

Okonomiyaki

Okonomiyaki is a traditional Japanese omelette/ pancake typical to western Japan, including Nara, where I lived for a year (many years ago) and loosely translates to “how you like it pancake.” It is cooked on a teppan or BBQ grill and is very versatile. It can be vegetarian or not. Traditionally carrots are not used but I like the sweetness they add.

Ingredients

serves 4 - 5 as a main meal

Batter

1 cup wholemeal plain flour*
½ cup potato or glutinous rice flour*
2 teaspoons powdered dashi, veggie stock or salt

Vegetables

3 cups finely sliced Chinese cabbage
240g carrots
4 cloves (15g) garlic, finely chopped
50g ginger, finely chopped
1 stick finely diced celery
½ cup finely sliced spring onion whites
3 eggs, whisked

*GF version - use ¾ cup brown rice flour and ¾ cup potato flour

Optional

very thinly sliced pork belly (butcher to cut when frozen) OR fresh raw prawns OR raw squid rings
3 tablespoons dried prawns (add to veggies)
1 punnet thinly sliced Shiitake mushrooms

Toppings

Tonkatsu sauce (50ml Tomato sauce, 30ml Worcestershire, 5ml Light soy sauce)
Japanese Kupa Mayonnaise
½ cup finely sliced spring onion greens
Bonito flakes, 1 - 2 tablespoons per serve
Peanut or olive oil for cooking

Method

1. Prepare all vegetables as above and mix together in a very large bowl. Stir to combine.
2. Squeeze a little to release some juices.
3. Combine flours, dashi, stock powder or salt. Then sprinkle on top of the vegetables.
4. Stir well to combine.
5. Stir whisked egg into the vegetables. This will take some time
6. The mix will just hold together with a little moisture but is fairly dry. This is right. Stir again before cooking.
7. To cook you will need a non stick frying pan with a lid or a BBQ plate and a “lid” (you could even use an upside down frying pan.)
8. Heat and oil your cooking surface and transfer 1.5 cups of okonomiyaki mix onto it.
9. Flatten slightly (2.5-3cm thick) and tuck in any veggies trying to escape the “pancake”.
10. If using optional ingredients, place them on the top of the uncooked Okonomiyaki now. Cover with lid and cook for 3 - 4 minutes (high medium.)
11. Check the base and once browned, carefully flip the Okonomiyaki over with a large metal spatula (or if it too big to flip, slide it onto a plate and then flip it. Cover again with the lid.
12. Cook a further 3 - 4 minutes.
13. Slide the Okonomiyaki onto a plate and drizzle with mayonnaise and Tonkatsu sauce.
14. Sprinkle with bonito flakes and spring onions. Eat immediately.

Louise Edney is an accredited nutritionist, caterer and educational speaker on all things to do with delicious, nutritious, conscious eating.