



SPANISH-JAPANESE BRIDGE · MODERN · SIDE · TAPA · VEGETABLE SHOWPIECE

Kamado Mushrooms with Black Garlic Butter

Whole king trumpet, maitake, and cremini mushrooms charred on the kamado at 230 °C for eight minutes, then plated while still hot under a coin of black-garlic compound butter that melts into the grill marks. Four ingredients, fifteen minutes, a vegetable course that eats like it belongs next to a ribeye.

Protein None (mushroom-centric)

Serves 4 as side · 6 as tapa

Difficulty Beginner

Active 15 min (kamado must be lit already)

Total 45 min (including kamado fire)

THE STORY

The Vegetable That Eats Like Meat

There is a strain of modern cooking that treats vegetables as protagonists rather than sides — vegetables cooked with the same seriousness and fire as a cut of beef. Basque wood-fire kitchens led the way with grilled artichokes and whole onions; Japanese kitchens developed the same register around dashi-glazed turnips and charred leeks. The thread is technique: the vegetable gets the fire, the rest, the seasoning, and the attention a steak would get. Done right, a plate of mushrooms can stop conversation.

Mushrooms are the perfect canvas because they are already umami-dense — glutamate and guanylate, the same compounds that make dashi profound. When kamado-charred at 230 °C, the mushroom's surface Maillards quickly (the exterior is mostly protein and amino acids, not water like most vegetables), and the interior's moisture steams gently, producing a texture that is firm, meaty, and deeply flavored. A coin of black-garlic compound butter dropped onto the

hot mushrooms finishes the plate with a second umami layer — black garlic's melanoidin-rich sweet depth over the mushroom's smoky char. The two flavors are siblings from different cuisines; together they are a vegetable dish that reads as formal-worthy.

This recipe also ties together three recipes already in the corpus: Black Garlic DIY (UMAMI-8 #5) provides the black garlic, the Sobrasada Honey Butter (UMAMI-9 #4) provides the compound-butter methodology, and the whole-vegetable direct-fire charring technique from Coca de Recapte (UMAMI-10 #4) provides the fire approach. One recipe, three prior deployments, a vegetable showpiece. The corpus is becoming a cooking system.

AT A GLANCE

Specs

<p>MUSHROOMS Mixed — king trumpet + maitake + cremini</p>	<p>KAMADO TEMP 230 °C direct • 4 min per side</p>	<p>FINISH Black-garlic compound butter coin</p>	<p>DIFFICULTY Beginner ●○○○○</p>
<p>ACTIVE TIME 15 min</p>	<p>TOTAL TIME 45 min (including fire prep)</p>	<p>SERVES 4 side · 6 tapa</p>	<p>CUISINE Spanish-Japanese bridge</p>
<p>CROSS-REFS UMAMI-8 #5 Black Garlic · UMAMI-9 #4 Compound Butter method · UMAMI-10 #4 fire technique</p>	<p>PAIRING Rioja Crianza OR chilled junmai sake</p>		

What Changed & Why

Whole-mushroom kamado cooking is a modern Spanish-Japanese technique — rooted in the Basque asador tradition (grilled whole onions, artichokes, leeks) and the Japanese wood-fire tradition (charred shiitake, maitake, matsutake over binchotan). The adaptation combines these with a black-garlic compound-butter finish that reads as fearless-fusion at the table. The ● tier upgrades to foraged seasonal mushrooms (matsutake in fall, morels in spring via Regalis Foods) and adds a shiro dashi brush at finish — a final umami lift that pushes the dish from excellent to memorable.

