ASIAN SAUCES GO MAINSTREAM

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Sweet and tangy plum sauce, often used as an accompaniment to appetizers, serves as a perfect dipping sauce for a new chicken nuggets lunch kit. It’s also a natural in new frozen vegetable egg roll products, crispy spring rolls and sesame chicken entrees.

Traditional black bean sauce, a blend of fermented Chinese black beans with garlic, soy sauce and seasonings, is jazzing up new wrap-style sandwiches, frozen stir-fried noodles and Chinese-style barbecue-flavored pork ribs.

KIKKOMAN TIMELINE

**Earlier than 500 B.C.**

The Chinese develop the first soy sauce, using fermented soybeans.

**500s A.D.** A Japanese Zen priest studying in China discovers Chinese soy sauce and brings it back to Japan, where wheat is added to create a new Japanese soy sauce.

**1600s** Kikkoman establishes the first commercial brewery to produce soy sauce near present-day Tokyo.

**1868** Japanese immigrants bring soy sauce with them to Hawaii.

The Evolution of Asian flavor

TODAY’S CONSUMERS may think of soy sauce and other Asian flavors as everyday ingredients in America’s culinary melting pot—but that’s a relatively recent point of view.

Until the middle of the 20th century, the average U.S. consumer probably never saw soy sauce outside of a Chinese or Japanese restaurant—certainly not in the local grocery store or diner. Kikkoman began exporting soy sauce to the United States from Japan in the 1860s, but the only people using it were the increasing numbers of Japanese immigrants living in Hawaii and California.

**The “All-Purpose Seasoning”**

That all changed in the mid-1950s, however, when Kikkoman recognized the potential for soy sauce and other Asian flavors in a changing, more worldly America. Kikkoman began promoting soy sauce as an “All-Purpose Seasoning,” airing the first network prime-time commercials for soy sauce in November 1956. In 1957 the company established a North American subsidiary, Kikkoman International Inc., which set up shop in San Francisco to show Americans what naturally brewed soy sauce could do for them.

Thanks to Kikkoman’s ongoing sampling and education campaigns, which featured James Beard, Graham Kerr and other prominent food personalities, soy sauce took its place in America’s pantries alongside other standard condiments. And the growing consumer acceptance of Asian foods soon led to a receptive market for more Asian products. In 1961, Kikkoman became the first company to develop a formula for teriyaki sauce that could be bottled and sold for home use, launching a world-wide trend that’s still going strong today.

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Convenient Asian cooking

But soy sauce and teriyaki were just the beginning. As America’s tastes continued to evolve, Kikkoman steadily added a variety of convenient Asian sauce and seasoning products to its lineup: flavored Teriyaki Sauces; Teriyaki Baste & Glaze; Teriyaki Takumi Collection Sauces (new); Sweet and Sour Sauce; Ready-to-use Stir-Fry Sauce; Quick & Easy Marinades; Panko Japanese Style Bread Crumbs (now with zero grams trans fat); Tempura Batter Mix; along with less sodium, preservative-free, organic and tamari soy sauce options.

Kikkoman’s newest line of authentic Asian sauces taps into the growing consumer demand for more sophisticated flavors. Kikkoman Hoisin, Plum, Thai Style Chili, and Black Bean Sauces offer classic Asian sauces and condiments that make it easy for foodservice operators and R&D product developers to create Asian foods with authentic flavors. Or, they can be used to add a flavor twist to non-Asian applications such as barbecue, dressings and sauces, marinades, glazes and dipping sauces.

“Black Bean Sauce has a strong garlicky flavor that’s perfect for Asian foods. It’s a very well-known product in Asian cooking,” says Debbie Carpenter, marketing manager for Kikkoman Foodservice and Industrial in San Francisco. “Our Thai Style Chili, Plum and Hoisin Sauces are very versatile and work well with a lot of different flavors.”

As Kikkoman continues to introduce new Asian food products to American consumers, food manufacturers and new product developers, there’s one thing that won’t change: the company’s commitment to sharing its knowledge and experience to develop an ever-broadening market for Asian flavors.

