

Miso Facts

Miso

Miso is a rich, salty condiment that characterizes the essence of Japanese cooking. Many Japanese begin their day with a fortifying bowl of miso soup. They also use miso to flavor a variety of foods in other meals throughout the day. Making miso is a household art in Asian countries, comparable to the American practice of canning foods. To make miso, soybeans, and sometimes a grain such as rice, are combined with salt and mold culture. The mixture is then aged in cedar vats for one to three years. Most miso made in western countries is produced in a similar manner. Quick miso is also available, but is generally inferior in taste to traditionally aged miso.

Miso is actually a group of condiments. The addition of different ingredients, and variations in the duration of aging produce different types of miso that vary greatly in flavor, texture, color, and aroma. In Japan, different types of miso are prepared and evaluated in much the same way Westerners judge fine wine and cheese.

Buying & Storing Miso

Miso is found in natural food stores and Asian markets. Store miso in a refrigerator where it will keep for several months. The white mold that sometimes forms on miso is harmless. It can be scraped off or mixed into the miso.

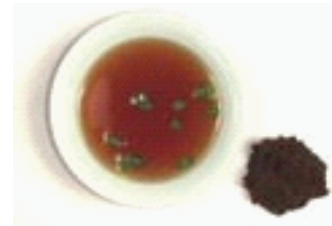
Using Miso

Use miso to flavor soups, sauces, dressings, and marinades, and to make delicious patés. Use it in place of anchovy paste and as a salt or soy substitute in recipes. Because miso is high in sodium, it's best used sparingly. One-quart of water makes a savory soup stock. A tablespoon of miso mixed into a cup of hot water produces a tasty low-calorie broth, perfect for sipping.

Nutritional Value of Miso

Two tablespoons of miso provides:

Calories – 71
Protein – 4g
Fat – 2g
Carbohydrates – 9g
Calcium – 23mg
Iron – 1mg
Zinc – 1.25mg



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