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Paul Lee in the kitchen with Chef Ben.



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Chongga brand Korean rice cakes.
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Fried rice cakes with
Korean sweet chilli sauce (p.51).



BONITO, WASABI LEAF DRESSING,
WASABI FLOWERS

A thriving wasabi industry has been established in Tasmania over the past decade or so. The fresh wasabi leaves and flowers have a subtle floral flavour unlike the harsh industrially processed stuff (that often contains no wasabi at all).

In a small saucepan over medium heat, place the vinegar, sugar and salt along with 500 ml (17 fl oz/2 cups) water. Heat until the sugar has dissolved, taking care not to let it boil. Remove the pan from the heat, transfer the liquid to a bowl and allow this pickling liquid to cool in the refrigerator.

If your bonito fillets are small, remove the pin bones with tweezers. If your fillets are larger, remove the bones by using a knife to cut down either side of the central bones and the bloodline.

Submerge the bonito in the pickling liquid and refrigerate for 45 minutes.

To make the wasabi leaf dressing, stir all the ingredients together in a small bowl. Taste and adjust the seasoning with salt if needed.

Remove the bonito fillets from the pickling liquid and pat them dry with paper towel.

Using a blowtorch, scorch the skin side of the fish only until blistered. Alternatively, the fillets can be placed under a hot grill (broiler) or salamander to scorch the skin.

Lay the fillet, skin side up, on a chopping board and slice the bonito into 5 mm (¼ in) slices.

Arrange 5 slices on each serving plate and add 1 teaspoon of dressing on and around the bonito. To finish, arrange the wasabi flower shoots and small leaves on and around the sliced fish.

SERVES 6
250 ml (8½ fl oz/1 cup) rice wine vinegar
140 g (5 oz/¾ cup) sugar
2 tablespoons salt
400 g (14 oz) bonito fillets, skin on
6 wasabi flower shoots and smaller leaves

WASABI LEAF DRESSING
1 tablespoon Spring onion oil (p.219)
1 tablespoon ground wasabi sauce (preferably Hawasabi brand)
small pinch of sugar
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1½ teaspoons grapeseed oil
2 wasabi leaves, shredded

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Bonito, pre- and post-scorching.



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Organisation is the key in any kitchen.





**TUNA , AVOCADO , WAKAME ,
PICKLED CUCUMBER**

To make the pickled cucumber, in a small saucepan put the vinegar, 125 ml (4½ fl oz/½ cup) water, the sugar and salt and cook until the sugar has dissolved, taking care not to let it boil. Remove from the heat and allow to cool for 10 minutes. Slice the cucumber into 5 mm (¼ in) rounds. Pour the pickling liquid over the cucumber and leave for at least 2 hours.

To make the soy dressing, place all the ingredients in an upright blender except the grapeseed oil and process well. With the blender running, slowly pour the oil in to emulsify the dressing.

Mash the avocado with the milk and push it through a fine sieve.

Process the wakame finely in an electric spice grinder.

To serve, arrange the tuna on a plate and place small spoonfuls of avocado on each piece of fish. Drizzle over 2 teaspoons of the soy dressing. Season the tuna lightly with sea salt. Place one piece of pickled cucumber on each piece of tuna. Place a slice of radish onto each piece of tuna. Sprinkle the whole dish with wakame powder.

SERVES 2-4
¼ avocado
¼ teaspoon milk
½ teaspoon dried wakame
250 g (9 oz) sashimi-grade tuna,
trimmed and cut into 1.5 cm
(½ in) cubes
¼ teaspoon sea salt flakes
2 small red radishes, thinly sliced

SOY DRESSING
2 tablespoons light soy sauce
½ teaspoon rice wine vinegar
¼ teaspoon caster sugar
zest of ¼ lemon
60 ml (2 fl oz/¼ cup) grapeseed oil

PICKLED CUCUMBER
60 ml (2 fl oz/¼ cup) rice wine vinegar
2 tablespoons sugar
2 teaspoons salt
1 baby cucumber, sliced into 5 mm
(¼ in) rounds



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Setting up.
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Grilled octopus with fermented chilli (p.99).





SPINACH AND TOFU DUMPLINGS

Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil. Blanch the spinach for 10 seconds and then cool immediately in iced water. Place the cold spinach in a colander, squeezing it in your hands to remove all the excess liquid. Roughly chop the spinach and set aside.

Heat the grapeseed oil in a small frying pan over medium heat and cook the garlic chives and spring onion for a few seconds until aromatic. Add the tofu and cook for 3 minutes. Add the preserved vegetable and spinach and cook for 2 more minutes, then season with the sea salt and white pepper. Remove from the heat and allow to cool. Once cool, stir through the sesame oil and adjust the seasoning if necessary.

