 2 tablespoons of the oil. Season the tofu and fry until golden brown on all sides. Remove and drain on paper towels.

Wipe out the wok and return to the heat. Add the remaining oil, then stir-fry the carrot, scallions, shallot, and garlic until the carrot is tender, about 2 minutes. Add the vegetable stock, soy sauce, fish sauce, sugar, and *mirin* and bring to a boil. Add the lettuce and season with salt and pepper to taste.

Divide the noodles and tofu between 2 bowls, ladle over the hot soup, and serve.

serves 2

2 dried shiitake mushrooms
3 ounces *ramen* noodles
2 teaspoons vegetable oil
1 carrot, peeled and finely sliced
2 teaspoons finely sliced shallots
2 ounces enoki mushrooms, broken up
½ cup sliced button mushrooms
handful of baby spinach
handful of snow peas, thinly sliced
1¼ cups chicken stock (see page 13)
1 sheet of *konbu* (kelp) seaweed
2 teaspoons soy sauce
½ teaspoon sugar
2 teaspoons rice vinegar
1 teaspoon *miso* paste (see page 11)
scant 2 teaspoons sesame seed, briefly toasted in a hot, dry skillet

three-mushroom soup

In a small, heatproof bowl, pour ½ cup boiling water over the mushrooms and let soak.

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

In a hot wok, heat the oil and stir-fry the carrot and shallots for 5 minutes. Drain the shiitake (reserving the liquid), and discard any tough stems. Slice thinly and add them to the wok with the other mushrooms, spinach, and snow peas. Continue to stir-fry for another 3 minutes.

Bring the stock to a boil, adding the liquid from the mushrooms. Add the *konbu*, soy sauce, sugar, rice vinegar, *miso*, and noodles to the wok and toss well so that everything is combined. Pour in the boiling stock and bring to a boil.

Divide between 2 bowls, and serve scattered with the toasted sesame seed.

serves 4

- 7 ounces flat egg noodles
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 carrot, peeled and julienned
- 2 lemongrass stalks, outer leaves removed, finely chopped
- 1 chile, finely sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and sliced
- 2 kaffir lime leaves
- 7 ounces skate fillet
- 1 cup chicken stock (see page 13)
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 3½ ounces peeled raw shrimp, deveined
- 4 sea scallops, shelled, trimmed, and sliced horizontally in half
- 2 handfuls of spinach
- 1 small head of Bibb lettuce, shredded
- salt and white pepper
- pickled ginger

serves 4

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 red onion, peeled and thinly sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and minced
- 2 lemongrass stalks, outer leaves removed, finely sliced
- 1½ cups thinly sliced button mushrooms
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- 2 teaspoons fish sauce (*nam pla*)
- 1 quart chicken stock (see page 13)
- 8 sea scallops, shelled and trimmed
- 8 raw, unpeeled shrimp
- 16 mussels, scrubbed and debearded
- finely grated zest and juice of 1 lime
- 3½ ounces medium egg noodles
- 1 red chile, sliced
- 2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil
- 3 scallions, thinly sliced

spring greens and seafood soup with pickled ginger

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

In a hot wok, heat the oil and stir-fry the carrot, lemongrass, chile, garlic, and kaffir lime leaves for 1 minute. Add the skate, chicken stock, and rice vinegar and reduce the heat. Poach the skate, turning halfway through, until it just comes away from the bone, 5 minutes. Remove and let cool. As soon as you can handle it, slide the meat off the bones.

Add the shrimp, scallops, spinach, and lettuce to the hot stock. Season with salt and pepper. Cook over low heat until the scallops and shrimp are cooked through and the leaves wilted, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the noodles and skate to the pan and toss so that everything is well combined and heated through.

Ladle into 4 bowls and serve topped with pickled ginger.

seafood and egg noodle soup

In a hot wok, heat the vegetable oil, and stir-fry the onion, garlic, lemongrass, and mushrooms for 1 minute. Add the sugar, fish sauce, and chicken stock and bring to a boil.

Add the seafood and return to a boil. Add the lime zest and juice, the noodles, and the chile. Simmer until the noodles are tender, the seafood is cooked, and all the mussels are open, about 3 minutes. Discard any mussels that remain closed.

Divide among 4 bowls, drizzle over the sesame oil, and scatter over the scallions.

serves 2

5 ounces raw shrimp, peeled
and deveined, shells reserved
1 quart vegetable stock (see
page 13)
1 green chile, seeded and finely
sliced
salt and white pepper
6 kaffir lime leaves
2 lemongrass stalks, smashed
3½ ounces rice noodles
1 small cleaned squid, cut into rings
1 tablespoon fish sauce (*nam pla*)
juice of 1 lime
6 shiitake mushrooms, stems
removed, thinly sliced
2 scallions, thinly sliced
6 cooked crab claws, cracked
2 tablespoons roughly chopped
cilantro

hot and sour seafood broth

In a saucepan, combine the shrimp shells, stock, chile, ½ teaspoon salt, lime leaves, and lemongrass and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat, cover, and simmer for 30 minutes. Strain into a clean pan.

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

Mix together the shrimp, squid, fish sauce, lime juice, mushrooms, and scallions. Season with salt and toss gently.

Bring the strained broth back to a boil. Add the shrimp and squid mixture along with the crab claws and simmer for 2 minutes. Taste and correct the seasoning if required.

Place the soaked noodles in 2 bowls and ladle over the hot broth. Serve scattered with the cilantro leaves.

serves 2

6 raw, unpeeled shrimp
2 cups chicken stock (see
page 13)
2 teaspoons *mirin* (see page 11)
1 tablespoon soy sauce
2 teaspoons sake
1½-inch piece of fresh ginger,
peeled and julienned
1 garlic clove, peeled and finely
sliced
3½ ounces rice vermicelli
handful of snow peas
2 heads of bok choy, separated
into leaves
4 quail eggs
salt and white pepper
2 scallions, finely sliced
large handful of cilantro leaves

prawn and quail egg soup

Remove the shells (and heads if available) from the shrimp, devein, and set the shrimp aside. In a saucepan, combine the shells (and heads) with the stock, *mirin*, soy sauce, sake, ginger, and garlic and bring to a boil. Simmer for 10 minutes, then remove the shrimp shells.

Soak the vermicelli according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

Cook the snow peas and bok choy in the stock until cooked, about 5 minutes. Add the shrimp, simmer for a scant 2 minutes, and remove from the heat.

Divide the vermicelli between 2 bowls and add the shrimp and vegetables. Poach the quail eggs in the remaining broth over medium heat for 2 minutes and spoon them over the other ingredients, along with the stock. Check the seasoning and serve scattered with the scallions and cilantro.

serves 2

hot and sour seafood ramen

for the marinade

2 teaspoons fish sauce (*nam pla*)
2 teaspoons *mirin* (see page 11)
2 teaspoons soy sauce
dash of Tabasco
2 teaspoons cornstarch

¾ pound raw, in the shell, unpeeled,
mixed seafood, such as shrimp,
sea scallops (trimmed),
small clams (well rinsed
and drained), or mussels
(scrubbed and debearded)
salt and white pepper
3 ounces ramen noodles
1½ cups chicken stock (see
page 13)
1 cinnamon stick
3 cloves
1 tablespoon rice vinegar
1 teaspoon sugar
1 red chile (or to taste), finely
sliced
2 teaspoons fish sauce (*nam pla*)
½ cup baby corn, halved lengthwise
½ cup zucchini, thinly sliced
6 pieces of pickled bamboo
shoots (*menma*)
1 tablespoon *wakame* seaweed,
soaked in warm water for
5 minutes, drained, and
roughly sliced
4 scallions, finely sliced
few sprigs of watercress

Make the marinade: In a medium bowl, whisk the fish sauce, *mirin*, soy sauce, and Tabasco into the cornstarch. Season the seafood with salt and pepper and add to the marinade, coating well. Cover and set aside for an hour; overnight in the fridge is even better.

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

In a large saucepan, bring the chicken stock, cinnamon, cloves, rice vinegar, sugar, chile, and fish sauce to a boil and add the seafood, marinade, baby corn, and zucchini. Simmer until the seafood is cooked and all the shells are open, about 3 minutes. Discard any shells that remain closed.

Divide the noodles between 2 bowls, top with the seafood and vegetables, and ladle in the stock. Check the seasoning and serve topped with the bamboo shoots, *wakame*, scallions, and watercress.





serves 2

3½ ounces ramen noodles
1 medium egg
½ cup all-purpose flour
vegetable oil, for frying
2 garlic cloves, peeled and chopped
1 leek, sliced
½ cup snow peas
1 carrot, peeled and thinly sliced on the diagonal
1 onion, peeled and sliced
2 teaspoons soy sauce
1 tablespoon rice vinegar
1 tablespoon fish sauce (*nam pla*)
2 star anise
2 cups chicken stock (see page 13)
10 raw, peeled shrimp, deveined
2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil
store-bought sweet chili sauce

crispy shrimp ramen soup

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

In a medium bowl, lightly whisk the egg with ½ cup iced water. Sift in the flour and barely combine to make a smooth batter (don't overwork it, or it will become heavy).

In a hot wok, heat 1 tablespoon of oil and stir-fry the garlic, leek, snow peas, carrot, onion, soy sauce, rice vinegar, fish sauce, and star anise for 2 minutes. Pour in the chicken stock, bring to a boil, and simmer for 5 minutes.

