



## Umami: The Fifth Taste

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# Umami: The Fifth Taste

*Michael Anthony, Heston Blumenthal, Alexandre Bourdas*

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Umami is described as a pleasant savory taste imparted by glutamate, a type of amino acid which occurs naturally in many foods including meat, fish, vegetables, and dairy products. As the taste of umami itself is subtle and blends well with other tastes to expand and round out flavors, most people don't recognize umami when they encounter it, but it plays an important role in making food taste delicious. Umami is considered the fifth taste, in addition to sweet, sour, salty, and bitter. In *Umami*, ten of today's most renowned chefs explain how they discovered this fifth taste and the ways in which it has had an impact on their cooking. Two of the chefs are Japanese (Nobu and Murata), but the others come from around the world: the U.S. (Anthony and Kinch), the U.K. (Blumenthal and Cursan, ), France (Bourdas and Nagae), and Peru (Martinez and Schiaffiano). Despite their diverse backgrounds and locations, however, they all have in common an understanding and appreciation of umami, and the unique ways in which they're able to use it to maximize the exquisite flavors of their culinary creations. For each of the eight main contributors, there's a two-page color spread featuring a personal essay about umami, and photos of the chef and his restaurant. Then the chef presents four recipes that showcase the fabulous umami-rich dishes that have earned his establishment its Michelin star(s). The recipes incorporate fresh, local ingredients and use no butter or oil, so they are healthy as well as sublimely delicious. An additional section of the book showcases pastry, as two of today's leading pastry chefs weigh in on how umami plays a role in their baking. Recipes for both savory and sweet treats are included. The book also includes information about the history and science of umami, written by two leading experts on the subject, John Prescott, Ph.D. of Taste Matters Research and Consulting, and Ole Mouritsen, Ph.D., of the University of Southern Denmark and author of *Seaweeds an*

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160 pages

Présentation de l'éditeur

Highly qualified food and nutrition scientists combine with some of the world's greatest chefs to produce this superbly illustrated revelation of the mysterious fifth taste that has gained global recognition in recent years and has become such a key component in cooking. In the words of chef Yoshihiro Murata: Umami is a Japanese word, and the taste was originally identified by a Japanese scientist, but it has been used in cuisines around the world for centuries by people with no knowledge of the word or of dashi, the umami-rich stock used in Japanese cuisine. Examples include Russia's beet stock, made with beets and beef, Britain's Marmite and vegetable soup, and China's shang tang made with Jinhua ham. Chicken breasts, dried tomatoes, and morel mushrooms can also be used to make stock. Now that chefs have learned about umami, they are actively using it in their cuisine, and health-conscious diners have also picked up on this taste, promoting its spread to tables around the world. The ingredients of good food know no borders. But good cooking also requires communication. We Japanese chefs have been picking up hints from the cuisines of other countries, such as China and France. And non-Japanese chefs have been adopting practices from Japan, including the use of dashi and of umami. The world surely has many more umami-rich foodstuffs waiting to be discovered. As a chef, I am eager to try out diverse ingredients. And I am also eager to share Japan's splendid techniques, such as the use of umami and dashi to bring out the best from ingredients of all sorts techniques that can present wonderful new possibilities for cuisines of every genre.

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