

# South River Currents

NOURISHING LIFE FOR THE HUMAN SPIRIT SINCE 1979.™

Fall/Winter 2003-04

INTRODUCING

## Garlic Red Pepper Miso

*An exciting new South River specialty*



**W**e love this new miso! Warm orange in color, it has a mild spicy taste and aroma. It is a delicious seasoning for soup, and, because it is relatively low in salt (6%), it can be lightly spread on whole-grain toast with olive oil or butter. It is tasty and colorful on pasta dishes. (Add just before serving.) It makes a wonderful “Red Empress” salad dressing and, as with the Dandelion Leek Miso, a delicious instant soup broth — on its own, or with chopped fresh parsley. (See recipes inside.)

### *The story behind this miso*

For the past two years, we have been working to create a light, low-salt companion to our dark and hearty Dandelion Leek Miso. Starting with our family favorite, Chickpea Miso, as the base, then adding immune-strengthening garlic and deeply warming red pepper paste, we made experimental batches. At one point, nearly a dozen different samples lined our shelves. Last spring, one sample kept calling us back for more. In fact, it was used up so quickly that soon we were left with nothing but an empty jar.

Our next step was to translate this domestic

success into a recipe suitable for commercial production. We ordered about 300 pounds of fresh organic garlic from California and seventy pounds of roasted red pepper paste from Turkey.

For several days, fresh garlic, lightly steaming in our wood-fired cauldron, filled the shop with its head-clearing aroma. Red pepper paste transformed the Chickpea Miso base to an autumn orange color. Next, we added dried nettle greens and sea vegetables. Finally, we put the newborn miso into its summer vat and waited with anticipation for the fall harvest. Please enjoy this exciting new miso.

## *Reduced Risk of Breast Cancer Linked to Miso Soup*

An article published in the English *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* in June 2003, reports breast cancer risk was reduced by *one half* in Japanese women who ate *three or more* bowls of miso soup on an almost daily basis! Conducted by the Japan Public Health Study of Cancer and Cardiovascular Disease, the report monitored 21,852 women from 1990 to 2000. Post-menopausal women showed the highest reduction of risk.

With high quality miso available in the USA, we too can enjoy the protective health benefits of this miraculous food.

Reference: *Soy, Isoflavones, and Breast Cancer Risk in Japan*, by Yamamoto, S. in *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* Vol. 95, pgs 906-913, June 18, 2003. (To read an abstract of the article on the web go to <http://highwire.stanford.edu/cgi/search> and enter the reference information.)



A SOUTH RIVER LEGEND CONTINUES

## Dandelion Leek Miso 2003

In the 20-odd years since we have been making this specialty miso, we have never had enough to last through the year; we have always sold out. This year we have on hand the largest batch ever: three weeks of harvesting, washing, steaming, cutting, and mixing, including over 300 pounds of fresh dandelion greens and about 350 man/woman hours of labor. This may be the best batch yet!

Many people have told us that a broth made with this miso has nursed them through illness, or helped them while traveling where good quality food was not available. This miso is great for an instant soup broth in the workplace, or, for a “pick-me-up” instead of coffee. One friend gave Dandelion Leek Miso as a gift to the royal household of Japan.



UPPER LEFT: Harvesting the dandelion greens, with flowers still in the bud, at South River  
ABOVE: Jun Hough and Ikuko Matsuda chopping steamed wild leeks. LEFT: Wild leeks ready for chopping.

## MAKING MISO IN THE NOURISHING TRADITION



1 Cooking with wood fire in the masonry stove.



2 Inoculating the steamed grain with koji spores (*Aspergillus oryzae*).



3 Two days later, harvesting koji, the cultured grain.

# Cooking for Life with South River Miso

## Miso-Ginger Hot Shot

This recipe is adapted from one sent to us from Japan by Miyuki Embree, who writes: “I love miso and I use it everyday when I cook meals for my family. Here is a special recipe that we use as a home remedy for colds. This has been well received by my Canadian in-laws; they think it really works.”

- 2 teaspoons Garlic Red Pepper or other light Miso
- 1-2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger
- 2 teaspoons chopped scallions or onion

—Put all the ingredients in a mug and fill with hot boiling water.

—Stir and drink before going to bed.

—Next morning you will be back in great shape.

Thanks to Miyuki Embree.

