

South River Currents

NOURISHING LIFE FOR THE HUMAN SPIRIT SINCE 1979.™

Fall/Winter 2009/2010



May the Circle Be Unbroken

BY CHRISTIAN ELWELL

Although a variety of naturally made miso is available in natural food stores, South River Miso due to its ingredients and manufacturing methods is a unique cultural artifact, a remnant of taste and quality from Japan's centuries old handcrafted miso tradition.

—John Belleme,
author of *Cooking with Japanese Foods*

For over 25 years I have been growing rice in small plots, saving seed from year to year. One day last April as I was about to

plant the rice again, an old friend, Bob Carr, from Ohio, dropped in out of the blue. After I welcomed him and told him that I was plant-

ing rice, he asked me if I had read *Anastasia*, which he pronounced in phonetic Russian, "on-a-star-see-ya." The book* is about the way of life and teachings of a remarkable healer, real or imagined, by the name of Anastasia, who lives in Siberia. What I learned from Bob that day has been informing me about many things ever since.



Early morning, August 14, sun rising on the rice paddy behind the miso shop with rice flowers in full bloom. Inset, right: dew drenched awns, each one connecting the heavens to every single grain of rice, each born new out of the All.

* *Anastasia*, by Vladimir Megre (2008: Ringing Cedars Press, www.ringingcedars.com)

A note about ordering...

99% of our customers now order online:

www.southernrivermiso.com

Please go to our web site, for price and ordering information.

We have 10 varieties of miso available along with limited amounts of unpasteurized miso tamari.

If you don't have a computer, please call us: 413 369-4057.

If you prefer not to call, please write!



Right: The rice paddy after harvest. South River Farm is also home to Natural Roots, a thriving, horse-powered CSA (Community Supported Agriculture), with vegetable fields pictured in background. Above: Pat on lunch break. Photo inset far right: day-old, green tree frog resting on a leaf in the rice paddy after emerging from its watery life as a tadpole. Flower heads began emerging from the rice plants at the same time.



The first, perhaps most important thing Bob shared with me from Anastasia was this: *The plants no longer know who they are serving.*

We are beginning to see that we are woven into a fabric of life and goodness in a way that reaches far beyond our material understandings, which are too often *mis*-understandings. We think food plants are to be manipulated according to our short-sighted designs. In truth, we are all woven out of the light of cosmic being and intelligence. We need the nourishment and support of a healthy plant kingdom for our daily sustenance, *and the plants need us*: not only for our wise stewardship and caretaking. They need the *feed-back* of our being, in order to give to us the precise qualities we need for our ongoing evolution and healing.

In this country there are millions of acres of cereal grains and food plants that no longer "know" who they serve. They have never been touched with the human hand, nor do they hear the solemn prayers our ancestors once sang. Plants and human beings for millennia have been co-creating each other. Now, with the mentality of slaveholders, we manipulate

I have been using miso for over 35 years and discovered your miso almost 15 years ago. Having searched the world over for the very finest quality miso, I am certain that yours is the healthiest, most traditional miso on the planet. I also use your koji to make amazake for my family. Congratulations on maintaining such integrity and dedication to creating only the BEST. I am expanding my business of herbal and nutritional consulting and will be carrying your miso as part of my healing foods line.

—C. S., CA

plants and animals as if they have no being or wisdom of their own. We demand of them, "Produce! Produce!" The plant world surrenders its fruit, increasingly empty of real, cosmic health and nutrition. No enriched Wonder Bread can heal us.

So Bob told me what Anastasia would have us do when planting seeds: Place the seeds under your tongue for nine minutes. The seeds will receive the invisible code of our bodily-being.

Hold the seeds between the palms of your hands. Then, breathe on the seeds. The seeds are informed by our breath.

Now hold the seeds in the outstretched palms of your hands, open to the heavens above as you stand barefoot on the ground below where they will be planted. The seeds absorb all of this.

Now plant these seeds in the earth.

I said to Bob, "I have more than a thousand seeds. I can't put them all under my tongue!"

"That's all right," he said. "Just take a few and follow the indications. They will communicate the information to the rest of the plants."

