

Miso Soup with Shiitake Mushrooms

Prep to table: 20 minutes | Serves: 3 to 4

I started experimenting with miso paste after trying, and failing, to find a packaged miso soup that I like. Miso, a savory Japanese paste produced by fermenting soybeans with the fungus *aspergillus oryzae*, is known for its strong umami flavor. Miso is a complete source of protein and rich in vitamins and minerals –if you don't boil the living daylights out of it. So I suggest turning off the heat before adding it to your soup. For the other ingredients, go with green cabbage, if you can; the red turns the soup a little murky, though it will still taste great. For the rice noodles, choose thin ones that need up to four minutes of cooking time so you don't overcook your vegetables. They don't deserve it.

5 garlic cloves, minced
1 tablespoon light, untoasted sesame oil
½ pound shiitake mushrooms, sliced
2 large carrots, thinly sliced
6 tablespoons soy sauce
½ cup cubed firm tofu
5 ½ cups water
8 ounces thin rice noodles
1/2 head small green cabbage, sliced, roughly chopped
3 green onions, thinly sliced, divided
2 tablespoons dried seaweed (optional)
¼ cup miso paste (white, yellow, or red)

Serving suggestion

Chopped parsley
Soy sauce
Red pepper flakes

Sauté the garlic and sesame oil in a soup pot over medium heat for about 2 minutes. Add the mushrooms and cook until fragrant, about 3 minutes. Stir in the carrots, soy sauce, and tofu and cook for 1 more minute to lock in the flavors.

Add the water and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer until the vegetables have softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in the noodles, cabbage, and half the green onions. Simmer until the noodles have softened, 2 to 4 minutes. Turn off the heat and stir in the seaweed, if you want more salty flavor, and miso paste.

Serve in bowls topped with the remaining green onions and parsley. Include extra soy sauce and red pepper flakes so you can turn up the intensity, if you want.

Easy ingredient swaps:

Olive oil for the sesame oil

Chopped fresh spinach for the cabbage

1 leek, thinly sliced, for the green onions

1-inch piece (1 tablespoon) fresh ginger, grated, for the red pepper flakes