In a wok or deep-sided pan, heat 1¼ inches of vegetable oil to 350°F. Drop in a bit of batter to test the temperature; if it bubbles up and turns golden, you are ready to go. Dip each shrimp in the batter (you won't require all of it) and fry until crisp and golden, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Remove and drain on paper towels.

Ladle the soup and noodles into 2 bowls, ensuring there is an island of noodles surrounded by broth. Drizzle with the sesame oil and top with the shrimp. Serve with the chili sauce.

serves 2

5 ounces firm tofu
vegetable oil, for frying
½ pound ramen noodles
4 slices of *kamaboko-aka* (see page 11)
4 crabsticks
1 egg, hard-boiled
4 cooked, peeled shrimp
2 heads of bok choy, roughly chopped
1 quart chicken stock (see page 13)
2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
salt and white pepper
12 pieces of pickled bamboo shoots (*menma*), drained
1 tablespoon *wakame* seaweed, soaked in warm water for 5 minutes, drained, and chopped
2 scallions, sliced

wagamama ramen

Cut the tofu into ½-inch slices. In a skillet, heat a bit of vegetable oil and fry the tofu until just colored on each side, about 1 minute.

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold running water. Divide between 2 bowls along with the *kamaboko-aka*, crabsticks, tofu, half an egg each, 2 shrimp each, and the bok choy.

In a saucepan, bring the chicken stock to a boil. Preheat the grill or broiler or a grillpan. Lightly coat the chicken breasts in vegetable oil, season with salt and pepper, and grill, broil or chargrill until cooked, about 4 minutes each side. Let rest for 5 minutes and slice on the diagonal into ½-inch strips.

To serve, pour the chicken stock over the noodles, lay the chicken strips on top, and garnish with the *menma*, *wakame*, and scallions.

If we have a signature dish, then this is it; pure wagamama. Broth, noodles, and a host of toppings, so lots of variety. This is the only recipe you'll also find in The wagamama Cookbook. We are rather proud of it.

serves 4

1 medium, cooked crab
vegetable oil
salt and white pepper
1 carrot, peeled and roughly
chopped
1 celery stalk, roughly chopped
1 onion, peeled and roughly
chopped
2 cups chicken stock (see
page 13)
3½ ounces rice vermicelli
2 large eggs, 1 separated,
1 lightly beaten
½-inch piece of fresh ginger,
peeled and minced
2 teaspoons finely chopped
scallion
1 garlic clove, peeled and minced
small bunch of cilantro, leaves
picked, stems finely chopped
8 wonton wrappers/skins
2 small heads of bok choy, leaves
trimmed and separated
handful of snow peas
3½ ounces carrots, peeled and cut
into ¼-inch dice
3½ ounces celery root, peeled
and cut into ¼-inch dice
2 teaspoons soy sauce

crab and wonton broth

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Crack the crab shell with the back of a large knife. Pick the crabmeat, keeping the white and brown meat separate. Discard the "dead man's fingers."

Place the crab shells in a roasting pan, toss with a bit of vegetable oil, season well with salt, and roast for 20 minutes. Transfer to a saucepan, add the carrot, celery, and onion and pour over the chicken stock. Bring to a boil slowly, skim, and simmer for 30 minutes, skimming the surface as necessary. Stir in the egg white, simmer for 5 minutes, then turn off the heat.

Line a strainer with a double layer of cheesecloth, pour the stock through, and let drain into a clean saucepan. (This may sound like quite a performance, but it means you will have a clear stock in the finished dish, which looks and tastes very impressive.)

Combine the brown crabmeat with the egg yolk, ginger, scallion, garlic, and the chopped cilantro stems. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Place a teaspoon of this crab mixture in the center of 4 of the wonton wrappers. Dab the edges with the beaten egg, cover with a second skin, and seal, pushing out as much air as you can. Poach the wontons in boiling salted water for 5 minutes, drain, refresh under cold water, and set aside. Blanch the bok choy and snow peas in the same water for about 15 seconds, drain, and refresh under cold water.

Cook the vermicelli according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

Now blanch the carrots and celery root in boiling salted water for 1 minute, refresh under cold water, and transfer to 2 bowls. Add the wontons and vermicelli and cover with the clear broth. Add the bok choy and snow peas and sprinkle with the white crabmeat. Season with the soy sauce and serve.





serves 2

for the marinade

1¼-inch piece of fresh ginger,
peeled and grated
2 teaspoons *mirin* (see page 11)
2 teaspoons soy sauce
2 teaspoons fish sauce (*nam pla*)

2 salmon fillets, about 5 ounces
each
salt and white pepper
3½ ounces *ramen* noodles
2 cups chicken stock (see
page 13)
2 teaspoons fish sauce (*nam pla*)
2 garlic cloves, peeled and minced
1 carrot, peeled and julienned
½ cucumber, seeded
and julienned
2 ounces green beans, trimmed
and halved lengthwise
handful of cilantro leaves

marinated salmon ramen

In a medium bowl, combine the marinade ingredients. Season the salmon fillets with salt and pepper and add to the marinade. Turn to coat several times, cover, and set aside for 1 hour; overnight in the fridge is even better.

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

In a large saucepan, combine the chicken stock with the fish sauce and garlic and bring to a boil. Add the salmon and its marinade, cover, and simmer for 2 to 3 minutes. Add the carrot, cucumber, and beans and simmer until the fish is just cooked, about another 2 to 3 minutes. Remove the fish and keep warm.

Divide the noodles between 2 bowls. Pour over the soup, ensuring each bowl gets an equal share of vegetables. Check the seasoning. Top with the fish and serve scattered with cilantro leaves.

serves 2

7 ounces rice vermicelli
1 tablespoon fish sauce (*nam pla*)
1 teaspoon sugar
salt and white pepper
1 quart chicken stock (see
page 13)
5 ounces lump crabmeat, flaked
1 small head of Bibb lettuce, finely
shredded
2 teaspoons finely sliced scallion
½ cup bean sprouts
1 lime, cut into wedges

vietnamese-style crab noodle soup

Cook the vermicelli according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

In a saucepan, combine the fish sauce, sugar, and a generous pinch of salt with the stock. Bring to a boil, lower the heat, and simmer gently for 20 minutes.

Add the crabmeat, check and adjust the seasoning if necessary, and remove from the heat.

Divide the noodles between 2 bowls. Ladle the soup over the noodles, top with the lettuce, scallions, and bean sprouts and serve with the lime wedges.

serves 4

for the marinade

2 teaspoons soy sauce
1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil
2 teaspoons fish sauce (*nam pla*)
2 teaspoons *mirin* (see page 11)
2 teaspoons cornstarch

7 ounces sea bass (branzini) fillets
(skin on), cut into 1½-inch
pieces
salt and white pepper
3½ ounces ramen noodles
1 quart chicken stock (see
page 13)
2 garlic cloves, peeled and minced
1¼-inch piece of fresh ginger,
peeled and grated
1 tablespoon fish sauce (*nam pla*)
1 tablespoon rice vinegar
juice of 1 lime
handful of green beans, trimmed
2 tablespoons frozen peas,
defrosted
handful of spinach
handful of cilantro leaves

marinated sea bass with green vegetables and ramen noodles

Make the marinade: Combine the soy sauce, sesame oil, fish sauce, and *mirin*. Stir in the cornstarch to dissolve. Combine the fish with the marinade ingredients and season with salt and pepper. Cover and set aside for an hour; overnight in the fridge is even better.

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

In a saucepan, combine the chicken stock, garlic, ginger, fish sauce, rice vinegar, and lime juice and bring to a boil. Blanch the beans in this mixture until just tender, about 4 to 5 minutes. Remove with a strainer or tongs and refresh under cold water.

Add the fish pieces and marinade to the simmering stock, bring to a boil for 2 minutes, then add the beans, the peas, and spinach to the pan with the noodles and simmer for another minute. Check the seasoning.

Divide among 4 bowls and serve scattered with cilantro leaves.





serves 2

for the marinade

- 2 teaspoons hoisin sauce
- 1 teaspoon fish sauce (*nam pla*)
- 1 teaspoon *mirin* (see page 11)
- 1 boneless, skinless chicken breast
- 3 cups chicken stock (see page 13)
- 1 tablespoon red *miso* paste (see page 11)
- 1¼-inch piece of fresh ginger, peeled and thinly sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and sliced
- 7 ounces *soba* noodles
- 2 heads of bok choy, roughly chopped
- 1 large hard-boiled egg, shelled and halved

chargrilled chicken, soba, and miso soup

Make the marinade: In a medium bowl, combine the hoisin sauce, fish sauce, and *mirin*. Add the chicken breast and toss well. Cover and set aside for an hour; overnight in the fridge is even better.

Preheat the grill or grillpan. Chargrill or charbroil the chicken until cooked, about 4 or 5 minutes each side.

In a saucepan, combine the chicken stock, *miso* paste, ginger, and garlic and bring to a boil. Add the *soba* noodles and bok choy and cook until the noodles are just tender, about 3 minutes.