CHANGE	ORIGINAL	UMAMI VERSION	WHY
TECH	Sliced mushrooms sautéed in butter	Whole mushrooms kamado-charred at 230 °C direct heat	Slicing destroys the textural architecture of the mushroom before cooking. Whole-cooked mushrooms hold their structure, brown on the surface, and stay juicy inside. The kamado's direct heat produces char that cast iron cannot match.
ADD	Simple butter or oil finish	Black-garlic compound butter coin per serving	Black garlic's melanoidin-rich sweet-umami depth finishes the mushroom's smoky char with a second flavor layer. The butter melts on contact and carries the black-garlic flavor across the surface.
ELEV	Serve immediately	Light 2-minute rest before service for flavor integration	The butter coin needs 60 seconds to fully melt and pool; the mushrooms need another 60 seconds for the interior moisture to redistribute. A 2-minute rest on the platter produces markedly better flavor integration.

CHANGE	ORIGINAL	UMAMI VERSION	WHY
SUB	Button mushrooms + grocery black garlic	● king trumpet + cremini + store-bought black garlic · ● foraged maitake + king trumpet + homemade DIY black garlic (UMAMI-8 #5) + shiro dashi brush + Las Pedroñeras garlic in the butter	Mushroom quality and variety matter — king trumpet and maitake grill far better than button or cremini. DIY black garlic from UMAMI-8 #5 is measurably more nuanced than commercial.

What You Need

● Everyday

The Mushrooms

- 250 g king trumpet mushrooms (the large cylindrical ones — halve or quarter lengthwise to flat-grill surfaces)
- 200 g maitake (hen-of-the-woods) — cluster torn into large serving-size chunks, NOT broken into small florets
- 200 g cremini or portobello — stems trimmed, caps halved or whole depending on size
- **Total:** ~650 g raw mushrooms (shrinks to ~450 g cooked)

For the Grill

- 2 tbsp neutral oil (grapeseed or high-smoke-point)
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp freshly cracked black pepper

The Black-Garlic Compound Butter

- 100 g unsalted butter, at room temperature (soft)
- 4 cloves black garlic, mashed to a smooth paste
- 1/2 tsp flaky sea salt (Maldon if available)
- 1 tbsp finely chopped chives (optional — adds visual freshness)
- *OR substitute:* 100 g of pre-made black-garlic compound butter from your freezer bank (per UMAMI-9 #4 methodology)

To Finish

- Flaky Maldon salt at service
- A few drops of aged sherry vinegar (optional — adds brightness that cuts the richness)
- Fresh thyme leaves or chives (optional — visual)

Substitution Notes

- *No king trumpet?* Large portobello caps sliced into 2 cm-thick steaks work well. Large shiitake caps also good. Avoid button mushrooms — they release too much water and steam rather than char.
- *No maitake?* Substitute oyster mushrooms torn into large clusters, OR use extra king trumpet.

- *No black garlic yet?* Make it via UMAMI-8 #5 (3 weeks DIY) OR buy from Regalis Foods / Whole Foods specialty section. Short-term substitute: 4 cloves regular garlic + 1 tbsp balsamic reduction in the butter (flavor approximates black garlic's sweet-depth without the 3-week project).

● No Limits

The Mushrooms — Foraged or Premium

- **Seasonal tier (fall):** 200 g matsutake (Japanese pine mushroom — The Japanese Pantry, Regalis Foods, Marx Foods) — deeply aromatic, grills exceptionally
- **Seasonal tier (spring):** 200 g fresh morels from Regalis Foods overnight — the spring prize
- **Anytime tier:** 300 g foraged or cultivated maitake from specialty producers (Smallhold NYC, Mycopia SF)
- 300 g **king trumpet** from a specialty Asian grocery (larger, firmer than commercial king trumpets)
- 150 g **baby shiitake** — left whole

The Black-Garlic Compound Butter — DIY Bank

- 100 g **European-style cultured butter** (Vermont Creamery, Échiré, Beppino Occelli)
- 4 cloves **DIY black garlic from UMAMI-8 #5** (a 3-week project; the flavor is measurably more nuanced than commercial)
- 1 clove **Las Pedroñeras purple garlic**, raw, microplaned — adds a fresh-garlic top note behind the sweet depth
- 1/2 tsp Maldon
- 1 tbsp chopped chives

