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Pan-Fried Teriyaki Tofu Bowl 照り焼き豆腐丼

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Author: Namiko Hirasawa Chen · Published: Mar 21, 2022 · Updated: Jul 6, 2024

Smothered with sweet-savory homemade teriyaki sauce, this Pan-Fried Teriyaki Tofu Bowl is amazingly easy and delicious! It's also a great way to incorporate tofu into your weeknight dinner rotation. Bonus: I'll show you the best way to cook crispy tofu.





Tofu is a magical substance in the Japanese food world. This collection of [Japanese tofu recipes](#) is yummy proof!

Today's **Teriyaki Tofu Bowl** (照り焼き豆腐丼) is a super-simple yet satisfying recipe. Crispy pan-fried tofu glazed in the beloved teriyaki sauce and served over fluffy rice with veggie. It has to be one of the dynamic one-bowl meals for vegetarians, vegans, and omnivores alike.

Why You'll Love This Teriyaki Tofu Bowl

In addition to being simple and easy, it's also:

- **Best texture** — It's all about texture when comes to making tofu. I'll teach you how to achieve crispy shells with tender, creamy bites.
- **Affordable, practical, and pantry-friendly.** Couldn't love it more!
- **Great intro dish** for anyone new to tofu
- **Flexible** — You can use whatever grain or other vegetables you like.

This Teriyaki Tofu Bowl consists of 3 simple components:

- Teriyaki tofu
- Steamed rice (white or brown rice, cauliflower rice for low carb, or any grains you prefer)
- **Broccoli Blanched with Sesame Oil** (or other veggies such as bell peppers, edamame, bok choy, etc)

If you have some **frozen cooked rice from the freezer**, you just need to microwave it while pan-frying the tofu. Talk about a meal-prep-friendly, speedy dinner!

A Quick Note

I do want to mention that while most people in the US (or anyone who follows food trends) are familiar with teriyaki tofu bowls, the dish is not exactly a thing you can find in Japan.

To be clear, there are endless variations of **rice bowls** (or what we call the *donburi*) in Japanese cuisine, but we don't typically serve cubed tofu over steamed rice in such a manner.

Instead, we serve thick slices of tofu as “tofu steak” such as my [Teriyaki Tofu recipe](#) as a standalone side to complement a well-rounded [ichiju sansai](#) Japanese meal.



For vegan/vegetarian, just omit katsuobushi (dried bonito flakes) topping.

Anyhow, I can see why teriyaki tofu is being incorporated into a rice bowl format! By serving bite-sized crispy tofu over a bowl of rice and veggies, it makes a quick weekday meal that comes together in a flash. For these reasons, I'm on board!





Ingredients for Teriyaki Tofu Bowl

- Medium-firm tofu (I'll explain later why this firmness works the best)
- Potato starch (More on the Tips section below)
- Homemade teriyaki sauce: sake, mirin, soy sauce (or gluten-free soy sauce), and sugar
- Garnishes: chopped green onion (or cilantro) and sesame seeds

How to Make Teriyaki Tofu Bowl

- 1 Press the tofu and make the homemade teriyaki sauce.
- 2 Coat the tofu cubes with potato starch.
- 3 Pan-fry the tofu and coat well with the teriyaki sauce.



Why Do We Need to Press the Tofu?

There are a few reasons why it's important to drain the tofu before using it.

- 1 About 90% of tofu is made up of water. Pressing the tofu helps release the water, and as a result, it **improves the taste of the tofu and the overall texture of the final dish.**
- 2 The tofu is **less likely to break and lose its shape.** Well-drained tofu keeps its shape even during pan-frying or simmering, which is what we're after for the presentation of a dish.
- 3 Tofu can **absorb more flavors** after draining the water.



Good to know: You can even control the texture and flavor of tofu by changing the **draining time** according to the dish.

How to Press Tofu



As you know, you can press tofu with a heavy object like a pot filled with water. However, I wanted to speed up the pressing time and make it more compact when doing this process, so I tried [Tofuture Tofu Press](#) and I wish I had gotten it sooner. It's one of the [best tofu presses](#) because it's easy to use and doesn't take up much space.

