

CHEFKAZU

5 FUSION RECIPES

Sardinia × Japan

EN · IT

Five dishes where the Mediterranean and Japan
find each other — without compromise.

Cinque piatti dove il Mediterraneo e il Giappone
si incontrano — senza compromessi.

- 01 Tonno Rosso Tataki
- 02 Culurgiones in Dashi / nel Dashi
- 03 Bottarga Spaghetti al Yuzu
- 04 Maialino Sardo Kakuni
- 05 Seadas al Matcha

01 Tonno Rosso Tataki

with Pecorino Crisp & Mirto Reduction

— Tonno dell'Alghero, tecnica giapponese —

Alghero's bluefin is one of the great ingredients of the Mediterranean — firm, ruby-red, oceanic. The tataki technique (sear, ice-shock, slice) amplifies what's already there. The mirto reduction brings that bittersweet Sardinian berry note, and a shattered wafer of aged Pecorino Sardo gives the crunch that tempura would give in Japan. Nothing imported. Everything transformed.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	bluefin tuna loin, sashimi-grade, trimmed
80 ml	mirto liqueur (or mirto-infused red wine)
1 tsp	honey
40 g	Pecorino Sardo stagionato, finely grated
1 tbsp	white sesame seeds, toasted
2 tbsp	extra virgin olive oil
q.b.	flaky sea salt & black pepper
q.b.	micro herbs or wild fennel fronds

METHOD

1. Season & sear

Pat tuna dry. Season with fine salt and pepper. Heat a cast-iron pan over the highest flame until smoking. Sear the tuna 20–25 seconds per side on all four long sides. You want a 3 mm crust, raw core.

2. Ice-shock

Transfer immediately to an ice bath for 90 seconds, then onto a wire rack. Rest 5 minutes. Wrap in cling film, refrigerate 20 minutes before slicing.

3. Mirto reduction

In a small saucepan, reduce mirto with honey on medium heat until syrupy and coat-a-spoon thick, about 8 minutes. Cool.

4. Pecorino crisps

Spread grated Pecorino in thin 5 cm rounds on a silicone mat. Bake at 180°C for 7 minutes until golden. Cool completely — they harden as they cool.

5. Plate

Slice tuna 8 mm thick. Fan 4–5 slices per portion. Dot mirto reduction around the plate. Place one Pecorino crisp upright. Finish with sesame, olive oil, herbs.

Chef's note: The tuna must be fridge-cold when it hits the pan — warm tuna overcooks in seconds. Confirm it's suitable for raw consumption with your fishmonger.

02 Culurgiones in Dashi

Potato & Mint Dumplings in Kombu Broth

— Il tesoro dell'Ogliastra, a nuoto nell'umami —

Culurgiones are the most technically demanding pasta in Sardinia — the wheat-ear fold takes years to perfect. They are also a natural vehicle for Japanese broth. The filling's potato-mint sweetness needs something clean and mineral underneath it. Dashi provides exactly that: depth without weight, umami without richness. No cream. No butter sauce. Just the pasta, the broth.

INGREDIENTS

PASTA

300 g semolina flour (semola rimacinata)

140 ml warm water

1 tsp fine salt

FILLING

400 g floury potatoes, boiled & riced

80 g aged Pecorino, grated

2 cloves garlic, fried in olive oil

10 g fresh mint, finely chopped

DASHI

1 litre cold water

20 g kombu

20 g katsuobushi (bonito flakes)

2 tbsp light soy sauce (shiro shoyu)

1 tsp white truffle oil

METHOD

1. Make the pasta

Mix semolina, water and salt into a firm dough. Knead 10 minutes until smooth. Wrap and rest 30 minutes at room temperature.

2. Fill & fold

Roll pasta to 2 mm. Cut 8 cm rounds. Place a teaspoon of potato filling in the centre. Fold into the classic culurgiones wheat-ear pleat — 12–14 folds along the seam. Rest on semolina-dusted tray.

3. Draw the dashi

Cold-steep kombu in 1 litre water for 30 minutes, heat to 80°C. Remove kombu. Add katsuobushi, steep 4 minutes off heat. Strain. Season with shiro shoyu.

4. Cook & serve

Cook culurgiones in well-salted boiling water 4–5 minutes until they float. Ladle hot dashi into warm bowls. Place 3 culurgiones per portion. Finish with one drop of truffle oil and a mint leaf.

Chef's note: Shiro shoyu (white soy) keeps the broth pale and clean. Regular soy works but darkens the bowl significantly.

03 Bottarga Spaghetti al Yuzu

Smoked Roe, Yuzu Butter & Toasted Nori

— *Il mare, due volte* — *Sardegna e Giappone* —

Bottarga di muggine is Sardinia's answer to caviar — cured grey mullet roe, pressed and dried, with a flavour that is intensely oceanic, salty, and faintly bitter. It has been made in Cabras for millennia. Yuzu, Japan's great citrus, cuts straight through the roe's richness with an aromatic complexity that Sardinian lemon cannot quite match. Nori adds a second marine layer. Five ingredients. Needs no more.