Divide the soup between 2 bowls, ensuring each has an equal share of noodles. Slice the chicken on the diagonal and place on the noodles and broth. Top with half a hard-boiled egg and serve.

serves 2

for the marinade

- 2 teaspoons *mirin* (see page 11)
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce (*nam pla*)
- 1 red chile, thinly sliced
- 1 garlic clove, peeled and minced
- 5 ounces dark chicken meat (leg and thigh), trimmed and roughly chopped
- salt and black pepper
- 3 cups chicken stock (see page 13)
- 2 star anise
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 2 heads of bok choy, sliced
- 3 ounces *ramen* noodles
- few sprigs of cilantro

hot and sour chicken ramen

Make the marinade: Mix the ingredients in a medium bowl. Add the chicken, season with salt and black pepper, and toss so that everything is well combined. Cover and set aside for 1 hour; overnight in the fridge is even better.

In a saucepan, heat the chicken stock along with the star anise, cinnamon, rice vinegar, and honey. When boiling, add the chicken and its marinade, bok choy, and the noodles. Bring back to a boil and simmer until the chicken is cooked, about 3–4 minutes. Remove any froth from the surface of the water.

Divide between 2 bowls and serve topped with the cilantro.

serves 2

- 2 lean pork steaks
- 2 tablespoons barbecue sauce
(see page 19)
- 3½ ounces thin soba noodles
- 2 cups chicken stock (see
page 13)
- 1 tablespoon chili ramen sauce
(see page 18)
- bunch of cilantro, leaves picked
- large handful of bean sprouts
- 1 small red onion, peeled
and thinly sliced
- 1 red chile, seeded and
thinly sliced
- 1 lime, cut into wedges
- teriyaki sauce (see page 19)

chili pork ramen

Combine the pork with the barbecue sauce in a plastic food bag, massage, and set aside for 1 hour; overnight in the fridge is even better.

Preheat the grill or broiler. Grill the pork until cooked, about 3–4 minutes each side. Let rest and then slice on the diagonal.

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

In a saucepan, heat the chicken stock. Combine the noodles, chili ramen sauce, cilantro leaves, bean sprouts, onion, and chile and divide between 2 bowls. Ladle over the hot stock, top with the sliced pork, and serve with a lime wedge and the teriyaki dipping sauce.

This recipe is by Sjoerd Hoek, from wagamama in Amsterdam.

serves 2

- 3½ ounces medium egg noodles
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and
thinly sliced
- 2 ounces ground pork
- 2 ounces raw, peeled shrimp,
deveined
- 3 cups chicken stock (see
page 13)
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce (*nam pla*)
- 2 Chinese cabbage, stems removed
and leaves cut into rough strips
- salt and white pepper (optional)
- 2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced
- ½ cup bean sprouts
- 1 tablespoon cilantro leaves
- 1 tablespoon roasted peanuts
- 1 lime, cut into wedges

pork, shrimp, and egg noodle soup

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

Heat a small skillet over medium heat, add 1 tablespoon of the vegetable oil, and fry the garlic until crisp and golden, about 1 minute. Toss the garlic and the hot oil through the noodles and reserve.

Heat a heavy-bottom pan over medium heat, add the remaining oil, and cook the ground pork until it begins to brown, about 5 minutes. Add the shrimp, the stock, and fish sauce and bring to a boil. Add the cabbage and simmer for 30 seconds, check and correct the seasoning if necessary, and remove from the heat.

Divide the garlic noodles between 2 bowls, ladle over the soup, and add the sesame oil. Top with the scallions, bean sprouts and cilantro leaves. Sprinkle with the chopped peanuts and serve with the lime wedges.





serves 2

2 sheets of *tashima* (dried kelp seaweed)
3½ ounces *udon* noodles
3½ ounces beef (boneless top loin steak)
2 cups chicken stock (see page 13)
salt and white pepper
1 teaspoon soy sauce
1 scallion, sliced
1 garlic clove, peeled and crushed

clear beef noodle soup with tashima

Cut several thin strips of the seaweed and reserve. Soak the rest in warm water for 30 minutes. Drain, rinse carefully, and cut into 2-inch lengths.

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

Cut the beef into bite-size pieces. In a saucepan, bring the stock to a boil. Season the beef with salt and pepper and add to the stock, stirring to ensure the meat isn't stuck together. Add the soy sauce, scallion, and garlic and skim off any impurities. Reduce the heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Add the noodles and simmer for another 5 minutes. Add the soaked seaweed and check the seasoning.

Divide between 2 bowls, top with the reserved seaweed strips, and serve immediately.

serves 2

for the stock

1¼ pounds beef bones
14 ounces pork bones
2 star anise
1 cinnamon stick
1¼-inch piece of fresh ginger, peeled and sliced
1 onion, peeled and quartered

3½ ounces *udon* noodles
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely sliced
1 tablespoon finely sliced shallots
7 ounces boneless sirloin beef steak, trimmed and very thinly sliced
2 tablespoons soy sauce
2 tablespoons fish sauce (*nam pla*)
salt and white pepper
handful of bean sprouts
large handful of cilantro leaves
large handful of mint leaves

Combine all the stock ingredients in a pan, cover with 2½ quarts cold water, and bring to a boil. Periodically skim off the froth that will form on the surface to stop the broth going cloudy. Simmer for 2 hours. Strain into a clean saucepan, bring back to a boil, and reduce by half, about 30 minutes. You should have about 2¾ cups of the rich stock.

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

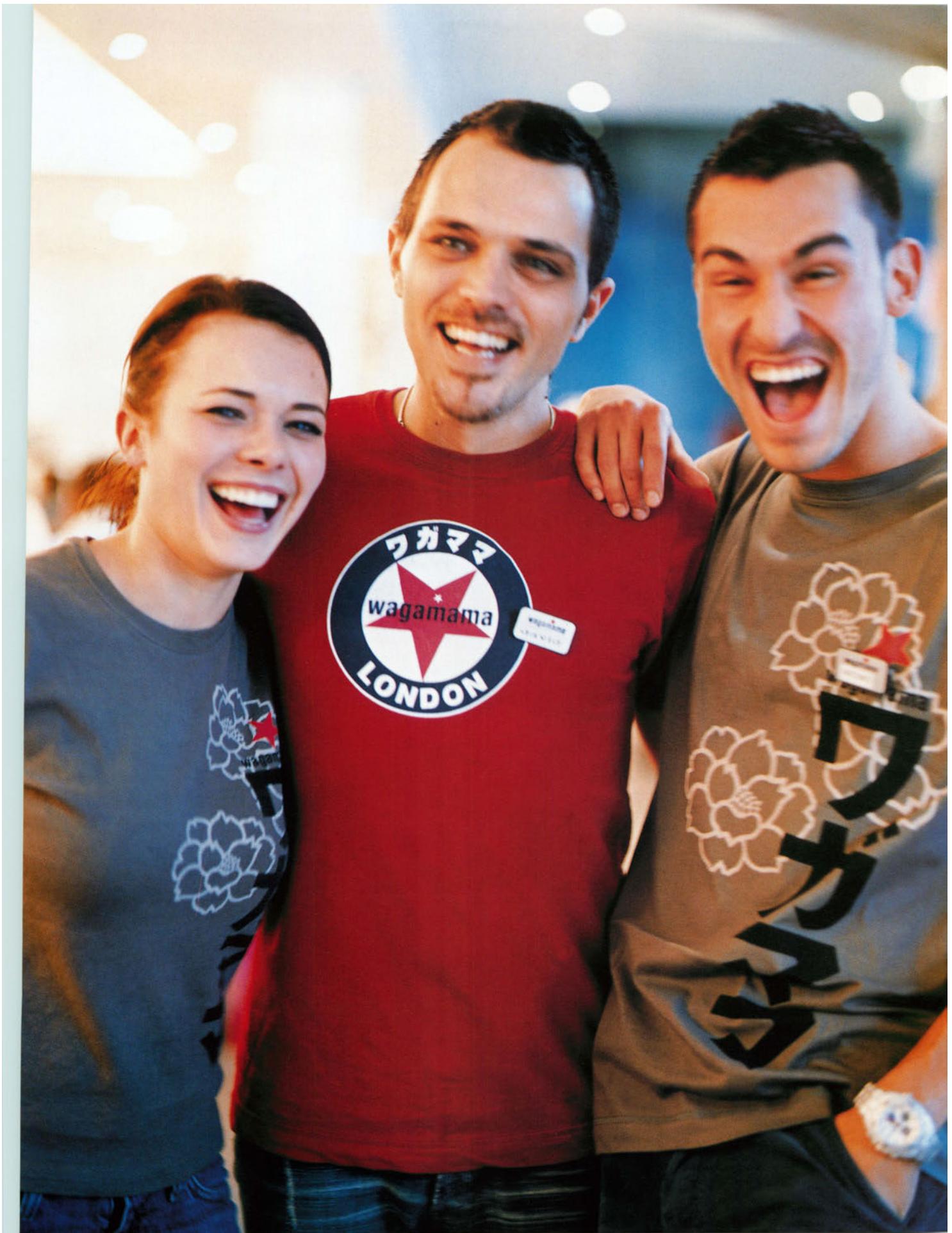
In a hot wok, heat the oil and sauté the garlic until golden; remove and set aside. Add the shallots and stir-fry until golden and crisp, remove, and add to the garlic.