I followed this procedure for twelve seeds and interspersed those seedlings among the others. Within a few weeks all the plants in the rice paddy were intermingling, physically



I love your miso, I am now 71 years old and since 31 years in South Korea, where I've lived, I've never been sick, never gone to hospital ... I think that miso does something ... again, I can say that I enjoy your delicious miso, using every time, instead of salt, when I can.

—M. T., SOUTH KOREA

Cooking for Life

with  **SOUTH RIVER MISO**

Basic Miso Soup

- 2 tsp. oil
- 1 cup onions, thinly sliced
- 1 cup sliced carrots
- 2 cups finely chopped cabbage or other greens
- 1 quart water
- 3-5 Tbs. miso, depending on variety

Heat oil in heavy pot. Add onions, carrots and sauté 2-3 mins. Add water, cover, bring to boil, and simmer 10 mins. Add cabbage and simmer 2-3 mins. Cream miso with a little of the broth, add to soup, and turn off heat. Serve garnished with minced parsley. Serves 4.

Egg-drop Miso Soup*

- 1 fresh organic egg
- 1 quart of soup stock or water
- ¼ cup miso
- 1 minced scallion
- Optional: 1 sheet of nori (sea vegetable),
toasted and cut into small pieces

Beat egg. Bring stock to boil; pour egg into boiling stock in a thin thread, stirring quickly while you pour. (If you do not stir, the egg will clump up.) The thin thread of the egg-drop cooks very quickly, rising to the surface of the soup like tiny, beautiful flowers. Boil a minute or two, then turn down flame. Place miso in a bowl, add broth, and purée. Blend purée with soup and simmer a few minutes. Garnish each bowl with nori and scallion. Serves 4.

Miso Mighty (Better 'n Coffee) Instant Drink†

- 1 cup of hot water
- 1-2 tsp. miso, depending on variety

Mixed into a cup of hot water, miso makes a simple and fortifying drink, a good substitute for coffee. Use Dandelion Leek or Garlic Red Pepper for an especially satisfying instant broth.

* Adapted from Aveline Kushi, *How to Cook with Miso*. (Japan Publications, 1978) pg. 59.

† Adapted from William Shurtleff, *The Book of Miso* (Ten Speed Press: 1983) pg 109.



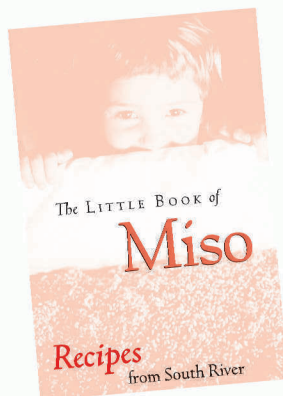
Miso — A Natural Probiotic Medicine

Miso is prized for its ability to aid in the digestion and assimilation of other foods. At least four digestive agents are contained in all non-pasteurized miso: natural digestive enzymes, lactic-acid producing bacteria (*Lactobacillus* and *Pediococcus* species), salt-resistant yeasts, and the mold and other microorganisms present in koji. Only the very hardiest microorganisms are able to survive the rigors of several years' fermentation in the presence of salt. Thus they and their enzymes are well suited to continue their work in the large and small intestines where they break down or digest complex proteins, carbohydrates, and fats into simpler, more easily assimilable molecules. In Japan, commercially available digestive enzymes are often made from the same type of koji used to make miso.



A well known Japanese proverb states that a bowl of miso soup each day keeps the doctor away, and traditional folk wisdom abounds with sayings about the value of miso as a medicine used to cure colds, improve metabolism, clear the skin, and help develop resistance to parasitic diseases. Miso is often used quite specifically ...to settle an upset stomach, ameliorate a hangover, or get rid of acid indigestion.

From *The Book of Miso*, by William Shurtleff and Akiko Aoyagi
(Ten Speed Press, 1983), page 21 and page 25



For more great miso recipes, see *The Little Book of Miso: Recipes from South River*, featuring recipes for soups and stews, salad dressings, spreads, amazing Miso Porridge, marinades, pasta, grain, vegetable, and bean dishes...even desserts! Download a PDF of *The Little Book of Miso* from our Web site, southrivermiso.com, or order it by mail for \$2:

SOUTH RIVER MISO COMPANY
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888 SHELburnE FALLS RD.
CONWAY, MASS. 01341

www.southrivermiso.com

Miso 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.

