

# Okonomiyaki お好み焼き



**Jim – 4 Guys and a Tomato**

**Event: Japanese Street Food – Nov 14, 2019**

**Inspired by: Ninette R Enrique**

This is still one of my favorite recipes. Okonomiyaki is an ingredient-rich Japanese pancake that I first experienced in the Hiroshima train station food court. Okonomi translates to “how you like”, and yaki means “cooked” or “fried”. The fun part of the presentation is the dried bonito flakes that wave on the surface with the heat.

Back in 1995 early adopters of “The Internet” used News Groups to share information. These evolved from dial-up bulletin boards. To participate, one simply sent an email to the group and then looked for a response. Ninette, a graduate student at Columbia University, was one of the most active and accomplished foodies (a term not yet coined). She responded to my [request](#) with the following [recipe](#).



## **Ingredients:** (makes 4 pancakes)

- |    |         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ½  | head    | Cabbage, finely shredded                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 1  | C       | Tenkasu (pieces of fried tempura batter)                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 2  | C       | Flour                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 1½ | C       | Water (approximately)                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 2  | inches  | Yamaimo (mountain yam), grated -or- 4½ teaspoons baking powder                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 1  | T       | Hondashi powder (fish broth)                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 4  | pinches | Salt                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 4  |         | Eggs                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 2  | T       | Red ginger (kizami beni shoga)                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 8  | strips  | Bacon (partially cooked until the fat just starts to render)                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 1  | C       | Pork, shrimp, squid, etc., cut in small pieces (Note: with the pork, slice it very thin and half-cook it in advance just to make sure it cooks all the way through in the pancake, although you probably don't have to do this.) |

## **Toppings**

- Okonomiyaki Sauce, or Tonkatsu Sauce mixed with some Worcestershire sauce
- Mayonnaise (Japanese mayonnaise, such as Kewpie)
- Dried bonito flakes
- Green seaweed flakes (Aonori)

## Directions:

**MAKE TENKASU:** If you can't find tenkasu in the store, you can make it yourself using tempura flour. Follow the directions on the tempura flour box to make the batter (1 cup's worth of batter is more than enough). Heat oil in wok or skillet. When oil is hot enough, swirl the oil around to create a mini whirlpool (be careful not to burn yourself!). Drip batter in with a spoon. The vortex lets the batter spin into little pieces or "crumbs." Fry until golden. Remove and drain on paper towels. If you're afraid to do the whirlpool thing, fry the batter in bigger pieces, and after they've cooled, break them up into smaller pieces.

Note: The tenkasu is used to make the pancakes lighter.

**MAKE BATTER:** Mix flour and water together to right consistency. It should be a little thicker than breakfast pancake batter because it must hold the cabbage and meats together. If it's too thin or thick, adjust accordingly by adding more flour or water. Add to batter the hondashi and grated yamaimo. These make the batter a little more flavorful and "lighter."

**MAKE 1 PANCAKE:** In separate bowl, put approximately:

2 cups shredded cabbage	2 tbs. red ginger
¼ cup tenkasu	¼ cup meat, seafood, etc.
½ cup batter	1 egg
1 pinch salt	½ tsp. baking powder

Mix the ingredients.

**COOK PANCAKE:** Heat teppanyaki pan, griddle, or non-stick skillet with a little oil or bacon grease (medium high heat). Spread pancake so cabbage is distributed evenly (it'll be about 6 to 7 inches in diameter -- it's no small pancake!). When the edges are about cooked and the bottom is brown (about 6-10 minutes), cover the top with two slices of bacon that have been cut in three pieces each. Flip over. Cook until the bacon is done.

While the other side is cooking, and the bacon is sizzling underneath, adding flavor and fat (oops), top the pancake with okonomiyaki sauce & mayonnaise -- squirt on and spread around with a knife -- and sprinkle with the seaweed powder and bonito flakes. The bonito flakes will wave in the heat and look like they are dancing. When the bottom is brown and the bacon crisp, cut in 3 or 4 pieces and serve. Mix up the next pancake and start cooking again. 4 pancakes will serve 4 people or 3 hungry people.

Note: Don't worry if the first time you make this, it doesn't come out perfect -- the batter is too heavy, or the pancake did not cook completely inside, etc. Give yourself a few tries to become an okonomiyaki expert.