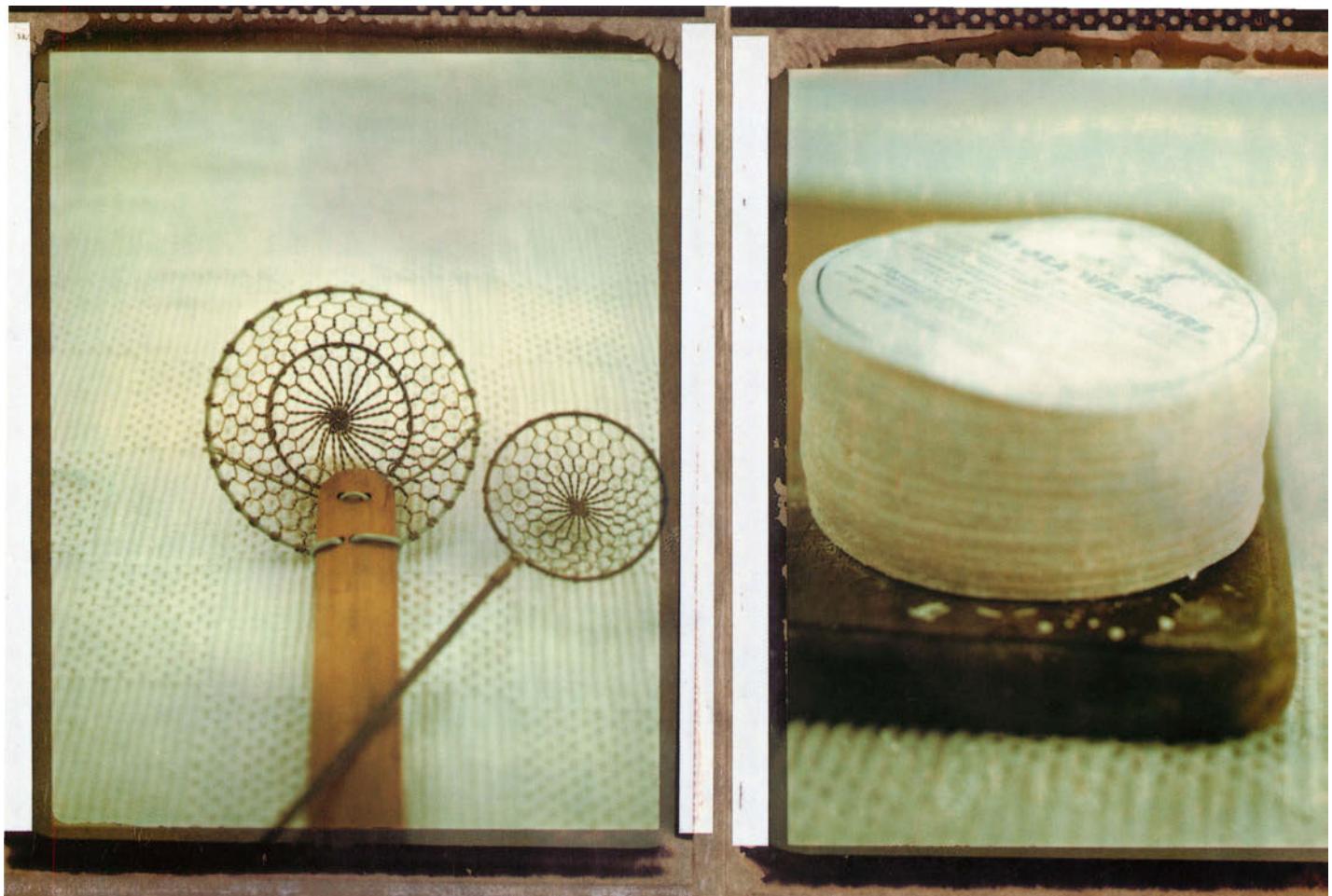
Divide the noodles between 2 bowls. Add the beef, soy sauce, and fish sauce to the broth and simmer until the beef is just cooked, about 2 minutes. Check the seasoning.

Ladle the beef and stock over the noodles. Serve topped with the bean sprouts, cilantro, mint, and crispy garlic and shallots.

Simmering the stock for 2 hours may sound like a stage you might want to skip, but it is the essence of this dish.

We





wrapped

You normally dress a noodle. Or soak it in a broth. But there is a way that turns this notion on its head. Wrapping noodles do that. Round or square, they envelop a neat pile of deliciousness. This might be vegetables. Usually there is protein too. Typically minced, or cut small. With some you dip. With others all the punch is contained within. In others still, the noodle not only wraps but turns up in the filling too. Usually these are the slippery ones (see page 9).

Wrapped noodles make great finger food. Packaging you can and do want to eat. They work on picnics, shine at parties, and generally encourage a pretty relaxed view about eating. If you steam or boil, you end up with something soft—silky even. At least that's before you get to the filling, when things get really interesting.

If you fry or bake, the result ends up being decidedly more crispy on the outside. When we choose this route we tend to go for strong, robust flavors inside.

You can, of course, opt not to do any of these things and simply soak your wrapper and, well, wrap. Perfect if the stuffing is a salad or cooked ingredients.



makes 15 to 20 pancakes

1½ cups dried Chinese mushrooms
2 ounces rice vermicelli
1 garlic clove, peeled and finely chopped
1 tablespoon finely chopped scallion
¾ cup finely chopped canned water chestnuts
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 tablespoon *mirin* (see page 11)
1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil
1 red chile, finely diced
1 tablespoon fish sauce (*nam pla*)
½ teaspoon light brown sugar
½ cup bean sprouts
1 tablespoon roughly chopped mint
1 tablespoon roughly chopped cilantro
3½ ounces Chinese cabbage, finely sliced
salt and white pepper

8-inch or 6½-inch rice paper (spring roll) wrappers/skins
chili sauce (see page 22), to serve

pancake rolls

In a small heatproof bowl, soak the mushrooms in boiling water for 10 minutes, drain, and finely dice, discarding the tough stems.

Soften the vermicelli according to the instructions on the package, drain, and roughly chop.

Combine the mushrooms and noodles with the remaining filling ingredients and stir thoroughly, seasoning with salt and pepper.

In a medium bowl, soak a rice paper wrapper in warm water until pliable, 1 to 2 minutes, remove, and add another to soak. Place a generous spoonful of the mixture in the center of the paper, and roll up to form a cigar, tucking in the ends as you go. Place seam-side down on a plate and repeat until all the papers and filling are used up. Cover with a damp dishtowel if not serving immediately. Serve with the chili sauce.

If you are using the 8-inch size rice papers, allow 1½ ounces of mixture per roll; if using the 6½-inch size, allow 1 ounce per roll. If you have an electric set of scales you might consider putting the paper on the scales, setting to zero, and then proceeding with the measured mixture.

makes 20 to 25 rolls

1 pound cooked, peeled shrimp
1 mango, pitted, peeled, and diced
grated zest and juice of 1 lime
2 tablespoons fish sauce (*nam pla*)
2 teaspoons light brown sugar
large handful of bean sprouts
small bunch of Thai basil, leaves
picked and roughly chopped
small bunch of mint, leaves picked
and roughly chopped
salt and white pepper

20 x 8-inch or 25 x 6½-inch rice
paper (spring roll) wrappers/
skins

makes 30 to 40 pancakes

handful of bean sprouts
2 tablespoons finely diced fennel bulb
1 small head of Bibb lettuce, finely
shredded
2 tablespoons finely sliced scallion
1¼-inch piece of fresh ginger,
peeled and grated
2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely
chopped
1 tablespoon fish sauce (*nam pla*)
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
1 red chile, peeled and finely diced
bunch of cilantro, leaves picked
juice of 1 lime
14 ounces cooked, peeled shrimp
1 pound cooked and picked
crabmeat (at least 50%
brown meat)
salt and white pepper

8-inch or 6½-inch rice paper
(spring roll) wrappers/skins

shrimp and mango rolls

In a medium bowl, combine all the filling ingredients, season with salt and pepper, and toss to mix.

In another bowl, soak a rice paper in warm water until pliable, 1 to 2 minutes, remove, and add another to soak. Place a generous spoonful of the mixture in the center of the paper and roll up to form a cigar, tucking in the ends as you go. Place seam-side down on a plate and repeat until all the papers and filling are used up. Cover with a damp dishtowel if not serving immediately.

seafood rolls

In a medium bowl, combine all the filling ingredients, season well with salt and pepper, and toss well to mix.

In another bowl, soak a rice paper in warm water until pliable, 1–2 minutes, remove, and add another to soak. Place a generous spoonful of the mixture in the center of the paper and roll up to form a cigar, tucking in the ends as you go. Place seam-side down on a plate and repeat until all the papers and filling are used up. Cover with a damp dishtowel if not serving immediately.





makes about 8

shrimp salad rolls

for the dressing

finely grated zest and juice of
1 lime
1 teaspoon fish sauce (*nam pla*)
1 teaspoon hoisin sauce
1 chile, seeded and finely sliced
1 garlic clove, peeled and minced

for the rolls

3½ ounces cooked, peeled shrimp
handful of bean sprouts
½ cup frozen peas, defrosted
1 medium carrot, peeled and
julienned
2 tablespoons roughly chopped
cilantro
2 teaspoons sesame seed, briefly
toasted in a hot, dry skillet

6¼-inch Vietnamese rice paper
(spring roll) wrappers/skins
sweet chili dipping sauce (see
page 16), to serve

In a small bowl, combine all the dressing ingredients and set aside.