South River Miso Hummus

- 1 cup cooked chickpeas
- 4 tbsp. Tohum Sesame Tahini
- 2 tbsp. South River Chick Pea Miso or other one-year variety
- 2 cloves garlic (optional)
- Juice of one lemon
- Olive oil (optional)
- Fresh parsley

Drain chickpeas and keep cooking liquid aside. Blend all ingredients together except olive oil (use “pulse” setting on blender). Add cooking liquid as needed for desired consistency. Put in serving dish and drizzle olive oil on top. Garnish with fresh parsley.

Thanks to Maria Rossi for this delicious recipe.

Miso Happy, Green Goddess Dressing

- ½ cup olive oil
- 3 tbsp. cider or rice vinegar
- 2 tbsp. Sweet White Miso
- 1½ tsp. chopped garlic
- 1-2 tbsp. fresh chives, chopped
- 1 tsp. honey
- 2-3 tbsp. water

Mix ingredients in a blender until a creamy, smooth texture is obtained.

Easy Miso Marinade

- ¼ cup Sweet Tasting Brown Rice Miso or other one-year variety
- 2-4 tablespoons mirin, lemon juice, or cider vinegar
- 1-2 teaspoons South River Miso Tamari (optional)
- 2-3 cloves garlic minced
- 1-2 teaspoons fresh grated ginger (optional)

Mix all ingredients together well. Pour over tofu, fish, or chicken and let marinate in refrigerator for at least 2 hours. Then bake, broil, sauté, fry or poach.

Easy Dressing

- 1 teaspoon Dijon type mustard
- 2½ tablespoons rice or cider vinegar
- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon unrefined flaxseed oil (optional)
- 1 tablespoon Sweet White Miso or other one-year variety

With fork, mix miso into mustard, vinegar, and oil in a glass jar. (Recycled South River Miso jars are great for this.) Screw on lid and shake vigorously immediately before using.

will turn into a liquid gruel with a wholesome sweet or mildly sour taste. Reheat in the morning (without boiling) and serve.

MORNING METHOD: Prepare oatmeal as above. Stir miso into a bowl of medium hot oatmeal. Let sit several minutes before eating.

—Any whole, rolled, cracked, or ground cereal grains may be used, although cooking times will vary as necessary.

—Add mulberries or other dried or fresh fruits and/or nuts as you cook the cereal or as you stir in the miso.

*Note: For miso porridge it is imperative to use an unpasteurized, one-year light miso, rich in amylase enzymes. (Choose South River Chick Pea, Sweet Tasting Brown Rice, Azuki Bean, Sweet White, or Garlic Red Pepper Miso.)

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?

Opened or unopened, refrigerated or not, miso will keep indefinitely. Since South River Miso is a living food, it will continue to age in the jar. Over the course of time, it will darken and become more savory; it is still good to eat. Proper storage instructions are sent with each order.

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 micro-organisms 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.

South River Porridge

“Porridge is the mother of us all”

—Russian proverb

- 1 cup rolled oats
- 2 cups water
- 2 teaspoons one-year light miso* (see note below)

OVERNIGHT METHOD: Cook oatmeal in the evening 5-10 minutes, or until water is absorbed. (Do not use salt in the cooking.) Let oatmeal cool down to body temperature and then stir miso thoroughly into the warm cereal. Cover and let sit overnight at room temperature (about 70°).

Without imparting a noticeable taste of its own, the miso with its enzymatic power, will liquefy the cereal, unlocking its essential nutrition as it ferments overnight. The cereal



touching, communicating with each other through their interweaving roots and microscopic root hairs.

Has this made any difference to the quality of the grain? We will be threshing the grain next week, and I can't wait to taste and eat it! But already, I know this: following these indications has changed me. It opened up a new world of relationship with the plants I had not experienced or noticed before. I began to see the beauty and being of the rice plant for its own sake. Through this intimate ritual with the seeds, my relationship with the rice changed to a kind of sacred friendship. I began to feel that I *knew* the rice and that somehow, the rice *knew* me!

