

Japanese Food Made Easy by Aya Nishimura

'Main Meals'

Tonkatsu (Japanese Pork Cutlet) (p. 154)

Serves: 4

Preparation: 30 minutes

Cooking: 15 minutes

Tonkatsu is one of the most popular yo-syoku dishes (Western influenced Japanese cuisine). I recommend preparing the pork using a meat tenderiser, which is a great kitchen tool to have. You can also try katsu sandwiches – spread butter on toast and sandwich the katsu and tonkatsu sauce inside with shredded cabbage. Heavenly!

4 pork loin steaks, about 170 g (53/4 oz) each, skin and bones removed

2 eggs, lightly beaten

400 g (14 oz) soft white cabbage (about 1/4 small cabbage), shredded and kept in ice-cold water

1/2 cup (125 ml) Quick Tonkatsu Sauce (see page 214)

sea salt and ground black pepper

1/4 cup (35 g) plain (all-purpose) flour

2 cups (120 g) panko breadcrumbs

2 cups (500 ml) sunflower oil, for deep-frying

Bring the pork steaks to room temperature. If you have thick steaks, make five or six incisions where the meat meets the fat on both sides. This will tenderise the pork and prevent it from curling during cooking. Season with salt and black pepper.

Place the flour, beaten eggs and breadcrumbs in three separate shallow bowls. Coat the pork in the flour first and pat to remove any excess flour. Next, dip the pork into the egg. Finally, cover the pork with breadcrumbs. (You can freeze the coated pork at this stage if needed.)

Heat the sunflower oil in a deep saucepan to 180°C (350°F). Cook two pork steaks for about 3 minutes, until golden brown. Use a metal strainer to remove the tonkatsu and place on paper towel to drain. Repeat with the rest of the steaks, then fry each tonkatsu again for another minute and drain on paper towel.

Drain the cabbage completely.

Cut the tonkatsu into thin slices. Serve with the cabbage and drizzle with the tonkatsu sauce.

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'Basics'

Quick Tonkatsu Sauce (p. 214)

Makes: about 1/2 cup (125 ml)

Preparation: 10 minutes

Tonkatsu sauce is the Japanese equivalent to British brown sauce. You will find ready-made tonkatsu sauce in any Japanese grocery store, Asian food store or online. However, it's not too difficult to make from scratch. Here is my quick, easy-to-prepare version. Try it with Okonomiyaki (see page 46) or Kushikatsu (see page 142).

1/2 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice

2 tablespoons tomato sauce (ketchup)

1/4 cup (60 ml) Worcestershire sauce

2 teaspoons dijon mustard

4 teaspoons soy sauce

1/4 cup (45 g) light brown sugar a pinch of sea salt

1/4 cup (40 g) white sesame seeds, toasted, optional

Mix the tomato sauce, Worcestershire sauce, mustard, soy sauce, sugar, lemon juice and salt in a bowl until well combined.

If you are making this to store, don't add the sesame seeds at this stage. Store the sauce in the fridge in a clean, screw-top jar for up to a month.

Place the toasted sesame seeds in a suribachi or mortar and coarsely grind. Mix them into the sauce just before serving.