



Miso is a sweet, flavorful paste used to enhance the taste of sauces, soups, dips, marinades, dressings and main dishes. Miso comes in a variety of flavors textures, color and aromas. Flavor varies greatly depending upon the proportion of salt to soybeans, the addition of rice or barley, and the length of fermentation. Colors range from bright gold to blackish-brown. Miso is high in phytochemicals, beneficial enzymes, and bacteria.

Miso

IN THE MARKET

The widest choices of miso will be in the refrigerated section of Asian markets and natural food stores. Look for unpasteurized miso because it contains more flavor and beneficial microorganisms than pasteurized versions. It is sold in cups, plastic tubs, plastic bags or glass jars. The most common packaging is one- to two-pound tubs or 12 - 14 ounce plastic bags.

The wide variety of miso falls within three main categories: rice miso, barley miso and straight soybean miso. The fun of cooking with miso is experimenting with various types and becoming familiar with its many colors, textures and flavors.

RETAIL SUPPLIER

American Soy Products/Eden Foods - Tekka Miso Condiment, Hacho Miso, Brown Rice Miso, Barley Miso, Natto Miso

GIVE ME FIVE

1. Stir a tablespoon of miso into a bottle of Italian dressing or into any homemade marinade recipe for a zesty flavor boost when grilling meat, poultry or fish.
2. Add a tablespoon or two of miso to chili for additional flavor depth.
3. Create a zesty honey mustard dip to serve with fresh vegetables by mixing a couple teaspoons of miso to honey mustard dressing.
4. Prepare a classic sweet miso sauce by combining 3 tablespoons white miso with 1-1/2 tablespoons mirin, 3 tablespoons sugar, 4 tablespoons fish or vegetable broth and 1 sliced scallion in a pan over medium heat. Bring to a boil then simmer for 1 – 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Serve over firm tofu, meat, poultry, fish, vegetables or whole grains and pastas.
5. Mix a small amount of miso into any type of broth-based soup (such as French Onion, Beef Barley or Vegetable) for extra flavor.

IN THE KITCHEN

Store miso tightly sealed in the refrigerator, where it will keep for several months. It is not advisable to freeze miso. Recipes using miso usually require only one to two tablespoons. Boiling or prolonged heat will destroy the live microorganisms and the wonderful aroma of miso. For hot dishes such as soups, always add miso at the end of cooking. Also, blending miso with a small amount of liquid before adding it to a dish assures that it dissolves completely with a smooth creamy consistency. Because it is a fermented product, miso will add a cheese-like flavor to many of the foods it is added to.

Akamiso, which means “red miso,” is a specific rice miso. Because of its robust flavor it works best in stir-fries, marinades and simmered dishes that contain strong-flavored fish, poultry, meat or vegetables.

Shiromiso, a “white miso,” is another type of rice miso. It is about half as salty as akamiso and is much sweeter. It is especially good in sauces, dressings and marinades for mild-flavored fish, shellfish, and vegetables.

Hatcho miso is considered the miso of Emperors. Strictly a pure soybean paste, it is savory-tart and mildly sweet.

NUTRITION HIGHLIGHTS

Miso is one of the four main foods in the Japanese diet that contributes high amounts of isoflavones, important phytochemicals, and beneficial bacteria and enzymes that aid in digestion. Research shows miso acts as an antioxidant. Current studies are exploring potential anti-cancer properties of miso.

THE MAKING OF MISO

Once made in most Japanese homes with secret family recipes, today most miso is made in large factories. Small miso breweries still exist to preserve original preparation techniques and regional miso styles. Kojikin (a special mold) is mixed with a grain to allow fermentation that results in koji. The koji is then added to cooked soybeans along with water and salt, and the mixture is run through a mashing machine. The resulting smooth paste is put in large vats, which are covered and weighted as the miso goes through fermentation from a few months to several years.

NUTRITION FACTS

Serving: 1-Tbs. (17 grams)

Calories	35	% Daily Value
Total Fat	1g	2%
Saturated Fat	0g	0%
Total Carbohydrates	5g	2%
Protein	2g	4%
Cholesterol	0mg	0%
Sodium	620mg	26%
Dietary Fiber	1g	4%
Calcium	11mg	2%
Potassium	36mg	1%
Phosphorus	26mg	3%
Folate	3mcg	1%

Source: USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 17 (2004)

Isoflavone: | 7mg

Source: USDA -Iowa State University Database on the Isoflavone Content of Foods, Release 1.3, 2002, USDA Nutrient Data Laboratory Agricultural Research Service

Sodium content varies with the type of miso. Although high in sodium, compared to the same amount of salt, the sodium content of miso is significantly lower.

Exchanges: 3 Tbs. = 1 starch + 1 lean meat/meat substitute
 Source: Exchange Lists for Meal Planning, 2nd edition, 2002. The American Diabetes Association/The American Dietetic Association.