Shiro Dashi Finish

- 2 tbsp **shiro dashi** (Japanese white-soy concentrated dashi) — Yamaya, Higashimaru, or other premium brand from Japanese grocery
- Brushed lightly onto mushrooms during the last 30 seconds on the grill — adds final Japanese umami layer under the Spanish-Japanese black-garlic butter

EQUIPMENT

Your Kit

- Kamado (or other live-fire grill — direct heat zone)

- Long tongs

- Large sheet pan (to hold mushrooms before grilling)

- Small bowl + fork (for making the compound butter)

- Serving platter — ceramic or wooden

- Silicone brush (optional — for shiro dashi finish)

- Pastry brush (for oiling mushrooms)

MISE EN PLACE

Before You Start

- Light kamado 30 min before cook. Target 230 °C dome temperature. Direct-heat setup (no heat deflector). Optional: 1 oak or cherry wood chunk on the embers just before mushrooms go on.

- Black-garlic compound butter: in a small bowl, mash 100 g soft butter + 4 cloves mashed black garlic + 1/2 tsp salt + chopped chives until uniform. Roll into a log in cling film OR drop into a small ramekin and refrigerate 20 min to firm. Slice into 4 × 25 g coins at serve time.

- Trim mushrooms: king trumpet halved or quartered lengthwise; maitake clusters torn into serving portions (do NOT break into small florets); cremini halved or whole.

- Brush mushrooms with neutral oil — lightly, both sides. Season with salt + pepper.

- Arrange on sheet pan ready to transport to kamado.

MAKE-AHEAD

Timeline

- T-30 min — Light kamado
Full lump-charcoal load. Vents wide to establish fire. Target 230 °C dome.

- T-20 min — Make compound butter
Mash butter + black garlic + salt + chives. Log in cling film, fridge 20 min to firm. OR pull pre-made log from freezer to temper.

T-10 min – Trim + oil mushrooms

Halve/quarter king trumpet, tear maitake, halve cremini. Brush oil both sides. Salt + pepper.

T-3 min – Add wood chunk

Toss 1 oak or cherry wood chunk on embers (optional). Verify dome 230 °C.

T=0 – Mushrooms on kamado

Arrange mushrooms in a single layer on the grate. Cut-side-down if sliced. Close lid.

T+4 min – Flip

Mushrooms should have dark grill marks and be firming up. Flip each. Continue cooking lid closed.

T+7 min – Shiro dashi brush (●)

Optional: brush tops lightly with 2 tbsp shiro dashi. Close lid 30 sec more.

T+8 min – Off kamado

Mushrooms should be deeply grill-marked, firm, and slightly shrunken. Transfer to warm serving platter.

T+8 min – Add butter

Slice 4 coins of black-garlic butter (25 g each). Place one coin in the middle of each mushroom cluster on the platter. Butter melts into hot mushrooms.

T+10 min – Rest, finish, serve

2-min rest. Flaky Maldon + optional sherry vinegar drops + thyme leaves. Serve on warm plates or directly from the platter.

METHOD

The Cook

1 Light the Kamado + Build Fire

1. 30 minutes before the cook: light the kamado.
2. Full lump-charcoal load in the firebox. Pyramid shape. Light with 2 to 3 natural fire starters in the center.
3. Open all vents fully. Let the flames establish for 5 to 8 minutes, then close the lid.
4. Maintain vents at roughly 50 percent bottom, 50 percent top, targeting **230 °C dome temperature**. This takes 20 to 25 minutes of steady heating after the flames establish.
5. Setup: NO heat deflector — this is direct-heat grilling, not smoking. The grate sits over the live coals with only the fire ring between them.
6. Optional: 3 minutes before the mushrooms go on, toss 1 oak or cherry wood chunk on the embers. They should smolder (produce blue smoke), not flame up. If they ignite, shut the lid briefly to starve oxygen. Avoid hickory and mesquite — too aggressive for a quick cook.

