

# Vegetable Main Dish Recipes Vol. 9

## The Versatile Onion: Adaptable to Every Style of Cuisine

Onions can be used in a broad range of main dishes, sides, and seasonings, and they are excellent from a nutritional standpoint. Compared with the vegetable's exterior, the inside of an onion has a sweeter flavor, and you can enjoy a wide variety of flavors simply by adjusting the heat when you cook it. **By Makiko Hei**

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### Nutritional value of onions

The main components of an onion are allyl sulfide—the source of its unique smell and pungent taste—and potassium.

Allyl sulfide is an anticoagulative, so it can help prevent arteriosclerosis and blood clots. That is where we get the saying, “When we say onion, it makes your blood flow smoothly.” Potassium is an indispensable mineral that plays the main role in adjusting the water content of our bodies. It helps discharge excess water content that we retain from taking in too much salt, so it can reduce blood pressure and help prevent and relieve swelling. To get the most of these nutrients, we recommend eating uncooked onion or broth made from the entire it.

### How to choose onion, and some onion trivia

Select onions that feel heavy for their size, are round and plump, and tight skin around the neck and the roots. A good onion has shiny brown skin on its surface, and should be thoroughly dry. Why do your eyes tear up when you chop onions? It's your eyes reacting to allyl sulfide. You can reduce the tears by thoroughly chilling the onions in the refrigerator before you prepare them.

### How to store onions

Onions spoil more quickly at higher humidity, so store them in a cool, dark, and well-ventilated spot, or in the refrigerator's vegetable compartment. And if you store them in the refrigerator, wrap them in newspaper instead of a plastic bag to ensure breathability. If you use only part of an onion, wrap the cut end with plastic wrap, store it in the refrigerator, and use it up as soon as possible.

To freeze onions, chop or slice them and put them into storage bags. Here's a convenient tip: If you simmer some onions until they are brown, you can divide them into small quantities to freeze. Then you can partially thaw them and conveniently use them to various dishes. We don't recommend freezing whole onions because the liquid will seep out.



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## Whole onion soup with salt pork and beans

This soup delivers the *umami* (savory) taste of the ingredients, with no need for stock. It's delicious and easy for anyone to make.

**Cooking time: 60 minutes**  
(not incl. time to marinate meat)

**[Ingredients]** 4 servings

600g pork shoulder loin block

6g salt (1% of meat weight)

2 bay leaves

Pepper to taste

4 onions

100g carrot

200g soybeans or other beans (boiled)

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 liter water

Parsley leaves (chopped) to taste



### [How to cook]

1. Cut the pork into chunks slightly larger than bite sized. Place pork, salt, and pepper into a plastic bag, and rub the bag with your hands to mix all the ingredients. Marinate for at least 30 minutes, or as long as overnight. Peel the onions and dice carrots (unpeeled) into 1cm cubes.
2. Heat olive oil in the pan, brown the (1) pork, and remove it from the pan for now.
3. Arrange the onions in the bottom of the pan, add the (2) pork, water, and bay leaves, and cook over high heat. When it comes to a boil, turn the heat to low, cover with a piece of parchment paper with a small opening to release steam, leave a gap and put a lid on it, and boil over low heat for 30 minutes. Then add beans and carrots and boil for 20 minutes.
4. Add salt and additional pepper (not in the ingredient list) to taste. Serve in a bowl and sprinkle with chopped parsley.



## Caramelized onion cheese toast

If you have already prepped these caramelized onions, just put them on a slice of bread with some cheese and toast it!

**Cooking time: 30 minutes**

### [Ingredients]

(Easily prepared quantity)

2 onions (see photo 3-1: about 600g)

1 tablespoon olive oil

Water as needed

2 pinches of salt

2 slices of bread

Shredded cheese as needed



### [How to cook caramelized onion]

1. Peel onions and chop them coarsely.
2. Put olive oil and (1) onion into a pan, and sauté them over medium heat. Stir occasionally as the inside of the pan gets hot.
3. When the onions change color and begin to stick to the bottom of the pan, add about two tablespoons of water and cook off the excess liquid while mixing thoroughly. Repeat this step several times until the onions become beautifully caramelized. The process so far takes about for 15 ~ 20 minutes. Add salt at the end. Onions stuck in the pan can be peeled off easily a few minutes after you remove the pan from the heat.

3-1



3-2



### Tips

- It's better to use not too big a pan.
- Caramelized onions can be stored in the refrigerator for a week, and for nearly a month in the freezer.



### [How to cook caramelized onion cheese toast]

1. Put a generous amount of caramelized onion on a slice of bread and top with shredded cheese.
2. Place it in a toaster oven and cook until the cheese is browned.

### Profile

**Makiko Hei**

I love vegetables. I try to handle them with care and cook them simply but luxuriously, with the motto "Let's make our daily meals delicious regardless of the genre of the dishes."

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