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Okonomiyaki: Japanese Comfort Food



Synopsis

For Chef Yoshio Saito, learning to cook traditional Japanese food at his mother's side was a treasured part of his childhood. When she died when he was fourteen, he decided to honor her memory by learning how to cook her recipes and more. In this cookbook, Chef Yoshio, a Tokyo native and trained French/Japanese fusion chef, introduces today's modern home cook to Okonomiyaki, one of the most popular comfort foods in Japan. Okonomiyaki, although difficult to describe, can be likened to a savory pancake or pizza-like dish that is cooked on a griddle. Following on the tail of the popularity of sushi, Okonomiyaki is an exciting dish just becoming known in the United States. It uses a wide range of ingredients, including meat, seafood, vegetables, pasta, and more. When Chef Yoshio walks into an Okonomiyaki restaurant, he always gets the sense that his mother is there, helping to create the wonderful smells. For him, the taste of Okonomiyaki is the taste of home. Gathering his favorite recipes, Chef Yoshio shares his tips for three major regional styles of this comfort food in this cookbook: Hiroshima, Osaka, and Tokyo styles. As well as introducing classic Okonomiyaki dishes, Chef Yoshio shares his creative new dishes that expand the possibilities of Okonomiyaki.

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Customer Reviews

For those not inclined to read a long review, I'll start with the punchline: this book should be considered indispensable by any fan of this wonderful Japanese dish. I strongly encourage anyone new to Okonomiyaki to start with Osaka (Kansai) style. Those experienced with any given style will find Mr. Saito's book to be an inspiring guide on their trip down the Okonomiyaki rabbit hole! We first looked into Okonomiyaki after a friend from San Diego posted a picture of what turned out to be an Osaka-preparation to her Facebook page without a caption. Being foodies, we couldn't let something as unusual-sounding as a pancake made with shredded cabbage and garnished with shaved dried tuna, pickled ginger, seaweed and a special sauce made specifically for the dish go untried. Though we're happy to try new recipes on our own, given the unusual list of ingredients we decided that our first experience should be with a professionally-prepared dish made by an experienced chef- that would give us a benchmark. Though we live in a large metropolitan area, not a single restaurant seemed to have Okonomiyaki on the menu. A google search yielded one attempt to provide a worldwide list of places serving Okonomiyaki, however. ... and jackpot! The one place listed in our area no longer had it on the menu, but the 85-year-old chef was experienced in making five different styles, and was only too happy to make it to order with a day's warning! After trying a few different styles for inspiration and as a measure of the quality of our own attempts, our friend in San Diego sent a "care package" containing Okonomiyaki flour, Okonomi sauce, tempura bits (Tenkasu) , and shaved bonito flakes (Katsuobushi). We were instantly hooked. It was the night after our first (happily, successful!

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