1957 Kikkoman Corporation of Japan forms Kikkoman International Inc. to market soy sauce and other products to North America.

1961 Kikkoman introduces world’s first bottled teriyaki sauce.

1972 Kikkoman introduces dehydrated soy sauce to the industrial food market.

1973 Kikkoman opens its first soy sauce brewing facility in the United States in Walworth, Wis.

1983 Kikkoman’s new Less Sodium Soy Sauce hits U.S. grocery store shelves.


2003 Kikkoman introduces Pearl® Organic Soymilk in six flavors.

2004 The classic red-capped Kikkoman Soy Sauce dispenser is placed on display at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

2007 Kikkoman celebrates 50 years in America.
Soy sauce: The unexpected flavor solution

There’s No Substitute for a Naturally Brewed Soy Sauce—Literally.

Non-brewed or acid-hydrolyzed soy sauce may look like the real thing, but that’s where the similarity ends. Naturally brewed Kikkoman Soy Sauce features more than 285 flavor and aroma components that develop during a six-month-long natural brewing process. Soy sauce fermentation develops amino acids, which have flavor-enhancing properties that actually boost the flavors of other ingredients by triggering taste receptors on the tongue. It’s all wrapped up in a deep, rich-colored liquid with a distinctive aroma that just can’t be duplicated.

A Rich and Savory History

Naturally brewed soy sauce has been around for at least 2,500 years, when the Chinese created the earliest versions. A Japanese priest studying in China brought the potent seasoning liquid to his home country in the sixth century, where wheat was added for a Japanese flavor. Over the centuries, soy sauce, or “shoyu,” became an integral part of Japanese cuisine. And in the 1600s, an enterprising family in Noda, Japan, began brewing the soy sauce that would one day be known throughout the world as Kikkoman.

Although much has changed in the production of Japanese soy sauce since that first batch, the basic ingredients are still the same: water, wheat, soybeans, salt—and time. The soybeans and wheat are blended under controlled conditions, and then a proprietary culture starter is introduced. The mixture matures into a culture that is mixed with a brine solution to produce a mash. After several months of fermentation, the matured mash is then pressed to extract the raw soy sauce, which is refined, heat-treated and packaged.

A Clean-Label Advantage

Because naturally brewed soy sauce is a combination of simple elements, rather than a chemically produced solution, it offers food manufacturers the advantage of a clean label: Soy Sauce (Water, Wheat, Soybeans, Salt and less than 0.10% Sodium Benzoate as a preservative).

The Umami Factor

Kikkoman Soy Sauce also offers the advantage of umami, a flavor boost that can’t be artificially created. Umami is a fifth basic taste—in addition to the traditional sweet, salty, sour and bitter taste sensations—that has been described as the “magic ingredient.”

Teriyaki is top of mind in many new products, such as a new teriyaki marinated tuna and crackers lunch kit. But soy sauce is branching out to meld with Italian, Mexican and other ethnic flavors in a wide array of new frozen and refrigerated dinnertime products: pork osso bucco, French dip roast beef, even Mexican-style tacos and quesadillas.

Vegetarian proteins, too, can benefit from the meaty flavor notes added by naturally brewed soy sauce. New meatless burgers, jerky, and “ham” sandwich slice products all incorporate soy sauce for extra oomph.

For snack lovers, new smoky barbecue and spicy Southwest mixes, along with jerky in beef, salmon and buffalo varieties, hit high flavor notes thanks to soy sauce.

<< The difference is clear: Non-brewed soy sauce (far left) is often opaque with a harsh, overpowering flavor and pronounced chemical aroma. Naturally brewed soy sauce (left) is transparent, with a light amber color and balanced flavor and aroma.
as “savory” or “brothy.” It is present only in foods that have been brewed, aged or are very ripe, such as red wine, aged cheese and mushrooms.

Since naturally brewed soy sauce contains amino acids that are both flavor potentiators and umami contributors, it packs a powerful flavor-enhancing punch. Adding brewed soy sauce to a food product can help its natural flavors “pop,” making foods taste richer and more fully rounded without necessarily adding a pronounced Asian flavor.

