

BLOWFISH TESTICLES POISON SEVEN...screamed the headline in the January 27th 2009 edition of THE GUARDIAN. The article went on to describe how close to death some people in the Japanese city of Tsuruoka came as a result of ingesting certain parts of a Japanese blowfish.

In Japan, Blowfish (Fugu) is considered a delicacy but only skilled master chefs, trained in the traditional way to remove the poison, are licensed to prepare it. Typical signs of blowfish poisoning are limb paralysis, respiratory failure and loss of consciousness. Death can follow within hours. (Does this remind my faithful readers of another deadly species of marine life? See Book #2 in my Carrie Carlin series, "Sharks, Jellyfish and Other Deadly Things.")

So why would anyone take a chance on dying an early and painful death by consuming this food? Are Japanese gourmands all Russian roulette players, willing to gamble with their lives for a thrill? Is the taste so incredible that one loses all ability to reason? Are these fugu aficionados addicted like heroin addicts who, once hooked, will kill or be killed to satisfy their craving? And why, I ask myself, would anyone choose to eat fish testicles in the first place?

Determined to solve this mystery I scoured the internet for a fugu recipe...and found one! Fortunately for this author, one cannot buy Japanese blowfish in the U.S. so I was forced, at the suggestion of the Savory Japan chef who created this dish, to substitute Monk fish which is a firm-fleshed fish apparently similar in texture and taste to blowfish. And fortunately this recipe employs only the flesh of the fish. I pass this along to you, my adventurous readers, along with a friendly warning. Should you create this dish and find yourself so enamored that you must take a trip to Japan so you can have the real thing, do not visit that infamous restaurant in Tsukeroka City. And unless you really have it in for your traveling companion, insist that the restaurant chef shows you his license!

To learn about other inventive Japanese ways to eliminate one's enemies, do not miss "SHOOTING STARS AND OTHER DEADLY THINGS."

# FUGU TETCHIRI

## Blowfish Hot Pot with Ponzu Sauce

1 pound of Japanese blowfish (substitute Monk Fish or Red Snapper, cut into chunks)  
4 cups dashi (stock)  
1 block of medium tofu  
1 cup of roughly chopped hakusai (Chinese cabbage)  
1 large negi, cut on the diagonal (onion)  
Enoki and shiitake mushrooms  
1 bunch of shungiku

### PONZU SAUCE

2 limes juiced  
Half cup soy sauce  
2 tbsp rice vinegar  
2 tbsp mirin (sweet sake)  
1 oz. katsuobushi flakes

Daikon grated (Japanese radish)  
2 chopped scallions

This dish is best prepared at the table on a portable range but can be done on the stove and brought to the table piping hot.

First prepare the ponzu sauce. Bring the soy sauce and the mirin to a boil, then immediately remove from the heat and add the katsuobushi. Soak for 10 minutes. Strain and let it cool before adding the lime juice. Cut up the vegetables.

Bring the dashi to a soft boil. Add the fish and let it simmer for 10 minutes. Then add the harder vegetables such as carrot, negi, and the white part of the hakusai. Next add the softer vegetables and the tofu.

Serve communally. Dip the piping hot morsals into small bowls filled with ponzu sauce. Serve with grated daikon and chopped scallions.

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