WHY THIS WORKS

The 230 °C dome temperature is chosen to match mushroom Maillard kinetics. At this heat, mushroom surface browns quickly (60 to 90 seconds first visible color), while the interior moisture steams gently rather than boils aggressively. Higher temperatures (280 °C+) char the mushroom surface before the interior heats through, producing a burned-outside-raw-inside result. Lower temperatures (180 °C) steam the mushroom too gently and produce a flabby texture without crust. Reference: Kamado Mastery §Direct-Heat Vegetable Program; Produce and Vegetables §Mushroom Cookery.

2 Make the Black-Garlic Compound Butter

1. This can be done hours or days ahead; the butter keeps 1 week in the fridge, 3 months in the freezer.
2. In a small bowl, combine: 100 g soft unsalted butter (must be truly soft — finger press leaves a clean dent with no resistance), 4 cloves black garlic (mashed to smooth paste), 1/2 tsp flaky salt, 1 tbsp finely chopped chives.
3. ● **tier additions:** include 1 clove fresh garlic microplaned for a fresh-garlic top note; use European-style cultured butter.
4. Mash with a fork or spatula until the mixture is uniform — no streaks of butter separate from garlic paste. About 60 seconds of working.
5. Two options for shaping: (a) roll into a log in cling film, 25 mm diameter × 100 mm long — freeze firm for easy coin slicing at serve time; (b) pack into a small ramekin and refrigerate 20 min — scoop quenelles at serve time.
6. **Pablo reference:** the methodology follows UMAMI-9 #4 Sobrasada Honey Compound Butter exactly. The black-garlic version is a different flavor but identical construction. If a log already exists in the freezer bank (4 variants is the recommended Sunday-session target), use it directly.

3 Trim + Oil the Mushrooms

1. Wipe any visible dirt from the mushrooms with a damp paper towel. **Do NOT wash under running water** — mushrooms absorb water readily and steam instead of searing when wet.
2. **King trumpet:** halve lengthwise if small (less than 10 cm long), or quarter lengthwise if large. The cut surface is where the grill marks land.
3. **Maitake:** pull the cluster apart into serving-size chunks — each chunk should be roughly the size of a small fist. Do NOT break into small florets; they'll fall through the grate and dry out.
4. **Cremini / portobello:** trim stem flush with the cap. Small cremini cook whole; large portobellos halve.
5. Place all mushrooms on a large sheet pan. Brush lightly with 2 tbsp neutral oil (grapeseed) on both sides. Do not douse — mushrooms are already surface-saturable and excess oil drips onto the coals, causing flare-ups.
6. Season both sides with 1 tsp kosher salt and 1/2 tsp freshly cracked black pepper.

WHY THIS WORKS

Mushrooms are roughly 90 percent water by weight, but their structural polysaccharides (chitin, beta-glucan) hold the water tightly. When heated, the water steams out slowly from the cut surface rather than flooding out. This is why mushrooms concentrate in flavor during cooking — the water leaves but the umami compounds remain. Washing adds surface water that must evaporate before Maillard browning can begin, delaying the cook and sometimes preventing proper char. Wiping with a damp cloth is the correct cleaning method. Reference: Produce and Vegetables §Mushrooms — The Umami Vegetables; Food Science Core §Water Activity in Cooking.