## Red Empress Dressing

- ¼ cup cider or rice vinegar
- 2 tablespoons Garlic Red Pepper Miso (Another light variety may be used but will not give you the red empress!)
- 2 teaspoons honey or rice syrup (optional)
- 2-3 tablespoons raw onion (optional)
- ¾ cup olive or sesame oil

In blender, mix on high speed all ingredients except oil.

With blender on medium speed, slowly add oil.

2-4 tablespoons water can be added if a thinner consistency is desired.

Add ¼-½ cup fresh parsley, basil, or other herbs to give this red empress a touch of green.

## Mighty Instant Soup

—Mix 1 heaping teaspoon of Garlic Red Pepper miso with a little hot water in a mug.

—Add finely chopped onions and fresh parsley.

—Add hot, boiling water to fill the mug.

—Stir and let sit for a few moments before drinking.

(Of course, other varieties of miso can be used. Dandelion Leek Miso is especially good for this instant soup.)

## Tofu “Cheese”

—Cut a block of tofu in half sidewise, so you end up with two thinner blocks of the original size.

—Cover each half-block with a one-year light miso. Garlic Red Pepper Miso should be great for this recipe!

—Place the miso-coated tofu in a glass or ceramic container and refrigerate or keep in a cool place 6-12 hours. Check it for desirable consistency and saltiness. The longer it stays covered with miso, the saltier the tofu will become.

—Scrape off the miso. (Save the miso for use in other dishes; it will be less salty.)

—Mash the tofu cheese and use as a spread on crackers, on pizza, or in other recipes.



## Frequently Asked Questions about Miso

**How long does miso keep? I've had a jar in my refrigerator for about a year. Is it still OK to use?**

Because of its salt content, miso will keep for years under refrigeration. It is fine to use miso that has been in the fridge for a year or more.

**I have heard it is best not to cook miso; if so, how do I make miso soup?**

Each teaspoonful of unpasteurized miso contains millions of active microorganisms which are beneficial to the dynamic digestion and assimilation of all foods, and which help to establish and maintain a healthy, vigorous digestive system. For these reasons, miso should not be subjected to prolonged cooking or high heat. Add miso at the end of cooking and turn the heat source down very low or remove soup from the stove and serve several minutes later, allowing the flavors to blend.

**How much miso should I use?**

For greatest benefit miso should be used in small amounts on a regular basis. One to two tablespoons per day would be average use. When seasoning soup, begin by adding a small amount of miso — one to two teaspoons per cup of liquid — adding more if needed. Miso soup should taste neither too salty nor too bland. The miso should mingle with the flavor of the soup and enhance, but not overpower it.



4 Cooling the beans after they've been cooked by wood fire for 20 hours.



5 Raw miso, after the cooked beans have been mashed and mixed with the salted koji.



6 Miso aging in wooden vats, as long as three years for some varieties.

# SOUTH RIVER MISO COMPANY

## Three-Year Miso

These varieties of miso are dark in color due to their long natural aging in wooden vats for at least three summer seasons. Their unrivaled, savory flavor satisfies the soul in nourishing soups and stews. Especially valued for winter cooking, they provide high-quality vegetable protein. Salt content ranges from 10 to 12 percent.

### Three-Year Barley Miso

This ancient and robust miso is our most popular variety. Now a staple in many American kitchens, it is most often recommended for healing diets. The color ranges from dark pumpkin to russet brown as it ages. Some years ago, this variety was the winner of East-West Journal's "Most Hearty Miso" award. Made with barley and soybeans.

### Black Soy Barley Miso\*

This miso is identical to our Three-Year Barley, except that it is made with black, rather than the standard yellow soybeans. Black soybeans are known for their rich, sweet taste. Traditional wisdom credits them with healing powers for the female reproductive system. Made with barley and black soybeans.

### Hearty Brown Rice Miso

Deep, dark, and nourishing, this miso is wonderful in soups, stews, and casseroles. It is a satisfying alternative to the three year barley misos, containing all their depth and power along with the extra sweetness of brown rice. Made with brown rice and black soybeans. GLUTEN FREE

### Chickpea Barley Miso\*

We first made this soy-free variety for a friend who requested a long-term barley miso without soybeans. The chickpea, staple of Middle Eastern and Mediterranean peoples since ancient times, is one of the most easily digestible beans. This miso has a rich, well-rounded taste. Made with barley and chickpeas. SOY FREE



## One-Year Miso

Sweeter in taste than the hearty varieties, light miso is fresh and lively, and comes in happy, sunlight colors. It is rich in amylase digestive enzymes, and brings a transformative touch to sauces, spreads, seasonings, salad dressings, soups, and breakfast porridge. The best choice when introducing friends to miso for the first time, it is also a favorite with children. Aged in wooden vats for a minimum of three months, but usually for six months to one year, the salt content ranges from 4 to 7 percent.