Now, I don't have to risk a heavy object falling while pressing my tofu and it takes up much less of my prep space. It drains tofu quickly, and you'll only have to press it for about 30 minutes to make Teriyaki Tofu. If you have been debating getting a tofu press, don't wait—just get this one on [Amazon for \\$22](#)!





5 Tips to Make the Best Teriyaki Tofu Bowl

Tip 1: Use medium-firm tofu

I've used different types of tofu for pan-fried recipes, and I find medium-firm tofu (*momen dofu* 木綿豆腐) offers the best texture.

Why? Medium-firm tofu is firm enough that it won't crumble easily yet it keeps enough moisture that it stays tender and fluffy after pan-frying. I usually let it drain for 30-45 minutes, but you can extend it if you like your tofu to be on the firmer side.

Many people use extra-firm tofu when it comes to pan-frying or baking, but I feel the texture of the tofu is too tough and dry.

This is my personal preference, so feel free to use firmer tofu if preferred.

Tip 2: Pressing the tofu with weight

If you leave the tofu on the countertop, water naturally starts to come out from the tofu. When you apply pressure on the tofu, it drains the water out faster, resulting in a firmer texture.



You can purchase a [tofu press](#) if you eat pan-fried or stir-fried tofu often. It's a convenient and effective way to drain as much water as possible. However, if you don't plan to use it often, you can always use an old fashion way of putting a heavy object on top of the tofu.

Wrap the tofu around with paper towels so that excess moisture will be absorbed. Then place a flat board such as a cutting board, tray, or plate, which helps distribute the weight.

Your weight should be heavy enough to press down evenly across the top of the tofu, but not so heavy that the tofu would crumble. I use a marble mortar but a large can of food is a perfect weight.

Tip 3: Use potato starch

In Japan, potato starch, or what we call *katakuriko* (片栗粉), is the most common starch we use to coat ingredients for pan-frying or deep-frying. The potato starch creates a nice crispy shell around the food, absorbs all the delicious flavors from the sauce, and thickens it at the same time.

The closest substitute and the popular counterpart is cornstarch. It looks similar, but when you touch it, you could immediately tell these two starches apart.

When I did recipe testing for **Karaage** (Japanese fried chicken) using these two starches, I realized **potato starch coating is significantly better than cornstarch for yielding the best crispy texture**; therefore, I highly recommend potato starch for this recipe as well.

I do not have experience in using other types of starch, so I can't advise on other substitutes.

Tip 4: Pan-fry the tofu with patience

Since uncooked tofu is edible right out of the package, you can speed up the browning process by cooking on relatively higher heat.

Why browning? It gives an additional layer of delicious charred flavor, makes the food more appealing, and creates a crispy shell.

Don't flip the cubed tofu frequently; give enough time for each side of the tofu to have good contact with the hot frying pan so it will brown properly.

Tip 5: Stop cooking the sauce once it starts to thicken

The potato starch coating on the tofu will absorb and thicken the delicious sauce quickly. Once you see the sauce thickens, remove the pan from the stove. The sauce will continue to thicken as more moisture evaporates.





Side Dishes to Serve with Teriyaki Tofu Bowl

You can serve the Teriyaki Tofu Bowl as it is but for a more elaborate meal, here are my suggestions:

Soups

- [Kabocha Miso Soup](#)
- [Vegan Miso Soup](#)

Japanese Pickles

- [4 Easy Soy Sauce Pickles](#)
- [Spicy Japanese Pickled Cucumbers](#)
- [Japanese Pickled Cabbage](#)

Vegetable Sides

- [Miso Glazed Eggplant](#)
- [Okra with Ginger Soy Sauce](#)
- [Miso Butter Mushrooms in Foil](#)
- [Roasted Miso Garlic Cauliflower](#)





Other Quick & Easy Rice Bowl Recipes

- [Vegan Poke Bowl](#)
- [Soy-Glazed Eggplant Donburi](#)
- [Stir-Fried Tomatoes and Eggs](#)