4 Grill the Mushrooms

1. Once kamado is steady at 230 °C with optional wood chunk smoldering: place mushrooms on the grate in a single layer, cut-side-down if halved/quartered. Do not overlap. Space them so each has airflow around it.
2. Close the kamado lid. Cook for 4 minutes undisturbed.
3. **At 4 minutes:** open the lid. Mushrooms should have dark grill marks on the bottom, surfaces should be firming up, and the cut surfaces should be visibly browned. If mushrooms look flat and uncolored: close lid and continue 2 more minutes before flipping.
4. Flip each mushroom with tongs. Work steadily — don't leave the kamado open longer than necessary.
5. Close lid. Cook for 3 to 4 more minutes on the second side.
6. (🔴 **optional shiro dashi brush**): at 7 minutes, open the lid and brush the top (previously-flipped) surface of each mushroom lightly with 2 tbsp shiro dashi. Close lid for 30 more seconds — dashi glazes onto the surface and integrates with the residual smoke.
7. **At 8 minutes total:** mushrooms should be deeply grill-marked on both sides, firm to the touch, slightly shrunken in size (roughly 70 percent of raw volume), and fragrant. Transfer to a warm serving platter using tongs.

WHY THIS WORKS

The 8-minute total cook time (4 min per side) is calibrated for kamado 230 °C and mushrooms of this size (king trumpet halved, maitake torn, cremini whole or halved). At this time-temperature combination, the surface reaches roughly 180 °C in the Maillard browning zone, while the interior reaches approximately 90 °C — hot enough to steam the internal moisture but not so hot that the texture collapses. The flip at 4 min ensures symmetric browning and avoids the bottom over-charring. Mushrooms are remarkably forgiving: 6 to 10 minutes of total cook produces acceptable results across the range. Reference: Kamado Mastery §Direct-Heat Vegetable Program; Food Science Core §Maillard Threshold.

5 Compound Butter + Rest + Finish

1. Once mushrooms are off the kamado and on the warm serving platter: immediately slice 4 coins (25 g each) from the compound-butter log (or scoop 4 quenelles from the ramekin).
2. Place one butter coin on top of each serving cluster of mushrooms. The coin sits directly on the hot surface.
3. The butter begins melting immediately on contact. Within 60 seconds, it has melted into a pool around each cluster, coating the mushrooms with black-garlic-infused fat.
4. **Rest 2 minutes on the platter.** This rest is not optional — the butter needs the full 60 seconds to melt and pool, and the mushrooms need another 60 seconds for the interior moisture to redistribute. Serving immediately produces a flatter dish.
5. Finish: scatter flaky Maldon salt across the top. Drop 3 to 4 drops of aged sherry vinegar (optional — bright counterpoint to rich umami). Scatter fresh thyme leaves or chopped chives for color.
6. **Serve on the platter.** The mushrooms are communal — guests spoon or fork mushrooms + pooled butter onto their plates. Crusty bread nearby to soak up the butter pool at the end.

QUICK REFERENCE

Timing Cheat Sheet

STEP	TIME	CUE
Light kamado + stabilize 230 °C	T-30 · 5 min active + 25 min passive	Dome reading 230 °C steady
Make compound butter (or pull pre-made)	T-20 · 5 min	Uniform; log firmed in fridge/freezer
Trim + oil mushrooms	T-10 · 5 min	Dry wipe, do not wash; light oil coat
Wood chunk on embers (optional)	T-3 · 30 sec	Blue smoke, not white
Mushrooms on grate, lid closed	T=0 · 4 min	Single layer, cut-side down
Flip	T+4 · 30 sec	Dark grill marks on bottom

STEP	TIME	CUE
Optional: shiro dashi brush	T+7 · 30 sec	Light coat, close lid 30 sec more
Off kamado to warm platter	T+8 · 30 sec	Deep grill marks, ~70% of raw volume
Butter coins + rest 2 min	T+8 to T+10 · 2 min	Butter melts into pool around mushrooms
Maldon + vinegar drops + serve	T+10 · 30 sec	Platter to table, crusty bread alongside

TROUBLESHOOTING

Emergency Protocols

MUSHROOMS LOOK PALE / NO GRILL MARKS AFTER 4 MINUTES

Kamado is running too cool. Pull lid briefly to let some oxygen in (30 sec), open bottom vent wider, close lid, wait 2 min for temperature to rise. Mushrooms can continue cooking during the recovery; extend the first-side time to 6 min total. Next cook: start the kamado 10 min earlier, verify 230 °C dome with IR thermometer before putting mushrooms on.

