

## Papermaker's Soba by Nicholas Cladis

1. Sift the flour. Japanese buckwheat flour 100%, but if you can just get your hands on regional buckwheat flour, you can cut it with 20-30% bread flour. Otherwise it's too crumbly.

Note 1: US regional buckwheat flour tends to be too coarse on its own

Note 2: Semolina flour also works nicely in place of bread flour

2. I've failed a lot with this, and found a sweet spot to be about 500g of buckwheat flour; or 400g buckwheat, 100g bread flour

3. 250g water; use very cold, filtered water

4. Put the flour in a wide, flat bowl or pan, and then pour water in little by little and use your fingers to mix it around – it is a lot like when you mix a vat with fingers outstretched. This is called *mizumawashi* in Japanese.

5. Then you do *kukuri*, which is forming a dough ball with all the crumbly bits you made in the previous step.

6. Make it nice and smooth and round and slightly flat. This can take a little bit of time.

7. Lay out a lot of flour on as big a table or other surface as you can. Pat the dough ball down into a round disc, on the floured surface.

8. Use a big long stick, 1" diameter, to roll the dough into an even, symmetrical disc. I recommend a stick similar to what you'd use to stir a vat for *nagashizuki*. Regular rolling pins are too wide, and you don't really need handles. Get the dough as thin as you can. You'll have to liberally sprinkle flour every so often so it never sticks.

9. Wrap the dough around the stick and then, with it all wound around that stick, move it back and forth to gradually make a rectangle shape with the dough. Keep rolling until about 1mm thick. Remember flour!

10. Fold it in half once, then again, until you have a long block. Now you can cut the noodles. Use a guide, and try to cut them evenly. Place the guide on top of the block of dough, but don't push, and then move it every 1/8 of an inch or so, and slice downward with the knife.

11. Cook the raw noodles for about 30 seconds in boiling water; wash with cold water in a strainer. I prefer them cold! You could also serve them warm.

Note: Retain the water you cooked the noodles in! Place it in a teapot or something to keep it hot..

12. I serve with grated radish (*daikon*), a bit of green onion, katsuobushi flakes, a dollop of wasabi, and a cold dashi sauce. In the papermaking region of Echizen, the grated radish is added to the dashi sauce, mixed well, and poured on top of the noodles that are already topped with the dry ingredients (*Echizen oroshi soba*).

13. Pour some of the water you cooked the noodles in (*soba yu*), and drink along with your soba, like a tea. You can also use it to "wash" your dish after eating the soba and then drink from the dish.