

# Vegetable Main Dish Recipes Vol. 5

## Japanese leeks

# Eat Japanese Leeks; Live a Healthy Life and Keep the Doctor Away

The Western saying goes, “An apple a day keeps the doctor away.” But in Japan, it’s negi, or Japanese leek, that is believed to help maintain good health and keep physicians at bay. Japanese leeks offer a range of benefits, such as helping you recover more quickly from fatigue, ward off colds, stimulate digestion, and boost your immune system.

By Makiko Hei

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### Nutritious Japanese Leeks

When leeks are chopped up, especially Japanese leeks, their unique aroma is released, along with allylsine (diallyl sulfide), which not only gives leeks their sharp taste, but also enhances blood circulation. This warms up the body and boosts the immune system, at the same time helping prevent blood clots. In addition, allylsine reportedly helps the small intestine absorb vitamin B1 that has the function of removing fatigue substances and promote the secretion of digestive juices. That means it’s a great help in recovering from fatigue when you eat it with pork, which is rich in vitamin B1.

The green leaves contain an abundance of nutrients such as vitamin C, calcium, and kalium. The sticky sap (fructan) that appears when leeks are cut open also helps boost your immune system. Working one stalk of Japanese leeks into your diet can help you live a full, healthy life and avoid a lot of doctor visits.

### Tips for cooking

The allylsine content is reduced by half when leeks are soaked in water and heated, so it’s best to cook them as soon as possible before eating. In addition, the taste of Japanese leeks changes from sharp to sweet as they are cooked thoroughly, so different cooking methods bring out different flavors.

### How to store your Japanese Leeks

You can store leeks for nearly a week if you wet the roots with water, wrap them in newspaper, and store them in a cool place. It’s also best to store them with the roots down and the leafy part up, like in their natural environment. Store partly used leeks in a plastic bag and refrigerate them.



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Here's a dish that helps fight off fatigue with allysine from Japanese leeks and vitamin B1 from pork.

### Negi shumai (for 30 pieces) (Japanese leeks steamed dumplings)

Cooking time: 30 minutes

#### [Ingredients]

300g minced pork

200g boneless pork ribs, sliced

1/2 teaspoon salt

Pepper (to taste)

1.5 tablespoons light brown sugar

2 tablespoons cooking sake

2 tablespoons soy sauce

1/2 tablespoon oyster sauce

30g ginger, grated



1 tablespoon sesame oil

100g Japanese leeks

50g onion

5 tablespoons cornstarch

30 shumai wrappers

Vinegar, soy sauce, Japanese mustard (to taste)

#### [How to cook]

1. Shred sliced boneless pork ribs, and coarsely mince them using hard strikes with a kitchen knife. Coarsely mince Japanese leeks and onions and then coat them with cornstarch.
2. Put pork (minced and shredded ribs) and salt in a bowl, knead to mix, add the remaining seasonings, and then mix again.  
Add the starch-coated leeks and onions to the bowl, and mix thoroughly.
3. Place a shumai wrapper on the palm of your hand, then put about 30g of the filling on it, hold the wrapper with one hand and shape it into a short cylinder with a small spatula, leaving the top open, and place it on a cutting board, or other flat surface to stand it upright.
4. Place them in a steamer with boiling water over high heat for 10 minutes, and enjoy them with vinegar, soy sauce, and Japanese mustard to taste.

※ If a steamer is not available, spread roughly cut cabbage in a frying pan and place the shumai on top, leaving some space between them. Pour in 100cc boiling water from the edge of the pan, cover with a lid, and steam for 10 minutes.





Well-balanced Taste of Sweet, Tangy, Bitter, Umami Stirs Your Appetite

## Negi with Spicy Dressing (3~4 servings)

Cooking time: 10 minutes

### [Ingredients]

150g Japanese leeks

1 tablespoon Korean red chili pepper flakes (coarse grind)

1/2 tablespoon light brown sugar

1 tablespoon soy sauce

1 tablespoon rice vinegar

1 tablespoon sesame oil

1 tablespoon ground toasted white sesame seeds



### [Preparation]

1. Combine all the seasonings in a large bowl and stir.
2. Slice leeks diagonally, put them into the bowl of seasonings, and mix.



### [Menu possibilities]

These are delicious on their own or added to other dishes, so for convenience, make a large quantity and keep them at hand. The day after preparation, the leeks will become soft and pliable, reducing the volume, but you can enjoy this different texture in a marinated dish. You can store them in the refrigerator for three to four days.

- Use these spicy Japanese leeks as a side dish with grilled boneless pork ribs seasoned with salt and pepper.
- Serve them with tofu.
- Mix them with freshly steamed potatoes, taro root, and so on.

### Profile

#### Makiko Hei

She runs a vegetable cooking school a “vege vege vege\*” (Meguro, Tokyo)

HP: <https://vege3.jp/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/makichanshokudo/>

\* The school teaches a careful approach to preparing of vegetables in ways to create glamorous vegetable dishes, with the motto “Love vegetables, make delicious daily meals.”

