

Blog Title: *Can I get a RAMEN? Your Guide to Crafting Delicious Noodles at Home*

Blog Entry 1: *Back to the Basics*

When some people think of ramen they imagine we're talking about the packs of dried noodles that resembled Justin Timberlake's hair back in the 90s. Some people may jokingly dub ramen the poor man's meal, but it is actually a beloved Japanese dish that has gained global popularity. Ramen is a dish full of delicious flavors and has endless customization possibilities! Making your own ramen might seem intimidating, but you don't have to be a professional chef to whip up a nice steaming bowl of noodles. As the start of soup season begins, we're going to dive right into the basics of crafting the comfiest bowl of ramen right at home. Most of the ingredients are easy to find at your local supermarket, so don't be worried if you can't find any Asian markets in the area. Obviously, you'll need some noodles, but the most important part to focus on is your broth; it is the heart and soul of ramen! There are so many choices, like chicken, beef, or vegetable, and it may seem hard to choose, but remember – you can create it any way YOU want. Protein and veggies help build and enhance the flavor of your broth, and you can always add additional sauces and garnishes as the final touches to your masterpiece. Enough talking – let's get to it!

Ingredients:

- Ramen Noodles (fresh or dried)
- Broth of Your Choice (chicken, pork miso, vegetable, etc.)
- Protein of Your Choice (tofu, pork, chicken, shrimp, etc.)
- Vegetables of Your Choice (mushrooms, baby corn, green onions, bok choy)
- Additional Items:
 - Soy Sauce
 - Miso Paste
 - Sesame Oil

Directions:

1. Begin with your chosen broth. Whether it's home-made or store-bought, start by simmering the broth (you can add any of the additional items for flavor enhancing, but you don't have to). Allow it to simmer for at least 30 minutes, but the longer it simmers, the deeper its flavor.
2. Next, while your broth is simmering, cook the ramen noodles according to the package directions. Drain and set aside.
3. Now it's time to prepare the fixings. Sauté your choice of vegetables and proteins until they are cooked to your liking. For my easy, go-to recipe, I usually stick to tofu (extra firm and cut into chunks since it doesn't require any cooking prep), carrots (I always have a bag of sliced carrot sticks in the fridge) and mushrooms (to add some earthy oomph to the mix).
4. This is when the magic happens; it's time to assemble your bowl! Place the cooked noodles into a bowl (preferably a deeper one). Add your veggies and protein (this is why

I like using tofu), then pour the hot broth over them. Arrange any additional toppings right on top of the noodles.

5. This is optional, but add any extra seasoning or sauces you like. I like doing a dash of soy sauce, a squeeze of lime juice, and Sriracha (sparingly, thanks to the shortage ☺) then garnishing with some chopped green onions. Now, your homemade ramen is ready to enjoy!

It's as easy as that! Feel free to take pictures and tag me in your creations y'all! Follow me on Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest for more recipes!

Blog Entry 2: Next Level Soup

Now that we've taken the first steps into the pool of ramen broth, let's elevate your flavors this week by making your broth from scratch. It may require more time and effort, but I *promise* you, the depth of flavors you'll achieve will make it truly worth all the sweat and tears. For the purpose of this recipe, I'll be specifically using chicken, but feel free to use whatever protein you'd like! For me, it's just easier to deal with the whole chicken, especially if I'm in a rush and snag a rotisserie chicken to speed up the process. You'll need to find more ingredients for this broth, including (but not limited to) onion, ginger, garlic and any additional enhancers and garnishes. Now, let's get down and dirty for this one.