The Kikkoman difference
Kikkoman offers a number of Asian sauces, seasonings and coatings from original teriyaki to plum sauce and kotterin. And, Kikkoman products are always reliable, available and consistent and are made with the highest standards of safety and quality.

FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION
Kikkoman offers more naturally brewed soy sauce products than any other company, along with operational solutions in pack sizes ranging from 6-ml packets to 275-gallon totes to trailers and railway cars. Cross-functional R&D and production teams are available to support customers’ production needs, whether they involve flavor volatility, ingredient interactions, storage stability or labeling regulations. Kikkoman’s many soy sauce product options include:

DEHYDRATED SOY SAUCE. Spray-dried instant soy sauce powder, golden-tan and free-flowing, provides excellent flavor retention during heat processing and freezing. It’s heat fusible, dispersible and soluble in water—and it can be used directly in dry formulations or reconstituted for use wherever naturally brewed soy sauce is called for.

LESS SODIUM SOY SAUCE. Once the natural brewing process is complete, sodium is removed using a proprietary dialysis process. With 37 percent less sodium (3,300mg/100g) and a less salty flavor than regular Kikkoman Soy Sauce, this alternative soy product is suitable for a wide range of applications—and is available in both liquid and powdered forms.

PRESERVATIVE-FREE SOY SAUCE. Interchangeable in any formulation calling for regular soy sauce, Preservative-Free Soy Sauce is made without added sodium benzoate or other preservatives.

PK-56 (CLEAR) SOY SAUCE. This light, amber-colored version of naturally brewed Kikkoman Soy Sauce develops sweet brewed notes from fermentation. It’s especially suited to poultry, seafood, soups, sauces and salad dressings and contributes to flavor enhancement without discoloration.
LOOKING FOR A MAJOR culinary trend that’s going to revolutionize the way Americans eat? Look no further than Asian flavors.

For a variety of reasons, Asian flavors are hot and getting hotter, with no cool down in sight. Total U.S. retail sales of Asian foods jumped by 27.3 percent from 2000 to 2004, according to research from Packaged Facts, and Asian-Americans are the fastest-growing major U.S. ethnic/racial group in percentage terms. In 2000, the United States’ Asian-American population was 12 million—an amazing 63 percent increase from 1990 Census Bureau figures.

Mainstream appeal
But the expanding appetite for Asian flavors is being driven by both ethnic and mainstream American consumers, say the experts. In fact, Packaged Facts projects that mainstream consumers will buy 75 percent of all ethnic foods in the next decade.

“The good news is that Americans are showing a huge appetite for Asian flavors,” says Greg Drescher, executive director of strategic initiatives for the Culinary Institute of America, St. Helena, Calif. “The challenge is to deliver those flavors in an authentic way.”

Asian food is reaping the benefits of a number of converging trends, especially health and convenience.

“It is perceived as being healthy, and it cooks quickly when you’re really strapped for time,” says Debbie Carpenter, marketing manager for Kikkoman Foodservice and Industrial in San Francisco.

A taste for soy sauce
According to Carpenter, soy sauce in particular is a natural flavor enhancer that can help add zip to low-fat foods, especially meat. “Good proteins are leaner without the fat, so there’s less flavor,” she says. “People are looking for healthy foods that have flavor.

“And as baby boomers age and lose some of their ability to taste, they’re going to want bigger, bolder flavors,” she adds. “That’s another opportunity for soy sauce to be added to really make that flavor intensify and pop.”

Regional cuisines
For consumers looking for culinary thrills, as more and more are these days, Asian flavors offer a chance to sample exotic cultures from an area of the world that is fast rising in economic importance.

“People used to think of Asian food as just Chinese or maybe Japanese food,” says Carpenter. “Now they’re getting more excited about Asia’s numerous regional cuisines. The desire for authenticity is going to continue to grow. Americans are now exposed to really good,
authentic ethnic food, and that’s what they expect. There are a lot of Generation X-ers out there who have grown up with Asian foods. And, sushi is in schools now—it’s in every mall.”