### Sweet-Tasting Brown Rice Miso

Blonde or caramel in color, this is our most popular light miso. Several leading natural food restaurants use this variety for making delicious salad dressings. Over the years, this has been a favorite variety for a number of schools and teaching centers such as the Omega Institute in Rhinebeck, New York. Made with brown rice and soybeans. GLUTEN FREE

### Chickpea Miso

This is our family favorite for a versatile light miso. It has characteristics similar to Sweet Tasting Brown Rice; only, it is made with the sumptuous chickpea instead of soybeans. We are always remarking about the wonderful, sweet flavor this miso brings to our table. Made with brown rice and chickpeas. GLUTEN AND SOY FREE

### Golden Millet Miso\*

Millet has been a staple in our family for many years. This tiny grain adds its sunny color and gentle sweetness to this smooth textured miso. Made exclusively at South River where we have the flexibility of making small batches of unique varieties. Made with millet and soybeans. GLUTEN FREE

### Azuki Bean Miso

Nowhere else can you find miso made with the small red azuki beans, highly regarded for their nutritional and healing properties in Oriental medicine. Festive burgundy in color, this delicate miso is ideal for seasoning light soups, bean dishes, sauces, and salad dressings. Made with brown rice and azuki beans. GLUTEN AND SOY FREE

### Mellow Barley Miso\*

The mild sweetness and soothing qualities of barley make this versatile variety a favorite for many miso lovers. It has been the most popular miso in the southernmost part of Japan for over 350 years. Made with barley and soybeans.

## SPECIALTY MISOS

### Dandelion Leek Miso\*

This legendary miso is made with wild-crafted plants which we gather from remote woodlands and from our farm along the South River, including dandelion greens, wild leeks, and nettle greens. Mineral-rich sea vegetables from the coast of Maine enhance its healing power. Made with Hearty Brown Rice Miso (black soybeans and brown rice). GLUTEN FREE

### Garlic Red Pepper Miso\*

Mildly spicy and deeply warming, this autumn-orange-colored specialty is made with immune-strengthening fresh garlic and sun-baked Turkish red pepper paste and nettle greens mixed and aged with Chickpea Miso (brown rice and chickpeas). Warms the body and the soul. GLUTEN AND SOY FREE

### Our Lowest Salt Miso

#### Sweet White Miso

Famous to the Kyoto region of Japan for generations, this miso is popular for its very sweet, gentle flavor and its smooth, creamy texture. It has a low salt content (4 percent) and a very short fermentation time (3 weeks), and it is delicious in spreads, dips, sauces and salad dressings, or for seasoning light soups. Made from soybeans and lightly polished brown rice. GLUTEN FREE

*\* These varieties are produced in limited quantities and may not always be available.*

# MORE GREAT PRODUCTS

from SOUTH RIVER MISO

**Miso Tamari** • *Certified Organic and unpasteurized.*

In Japanese, *tamari* means “little puddle” and refers to the savory liquid that collects in a vat of miso. Our genuine tamari is similar to its cousin, soy sauce, but much sweeter and lighter in taste. Friends nearby come back year after year, declaring that there is no seasoning comparable to South River Miso Tamari.

**Brown Rice Koji** • *Certified Organic*

Koji is made by inoculating steamed grain with the spores of *Aspergillus oryzae*, a mold which transforms the grain into sweet, fragrant koji, or cultured grain, during a two day fermentation process. Making koji is the first step towards making miso. In Japan, rice koji is used for a number of other fermented foods beside miso, including saké, amasaké, rice vinegar, and mirin. We make our rice koji from slightly polished, organic short grain brown rice. Most people use this koji for making their own homemade amasaké, a sweet pudding or drink. One cup of koji weighs 6 ounces. (A recipe for amasaké is included with order.)

from BLUE HERON FARM

**Maple Syrup** • *Certified Organic*

Grade A, Dark Amber Maple Syrup produced by Norma Coli at Blue Heron Farm in nearby Charlemont, Massachusetts. She is one of the very few full-time, female sugar makers in New England. There is nothing like pure Maple Syrup for a natural sweetener; Norma does it right.

from TOHUM

Our friend Beti Minkin and associates have a beautiful Natural Living Center in southern Turkey, on the Mediterranean coast. Part of their work is to bring traditional village foods to the U.S. in an effort to keep these heirloom foods alive. You have to try these superlative products to believe their quality. The product name, *Tobum*, means *seed* in Turkish.