I attended a cooking class today in Chestnut Ridge, NY, hosted by the owners of Paul and Elizabeth's Restaurant... Our opening break featured your dandelion leek miso, and I have to tell you....my reaction was WOW! What a delicious instant soup! It was surprisingly bardy and absolutely delicious. It is exactly what I crave on cold wintry days. Thank you!

—C. S., NJ

What does all this have to do with miso?

Ever since we began making miso over 30 years ago, it has been for me an entry into ever deepening, and often elusive mysteries. All along the way I have been asking (myself and others), "What is miso?" Inevitably, the question has interwoven itself with another question: "What is the human being?" For there can not be a satisfactory answer to the first question without a deepening insight into the second. Ultimately the question is, for each of us — as we meet each other, or, as we meet a phenomenon such as miso — "Who am I?" and "Who are you?" According to our capacity and willingness to live into these questions, we will come to see our world, the "you", in this case, the miso, through many new and deeper layers of meaning.

The miso maker becomes informed by the miso as the miso becomes informed by the maker. It is a reciprocal relationship that manifests in the co-creation of miso and human being, together becoming.

Your products are absolutely amazing. The quality is outstanding. I have bought other miso products from my local store in the past, but they don't come close to comparing to your products. Thank you for producing such an amazing high quality and delicious product! I am so grateful I found you!

—S. K., GA



First step in miso making process: making koji, the cultured grain.



THE FACES OF SOUTH RIVER

Left to right, top row: Robin Cole, Mark Pichette, German Perico, Debb Makara, Fumio Miyake, and Deb Duchin. Second Row: Steve Freiman, Gaella Ehwell. Bottom Row: Ben Lodi, Yukio Doyama, Mayumi Kinuta, Jeff Emerson, Ikuko Matsuda, Christian Ehwell.



The miso maker meets the ingredients and the entire miso making process with his or her own spirit-infused, soul-aware, bodily-being. As with other handcrafted foods, the miso carries the impress of our meeting. In this interweaving relationship it is important to know *who we are serving*.

Traditionally, food making was carried out on a very local level. The miso makers, like bakers and cheese makers, came into daily, personal contact with their neighbors and fellow villagers whom they were serving. Through these relationships, the food was infused in subtle and specific ways with the evolving needs of the human spirit.

There is a wise and very ancient saying from Japan: "Body-Earth: Not Two," which signifies that, in reality, we are not separate from Nature. The teaching of Anastasia tells us that the plants are here to help us, indeed, to heal us; only, they need input *from us* in order to

Natural Roots interns, Daniel Criss and Rachel Hestrin, harvesting rice in mid-September.

create their fruits especially for us. This is what is meant by the radical discovery: *the plants no longer know who they are serving*.

Ancient foods like miso arose out of deepest wisdom, through the divinely guided life-ways of our ancestral humanity. Miso was not created out of mental calculation or profit motive. It was a gift of the gods for the well-being of humanity. Nature is not against us; Nature is for us.

As an old friend, Anna Bond, once said, "Wisely given, miso gives its own wisdom."

We have a new bulletin board devoted to our customers in our common room. As we read your names, your notes, and prayers, or see your photos, we take you into the field of our being as you take our miso into yours. We co-create this miso together.



I received the order. I feel like I'm doing something really good for myself and my family. Glad I found South River Miso. Thanks!

—J. K., PA



www.southrivermiso.com

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SOUTH RIVER FARM

WOOD-FIRED HANDMADE MISO SINCE 1979

Certified Organic & Unpasteurized

SOUTH RIVER
MISO COMPANY

"...each kind of miso has its own, rich, complex flavor and its own purpose—whether it be to enrich a broth or stock, to season a sauce or marinade, to work as a pickling agent, or to stand on its own, spread on vegetables or layered into casseroles. Miso is healthy and versatile and simple in composition, but its real magic comes from its ability to transform—even to elevate—other ingredients onto another level altogether."

—Hiroki Shimbo-Bitchman, *Savuer Magazine* May/June 1998. [Italics added]