INGREDIENTS

- 320 g** spaghetti di Gragnano (bronze-die)
- 80 g** bottarga di muggine — half grated, half sliced paper-thin
- 60 g** unsalted butter, cold, cubed
- 1 tbsp** yuzu juice (bottled is fine)
- 1 tsp** yuzu zest or fine lemon zest
- 1 sheet** nori, toasted and torn
- 60 ml** pasta cooking water, reserved
- q.b.** extra virgin olive oil, to finish

METHOD

1. Cook pasta

Cook spaghetti in heavily salted water until 2 minutes shy of al dente. Reserve 100 ml of cooking water before draining.

2. Build the sauce

In a wide pan over low heat, melt butter with 60 ml pasta water, whisking gently to emulsify. Add yuzu juice and zest. Remove from heat.

3. Mantecare

Add drained pasta to the pan. Toss vigorously off-heat, adding spoonfuls of pasta water to build a glossy, clinging sauce. Add half the grated bottarga and toss again.

4. Plate

Twirl into warm bowls. Drape paper-thin bottarga slices over the top. Place torn nori pieces at angles. Finish with a few drops of olive oil. Serve immediately.

Chef's note: Do not add heat once the bottarga is in — it turns bitter and sandy. The residual heat from the pasta is all you need.

04

Maialino Sardo Kakuni

Slow-Braised Pork Belly, Sardinian Style

— La pazienza del kakuni, l'anima sarda —

Kakuni is Japanese pork belly braised low and slow in soy, mirin, sake, and sugar until it becomes something between meat and cloud. Sardinia's maialino — the island's small, semi-wild pig — has a fat structure and flavour that is almost made for this technique. Here the braising liquid is adapted with cannonau wine replacing some of the sake. Start this the day before. Patience is the technique.

INGREDIENTS

800 g	pork belly (maialino sardo), skin-on
100 ml	cannonau wine (or dry red wine)
80 ml	sake
80 ml	mirin
60 ml	soy sauce (koikuchi)
2 tbsp	dark brown sugar or honey
500 ml	dashi or chicken stock
2 cm	fresh ginger, sliced
2	spring onions, roughly chopped
20 g	lardo di Colonnata, sliced (optional)

METHOD

1. Blanch

Cover pork with cold water. Bring to boil, cook 5 minutes.

Discard water, rinse pork. This removes impurities and tightens the skin.

2. Sear

Pat dry. Sear pork belly skin-side down in a thin layer of oil until the skin is deep golden, about 8 minutes. Turn and sear flesh sides briefly.

3. Braise

Add cannonau, sake, mirin, soy sauce, sugar, dashi, ginger, spring onion, and lardo. Bring to simmer. Cover and braise at the lowest possible heat for 2.5 hours, turning every 45 minutes.

4. Rest & reduce

Remove pork, rest on a rack. Strain braising liquid, skim fat, reduce by half to a lacquer-thick glaze. Refrigerate pork and glaze overnight separately.

5. Finish

Next day: slice pork into 4 cm cubes. Warm gently in the glaze, spooning over constantly. Serve with steamed rice or pane carasau.

Chef's note: The overnight rest is not optional — the fat solidifies and slices cleanly, and the flavour deepens significantly.

05 Seadas al Matcha

Sardinian Honey Fritters with Matcha Cream

— *Il più antico dolce sardo, reimmaginato* —

Seadas are ancient — a thin semolina pastry pocket, filled with fresh pecorino or lemon-scented ricotta, fried in olive oil, and finished with dark bitter honey from the Barbagia highlands. They have been on Sardinian tables for centuries. What matcha adds is not flavour complexity but contrast: the earthiness of Japanese green tea against the honey's floral bitterness is the same principle as salt on chocolate.

INGREDIENTS

PASTRY

- 250 g** semolina flour (semola rimacinata)
- 1 tbsp** extra virgin olive oil
- 1 pinch** fine salt
- 80–90 ml** warm water

FILLING

- 200 g** fresh ricotta, drained overnight
- 1** lemon, zested
- 1 tbsp** honey (corbezzolo preferred)

MATCHA CREAM

- 150 ml** cold heavy cream
- 1.5 tsp** ceremonial-grade matcha
- 1 tsp** honey

TO FINISH

- q.b.** olive oil for deep frying
- q.b.** dark Sardinian honey, warmed

METHOD

1. Make pastry

Combine semolina, olive oil, salt and warm water. Knead 8 minutes to a smooth, non-sticky dough. Wrap and rest 30 minutes.

2. Matcha cream

Whisk matcha into 2 tbsp of cold cream until lump-free. Combine with remaining cream and honey. Whip to soft peaks. Refrigerate.

3. Assemble

Roll pastry to 2 mm. Cut 10 cm rounds. Place 1.5 tsp filling on half the rounds. Dampen edges, press second round on top, seal firmly and press with a fork.

4. Fry & serve

Fry seadas in abundant hot olive oil (170°C) for 90 seconds per side until pale golden. Drain briefly. Plate warm, drizzle with dark honey. Place one quenelle of matcha cream alongside. Dust with a pinch of matcha.

Chef's note: Seadas are best eaten within 3 minutes of frying. They do not wait. Prepare cream in advance; everything else straight from the pan.