In a medium bowl, combine the shrimp, bean sprouts, peas, carrot, cilantro, and sesame seed. Pour over the dressing and mix well.

In another bowl, dip the wrappers one by one in hot water for about 30 seconds. Remove and lay on a board to soften. Place a generous spoonful of the salad mixture in the center of a wrapper, and fold one side of the paper over. Tuck in each end and then roll over to seal the final side. Place seam-side down on a plate and repeat with the other wrappers. Cover with a damp dishtowel if not using immediately.

Transfer the rolls to a large serving plate or divide among individual dishes. Serve with sweet chili sauce, for dipping.

makes about 60

1½ cups dried Chinese mushrooms
7 ounces ground chicken
2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely
chopped
1¼-inch piece of fresh ginger,
peeled and grated
3½ ounces Chinese cabbage, finely
sliced
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 tablespoon *mirin* (see page 11)
2 tablespoons finely chopped
scallion
1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil
1 red chile, finely diced
1 tablespoon fish sauce (*nam pla*)
½ teaspoon sugar
¾ cup finely diced canned
water chestnuts
salt and white pepper

60 wonton wrappers/skins
vegetable oil, for pan-frying
gyoza sauce (see page 23),
to serve

mushroom and chicken gyozas

In a small heatproof bowl, soak the mushrooms in boiling water for 10 minutes, drain, and finely slice, discarding the tough stems. Add to the rest of the filling ingredients in a medium bowl and mix well. It is best to do this using your hands: as you work, the meat will absorb the liquid. Season well with salt and pepper.

Put a teaspoonful of the mixture in the center of each wonton skin. Moisten the edges with a little water and then fold over to create a half-moon shape. Press down to form a seal.

Heat a large skillet over medium heat until hot and almost smoking, about 1 to 2 minutes, and add 1 tablespoon vegetable oil. Reduce the heat to medium, put 4 to 6 dumplings in the pan, and sauté gently until just starting to brown, 1 minute each side. Don't overcrowd the pan or they will stew.

Remove the pan from the heat, add 3 tablespoons water, and cover immediately with a lid or aluminum foil. Return to the heat for 1 minute, then remove and set aside for another 2 minutes, by which time the gyozas will be heated through. Repeat for the remaining gyozas. It is quicker if you can use 2 pans, starting to heat the second one just before adding the water to the first pan.

Serve with the gyoza sauce. Ideally, serve one batch while you prepare the next because they are best warm.





makes about 80

pork gyozas

5 ounces Chinese cabbage, finely
chopped
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup finely chopped canned
bamboo shoots
1 pound ground pork
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 tablespoon fish sauce (*nam pla*)
1 tablespoon *mirin* (see page 11)
2 tablespoons finely chopped
shallots
1 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch piece of fresh ginger,
peeled and grated
1 tablespoon sesame seed,
briefly toasted in a hot,
dry skillet
1 tablespoon roughly chopped
cilantro
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon sugar
1 large egg, lightly beaten
1 red chile, seeded and finely
chopped
salt and white pepper

80 wonton wrappers/skins
vegetable oil, for pan-frying
gyoza sauce (see page 23),
to serve

In a medium bowl, combine all the ingredients for the filling and mix together. It is best to do this with your hands. Thoroughly season with salt and pepper.

Put a teaspoonful of the mixture in the center of each wonton skin. Moisten the edges with a little water and then fold over to create a half-moon shape. Press down to form a seal.

Heat a large skillet over medium heat until hot and almost smoking, about 1 to 2 minutes, and add 1 tablespoon vegetable oil. Reduce the heat to medium, put 4–6 dumplings in the pan, and sauté gently until just starting to brown, about 1 minute each side. Don't overcrowd the pan or they will stew.

Remove the pan from the heat, add 3 tablespoons water, and cover immediately with a lid or with aluminum foil. Return to the heat for 1 minute, then remove and set aside for another 2 minutes, by which time the gyozas will be heated through. Repeat for the remaining gyozas. It is quicker if you can use 2 pans, starting to heat the second just before adding the water to the first pan.

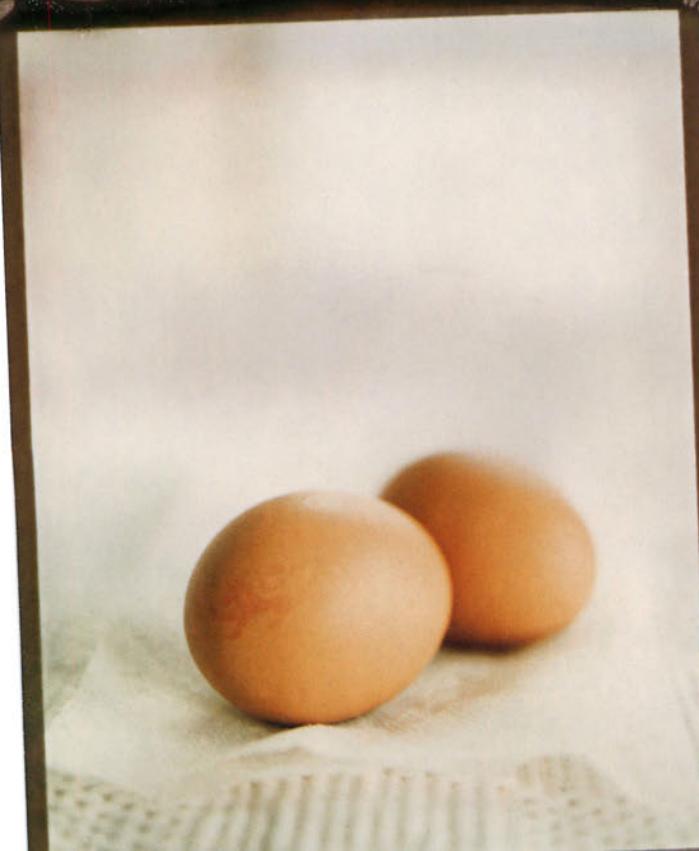
Serve with the gyoza sauce.



Guamama

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quick

Fast food takes on a new meaning with noodles. Here you have healthy ingredients. Fresh too. Combined in, at most, 10 minutes. Altogether a different proposition to some fast food we could mention. When you eat a noodle dish at wagamama, the only precooked part is the noodles. After that, what you eat is cooked only when you order it. We like the discipline. We also like the result.

This is why we deliver food when it is cooked. That way we feel you get the best. This is important when you want to eat something nutritious. It also tastes better.

None of the dishes in this book takes that long. Just like in the restaurants, the aim is really to get food on the table in a matter of minutes rather than hours. This chapter, however, contains the super-charged recipes. Those that come at you so that you are caught unaware. Supper in seconds you might say.

It might not seem that fast as you chop away with no heat in sight. But this is the way with noodles. A hot wok will wilt bok choy in moments, seal chicken in seconds, render a scallop a deeply golden caramelized color in no time. Well, very little time.

The secret to this really fast noodle cooking lies in choosing ingredients that need very little heat to give their best and which are suitably cut. So take care on the board.

There are often times when we want food fast. Not always, but certainly occasionally. There is every reason why the care taken should be just the same as with more complicated dishes. Good food fast? Why not?

serves 2

½ cup unsalted peanuts
3½ ounces medium egg noodles

for the dressing

1 to 2 red chiles (or to taste),
seeded and finely chopped
4 Chinese flowering chives (see
page 11), finely chopped
2 teaspoons rice vinegar
finely grated zest and juice of
½ lemon

2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 red onion, peeled and chopped
1 garlic clove, peeled and crushed
1 red bell pepper, seeded and
thinly sliced
1 cup sliced zucchini
handful of baby spinach
salt and white pepper

chive and chile noodles

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Roast the peanuts on a baking sheet until just colored, 5 to 6 minutes. Transfer to a cold plate and let cool. Roughly chop.

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

Make the dressing: Whisk together the chiles, chives, rice vinegar, and lemon zest and juice. Set aside.

In a hot wok, heat the vegetable oil and stir-fry the onion until softened, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the garlic, red bell pepper, and zucchini, and stir-fry over medium heat until lightly browned, another 4 minutes. Add the peanuts and cook for another minute.

Add the noodles and spinach and toss through the vegetables until the noodles are hot and the spinach just wilted. Add the dressing and ensure that all ingredients are evenly coated. Check the seasoning and serve.





serves 2

3½ ounces soba noodles
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
3 garlic cloves, peeled and mashed
1¼-inch piece of fresh ginger,
peeled and grated
½ pound baby spinach
1 tablespoon oyster sauce
1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil
juice of 1 lime
2 teaspoons sesame seed, briefly
toasted in a hot, dry skillet
1 chile, seeded and finely
chopped

spinach and soba noodles

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

In a hot wok, heat the oil and stir-fry the garlic, ginger, and spinach for 2 minutes. Add the noodles, toss once, remove from the heat, and stir in the oyster sauce and sesame oil.