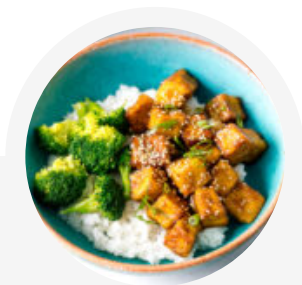
Tableware from Musubi Kiln

I've partnered with a great ceramic online shop from Japan called **Musubi Kiln**. You will get **10% off** with a coupon code **JUSTONECOOKBOOK** for your purchase. In this post, I've used:

- [Hibino Summum Mino Ware Bowl L](#) [↗](#)
- [Bronze Chrysanthemum Hasami Sauce Plate](#) [↗](#)
- Chrysanthemum Usuki Round Plate



Wish to learn more about Japanese cooking? Sign up for our **free [newsletter](#)** to receive cooking tips & recipe updates! And stay in touch with me on **[Facebook](#)**, **[Pinterest](#)**, **[YouTube](#)**, and **[Instagram](#)** [🔗](#).



Pan-Fried Teriyaki Tofu Bowl

★★★★★ 4.58 from 19 votes

Smothered with sweet-savory homemade teriyaki sauce, this crispy Pan-Fried Teriyaki Tofu Bowl is amazingly easy and delicious! It's also a great way to incorporate tofu into your weekly menu rotation.

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Pan-Fried Teriyaki Tofu Bowl 照り焼き豆腐丼



PREP TIME:

5 mins

COOK TIME:

25 mins

DRAINING THE TOFU:

30 mins

TOTAL TIME:

1 hr

SERVINGS: **2**

Tap or hover to scale the recipe!

INGREDIENTS

US Customary

Metric

1x

2x

3x

- ☐ 14 oz **medium-firm tofu (momen dofu)** (1 block)
- ☐ ⅓ cup **potato starch or cornstarch**
- ☐ 3 Tbsp **neutral oil** (divided)

For the Teriyaki Sauce

- ☐ ¼ cup **sake**
- ☐ ¼ cup **mirin**
- ☐ ¼ cup **soy sauce**
- ☐ 4 tsp **sugar**

For Serving

- ☐ 2 servings **cooked Japanese short-grain rice** (typically 1⅔ cups (250 g) per donburi serving)
- ☐ 1 **green onion/scallion**
- ☐ ½ tsp **toasted white sesame seeds**

***Japanese Ingredient Substitution:** If you want substitutes for Japanese condiments and ingredients, click [here](#).*

**Cook Mode** Prevent your screen from going dark

INSTRUCTIONS



- 1 Before You Start:** For the steamed rice, please note that **1½ cups (300 g, 2 rice cooker cups) of uncooked Japanese short-grain rice** yield 4⅓ cups (660 g) of cooked rice, enough for 2 donburi servings (3⅓ cups, 500 g). See how to cook short-grain rice with a **rice cooker**, **pot over the stove**, **Instant Pot**, or **donabe**.

To Drain the Tofu (30 Minutes Before Cooking)

- 1 Open the package of **14 oz medium-firm tofu (momen dofu)** and drain out the water. Next, wrap the tofu block in a paper towel (or tea towel) and place it on a plate or tray. Now, press the tofu: First, put another tray or plate or even a cutting board on top of the tofu block to evenly distribute the weight. Then, place a heavy item* (I used a marble mortar but a can of food works) on top to apply pressure. Let it sit for at least 30 minutes before using. *The weighted item should not be so heavy that it will crumble or crush the tofu block but heavy enough that it will press out the tofu's liquid.



- 2 While draining the tofu, you can cook the rice or a side dish. For this recipe, I also prepare [this blanched broccoli recipe](#).

To Prepare the Ingredients

- 1 Gather all the ingredients.



- 2** To make the homemade teriyaki sauce, whisk the **¼ cup sake**, **¼ cup mirin**, **¼ cup soy sauce**, and **4 tsp sugar** in a (microwave-safe) medium bowl. If the sugar doesn't dissolve easily, microwave it for 30 seconds and whisk well. Set aside.



- 3** Cut **1 green onion/scallion** diagonally into thin slices.



