

A Taste Of Gunma

Almost everyone has heard of wagyu – the succulent Japanese beef that is famed for its beautiful marbling of fats that melts in your mouth. It is said that the more marbling there is on the meat, the more expensive it is. But there comes in the Toriyama, a farm in Gunma prefecture, Japan that focuses on the science of achieving the right balance of umami in wagyu beef, rather than marbling. The best part of it? It is available right here in Singapore at Huber's Butchery for your purchasing! Huber's Butchery has recently held a tasting session for Toriyama's umami wagyu beef. They invited Chef Kazuki Arai, the executive chef of WHITE IN TAKASAKI, a banquet restaurant also in the Gunma prefecture. He is nothing short of having skills like a Japanese masterchef and leads us through a mouth-watering presentation of how he prepares Toriyama's umami wagyu.



Four dishes are prepared – the first being the *beef saikyo isobeyaki. Beef is marinated in a miso paste, then sous vide and finished off on a grill pan. Next is the beef leg kiyomizu shitate that is cooked in black vinegar. It is then placed into a flavourful, clear soup with refreshing vegetables like daikon, carrot, yuzu and edible chrysanthemum. The beef clod sobamushi is next on the menu. Its meat is steamed together with a buckwheat flour mixture, taro, ginkgo and awa-fu. Finally, a dish that many know of and love – sukiyaki. It is put together in a traditional hot pot, along with warashita sauce and optional umeboshi pickled plums. A sorbet of tomatoes and onions is also added for a refreshing contrast to the rich beef.

My favourite cut of beef is the inner thigh. It is inexpensive and packed with flavour. You can never go wrong with wagyu beef – it is always delicious
Kazuki Arai



Chef Kazuki Arai preparing the beef sukiyaki.

Chef Arai goes on to share with us that his favourite cut of beef is the inner thigh as it is inexpensive and like almost all other wagyu, it only requires a simple seasoning of salt and pepper. Chef Arai is all smiles, and with the help of his interpreter, lets us in on his love for food and tells us of his time when he once had the privilege of cooking for Yasuo Fukuda, the former prime minister of Japan. He initially had thought of becoming a French-cuisine chef, as to follow the footsteps of his father, a classically French-trained chef. However, he eventually decided that he would stick to his Japanese roots instead. Seeing that it was Chef Arai's first visit to Singapore, we decided to ask what his favourite dish is here – "Chicken rice!" OT

*Recipes refer to page 83

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beef saikyo miso isobeyaki

By Chef Kazuki Arai

500g	short plate beef, cut into (4 x 200g) chucks
20g	saikyo white miso
180ml	(each) cooking sake and mirin
200g	carrots, peeled katsuramuki-style, thinly sliced and soaked in salted water
1	(each) shimonita green onion and zucchini, thinly sliced
4	yakinori seaweed sheets
	Cooking oil, for pan-frying
	Mirin soy sauce, for basting

- Marinate the short plate beef chucks with saikyo white miso, cooking sake and mirin overnight. Place the marinated short plate beef chucks into a vacuum pack and sous vide in a sous vide circulator at 58°C for about 44 minutes. Remove and wrap the sous vided short plate beef chucks with the sliced carrots, shimonita green onion, zucchini and yakinori seaweed sheets into rolls. Pierce each beef roll into a bamboo skewer and set aside. Heat a frying pan with cooking oil over a medium heat until hot. Add in the skewered short plate beef rolls and baste with mirin soy sauce and pan-fry until lightly brown. Remove and cut each roll into 3 sections. Serves 4



soupe au pistou (pistou soup)

By Chef Raymond Blanc

Pistou Sauce

30g	basil stalks and leaves
4	garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
100ml	extra virgin olive oil
	Sea salt and freshly ground white pepper, to taste

Soup

4 tbsp	extra virgin olive oil
½	white onion, peeled and diced
1	carrot, peeled and diced
½	celery stick, diced
½	fennel bulb, diced
800ml	boiling water
1	courgette, diced
50g	(each) broad beans and peas, podded
8	cherry tomatoes, skin on and halved
	Grated Parmesan cheese, for sprinkling
	Toasted baguettes or croutons, for serving

- For the pistou sauce: Blanch the basil in a pot of boiling water for about 5 seconds. Drain well and plunge into an ice water – bath to stop the cooking process. Drain again and squeeze out any excess water. Chop the blanched basil and place into a food processor. Add in the crushed garlic, and extra virgin olive oil. Season with a pinch of sea salt and freshly ground white pepper and pulse to a smooth purée. Adjust seasoning and keep chilled.
- For the soup: Heat extra virgin olive oil in a saucepan over a medium heat until hot. Add in the diced white onion, carrot, celery and fennel and sweat for about 3 minutes. Season with sea salt and a pinch of freshly ground white pepper. Pour in 800ml boiling water and boil rapidly for another 5 minutes. Add in the diced courgette and podded broad beans and peas and cook for another 3 minutes. Add in the halved cherry tomatoes and cook for another 60 seconds. Add in 50g pistou sauce and sprinkle with grated Parmesan cheese. Adjust seasoning. Ladle the pistou soup into each warmed serving bowl and sprinkle with grated Parmesan cheese. Serve with toasted baguettes or croutons. Serves 4