

Tempura is probably the best known item on the Japanese menu. A very light and airy batter coats a variety of seafood, vegetables, and fruit which are quickly deep-fried. Artfully arranged on a platter, the dish is accompanied with a tempura dipping sauce and condiments-grated radish and grated ginger. Each diner mixes the condiments in the dipping sauce according to his/her tastes and the morsels are dipped and swirled just before eating.

Good Tempura is easy to make if a few rules are observed. The Tempura batter should be made just before needed and should be cold. Very lightly mixed, it should be somewhat lumpy and as each item is dipped in the batter, it should be immersed in hot oil immediately. Chopsticks make this an easy and fast operation. Never place more food in the oil than will cover 30% of the surface so that the temperature will not drop too low. The oil should be hot, between 330 to 340 degrees.

An ideal combination for each diner would be two shrimp, one piece of fish, two okra, one large mushroom, one slice of bell pepper, one slice of sweet potato, and one slice banana. However, you can choose according to your taste.

A quick stir-fry of Oriental cabbage gives this meal a flavorful and crunch vegetable to form a most satisfying Japanese meal.

YASAI-ITAME

SAUTEED ORIENTAL CABBAGE

1 Oriental cabbage (Napa), sliced
1 tbs Peanut oil
3 tbs Soy sauce
1 tbs Grated ginger
1 tbs Sake
1 tsp Sugar

- Blend together the soy sauce, ginger, sake, and sugar.
- Heat oil in a wok or skillet.
- Add cabbage and toss in the oil.
- Cook about 1 to 2 minutes.
- Add above soy mixture.
- Toss to coat cabbage.
- Cook about 1 minute.
- Place in a serving dish.

TEMPURA JAPANESE DEEP-FRY

Shrimp, cleaned and shelled with tail shell intact
(make three small slits on underside to prevent curling)
Fish filets, snapper, trout, flounder, thinly sliced
Scallops
Sweet potato, cut in ¼ inch slices
Green beans
Broccoli, flowerettes
Asparagus
Okra
Yellow squash, cut in rounds
Mushrooms, large
Onions, large, in rings
Carrots, cut on diagonal
Bell pepper, large slices
Banana, cut in quarters
Strawberries, large
1 recipe Tempura batter
1 recipe Tempura dipping sauce
1 recipe Tempura condiments

- Select four or five of the ingredients listed-two pieces of each per person.
- Heat oil to 330 to 340 degrees.
- Starting with vegetables, dip each piece of food in tempura batter and slide immediately into oil.
- Fry only a few pieces at a time, never covering more than 1/3 the surface of the oil.
- Remove to paper towel.
- Proceed with the seafood after the vegetables.
- Arrange artfully on a plate with paper towel or napkin.
- Serve with dipping sauce and condiments.
- Serve immediately.
- Blend together very lightly the egg yolks and water.
- Add flour all at once.
- Mix very lightly.
- Batter should remain lumpy.
- Prepare immediately before ready to dip food.
- Blend together the stock, soy, and mirin in a saucepan.
- Bring to a boil.
- Keep warm.
- Serve each condiment in separate bowls.
- Each person mixes condiments in dipping sauce according to taste.
- Lemon juice is for dipping alone.

TEMPURA BATTER:

2 Egg yolks
1 cup Ice water
1 cup Flour

- Blend together very lightly the egg yolks and water.
- Add flour all at once.
- Mix very lightly.
- Batter should remain lumpy.
- Prepare immediately before ready to dip food.

TEMPURA DIPPING SAUCE:

1 ½ cups Chicken stock
6 tbs Soy sauce
6 tbs Mirin (sweet rice wine)

- Blend together the stock, soy, and mirin in a saucepan.
- Bring to a boil.
- Keep warm.

TEMPURA CONDIMENTS:

1/2 cup Grated daikon (white radish)
1/2 cup Grated ginger
1/2 cup Lemon juice

- Serve each condiment in separate bowls.
- Each person mixes condiments in dipping sauce according to taste.
- Lemon juice is for dipping alone.