Squeeze over the lime juice and serve with the sesame seed and chile scattered over the top.

serves 2

3½ ounces thin rice vermicelli
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely
chopped
1¼-inch piece of fresh ginger,
peeled and grated
2 lemongrass stalks, outer leaves
removed, finely chopped
1 tablespoon finely chopped
shallots
2 red chiles, finely chopped
1 teaspoon curry powder
handful of finely sliced Bibb lettuce
1 cucumber, seeded and cut
into batons
handful of snow peas, sliced
lengthwise
1 tablespoon soy sauce
scant ½ teaspoon brown sugar
salt and white pepper

spiced vegetable noodles

Cook the vermicelli according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

In a hot wok, heat the vegetable oil and stir-fry the garlic, ginger, lemongrass, shallots, and chiles for 1 minute. Add the curry powder, lettuce, cucumber, and snow peas, and stir-fry until the vegetables are cooked, but still crunchy, about 5 minutes.

Add the soy sauce, sugar, and noodles and toss so that everything is well coated. Season with salt and pepper and serve.

serves 2

5 ounces *udon* noodles
2 garlic cloves, peeled and minced
1 tablespoon dried shrimp, soaked in
hot water, drained, and chopped
1½-inch piece of fresh ginger,
peeled and sliced
2 lemongrass stalks, outer leaves
removed, finely chopped
1 tablespoon finely chopped red
onion
bunch of cilantro
3 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 red bell pepper, seeded and very
thinly sliced
1 head of bok choy, roughly
chopped
salt and white pepper
1–2 chiles (or to taste),
finely chopped

serves 2

3½ ounces flat egg noodles
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
2 chiles, seeded and finely diced
2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely
chopped
1¼-inch piece of fresh ginger,
peeled and grated
1 red onion, peeled and cut
vertically into eighths
3½ ounces string beans, trimmed
and sliced into 2½-inch lengths
1 red bell pepper, seeded and
sliced lengthwise
1 tablespoon soy sauce
2 tablespoons sake
1 teaspoon brown sugar
1 tablespoon oyster sauce

red bell pepper and bok choy with spiced udon noodles

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

Combine all the other ingredients except the oil, red bell pepper, bok choy, and chile in a pestle and mortar and grind to a paste. Stir in 2 tablespoons of the oil.

In a hot wok, heat the remaining tablespoon oil, add the prepared paste, and stir-fry until it loses its raw flavor, about 2 minutes. Add the vegetables and carry on cooking for another 2 minutes. Add the noodles to the wok and toss so that everything is well coated.

Check the seasoning and serve sprinkled with the chile.

quick vegetable noodles

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

In a hot wok, heat the oil and stir-fry the chiles, garlic, and ginger for 30 seconds. Add the vegetables and continue to stir-fry until wilted, about 5 to 6 minutes, adding 1 tablespoon water halfway through. Stir in the soy sauce, sake, sugar, and oyster sauce along with the noodles. Toss so that everything is well coated and heated through, and serve.

serves 2

5 ounces *soba* noodles
1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
2 tablespoons rice vinegar
1 tablespoon soy sauce
2 teaspoons light brown sugar
scant teaspoon Chinese chili paste
(available from Asian markets)
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
 $\frac{1}{2}$ pound raw, peeled shrimp,
deveined and roughly chopped
2 scallions, finely sliced
1 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch piece of fresh ginger,
peeled and finely chopped
1 garlic clove, peeled and crushed
few cilantro leaves

chili prawns with *soba* noodles

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, then return to the pot and toss with the sesame oil.

In a small bowl, combine the rice vinegar, soy sauce, sugar, and chili paste.

In a hot wok, heat the oil and stir-fry the shrimp, scallions, ginger, and garlic for 1 to 2 minutes.

Add the chili mixture to the wok and cook for 1 minute. Add the noodles and toss so that everything is well coated and heated through. Scatter over the cilantro.

serves 2

2½ ounces *udon* noodles
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1¼-inch piece of fresh ginger,
peeled and grated
2 garlic cloves, peeled and minced
with a little salt
pinch of Chinese five-spice powder
1 tablespoon black bean sauce
6 to 8 sea scallops, shelled and
trimmed
2 handfuls of baby spinach
bunch of mint, leaves picked
3 tablespoons chicken stock
(see page 13)
1 tablespoon soy sauce
pinch of sugar
salt and white pepper
2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil
2 teaspoons sweet chili dipping
sauce (see page 16)
2 scallions, finely sliced

spiced scallops with spinach, mint, and sweet chili dressing

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

In a hot wok, heat the vegetable oil and stir-fry the ginger, garlic, five-spice, black bean sauce, and scallops for 2 minutes. Add the spinach and mint leaves, stock, soy sauce, sugar, and sesame oil and simmer until reduced slightly, about 1 minute. Check the seasoning. Add the noodles and toss everything so that it is well coated and heated through.

Serve drizzled with the sweet chili dipping sauce and topped with the scallions.





serves 2

soy-braised salmon

3½ ounces flat Chinese noodles
5 dried shiitake mushrooms
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1 onion, peeled and finely chopped
1 carrot, peeled and thinly sliced
2 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
1¼-inch piece of fresh ginger,
peeled and grated
7 ounces skinless salmon fillet, cut
into 1¼-inch squares
2 tablespoons soy sauce
½ cup chicken stock (see page 13)
2 teaspoons cornstarch, dissolved
in 2 tablespoons water
salt and white pepper

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water. Soak the mushrooms in ½ cup boiling water.

In a hot wok, heat the oil and stir-fry the onion, carrot, garlic, ginger, and salmon for 1 minute. Add the soy sauce, cover, turn the heat down, and simmer for 2 minutes.

Drain the mushrooms, reserving the liquid. Remove and discard the tough stems and finely slice. Add the chicken stock to the pan with the mushrooms, reserved liquid, and dissolved cornstarch. Bring to a boil and add the noodles, tossing to combine and taking care not to break up the salmon too much. Taste and season with salt and pepper, then serve.

serves 2

salmon and bok choy noodles

for the marinade

1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 tablespoon sake
2 garlic cloves, peeled and minced
1¼-inch piece of fresh ginger,
peeled and grated

3½ ounces somen noodles
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
3½ ounces skinless salmon fillet or
cutlets, cut into bite-size pieces
2 heads of bok choy, quartered
lengthwise
1 teaspoon cornstarch mixed with
a little cold water
2 tablespoons soy sauce
2½ cups chicken stock (see
page 13)
2 tablespoons sake

Make the marinade: In a medium bowl, combine the marinade ingredients, add the salmon, and toss gently so that the pieces are well coated. Cover and set aside for 1 hour; overnight in the fridge is even better.

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

In a hot wok, heat the oil and stir-fry the salmon and bok choy for 2 minutes. Blend the cornstarch paste with the soy sauce and add to the wok with the chicken stock and sake. Simmer until everything has thickened and the fish is cooked, about 3 to 4 minutes.

Toss the noodles through and serve.

serves 2

3½ ounces medium egg noodles
1 teaspoon cornstarch
1 tablespoon soy sauce
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
5 ounces dark chicken meat
(leg or thigh), cut into bite-size pieces
1 green bell pepper, seeded and cut into 1¼-inch pieces
2 tablespoons fermented black beans, rinsed and roughly chopped
4 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
1¼-inch piece of fresh ginger, peeled and minced
1 chili, seeded and finely chopped
2½ cups chicken stock (see page 13)
1 tablespoon sake

serves 2

3½ ounces soba noodles
2 cups chicken stock (see page 13)
1 leek, white part only, thinly sliced
2 tablespoons soy sauce
2 teaspoons fish sauce (*nam pla*)
1 tablespoon sake
5 ounces boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into bite-size pieces
2 handfuls of baby spinach leaves, roughly chopped
2 teaspoons sesame seed, briefly toasted in a hot, dry skillet

chicken and egg noodles with black bean sauce

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

Blend the cornstarch with the soy sauce.

Heat a wok and when hot add the vegetable oil. Add the chicken and green bell pepper and stir-fry for 2 minutes. Add the black beans, garlic, ginger, and chile and continue cooking until the chicken has almost cooked, another 3 to 4 minutes.

Stir in the chicken stock, blended cornstarch, and sake. Simmer for 2 minutes.

Spoon the noodles onto 2 plates, and serve topped with the chicken and black bean sauce.

chicken, spinach, and soba noodle soup

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

In a saucepan, bring the chicken stock to a boil and add the leek, soy sauce, fish sauce, and sake. Cook until the leek softens, about 10 minutes. Turn the heat down, add the chicken, and poach gently until cooked, about 4 to 5 minutes. Add the spinach, bring back to a boil, and remove from the heat.

Divide the noodles equally between 2 bowls and ladle over the spinach, chicken, and broth. Sprinkle with the sesame seed and serve.

serves 2

stir-fried chicken noodles

for the marinade

- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons *mirin* (see page 11)
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 3½ ounces chicken thigh meat, cut into bite-size pieces
- salt and white pepper
- 3½ ounces medium egg noodles
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
- ½ red bell pepper, seeded and finely sliced
- handful of snow peas, thinly sliced lengthwise
- 2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil
- 2 teaspoons sesame seed, briefly toasted in a hot, dry skillet
- bunch of cilantro, leaves picked

In a medium bowl, combine the marinade ingredients. Add the chicken, and toss well to coat the pieces. Season with salt and pepper, cover, and set aside for 1 hour; overnight in the fridge is even better.

Drain the chicken, reserving the marinade.

