Yuzu Kosho Grill Plate

NIBBLEDISH CONTRIBUTOR

Ingredients

For the Yuzu Kosho
Green Chillies
Fresh Yuzu
Good Quality Mineral Salt

The Grill
Scallops (roe removed)
Pork Chop
Chicken Thigh (skin on)
More of the salt
Fresh Ground Black Pepper

Plus assorted Japanese pickles to serve

Instructions

Yuzu is a wonderful citrus fruit that is virtually unknown outside of Japan and China. I know I had never heard of it until I came to Japan. The flavour and fragrance of yuzu is complex, with musky, spicy and herbaceous notes (similar to clove or thyme) matching a flowery citrus aroma. It is this complexity that allows yuzu to simultaneously deepen and lighten earthy winter dishes.

In Japan it's used in many ways: as a fragrant citrus note in clear winter soups; to add depth of flavour to winter sushi; as an ingredient in tea or fruit liquers; or even throwing

the whole fruit in to perfume to a hot bath. However, through all of these my favourite use of yuzu is to make *yuzu kosho*, a condiment so simple and amazing that I find it hard to believe that it is not more popular worldwide.

This dish showcases yuzu kosho by teaming it with simple grilled meats. The soft texture and sweet flavour of each of these meats is a perfect match for the salty, complex astrigency of the yuzu kosho. It's also great served with Japanese beef.

To make the yuzu kosho, take a large handful or two of green chillies. Split them lengthways. deseed them with the back of your thumbnail and remove the stem. The heat of your yuzu kosho will depend on the heat of your chillies, so choose them with this in mind. Yuzu kosho is not usually too hot, but however hot you want to make it is at your discretion.

With a peeler take all of the zest from the yuzu and finely mince it with a knife. Add the chillies and yuzu to a mortar with 1-2 tablespoons of very good quality mineral salt, and pound it all together. I like to leave it a little chunky, but it is also often heavily pounded to a very smooth paste. Remove it all to a clean jar and let the flavours come together for at least an hour or so but preferably overnight. The yuzu kocho will keep for weeks, so you can make it well in advance.

If you don't have yuzu there is no real substitute, however, you might be able to recreate something similar using the zest of half a lime and half an orange, with a pinch of fresh thyme leaves. I haven't tried this but I'm just hypothesising that the flavour might be at least remotely similar.

Scallops, pork and chicken all go beautifully well with yuzu kosho so to make the dish pictured, you just need to grill them. Cut the chicken into bite-sized pieces with the skin on, and choose a nice thick pork chop. Season all well with salt and ground black pepper. You can use slightly less salt because the yuzu kosho is very, very salty, but the dish is not intended to be balanced.

You can use a heavy-based frypan or griddle, but I prefer to grill them over an open charcoal flame. Add the chicken first, the pork after about 30 seconds (depending on the thickness) and then the scallops once you have turned the pork. The pork and scallops you should turn only once, but the chicken you can move around to get it evenly blackened and cooked. When ready, rest the meats for a few minutes, slice the pork and then transfer to a plate and add a pile of your homemade yuzu kosho.

Serve with an assortment Japanese pickles if you like.