

# BASIC JAPANESE BREAD ROLL DOUGH

KIHON NO RÔRU PAN KIJU 基本のロールパン生地

**MAKES ABOUT 620 g (1 LB 6 oz) – ENOUGH FOR 12 SMALL SWEET BUNS OR 8 LARGER SAVOURY BUNS**

Besides shokupan, perhaps the most versatile type of Japanese bread dough is a simple, lightly sweetened white dough which is used for the sweet and savoury rolls that are staples of bakeries, supermarkets and convenience stores. These include sweet red bean buns, hot dog rolls and baked curry bread (recipes follow), as well as custard buns, chocolate cornets, buns filled with whipped cream and jam, and a variety of *sôzai pan*, or savoury side dish buns, that feature Japanese comfort foods like tuna mayo, croquettes or yakisoba in a convenient hand-held bread-based format. The bread is also very nice on its own, soft, pillowy and mildly sweet, so you can just have it with soup or a salad for a light meal. You will need a stand mixer with a dough hook for this recipe.

7 g (¼ oz) yeast  
 160 ml (5½ fl oz/⅔ cup) lukewarm water  
 360 g (12⅔ oz) very strong bread flour  
 15 g (½ oz) golden caster (superfine) sugar  
 5 g (¼ oz) salt  
 1 tablespoon milk  
 1 egg  
 1 tablespoon honey  
 20 g (¾ oz) margarine or butter, plus more for greasing

Mix the yeast and water in a measuring jug until dissolved. Combine the flour, sugar and salt in a stand mixer fitted with a dough hook. Add the milk and egg to the yeasted water, then pour this into the stand mixer while mixing on low speed, then add the honey. When the dough comes together, add the margarine in small pieces and turn the speed up to medium. Knead for about 10 minutes, or until the dough passes the 'window pane' gluten test (see shokupan method, opposite). Place the dough in a lightly buttered bowl, cover loosely with cling film (plastic wrap) or a tea towel (dishcloth), and leave to prove somewhere warm for about an hour, or until doubled in size. Proceed to shape and bake according to the recipes that follow or, to make plain rolls, simply divide the dough into 12 equal pieces (50 g/2 oz each). Place on paper-lined trays, and leave to rise again for 45 minutes–1 hour before baking in a fan oven at 200°C (400°F/gas 6) for 10 minutes.



# GOOEY EGG CURRY BREAD

HANJUKU TAMAGO IRI YAKI KARĒPAN 半熟卵入り焼きカレーパン

MAKES 8 BUNS

40 g (1½ oz) Japanese curry roux  
 200 ml (7 fl oz/scant 1 cup) water  
 1 batch of Basic Japanese Bread Roll Dough, page 185  
 plain (all-purpose) flour, for dusting  
 8 eggs, soft-boiled and peeled (for timings, see Marinated Eggs, page 101)  
 1 egg, beaten well with a splash of milk  
 10–15 g (½ oz) panko

For almost as long as they have been eating curry and bread in Japan, they have been eating bread filled with curry. Curry bread, or *karē pan* in Japanese, was invented in or around the 1920s, and remains a firm favourite, sold not only at bakeries and convenience stores but also dedicated curry restaurants, who often offer house-made curry pan as a takeaway item, sort of like a souvenir. Typically, curry pan is deep-fried, like a doughnut. But it works very well baked, too, which is what this recipe is for.

Reconstitute the curry with the water. You can either do this in a saucepan or the microwave – for the latter, simply heat the roux and the water together in 30-second bursts, stirring in between each cook until completely dissolved and thickened – this should take about 2–3 minutes in total. Leave the curry in the refrigerator to cool completely while you prepare the rest of the recipe.