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

In a hot wok, heat the vegetable oil and stir-fry the garlic for 30 seconds. Add the chicken and stir-fry for 2 minutes, then add the red bell pepper, snow peas, and reserved marinade and stir-fry for another 2 minutes. Add the noodles and sesame oil and toss so that everything is well coated and heated through. Check the seasoning.

Serve with a sprinkling of the sesame seed and cilantro.

serves 2

3½ ounces Thai-style rice noodles
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 large egg, beaten and seasoned
2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
1 red chile, seeded and finely chopped
3½ ounces boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into bite-size pieces
2 ounces firm pork sausage, sliced
1 head of bok choy, roughly sliced lengthwise
1 teaspoon brown sugar
1 tablespoon soy sauce
handful of bean sprouts
2½ ounces *kamaboko-aka* (see page 11), sliced
2 scallions, finely sliced

serves 2

3½ ounces somen noodles
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into bite-size slices
1 cup thinly sliced button mushrooms
1 heaping cup thinly sliced shiitake mushrooms
1¼-inch piece of fresh ginger, peeled and grated
2 garlic cloves, peeled and mashed
2 teaspoons soy sauce
1 tablespoon sake
1 tablespoon *mirin* (see page 11)
1 lime, cut into wedges
handful of cilantro leaves

chicken fried noodles with sausage

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

Put 1 tablespoon of the vegetable oil into a hot wok. Add the egg, swirl so that it coats the bottom, and cook for 1 minute. Remove, let cool, then roll up and thinly slice.

Add the remaining tablespoon oil to the wok and stir-fry the garlic and chile for 30 seconds. Add the chicken, sausage, and bok choy. Stir-fry until the chicken is cooked, about 3 to 4 minutes.

Add the sugar, soy sauce, bean sprouts, and *kamaboko-aka* along with the reserved noodles and the egg, and toss so that everything is heated through.

Serve topped with the scallions.

stir-fried chicken and mushrooms with somen noodles

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

In a hot wok, heat the oil over a medium heat and stir-fry the chicken, mushrooms, ginger, and garlic for 2 to 3 minutes. Add the soy sauce, sake, *mirin*, and 2 tablespoons water and continue to stir-fry until the chicken is cooked, about 2 minutes.

Stir in the noodles to heat through and serve with a wedge of lime and a scattering of cilantro leaves.





serves 2

pork and soba noodles

7 ounces pork tenderloin, thinly sliced
1 tablespoon *char siu* sauce (Chinese barbecue sauce, widely available)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon Chinese five-spice powder
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 tablespoons sake
3 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces thick soba noodles
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces flowering greens (*choy sum*)
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sliced button mushrooms
handful of bean sprouts
 $\frac{1}{2}$ red bell pepper, seeded and finely sliced
2 scallions, finely sliced
2 tablespoons *yasai soba* dressing (see page 16)
2 large eggs, lightly beaten
1 tablespoon finely sliced *kimchee* (see page 11)
2 teaspoons sesame seed

In a plastic food bag, combine the pork, *char siu* sauce, Chinese five-spice, cinnamon, and sake and leave in the fridge overnight to marinate.

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

In a hot wok, heat the oil and add, one at a time, the noodles, pork, flowering greens, mushrooms, bean sprouts, red bell pepper, scallions, *yasai soba* dressing, and eggs, tossing well and stir-frying for a total of 6 to 7 minutes.

Serve sprinkled with the *kimchee* and sesame seed.

This recipe was created by Geraldo Suwu, from wagamama in Amsterdam.

serves 2

5 ounces medium egg noodles
1½ cups small broccoli florets
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
5 ounces beef (boneless top loin steak), thinly sliced into bite-size pieces
2 garlic cloves, peeled and mashed
1½-inch piece of fresh ginger, peeled and grated
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 tablespoon fish sauce (*nam pla*)
salt and white pepper

serves 2

3½ ounces medium egg noodles
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
1½-inch piece of fresh ginger, peeled and finely chopped
5 ounces beef (boneless top loin steak is probably best), cut into thin strips
½ red bell pepper, seeded and finely sliced
2 teaspoons cornstarch
2 tablespoons soy sauce
1 teaspoon sugar
½ cup chicken stock (see page 13)
1 tablespoon *mirin* (see page 11)
1 tablespoon rice vinegar
juice of 1 lime
2 tablespoons frozen peas, defrosted
handful of bean sprouts
bunch of cilantro, leaves picked
2 scallions, finely sliced

stir-fried beef with broccoli

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

In a saucepan, blanch the broccoli in boiling salted water, 2 to 3 minutes, drain, and refresh under cold water.

In a hot wok, heat the oil over medium heat and stir-fry the beef, garlic, and ginger until the beef is almost cooked, about 3 to 4 minutes. Add the noodles, broccoli, soy sauce, and fish sauce. Toss so that everything is well combined and heated through.

Check the seasoning and serve.

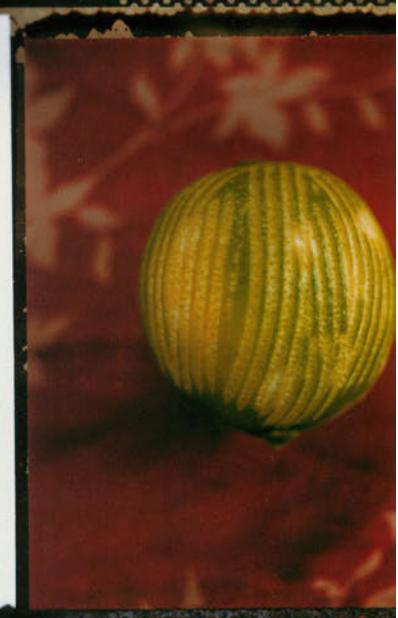
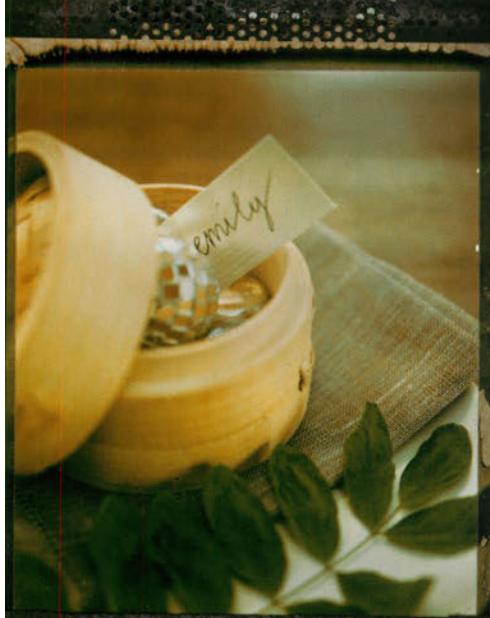
sweet and sour beef noodles

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

In a hot wok, heat the oil and stir-fry the garlic and ginger for 30 seconds. Add the beef, toss well, and then add the red bell pepper, stir-frying for 3 minutes. Blend the cornstarch with the soy sauce and add, along with the sugar, chicken stock, *mirin*, and rice vinegar. Toss so that everything is well coated and simmer to thicken slightly, about 1 minute. Add the noodles, lime juice, peas, and beansprouts. Cook everything for another 3 minutes.

Serve scattered with the cilantro and scallions.





entertaining

Entertaining with noodles really is a doddle. No complicated cooking, just good clean flavors. The preparation is easy, the cooking is quick and hassle-free, and the serving amounts to little more than a few bowls. You can get your friends to help or do it all beforehand—nothing could be simpler. Any cooking is done at the last minute, which means you remain in control.

Noodle stalls in Asia are based on the same principle: advance preparation = speed of service. You chop, pre-cook the noodles, and hold. Wait for everyone to arrive and then magically it all appears. The secret lies in doing enough, but not too much. Nobody wants to reheat things when stir-frying is so quick.

Sharing food is such an important part of entertaining and these kinds of dishes are perfect for communal eating. A lettuce leaf stuffed with scallops and noodles to start perhaps, and then, when you sit down, salmon teriyaki with *soba* noodle salad, or Thai-style shrimp with peanuts and chile, or beef and black bean sauce with egg noodles.

A salad or two might bring everything to a refreshing conclusion. Offer a summer salad with pickled ginger (*gari*) on warm days, or marinated mushroom salad with cellophane noodles for when the weather is a bit more inclement.

This is cooking to be done out in front of your guests, cooking to be proud of, cooking to be enjoyed with the minimum of fuss and the maximum of taste, texture, and flavor. Fast food of the right kind.



serves 12

2 ounces rice vermicelli, broken into
2½-inch lengths
vegetable oil
12 sea scallops, shelled, trimmed,
and sliced in half horizontally
1 garlic clove, peeled and mashed
1¼-inch piece of fresh ginger,
peeled and grated
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 tablespoon hoisin sauce
salt and white pepper
12 Bibb lettuce leaves
½ cucumber, seeded and cut
into matchsticks
handful of bean sprouts
1 tablespoon crispy fried shallots
(available from Asian markets),
optional
lime wedges
soy dipping sauce (see page 22)

stuffed lettuce leaves with scallops, noodles, and soy dipping sauce

Cook the vermicelli according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

In a hot wok, heat a little oil and stir-fry the scallops until they just color, about 2 minutes. Add the garlic and ginger and stir-fry for another minute. Add the soy and hoisin sauces and the drained noodles. Season with salt and pepper and remove from the heat.

