

# Tokyo Garlic Butter Udon

**Serves:** 2   **Prep Time:** 5 min   **Cook Time:** 10 min   **Total Time:** 15 min

Tokyo Garlic Butter Udon is a simple, comforting noodle dish inspired by casual Japanese home cooking and late-night meals in Tokyo. Thick udon noodles are coated in a rich garlic butter sauce with soy sauce for savoriness and a touch of sweetness for balance. This recipe is designed for busy days when you want something deeply satisfying without complicated techniques or hard-to-find ingredients.

This dish comes together quickly but delivers big flavor, making it perfect for weeknight dinners or a cozy lunch at home.

## Why You'll Love This Recipe

- Ready in 15 minutes
- Uses fresh udon noodles for chewy texture
- Simple pantry ingredients
- Naturally customizable with proteins or vegetables
- Comfort food that doesn't feel heavy

## Ingredients

- 2 packs fresh udon noodles
- 3 Tbsp unsalted butter
- 3 cloves garlic, finely minced
- 1 Tbsp soy sauce (preferably Japanese-style, like Kikkoman)
- 1 tsp sugar (or mirin for a deeper flavor)
- 1 cup firm tofu, cubed and pan-fried until golden
- 2 green onions, thinly sliced
- 1 tsp toasted sesame seeds

## Ingredient Notes & Substitutions

**Udon noodles:** Fresh udon gives the best chew, but frozen udon works well. Avoid dry udon if possible.

**Butter:** Unsalted butter allows you to control saltiness when combined with soy sauce.

**Soy sauce:** Japanese-style soy sauce is lighter and slightly sweeter than other varieties.

**Sugar or mirin:** Mirin adds depth and subtle sweetness; sugar works as a simple substitute.

**Tofu:** Firm tofu adds protein and texture. You can substitute chicken, shrimp, mushrooms, or omit entirely.

## Instructions

### 1 **Step 1: Prepare the tofu and noodles**

Pat the tofu dry with a paper towel and cut into  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch cubes. Heat a small amount of oil in a nonstick pan and pan-fry the tofu on all sides until crisp and golden, about 5–6 minutes. Remove and set aside. Bring a pot of water to a boil. Add the udon noodles and cook for about 2 minutes, just until loosened. Drain well and set aside.

## 2 **Step 2: Make the garlic butter base**

In the same pan, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the minced garlic and sauté for 30–45 seconds, stirring constantly until fragrant but not browned.

## 3 **Step 3: Build the sauce**

Add the soy sauce and sugar or mirin. Stir for 15–20 seconds until the sauce turns glossy and lightly emulsified.

## 4 **Step 4: Combine everything**

Add the cooked udon noodles and fried tofu to the pan. Toss continuously for 2–3 minutes until the noodles are evenly coated and lightly caramelized at the edges.

## 5 **Step 5: Garnish and serve**

Divide into bowls and top with sliced green onions and sesame seeds. For extra depth, add a few drops of sesame oil or a pinch of chili flakes before serving.

## Variations & Add-Ins

- Add mushrooms for extra umami
- Toss in spinach or bok choy at the end for greens
- Add chili oil for heat
- Finish with a soft-boiled egg for richness

## Storage & Reheating

This dish is best enjoyed fresh. Leftovers can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 days. Reheat gently in a pan with a splash of water to loosen the sauce.

## What to Serve With

Pair this udon with a simple cucumber salad, miso soup, or Japanese pickles for a complete meal.