

# Tempura is light as gauzy gown

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chy exterior, it should not mask or hide the succulent flavors of the food in envelopes.

The secret to making an outstanding tempura batter is in the consistency of the mixture. The retired tempura queen indicated that the batter should be like medium cream, perfectly acceptable with a few lumps.

Whereas most tempura batters use only eggs and flour, this batter uses cornstarch for a delectable crispness that just can't be beat. In addition, the oil used for frying should always be a peanut oil so that the temperature can be raised to 410-425 degrees F. This ensures a quick frying, a crispy batter and, because the food fries so fast, a flavor-

ful center without being the least bit greasy.

The use of vegetable oils is not recommended, mainly because they break down during the heating process. For optimum results, fry small pieces of food in small batches. Needless to say, larger chunks of food risk not getting cooked throughout, and large batches lower the temperature of the oil too quickly and will result in a soggy tempura.

The three sauces featured are all authentic and evolved mainly because the Japanese were looking for something with a little pizzazz and flavor to jazz up an otherwise ordinary dish. Pizzazz is an understatement. Pierre Franey would probably say they marry well. All I know is they taste great. Bon Appetit!

**TEMPURA BATTER**  
2 cups flour  
1/2 cup cornstarch  
2 tsp. baking powder  
1 tsp. baking soda  
1 egg  
1 1/2 cups ice water (plus/minus)

Sift together the flour, cornstarch, baking powder, soda. Beat egg well with 1 cup of the ice water. Add dry ingredients, adding more ice water, if necessary, to make a batter the consistency of medium cream. Heat oil in wok or electric skillet to 410-425 degrees. Dip vegetables, meat, fish or poultry into batter and fry until cooked throughout, about 1-2 minutes, depending on the thickness of the food. Serve tempura with dipping sauces.

**DIPPING SAUCE NO. 1**  
1/2 tsp. ginger (powdered)  
1/2 cup soy or tamar sauce  
1/2 tsp. sugar  
1/2 cup water  
2 tsp. sake

Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. Serve at room temperature or warmed, if desired.

**DIPPING SAUCE NO. 2**  
1/2 cup soy sauce or tamari\*  
1 tbsp. lemon juice  
1/2 cup water

Combine all ingredients and mix well. Can be served at room temperature or warmed.  
\*Tamari is a product similar to soy sauce with about 25 percent lower sodium (salt) content. It is available at most Oriental stores, health food stores and gourmet markets. Note: The batter does not call for salt in the recipe because it is preferred to have the salty flavor in the sauce rather than in the batter, which would affect the true flavor of the food.

**DIPPING SAUCE NO. 3**  
1 cup beef broth (stock or bouillon)  
2 tsp. tamari or soy sauce  
1/2 cup sherry  
1/2 tsp. ginger (powdered)  
1/2 tsp. sugar

Combine all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth or warmed. It is recommended that the chef also enjoy 1/2 cup sherry while making these dishes.

# Raw truth about art of sushi

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sashimi (raw fish not rolled in nori) and chirashi sushi (a variety of seafoods on a bed of rice).

Now the urge to feast is too great to deny. You take the sushi and dunk it into the small bowl of imported soy sauce and bite down. What once dazzled your eyes, now dazzles your mouth.

Yamamoto is well aware of America's inhibitions when it comes to eating raw fish. He is also aware of the recent Food and Drug Administration's study that recommends all fish products that are served raw, marinated or only partially cooked, be frozen first to discourage bacterial growth.

"People are worried that the fish could be spoiled, and that's why you must be careful to eat at only reputable eateries like Kyoto. Here, we have an acute understanding of how to handle the seafoods to maintain freshness," he said.

"We know what to look for when we receive the fish, and I must often refuse shipments that don't meet the grade. It must look, smell and feel fresh in order to be appetizing. If there's any question of freshness, we refuse the order."

Yamamoto prefers to deal only with fisheries that take necessary precautions to ensure freshness in the product. These precautions include proper cleaning of the fish, quick freezing when necessary to retard spoilage, and cor-

rect packaging to eliminate cross-contamination.

"Often, a fish that has been quick frozen immediately after the catch is preferable to one that hasn't because bacteria may not have had a chance to grow. Properly frozen, the fish will retain its texture and flavor after thawing," Yamamoto said.

If you're interested in making sushi at home, Yamamoto has some suggestions. First, you should visit a store that sells authentic Japanese products. You'll need to buy nori, wasabi, soy sauce and kokuho rice, which tends to be a bit starchier than

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regular store-bought rice and aids in forming the sushi.

The success of your homemade sushi will be largely dependent on the freshness of the seafood, so shop carefully. You will also need a small bamboo mat, used to roll ingredients into logs for cutting, and a sharp knife. A dull knife will only mash

the sushi log.

Next, you should visit a few local sushi bars and watch closely to learn the techniques and process. It is going to take some practice before your movements are as fluid as the pros. Don't try to be as fast as they are or you may need to invest in some band-aids.

# Try making sushi at home

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**SHRIMP-TIED SUSHI**

Ingredients are the same as for the sushi logs except this dish is not rolled. The shrimp is placed on top of a hand-molded cube of rice and tied with a strip of nori.

Butterfly or split the shrimp so that it will sit evenly on top of the rice cube. Cut the nori into strips long enough to fit around the rice and seafood. The blanched green portion of a green onion also works well for tying the sushi.

**OMELET SUSHI**

For those who can't accept the thought of eating raw fish...  
1 small onion finely diced

1 small green pepper diced  
2 tbsp. soy sauce  
2 eggs lightly beaten  
salt and pepper to taste

Saute onions in butter until they are translucent. Add the green pepper and continue to cook about 1 1/2 minutes. Add eggs and cook pancake style, lifting the edges to allow the liquid eggs to reach the frying surface. Allow the omelet to cool before assembling the sushi. Use the omelet as if it were seafood and insert it into your sushi recipes.

Recipes compiled by Robert Striks

Japanese food products and supplies are available at:  
Noble Fish and Seafood  
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Clawson, phone 585-2314

Umagiya Japanese Foods Inc.  
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