To serve, arrange the lettuce leaves on a large plate. Place 2 scallop halves in each lettuce leaf along with some noodles. Top with the cucumber and bean sprouts, crispy fried shallots, and a wedge of lime for squeezing.

Serve with the soy dipping sauce on the side.

serves 2

green curry noodles

3½ ounces egg noodles
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
handful of baby corn
1 red bell pepper, seeded and cut
into strips
1 small head of broccoli, broken
into florets
1 heaping tablespoon green curry
paste (see page 18)
7 ounces (about 1 heaping cup)
canned bamboo shoots,
drained and rinsed
handful of snow peas
salt and white pepper
handful of cilantro leaves

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

In a hot wok, heat the oil and stir-fry the baby corn, red bell pepper, and broccoli until they just start to color, about 5 minutes. Add the green curry paste and cook until it loses its raw flavor, about another minute. Add the coconut milk and ½ cup water, together with the bamboo shoots and snow peas. Cook for 2 minutes.

Add the noodles to the wok and toss them thoroughly so that everything is well combined.

Check the seasoning and serve sprinkled with the cilantro leaves.

serves 3 to 4

for the sweet ginger dip

2 tablespoons soy sauce
1 teaspoon fish sauce (*nam pla*)
1 tablespoon sugar
1½-inch piece of fresh ginger,
peeled and grated

3½ ounces *somen* noodles, broken
into 2½-inch lengths
12 raw shrimp, peeled but tail
on, deveined, and seasoned
1 sheet of *nori* seaweed, cut into
12 strips, 3½ inches long
vegetable oil, for deep-frying

bamboo skewers

somen noodle shrimp with sweet ginger dip

Make the dip: In a saucepan, combine the soy sauce, fish sauce, sugar, and ginger, bring to a boil and simmer until just thickening, about 3 minutes. Strain and let cool.

In a medium heatproof bowl, cover the noodles with boiling water and soak for 2 minutes, drain thoroughly, and pat dry with a clean dishtowel.

Push a skewer down each shrimp from the tail end toward the head. Place a strip of seaweed on a board. Lay a pinch of noodles about the same width as the shrimp at right angles to the seaweed. Place a skewered shrimp on top of the noodles. Moisten the visible part of the seaweed and roll up to seal so that it forms a band around the noodles and shrimp. Repeat with each shrimp.

Pour the oil to a depth of 1½ inches in a suitable pan. Heat over medium-high heat. When hot, drop in the shrimp in batches and cook, turning occasionally, until the noodles are crispy and golden brown, about 3 minutes.

Drain on paper towels and serve with the sweet ginger dip.

serves 2

3½ ounces wide Thai-style rice
noodles
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 tablespoon red curry paste
(see page 16)
12 raw, peeled shrimp, deveined
2 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
2 small heads of bok choy, sliced
lengthwise
handful of frozen peas, defrosted
6 baby corn
small bunch of cilantro, stems
finely chopped, leaves reserved
½ cup soy milk
juice of 1 lime
1 tablespoon fish sauce (*nam pla*)
2 teaspoons light brown sugar
salt and white pepper
1 tablespoon roasted peanuts

thai-style shrimp with peanuts and chili

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

In a wok, heat the vegetable oil and when hot add the curry paste. Stir-fry for 2 minutes, and then add the shrimp and garlic. Cook until the shrimp start to lose their raw color, about 4 minutes. Transfer to a bowl and set aside.

Add the bok choy, peas, baby corn, and cilantro stems to the wok, and stir-fry until the vegetables start to wilt and color, about 3 to 4 minutes.

Return the shrimp mixture to the pan, along with the soy milk, lime juice, fish sauce, and sugar. Season with salt and pepper, add the noodles, and cook for 3 to 4 minutes.

Serve with a scattering of peanuts and reserved cilantro leaves.





serves 2

2 salmon fillets, skin on
3 tablespoons soy sauce
3 tablespoons *mirin* (see page 11)
5 ounces *udon* noodles
1 red chile (or to taste), finely chopped
2 scallions, finely chopped
large handful of baby spinach leaves
bunch of cilantro, leaves picked and stems finely chopped
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
2 teaspoons sesame seed, briefly toasted in a hot, dry skillet
1 lime
sweet chili dipping sauce (see page 16)

for the dressing

2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil
2 teaspoons dark soy sauce
juice of 1 lime

salmon teriyaki with udon noodle salad

In a shallow bowl, combine the salmon, soy sauce, and *mirin*, toss so that they are well coated, and marinate for 2 hours; overnight in the fridge is even better.

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh briefly under cold water; they still want to be warm.

In a large bowl, combine the dressing ingredients and toss the noodles through. Add the chile, scallions, spinach, and cilantro, and toss well. Divide between 2 plates.

Heat the vegetable oil in a skillet. Remove the salmon from the marinade, season with salt and pepper, and sear, skin-side down, for 2 minutes. Turn over and fry on the other side for 2 minutes. Turn back onto the skin side and cook until the skin is crisp, another 2 minutes.

Place the salmon (skin-side up) on the noodles, top with the sesame seed, and serve with half a lime and the chili dipping sauce.

serves 2

for the marinade

- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- 1¼-inch piece of fresh ginger,
peeled and grated
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and grated
- 2 teaspoons soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons oyster sauce
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil

- 7 ounces monkfish fillet, cut into
pieces 1½ inches long,
¾ inch thick
- salt and white pepper
- 3½ ounces medium egg noodles
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon soy sauce
- pinch of light brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon oyster sauce
- 1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
- 3 tablespoons chicken stock
(see page 13)
- large bunch of cilantro, stems
trimmed at the base but
otherwise intact
- 1 tablespoon finely sliced scallion

monkfish and cilantro with chinese noodles

In a medium bowl, combine the marinade ingredients, then add the monkfish pieces, tossing to coat thoroughly. Add a seasoning of salt and pepper. Cover and set aside for 1 hour; overnight in the fridge is even better.

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

In a hot wok, heat the vegetable oil and stir-fry the monkfish and its marinade until the fish is cooked, about 3 to 4 minutes. Blend the cornstarch with the soy sauce, sugar, and oyster sauce. Add to the wok with the sesame oil and chicken stock and simmer for 30 seconds. Add the cilantro and continue cooking until it wilts, about another 30 seconds. Add the noodles and toss so that everything is combined and heated through. Remove from the heat, and check the seasoning.

Serve sprinkled with the scallion.

Cilantro is undoubtedly a strong herb, but there are times when using it to excess really pays off. Here it is used almost like a vegetable.

serves 2

for the marinade

- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 garlic clove, peeled and minced
- 2 teaspoons honey
- 1 tablespoon *mirin* (see page 11)
- 1 teaspoon fish sauce (*nam pla*)
- 2 teaspoons lime juice

- 2 quail, butterflied (see note below)
- 4½ ounces fresh egg noodles (or 3 ounces dried)
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 cup sliced portobello mushrooms
- ¾ cup snow peas
- 8 baby corn, halved lengthwise
- 1¼-inch piece of fresh ginger, peeled and grated
- 2 teaspoons soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch
- ½ cup chicken stock (see page 13)
- 1 tablespoon oyster sauce
- 1 tablespoon *mirin* (see page 11)

marinated quail with stir-fried noodles

In a large bowl, combine the marinade ingredients and stir gently but thoroughly to blend everything. Add the quail and coat thoroughly.

Cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package, drain, and refresh under cold water.

In a hot wok, heat the vegetable oil. Brush the marinade off the quail (reserving the marinade), and sear over medium-low heat (too hot and you will burn the marinade) until well colored and cooked through, about 5 to 6 minutes each side. Remove from the wok and keep warm. Wipe out the wok, add the reserved marinade, the mushrooms, snow peas, baby corn, and ginger and stir-fry for 2 to 3 minutes over high heat.

Combine the soy sauce and cornstarch. Add to the wok with the remaining ingredients, stirring to avoid lumps forming. Once everything starts to bubble, add the noodles and toss to ensure that everything is well coated.

Transfer to a serving dish, top with the quail, and serve.

Butterfly the quail by cutting down either side of the backbone, which should be discarded. Place the quail, breast-side up, on a board and press down firmly to flatten—you need to break the breastbone so that the birds stay flat.

serves 4

12 raw, peeled shrimp, deveined
5 ounces dark chicken meat (leg or thigh), roughly chopped
6 shiitake mushrooms, stems removed, roughly chopped
5 Chinese cabbage leaves, sliced
1 carrot, peeled and julienned
2 heads of baby bok choy, roughly chopped
handful of snow peas, trimmed
1¼-inch piece of fresh ginger, peeled and grated
7 ounces *udon* noodles
1 quart chicken stock (see page 13)
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 tablespoon *mirin* (see page 11)
salt and white pepper
2 scallions, finely sliced

chicken and shrimp hot-pot

In a casserole dish just large enough to take all the ingredients, arrange the shrimp, chicken, mushrooms, cabbage leaves, carrots, bok choy, snow peas and ginger. Place the noodles on top.

In a saucepan, bring the stock to a boil, add the soy sauce and *mirin*, and season with salt and pepper. Pour the stock over the ingredients and bring to a slow boil over medium heat. Let simmer until all the ingredients are cooked, about 5 minutes.

Let rest for 2 minutes and serve from the casserole dish, sprinkled with the scallions.