MUSHROOMS ARE BURNING / BLACKENED ON THE OUTSIDE

Kamado is running too hot (260 °C+), OR the mushrooms sat too long on the first side. Remove immediately; assess doneness by piercing with a knife — if interior is cooked, they're salvageable with butter (which masks slight char bitterness). Next cook: target 220 °C dome, not 230, and check at 3 min for flip time.

MUSHROOMS ARE SHRIVELED AND DRY

Cooked too long OR oven temperature was far too high. Not recoverable. Serve with extra butter and a generous squeeze of lemon to moisten. Next cook: pull at the 7-minute mark for safer timing; verify mushrooms were brushed with oil before grilling (reduces moisture loss).

BUTTER COIN WON'T MELT ON THE PLATTER

Platter is too cool OR mushrooms cooled too much during transport. Pre-warm the serving platter in a 60 °C oven for 10 min before the mushrooms come off the grill. Also: don't leave mushrooms on a cold work surface between grill and platter — transport directly.

FLARE-UPS DURING GRILLING

Oil dripping onto coals. Move mushrooms to a cooler zone of the grate OR brush off excess oil before grilling. If flames persist: close the lid briefly to starve oxygen. Mushrooms generally produce less fat-dripping than meat, so flare-ups are uncommon — indicates too much oil applied.

MUSHROOMS TASTE UNDER-SEASONED DESPITE SALT + PEPPER + BUTTER

Either insufficient salt (mushrooms absorb salt readily during cooking) OR the butter's black-garlic content was too low. For the batch: add Maldon directly to each serving plate. Next cook: salt more generously (1 tsp per 600 g raw mushrooms is the minimum); verify compound butter has 4 full cloves of black garlic.

DEEP DIVES

Technique Notes

Mushrooms as Vegetable Protagonist

COOKING PHILOSOPHY • UNIVERSAL • APPLIES TO ALL VEGETABLE-CENTRIC MENUS

Mushrooms are the one vegetable that eats like meat — firm, umami-dense, browned properly on fire. Glutamate (the same savory compound that defines dashi, parmesan, anchovy, miso) is naturally abundant in mushrooms, especially maitake, porcini, matsutake, and aged shiitake. This means mushrooms carry the seasoning most vegetables need externally applied. Practical applications: mushrooms as the primary vegetable course at a dinner-party where the rest is plant-forward; mushrooms alongside a simple piece of fish for a light meal; mushrooms as a standalone course in a multi-course tasting menu. The modern cooking tradition (since the early 2010s — inspired by Japanese yakitori, Basque wood-fire, Italian porcini cooking) treats mushrooms with the seriousness of a cut of meat: fire, salt, rest, plated cleanly. The technique applies to any mushroom variety with sufficient structural integrity to hold up to direct heat. Reference: Produce and Vegetables §Mushrooms — The Umami Vegetables; Nutrition and Health §Vegetable-Centric Meals.

● Compound Butter Finishing on Hot Surfaces

UNIVERSAL TECHNIQUE · APPLIES TO ALL HOT-OFF-THE-GRILL PROTEINS AND VEGETABLES

A compound butter dropped onto hot grilled or pan-seared food is the fastest way to deliver a layered second flavor to an already-cooked ingredient. The butter melts on contact, the flavorings distribute via the melted fat across the surface, and the dish gains depth without additional cooking. The UMAMI-9 #4 Sobrasada Honey Butter technique card documents this broadly; the UMAMI-8 #5 Black Garlic recipe provides a distinctive variant; this Kamado Mushrooms recipe is a concrete deployment. The Compound Butter Freezer Bank makes this a weeknight-capable move — 4 compound-butter variants × 25 coins each × 3-month freezer life = 100 single-portion precision finishers always available. For Pablo's setup: make a Sunday batch of 4 (Maitre d'Hotel + Pimentón + Sobrasada + Black Garlic), and any weeknight vegetable or protein can be elevated in 60 seconds. Reference: UMAMI-9 #4 Sobrasada Honey Butter §The Compound Butter Freezer Bank; Sauces and Condiments §Compound Butters.