To make the dumplings, place a rounded teaspoon of the filling in the centre of a wonton wrapper. Dip your finger in water and moisten the bottom edge of the wrapper. Gather the points of the wrapper up around the filling to form a pouch. Squeeze the wrapper together at the top to seal the dumpling. Repeat with the remaining filling and wrappers.

Put the finished dumplings on a tray dusted lightly with flour and store them in the refrigerator until ready to use.

Slice the ginger into a super-fine julienne and leave to steep in cold water until ready to use.

Cook the dumplings, in batches if necessary, for 4 minutes in a large saucepan of boiling water. Remove the dumplings with a slotted spoon and drain.

Serve a few dumplings per person in a bowl. Top each bowl of dumplings with some ginger shreds, 1 teaspoon soy sauce and ½ teaspoon garlic oil.

MAKES ABOUT 20 DUMPLINGS

600 g (1 lb 5 oz) English spinach, washed
 1 tablespoon grapeseed oil
 3 tablespoons thinly sliced flowering garlic chives
 2 spring onions (scallions), white part only, thinly sliced
 150 g (5½ oz) firm tofu, finely chopped
 80 g (2¾ oz) Chinese preserved vegetable, finely chopped
 ½ teaspoon sea salt
 ½ teaspoon ground white pepper
 1 teaspoon sesame oil
 1 packet wonton wrappers
 plain (all-purpose) flour for dusting
 5 cm (2 in) piece fresh ginger
 Garlic oil (p.219) to serve
 soy sauce to serve



BRUSSELS SPROUTS AND CHINESE SAUSAGE

This is a great vegetable dish that we serve in winter at Supernormal. The sweetness of the Chinese sausage wins over most opponents of the brussels sprout. We always use the tiniest organic brussels sprouts available — they're less bitter and have a tighter, firmer texture.

In a bowl, whisk together all the ingredients for the dressing. Check the seasoning and set aside.

Trim the brussels sprouts of any loose outer leaves and cut them in half lengthways. Slice the sausage thinly, on an angle.

Heat the grapeseed oil in a frying pan over medium heat. Add the brussels sprouts, cut side down, and sauté until golden and caramelised, about 5 minutes — you may have to do this in batches if the sprouts don't all fit in your pan. Turn the sprouts over and repeat. Add the sausage and sauté for 3 minutes, tossing the contents of the pan regularly. Remove the pan from the heat and transfer the sprouts to a mixing bowl. Repeat the process until all the brussels sprouts are cooked.

Just before serving, add the dressing to the sprouts and mix well. Serve warm.

SERVES 4 (AS A SIDE DISH)
300 g (10½ oz) brussels sprouts
2 Chinese sausages (lap cheong)
2 tablespoons grapeseed oil

DRESSING
1½ tablespoons rice wine vinegar
1 tablespoon fish sauce
1 tablespoon mirin
2 teaspoons light soy sauce
1 tablespoon water
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1 small bird's eye chilli, finely chopped
2 teaspoons grapeseed oil
1 teaspoon sugar



DESSERT

I think desserts are about fun and indulgence. Dessert offers the chance to mess around a bit, to break away from the idea of being sensible and healthy and just go all out. Desserts can have an almost cartoonish element, a sense of playfulness that extends beyond the flavour to colour and texture.

My approach to desserts has been strongly influenced by a trip to Japan where I discovered the things they do with soft serve ice cream. Soft serve is epic there and they come up with some of the kookiest flavour combinations imaginable. It's quite awe inspiring. I first came across it on Shodoshima, an island in Japan's Seto Inland Sea. The main industry there — other than fishing — is the production of soy sauce and there are many brewing facilities on the island. Each of them makes their own distinctive soy sauce and they all have their own shops where they sell bottles of their product. They also sell soy sauce flavoured soft serve. It has a light brown tinge and a really nice savoury element — not salty but savoury and not too sweet. And interestingly, the soft serves in each shop were all slightly different. It was that odd but completely successful hybrid of American and Japanese flavours that has informed the way I have approached desserts ever since. And, of course, we have a soft serve machine at Supernormal.

There are some traditional recipes in this chapter — such as the peanut sesame cookies — but mostly the dishes here are hybrids. The peanut butter parfait that we make at Supernormal is essentially a Western dish, but the nut element means that it sits easily alongside Asian-style desserts.

Some of the desserts here are quite sweet but the sugar levels can be very easily tempered to suit your own taste. You can pull back on the amount of sugar in the recipe because many of them come with sauces and syrups that are quite sweet on their own. Play around a little — it is dessert after all.



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Peanut butter parfait, peanut dacquoise,
chocolate ganache, butterscotch sauce (p.198).