Ingredients for Homemade Chicken Broth:

- Chicken with bones (I like using a package of chicken thighs)
- Water
- 1 Large Onion (quartered)
- 1-2 Pieces of Ginger (sliced)
- 3 Garlic Cloves (minced)
- Scallions
- Soy Sauce
- Mirin (a type of rice cooking wine)
- Salt

Directions:

1. Start by boiling your chicken in a large pot of salted water. About 10 minutes or so, remove the chicken from the water. Let it cool, then clean off the chicken from the bones, tossing them back into the water.
2. Add a quartered onion, thinly sliced ginger, and minced garlic cloves (as a garlic girl, I added like 6 cloves) to the pot of bones and water. Bring the water back to boil, then reduce the heat to a gentle simmer. Skim off any foam that rises to surface.
3. Here comes the fun part: seasoning your homemade broth! Add soy sauce, mirin (or substitute using a flavored rice vinegar), and more salt to taste, adjusting any ingredient or seasoning to your preference. I like to add in a chopped red Thai chili pepper for some heat.
4. Once it tastes like liquid gold strain your broth through a fine-mesh sieve or cheesecloth to remove the solids.

Annnnd *voila!* You just made your own ramen broth! Part of the reason I love using thighs for this recipe is that I already have the chicken ready to shred and add for my dish. Chicken broth is also easy to further enhance with my favorite veggies: baby corn, shitake mushrooms, snow peas, and bok choy add some umami sparkle to my ramen. Regardless, you've reached a new level of authenticity and flavor right in your own kitchen! Make sure you're following me to stay updated for more ramen recipes!

Blog Entry 3: It's Time to Get FUNKY!

Welcome back, my aspiring ramen chefs! Are you feeling bored of the basic ramen and ready to let your creative side take over? This week, we're going to explore some of my favorite ramen variations that will surely catch your tastebuds' attention!

1. Spicy Kimchi Ramen: This one is for my funky and spice-lovin' peeps. One of my favorite side dishes is the infamous Korean Kimchi! Adding a generous spoonful of this funky cabbage and some of the juices will give your ramen a nice, spicy kick. I generally prefer using a pork or chicken broth base for this recipe, topping it off a soft-boiled egg and sesame seeds. While some prefer to just drop their egg into the broth to poach, I like having a batch of eggs already boiled and ready to add ([click here](#) for my recipe on the perfect soft-boiled eggs). It gives it a picturesque finish to show off my mad ramen skills! Just take a look:



2. Vegetarian Miso Ramen: Whether it's a dietary preference or you're trying the #MeatLessMonday trend, you'll want to try the vegetarian remix with Miso Ramen. This recipe creates a miso-based broth using (homemade or store-bought) vegetable broth. I like adding some of my favorite veggies (baby corn and bamboo shoots), but I'll also add

shitake mushrooms and tofu cubes to give it a meatier feel. Top it off with a drizzle of sesame oil and chopped scallions.



3. Seafood Ramen: Calling all seafood lovers with my Seafood Ramen! I love switching things up from the usual chicken or pork to using a seafood broth made from fish or shrimp. If you're feeling super adventurous, try adding some squid rings for a different texture. You could take it further and bring in clams, scallops, fish cakes (Naruto's namesake), and anything else that comes from the sea! My grandmama absolutely loves when I bring my seafood ramen, but she likes throwing in some fresh lime juice and garnishing with nori seaweed. I like to think that my recipe takes her back to her childhood, but she's too busy slurping up her noodles to confirm that.



4. Tsukemen (pronounced "skee-men"): Our last variation for today is like from the Wild, Wild West of Ramen Town: Tsukemen AKA the Dipping Ramen. For this dish, the ramen noodles are served cold or room-temp with a separate bowl of hot, concentrated broth for dipping. I had my first bowl of Tsukemen when I visited some cousins out in L.A. a few years back, but it's *much* harder to find here in Detroit, which is why I *had* to find a

recipe to satisfy my cravings! This one is easy to customize too; you can add anything to your noodles or use as a side dish, including any veggies, kimchi, seaweed, and boiled eggs. The broth used for dipping in this recipe is much more intense than our standard broths, so once you've finished the noodles, adding some hot water helps dilute it enough to be finished off as a more pleasant soup. This is how I set it up when I'm at home:



Anyway, these ramen variations are just the tip of the creativity iceberg! Ultimately, it's up to you: experiment with different ingredients, broths, and seasonings to create your own signature ramen. Let your imagination run wild and create all the ramens because the possibilities are endless! Leave a comment with your favorite ramen or let me know anything you'd like to try! Maybe next week I'll craft something even funkier, so make sure to follow me to find out what's next!