● The Whole-Vegetable Approach — Structural Integrity First

KNIFE / PREP FUNDAMENTAL · UNIVERSAL · APPLIES TO ALL GRILLED VEGETABLES

The modern fire-cookery approach to vegetables prioritizes keeping the vegetable intact or in large pieces rather than pre-slicing. Rationale: slicing destroys the vegetable's structural architecture before cooking, exposing more surface area to water loss and heat, producing a vegetable that shrinks, dries, and loses textural character. Whole or large-piece vegetables hold their structure through the cook, develop a surface-only char that seals moisture inside, and present visually as a dish component rather than a side. Application across the corpus: whole eggplant for escalivada (UMAMI-10 #4 Coca), whole onions for French onion soup (charred first), whole leg of lamb (UMAMI-6 #4), whole king trumpet mushrooms (this recipe). The technique is the common thread across Basque asador, Japanese wood-fire, and modern-Spanish vegetable cooking. Reference: UMAMI-10 #4 Coca de Recapte §Whole-Vegetable Direct-Fire Charring; Produce and Vegetables §Fire-Charring; Kamado Mastery §Vegetable Program.

● No Limits: DIY Black Garlic Sources the Butter (Substitutes Commercial)

INGREDIENT QUALITY · SUBSTITUTES BLACK GARLIC SOURCE

Commercial black garlic works fine; DIY black garlic from UMAMI-8 #5 is measurably more nuanced. The DIY version has: fresher balsamic notes (because commercial is often aged longer than ideal), more tangible individual-clove character (commercial heads are often homogenized), and a sourcing-story that matters at the dinner-party table. One 10-head batch from UMAMI-8 #5 yields 6 to 12 months of compound-butter and other black-garlic applications — the investment is 3 weeks of counter-top aging once. For this recipe: 4 cloves per compound-butter batch means a single DIY head provides 2 to 3 batches. Cross-reference: UMAMI-8 #5 Black Garlic DIY §The Whole 3-Week Protocol; UMAMI-9 #4 Sobrasada Honey Butter §Ratio Framework. Reference: Pantry and Staples §DIY Projects.

● No Limits: Shiro Dashi Brush at Finish (Extends Grill Phase)

UMAMI LAYERING · EXTENDS GRILLING PHASE

Shiro dashi — Japanese white-soy concentrated dashi — brushed onto the mushrooms during the last 30 seconds of grilling adds an additional Japanese umami layer beneath the Spanish-Japanese black-garlic butter finish. The concentrated umami compounds (glutamate from konbu, inosinate from katsuobushi, plus soy proteins) glaze onto the hot mushroom surface and integrate with the residual smoke. The final dish has three distinct umami layers: mushroom-glutamate (the mushroom itself), shiro dashi glaze (Japanese umami-soy), and black-garlic butter (Maillard-aged garlic umami). This stacking is a modern-kaiseki technique that guests perceive as complex but cannot identify individual components. Use sparingly — 2 tbsp total across the 650 g of mushrooms. Over-apply and the Japanese note dominates; apply correctly and it integrates invisibly. Source: Yamaya, Higashimaru, or similar Japanese premium brand. Reference: Pantry and Staples §Japanese Shelf; Sauces and Condiments §Umami Stacking.