After the first rise of the dough, divide it into 8 equal (75 g/2½ oz) balls on a lightly floured surface. With a rolling pin, flatten each ball out into a circle about 15 cm (6 in) in diameter; make the outer edges of the circle thinner than the centre. If the centre of the dough is stretched too thin, the buns could rupture while baking. Place a big spoonful of the chilled curry sauce in the middle of each dough circle, and place an egg on top of the curry. Draw up two dough edges on either side of the buns and pinch them together at the top of the egg. Draw up the other two edges, pinching them together on top of the other dough seam to completely enclose the egg and curry. Place the sealed buns, seam-side down, on baking parchment-lined baking sheets about 5 cm (2 in) apart, and leave to prove again for about 15 minutes.

Preheat a fan oven to 200°C (400°F/gas 6). Brush the rolls with the beaten egg and sprinkle each one with a large pinch of panko. Bake for 15 minutes, and leave to cool slightly before eating. You can also serve these at room temperature and they will last for a day in the refrigerator.



# FUNDAMENTALS

## DASHI

出汁

I almost didn't include a recipe for dashi, because there's really no need for it – this book is all about convenience, so you should really be using dashi powder or concentrate. But it feels sacrilegious somehow to not include a recipe for dashi from scratch, because it is so fundamental to Japanese cuisine. If you make this, use it in something where you can really taste it, such as classic takikomi gohan or nanban soba.

MAKES ABOUT 500 ML (17 FL OZ/2 CUPS)

10 g (½ oz) kombu (about a 10 × 10 cm/4 × 4 in piece)  
2 dried shiitake mushrooms  
600 ml (20 fl oz/2½ cups) water (for really good dashi, use soft water – it will provide a fuller flavour)  
15 g (½ oz) katsuobushi

Place the kombu and mushrooms in a saucepan and pour in the water. Place the pan on a low flame and very slowly bring it to the lowest of simmers; when just a few small bubbles break the surface of the water, add the katsuobushi, remove from heat, and leave to infuse for an hour to maximise flavour. Pass through a fine sieve and gently squeeze out the ingredients. If you're not using it straight away, keep in the refrigerator – it will last about a week, but is better within a few days.

## TSUYU

つゆ

Tsuyu is a fortified, seasoned dashi, which can be used as a condiment or diluted to make broth for soup. Store-bought tsuyu is yummy and inexpensive, so if you're going to bother making it from scratch, you should make it from real kombu and katsuobushi, which gives it a very full, rich flavour.

MAKES ABOUT 225 ML (8 FL OZ/SCANT 1 CUP)

100 ml (3½ fl oz/scant ½ cup) soy sauce  
100 ml (3½ fl oz/scant ½ cup) mirin  
60 ml (2 fl oz/¼ cup) sake  
50 ml (1¾ fl oz/3 tablespoons) water  
1 tablespoon brown sugar  
10 g (½ oz) kombu  
10 g (½ oz) katsuobushi

Combine all the ingredients except the katsuobushi in a saucepan and leave to infuse for 1 hour. Place the pan over a medium heat and bring the liquid to a low simmer, then remove the kombu and add the katsuobushi. Let the liquid boil, then remove from the heat and leave to infuse for 10 minutes. Pass the tsuyu through a sieve, gently squeezing the liquid out from the katsuobushi. Keep in the refrigerator and use within a month. To use as a broth for soup, dilute 75 ml (5 tablespoons) tsuyu with 275 ml (9½ fl oz/just over 1 cup) water to yield 350 ml (12¼ fl oz/1½ cups) – the right amount for a bowl of noodles.

## MASTER PONZU

熟成ポン酢

Ponzu is perhaps the only Japanese condiment you definitely should make from scratch. There are some good ones out there, but the best ponzu really captures the 'whole fruit' sensation of fresh citrus, which is very difficult for pasteurised, shelf-stable products to accomplish. Also, if you make your own, you can blend citrus and adjust it to your taste. I make my ponzu in the winter, when good citrus is in season, then keep it going throughout the year like a master stock – I start with the below recipe and top it up with two parts citrus juice, two parts soy sauce and one part mirin, as needed. This results in an evolving, complex, balanced ponzu with a perpetually fresh citrus flavour.

