

SPICE OF THE MONTH

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March's spice is shichimi togarashi!

This month's featured spice is is deceptively modest. You've almost certainly seen shichimi togarashi before, hanging out with the soy sauce at your favorite sushi or ramen place. In its little plastic jar, it's easy to take for granted the centuries of history that go into this centuries old spice blend.

Shichimi togarashi was developed around 1625 by a spice merchant named Tokuemon. Chili peppers were relatively new to Japan, having been introduced sometime between the late 16th and early 17th centuries; until that point, they had only been used for medicinal purposes. Tokuemon blended dried chilies with roasted and dried chilies, black sesame seeds, mandarin orange peels, poppy seeds, hemp seeds, and powdered Japanese sansho peppercorns. He called this mix shichimi togarashi, which means seven-flavored chili, and sold it as a condiment that was both healthy and tasty.

Tokuemon's spice shop, Yagenburi, still exists and is still hand-blending shichimi togarashi today! Restaurants, manufacturers, and home cooks have also created their own versions of the spice mix, including white sesame seeds, yuzu zest, nori, ginger, and any other ingredients that help to create a blend that is piquant, fruity, nutty, and a little sweet.

The version we're bringing you this month comes from My Spice Sage, and it contains chili pepper, sesame seeds, dehydrated orange, poppy seeds, and ginger. Try it in one of the included recipes or use it to spice up noodles, rice, grilled vegetables, or almost any protein you can imagine.



**Croton
Free
Library**

All books listed here are available to check out from the Westchester Library System!

Our sources:

- *The Japan Times*: Shichimi: japantimes.co.jp/news/2009/06/18/reference/shichimi/
- Japanese Food Guide: Shichimi-Togarashi: japanesefoodguide.com/shichimi-togarashi/
- *Mastering the Art of Japanese Cooking* by Masaharu Morimoto
- *The Oxford Companion to Food* by Alan Davidson
- Yagenbori Shichimi-Togarashi: About: yagenbori.jp/about/english/

The recipes in this kit are:

- Japanese Street Corn from *Love Japan* by Sawako Okochi and Aaron Israel (p. 68)
- Soba Noodles with Pork, Scallions, and Shichimi Togarashi from *Spiced* by America's Test Kitchen (p. 172)

See our cookbook collection for additional info & recipes, like:

- Asian-Inspired Red Cabbage Salad with Candied Walnuts from *The Spice Collector's Cookbook* by Vina Thakkar Patel (p. 70)

What did you make with
your shichimi togarashi?

Post it on social media with the hashtag

#CrotonSpiceClub and tag us,

or send a photo & description to

ref@crotonfreelibrary.org!

Shichimi togarashi purchased from My Spice Sage.