● No Limits: Seasonal Rare Mushroom Sourcing (Substitutes Base)

INGREDIENT QUALITY • SUBSTITUTES MUSHROOM VARIETY

Cultivated king trumpet and cremini produce an excellent dish; foraged or seasonal-specialty mushrooms produce a different dish entirely. Fall: matsutake (Japanese pine mushroom) has a distinctive spicy-cinnamon aroma that grills beautifully — roughly \$60 to \$100 per pound, worth it for a special-occasion dinner. Spring: fresh morels from Regalis Foods during the 6-week spring season (roughly April to early June) — honeycomb texture holds char beautifully. Year-round: specialty-cultivated maitake from producers like Smallhold (Brooklyn) or Mycopia (Watsonville, CA) — the clustered frilly structure grills with a texture no other mushroom matches. For Pablo: Regalis Foods (already a verified supplier) ships morels and matsutake overnight; Marky's Caviar Miami stocks Regalis seasonally. The substitution upgrades the dish from excellent to showpiece. Reference: Seasonality §Mushroom Calendar; Pantry and Staples §Specialty Foraged Ingredients.

PAIRING

What to Drink

Wine — Spanish

Young Rioja Crianza or Tempranillo-based red with moderate tannin

The mushrooms' earthy umami + smoky char + black-garlic sweetness sits well in the young Spanish-red register. Rioja Crianza at 3 to 4 years of age delivers red fruit, soft tannin, and gentle oak that complements without dominating. Ribera del Duero Crianza is the alternative; Garnacha from Campo de Borja is the bargain play.

Wine — Japanese Bridge

Chilled junmai sake (same bottle as Miso Salmon / Chawanmushi)

If served in a Japanese-fusion context or alongside other UMAMI-3/5 Japanese dishes, sake is the correct pairing. The rice-derived umami complements the mushroom-glutamate + shiro dashi (if used) perfectly. Dassai or Hakkaisan junmai served at 10 to 12 Celsius.

Digestif

Aged Japanese whisky (Nikka From the Barrel, Yamazaki 12) or dry Oloroso sherry

Post-course digestif that extends the mushroom-smoke flavor narrative. Japanese whisky for the Japanese-fusion meal; dry Oloroso for the Spanish-register meal. Both small pours (30 ml) in small glasses. A capstone, not a table wine.

CONTEXT

Menu Ideas


This as Vegetable Side

Alongside a substantial protein main — Chuletón (UMAMI-7 #4), Whole Leg of Lamb (UMAMI-6 #4), or Ibérico Secreto on kamado (UMAMI-6 #1). The mushrooms bridge the gap between protein and the usual starch side, providing the umami depth a simple salad cannot. Serve at the center of the table; guests scoop from the platter.

This as Tapa / Opening Course

As a shareable first course before a Spanish or Japanese-fusion dinner. With Fino sherry or Albariño. Crusty bread alongside. 3 to 4 mushroom clusters per cluster-serving makes 6 to 8 tapa-size portions from one 650 g batch.

Downstream — Vegetarian Main

Scale the recipe 1.5× (1 kg mushrooms) and serve as a main course with a side of lentejas estofadas vegetarian variant (UMAMI-11 #5  card) + escarole salad + crusty bread. A complete vegetarian Spanish-Japanese fusion dinner. 45 minutes of active cooking across all three components.

Downstream — Kaiseki-Style Course Within Larger Meal

As a small 4-mushroom course within a multi-course Japanese or fusion dinner: chawanmushi starter (UMAMI-5 #5) → miso salmon SV (UMAMI-3 #4) → kamado mushrooms (this recipe) → chilled sorbet dessert. Serve mushrooms on individual small plates with pristine butter coins, not communal platter.

Downstream — Black-Garlic Butter Deployments

One batch of black-garlic compound butter (100 g) covers more than mushrooms: one coin each on a finished ribeye, on pan-seared scallops, on roasted whole sweet potato, on crusty grilled bread. The compound butter is the ingredient — the mushrooms are just one application. Store the rest as a log in the freezer bank.

YOUR NOTES

Cook Log

Session Notes

Date: _____ · Serves: ____ · Rating: __ / 5

Use this space to record what you changed, what worked, and what you'd do differently next time. Your future self will thank you.



Stop following recipes. Start understanding food.