MAKES ABOUT 225 ML (8 FL OZ/SCANT 1 CUP)

5 tablespoons lemon, lime, bergamot and/or yuzu juice; you can also add less sour citrus juices, such as satsuma, blood orange or grapefruit, but remember that ponzu should be quite acidic  
5 tablespoons soy sauce  
2 tablespoons water  
2 tablespoons caster (superfine) sugar  
1 tablespoon mirin  
1 teaspoon vinegar  
¼ teaspoon dashi powder  
¼ teaspoon salt  
spoonful of citrus zest, crushed to release their oils

Mix everything well until the sugar dissolves. Keep in a jar in the refrigerator indefinitely; top up with more citrus juice and seasonings as needed to keep a perpetual ponzu.

## JAPANESE BROWN SAUCE

ソース

This is an all-purpose Japanese brown sauce recipe that will work well in place of tonkatsu sauce, okonomiyaki sauce and other similar condiments.

MAKES ABOUT 300 ML (10 FL OZ/1¼ CUPS)

1 teaspoon tomato purée (paste)  
1 teaspoon Marmite  
¼ teaspoon mustard (Dijon or English)  
1 pinch of garam masala or mild curry powder  
75 g (2½ oz) brown sugar  
5 tablespoons ketchup  
5 tablespoons HP or similar brown sauce  
2 tablespoons tamarind paste  
2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce  
1 teaspoon rice or cider vinegar

Stir together the tomato purée, Marmite, mustard, garam masala and brown sugar to make a thick paste. Whisk in the ketchup, brown sauce, tamarind paste, Worcestershire sauce and vinegar, until smooth. This is best made at least an hour before you need it to let the sugar and spices dissolve properly. To make this more suitable for okonomiyaki, add an additional 1 tablespoon brown sugar, 1 tablespoon oyster sauce and a little more garam masala. For yakisoba, add 2 tablespoons tsuyu, reduce the sugar to 50 g (2 oz) and omit the vinegar. Keep in the refrigerator for up to six months, in a squeeze bottle.

## JAPANESE MAYO

マヨネーズ

Most of the recipes that call for mayonnaise in this book don't require Japanese mayonnaise – but that's a bit like saying that toast doesn't require butter. Use it if you got it!

MAKES ABOUT 225 ML (8 FL OZ/SCANT 1 CUP)

1 teaspoon nutritional yeast flakes  
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard  
1 teaspoon vinegar  
½ teaspoon soy sauce  
½ teaspoon MSG  
200 g (7 oz) mayonnaise

Stir together the yeast flakes, mustard, vinegar, soy sauce and MSG until the MSG and yeast flakes dissolve. Stir this into the mayonnaise and transfer to a squeeze bottle. Keep in the refrigerator for up a month.

# GLOSSARY

**ABURAAGE** 油揚げ  
Sheets of puffed, fried tofu, sold frozen at Asian grocers

**AONORI** 青のり  
Green seaweed flakes, used as a garnish

**BURDOCK (GOBŌ)** ごぼう  
A long, earthy root vegetable; found at Asian grocers

**CHICKEN STOCK POWDER** 鶏ガラスープ粉  
Asian-style chicken stock powder, found in yellow tins at Asian grocers

**CHILLI OIL** ラー油  
Chinese, Japanese or similar East Asian crispy chilli oil (do not use European chilli oil)

**CURRY ROUX** カレールー  
Pre-made Japanese curry blocks that are made into sauce by stirring through boiling water; common brands include Golden, Java, House and Yutaka

**DAIKON** 大根  
A large white radish, also called mooli

**DASHI** 出汁  
Broth made from kombu (dried kelp) and katsuobushi (dried, smoked tuna) that constitutes the basic flavour of many Japanese dishes; it can be made from scratch, but in home cooking is more commonly made from a powder or concentrate

