



Make your own Koji

Koji can be used to make several fermented foods and drinks in the Japanese and Chinese cooking traditions, including miso, miso soup, sake, soy sauce, amazake, and various types of marinades. The fermentation process transforms starches into sugars. The fermentation agent responsible for the transformation is the fungus *Aspergillus oryzae* which is available in our store in pure form or as part of a starter culture (enzyme preparation.)

Depending on the taste and the final product desired, the nutritious substrate can be either pearl barley (the husk and top layer of which has been removed), brown or polished white rice, or soybeans. You can proceed as follows:

1. Rinse the grain or beans (substrate) thoroughly and soak for 8 hours, before draining and cooking in a double boiler for 50 minutes to 2 hours for polished white rice or pearl barley and brown rice respectively and six hours for beans; let cool in a bowl.
2. Spread the substrate on a drip pan covered with a clean cotton cloth folded twice.
3. When the substrate temperature cools down to 37°C, inoculate it with the starter culture, respecting the proportions recommended by the manufacturer and mix well.
4. With the now-inoculated substrate, make a mound in the center of the drip pan, insert a thermometer at the top and cover with a cloth leaving the thermometer protruding to check the temperature
5. Place the drip pan in an incubator warmed to 27°C for miso and hotter for amazake and sake (never more than 35°C). In less than 24 hours, a sweet smell will emerge.
6. Spread and stir to avoid overheating.

When a white mold covers the substrate, the koji is ready. If the mold turns yellow, the fungus has begun to sporulate, which is of no consequence. To preserve it, spread the koji in a thin layer, allow to cool, wrap and refrigerate or dehydrate.