**Sun Dried Mulberries**

Growing at an elevation of 4500 feet above sea level, these wild, white mulberries are dried under the radiant Mediterranean sun. Wonderful as a sweet, nutritious snack, or cooked and used in breakfast cereals and desserts. Mulberries offer a refreshing flavor alternative to raisins.

**Sesame Tahini**

In an ancient village in southern Turkey the art of making tahini by wood fire is passed down through the generations. Sesame seeds, organically grown for centuries, are sun-dried, carefully roasted in wood fire ovens, and stone ground in one of the few remaining water mills of the region. The resulting tahini is dark in color, rich in flavor, and very high in calcium and iron.

**Red Pepper Paste**

This delicious and concentrated red pepper paste is medium hot and full of complex flavors. Royal red in color, it can be used in small amounts to give flavor, spice, color, and warmth to spreads, dips, and salad dressings. It makes a wonderful addition to miso soup, warming the body to the core in wintertime. We use this same red pepper paste as the ingredient in creating our Garlic Red Pepper Miso. A little bit goes a long way.

## OUR GUARANTEE



*If you are not happy  
with any of our products,  
we will gladly refund the  
total cost of your purchase.  
Please call or write to us  
with any questions  
or comments you may have.*

*We are here to learn from each other  
and to help each other grow  
in the True Spirit of all people.*

*Ten thousand flowers in spring, the moon in autumn,  
A cool breeze in summer, snow in winter.  
If your mind isn't clouded by unnecessary things,  
This is the best season of your life.*

Wu-Men (1183-1260)

From *The Enlightened Heart*, Stephen Mitchell, Ed. (New York: Harper Collins, 1993)



*The South River team in front of the miso shop at the start of our new season. Left to right: Jun Hough, Robin Cole, Deborah Duchin, Steve Freiman, Connie Mosher, Ikuko Matsuda, Yukio Doyama with Gaella and Christian Elwell, front center.*



*The South River, as it flows through our farm.*

Dear Customers, dear friends,

Your letters mean a great deal to all of us at South River. We read them at our staff meetings and delight in the warm glow of your appreciation. Whatever goodness and healing strength you find in our miso is due to the integrity of the ancient process by which it is made, especially the long slow cooking of the beans by wood fire and the hand-care each pound of miso receives from start to finish.

Through your letters, we feel connected to a larger, unseen community. We are glad to be part of the circle around your table. Thank you for nourishing us in this way!

*Christian and Gaella Elwell*  
and the South River team

## Love Letters

*Thank you so much for your wonderful miso. I so much appreciate the care and integrity used in producing your fine product. I especially appreciate your use of glass instead of plastic. It really makes a huge difference regarding health issues as well as taste....*

D.M., ATLANTIC CITY, NJ

*Just had my first cup of South River Golden Millet Miso and I feel better than I have for a long time! ...Thanks for the great variety of products.*

B. Z., SPOKANE, WA

*Thank you very much for The Little Book of Miso Recipes. I love it! It's very well done, very inspiring. I also discovered your Dandelion Leek Miso, the ultimate pleasure.*

S. S., SAN FRANCISCO, CA

*Just a note to tell you I love, love, love, love, your miso!!!! ...My body cells just vibrate, it seems, when I down some... Thank you for such a sacred, time-honored product. It's way above any other miso out there and full of life force. From a former non-Miso eater...*

R.M., MERRIMACK, NH

*The Dandelion Leek Miso is delicious! You make the best miso on the market. I will do my best to promote your products.*

L.K., BRIGHTON, MA

*[In August of 2000] ... I attended a class, "Exploring the Spirit of Miso", conducted by Christian Elwell. ... I shared my own healing story. I cut my forehead badly, requiring 14 stitches. I followed the healing recommendation from Michio Kushi's Basic Home Remedies: to reduce swelling and prevent infection, I applied nightly a pack of 50% miso and 50% brown rice wrapped in cheese-cloth. Today I have barely a scar.*

S. K., WOODBURY, CT

*Thanks for offering an incredibly high quality product! I tell everyone that South River is the HIGHEST quality miso available! Your fermented porridge recipe has helped me greatly!*

V.W., SEYMOUR, TN

*Yours is the best tamari I've ever tasted; and the miso is probably the best in the world —truly la crème de la crème.*

J.S., COCOA, FL