**GOCHUJANG** ごチュジャン  
Korean fermented chilli paste

**HIJIKI** ひじき  
Dried, black seaweed with a nutty flavour

**JAPANESE BROWN SAUCE** ソース  
A classic Japanese fruit-based sauce with many variations including tonkatsu, okonomiyaki, takoyaki and yakisoba sauces; in most cases, any will do, but certain recipes call for certain variations

**KAMABOKO** 蒲鉾  
Pink and white Asian-style fish cakes, sold frozen at Asian grocers

**KATSUOBUSHI** 鰹節  
Flakes of smoked, fermented, and thoroughly dried tuna loin, used for making dashi and as a garnish

**KIMCHI** キムチ  
Korean-style spicy fermented greens, usually Chinese leaf

**KOMBU** 昆布  
Dried kelp, used for making dashi and other seasonings

**KONNYAKU** 蒟蒻  
A near-flavourless, bouncy jelly made from the starch of the konjac plant, sold in Asian grocers

**LOTUS ROOT** レンコン  
A large, starchy, tubular vegetable full of holes, available at Asian grocers

**MIRIN** 味醂  
Highly sweetened cooking sake; for a stronger flavour, buy hon-mirin (true mirin)

**MISO** 味噌  
Seasoning, usually in paste form, made from salted and fermented soybeans; white miso is younger and has a lighter flavour, while red is aged longer and tastes richer

**MSG** 味の素  
Sodium salt of the glutamic acid for providing umami flavour, found in cute little shakers with a panda face on them, as well as in larger sacks; sold under the brand name Accent in the US, and as Ajinomoto elsewhere

**NATTŌ** 納豆  
Fermented soy beans with a strong taste and aroma and a sticky texture; a favourite for breakfast in Japan

**NORI** 海苔  
Sheets of dried seaweed, typically used for sushi or onigiri

**PICKLED GINGER** がり・紅生姜:  
Ginger preserved in a brine of vinegar, salt and sugar; the pink and thinly sliced variety (*gari*) is used exclusively as a condiment for sushi; the red, julienned kind (*beni shōga* or *kizami shōga*) is used as a topping

**PONZU** ポン酢  
A citrus-based seasoning or dip, typically made with soy sauce

**RAMEN** ラーメン  
Wheat noodles containing alkaline salts to make them springy, or the noodle soup dish that contains them

**RICE VINEGAR** 米酢  
Mild vinegar made from fermented rice or sake lees

**SAKE** 日本酒  
Japanese national beverage and ingredient made from the complex fermentation of rice; in cooking, it is used for balance, aroma and umami

**SANSHŌ** 山椒:  
The Japanese cultivar of Sichuan pepper, with a refreshing fragrance and delicate tingle

**SHICHIMI** 七味唐辛子  
Shorthand for shichimi tōgarashi, a blend of seven aromatic spices including chilli, orange and sesame

**SHIITAKE** 椎茸  
Meaty mushrooms that become stronger in flavour when dried

**SOBA** そば  
Thin buckwheat noodles

**SOY SAUCE** 醤油  
Seasoning made from fermented soybeans and wheat; all-purpose soy sauce is called *shōyu* and works for most dishes, but you may also wish to purchase *tamari* (dark soy sauce) and *usukuchi* (light soy sauce); do not use continental Asian soy sauces in Japanese recipes

**TAKIKOMI GOHAN** 炊き込み御飯  
Rice cooked together with various ingredients in the same pot

**TOFU** 豆腐  
Curd made from soy milk; recipes specify silken (*kinugoshi*) or cotton/block (*momen*) as needed; note that firmness levels do not indicate the type of tofu

**TSUKUDANI** 佃煮  
Sea vegetables or seafood preserved in a reduction of soy sauce and sugar

**TSUYU** つゆ  
Highly seasoned dashi used as a dip or as a concentrate for broth

**UDON** うどん  
Very thick, slippery wheat noodles

**WAKAME** 若芽  
Leafy, tender, green seaweed sold dehydrated, commonly found in miso soup

**YUZU** 柚子  
Japanese hybrid citrus with tart, highly aromatic juice