“The range of flavors that Americans are familiar with has broadened,” agrees Drescher. “We’re getting a much broader cross-section of interest in Asian flavors. And the focus of interest is moving from India to Southeast Asia.”

Southeast Asia gains ground
Although Chinese and Japanese food are likely to remain Americans’ top Asian choices, the cuisines of Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia increasingly will be considered standard Asian fare too, predict industry observers.

In fact, tempura, Southeast Asian satay, Vietnamese sandwiches, curry and Mandarin chicken salad kits already show signs of one day becoming mainstays of “American” food, suggests research from Packaged Facts.

Pan-Asian foods that mix and match cuisines are also seeing a surge in popularity, as restaurateurs lead the way by building on traditional Chinese and Japanese dishes with up-and-coming Southeast Asian flavors, particularly Thai and Vietnamese. And the more intense the flavors, the better, says Carpenter.

“People love bold,” she says. “Bold Asian flavors can go in so many different directions. If you have a bold product and use it as a base, you can make it sweet, you can make it hot.”

Food manufacturers shouldn’t be afraid to take advantage of Americans’ growing passion for the rich, full flavors of Asian cuisine, adds Drescher. “This is a very exciting time for food manufacturers, but there’s a risk of under-imagining where the American palate is going,” he says. “There are enormously rich, centuries-old culinary traditions in Asia. So many of the flavors in Asia are ready for prime time—they just need to be slightly adapted for the American market.”

The next 50 years

Made in the U.S.A.
Kikkoman’s roots may lie in Japan, but the company’s U.S. manufacturing plants are true-blue American.

From its first U.S. plant in Walworth, Wis., opened in 1973, to the 10-year-old Folsom, Calif., facility, Kikkoman has been a pioneer in producing authentic naturally brewed soy sauce using homegrown ingredients and an American work force.

Unlike some Asian foods imported from overseas, Kikkoman Soy Sauce is brewed in U.S. manufacturing plants using pure local water, North American-grown wheat and soybeans, and a proprietary seed starter to make the highest quality soy sauce possible. In addition, Kikkoman plants are HACCP approved and third-party inspected every year.

“We are proud to be one of the first Asian food companies in America,” says Yuzaburo Mogi, Kikkoman Corp. chief executive officer and chairman.

“From the start, Americans embraced our products, helping Kikkoman bring Asian flavors into the mainstream and become the nation’s leading supplier of soy sauce, teriyaki and other premium Asian condiments.”

Cutting-edge concepts with dehydrated soy sauce (l to r): Soy sauce-enhanced Rice Buns, a mega-trend in Japan, are handheld, stuffable servings of rice; Omelet Seasoning Blends, from Mexican to Italian, get a flavor boost from powdered soy sauce; sesame rice topped with nori, dehydrated soy sauce and wasabi become trendy Sushi Chips.
TRUSTED SOURCE. TRUSTED RESOURCE.

At Kikkoman, we’re here for you. With state-of-the-art production facilities in Walworth, Wis., and Folsom, Calif., and more than 10 distribution centers throughout North America, Kikkoman can assure prompt service, consistent quality and product availability.

And that’s just the beginning. Behind our products is a longstanding commitment to the prepared foods industry. So whether you need product samples, technical support or a creative partner in new product development, give us a call.

ASIAN FLAVOR RESOURCE GUIDE

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OTHER RESOURCES

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(800) 274-AIWF (2493)
www.aiwf.org

Asian Chefs Association
3145 Geary Blvd., No. 112
San Francisco, CA 94118
(415) 531-3599
www.acasf.com

The Culinary Institute of America
1946 Campus Drive
Hyde Park, NY 12538
(845) 452-9600
1-800-CULINARY
www.ciachef.edu

The Culinary Institute of America at Greystone
2555 Main St.
St. Helena, CA 94574
1-800-333-9242
www.ciachef.edu/california

International Association of Culinary Professionals
455 South Fourth St., Suite 650
Louisville, KY 40202
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(502) 581-9786
www.iacp.com

Research Chefs Association
1100 Johnson Ferry Road, Suite 300
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