- 4 After 30 minutes of draining the tofu, remove the paper towel and transfer the tofu to the cutting board. First, cut the tofu block in half widthwise.



- 5 Next, cut the tofu into roughly $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch (2-cm) cubes.



- 6 Put $\frac{1}{3}$ cup **potato starch or cornstarch** in a shallow tray or bowl and gently coat the tofu cubes with the potato starch. Set aside.



To Pan-Fry the Tofu

- 1 Heat a large frying pan on medium-high heat. When it's hot, add **1½ Tbsp of the 3 Tbsp neutral oil** (keep the rest for the next batch) and distribute it evenly. Add the first batch of tofu cubes to the pan, placing them about 1 inch (2.5 cm) apart from each other so it's easy to rotate the tofu cubes without sticking to each other.



- 2 Fry the cubes on one side until golden brown, then turn them to fry the next side. Repeat until all sides are brown and crispy. Transfer the fried tofu cubes to a plate or tray lined with a paper towel.



- 3 Add the next batch of uncooked tofu to the pan and fry until crispy and golden brown on all sides. Add more of the remaining oil as needed to help brown the tofu faster.



- 4 Remove all the fried tofu to the plate/tray.



- 5 Wipe off any remaining oil in the pan with a paper towel. Then, transfer the tofu back into the pan.



- 6 Add the teriyaki sauce to the pan; the sauce will start to thicken immediately. Quickly toss the tofu cubes in the sauce to coat, then turn off the heat and remove the pan from the stove. **Tip:** The sauce will continue to thicken with the residual heat, so if you want to keep some

sauce in the pan, be sure to turn off the heat as soon as the tofu is coated.



To Serve

- 1 Divide **2 servings cooked Japanese short-grain rice** into individual large (donburi) bowls. Serve the tofu and blanched broccoli over the steamed rice. Garnish the tofu with green onions and $\frac{1}{2}$ **tsp toasted white sesame seeds**.



To Store

- 1 You can keep the leftovers in an airtight container and store in the refrigerator for 3 days. Since the texture of the tofu changes when frozen, I don't recommend storing the tofu in the freezer.

NUTRITION

Calories: 443 kcal · **Carbohydrates:** 27 g · **Protein:** 21 g · **Fat:** 23 g ·
Saturated Fat: 3 g · **Polyunsaturated Fat:** 14 g · **Monounsaturated Fat:**
6 g · **Trans Fat:** 1 g · **Sodium:** 979 mg · **Potassium:** 191 mg · **Fiber:** 3 g ·

Sugar: 10 g · **Vitamin A:** 60 IU · **Vitamin C:** 2 mg · **Calcium:** 269 mg · **Iron:** 3 mg

Author: Namiko Hirasawa Chen **Course:** Main Course **Cuisine:** Japanese

Keyword: teriyaki sauce, tofu

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About Namiko Hirasawa Chen

I'm Nami, the recipe developer and founder of Just One Cookbook. I was born and raised in Yokohama, Japan, and now live in San Francisco with my family. Here, you will find easy and authentic Japanese recipes you'll love and enjoy!

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27 COMMENTS



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Z H

🕒 1 month ago

I was really excited to make this recipe but I had some mishaps along the way that negatively impacted the final product and made for a dish that was not entirely pleasant to eat. The tofu fried up well after being pressed and tossed with potato starch, and had a nice crispy exterior; however 3/4 cups of sauce ended up being way too much, and while I was waiting for the liquid to cook down the starchy coating gelatinized and the tofu turned out to have a weirdly slimy exterior when it was time to eat. I think having less sauce to begin with or reducing or thickening it beforehand would have yielded a better result.

★★★★☆

👍 0

➡ Reply

Naomi (JOC Community Manager)

Admin

Reply to [Z H](#) 1 month ago

Hello there! Thank you for trying Nami's recipe.

We're sorry to hear that this recipe didn't work for you. We hope you will continue to use the recipe with some modifications!

👍 0

➡ Reply

Emily

1 month ago

This was very easy to make and really yummy. My husband and I cleaned the whole plate!

★★★★★

👍 0

➡ Reply

Naomi (JOC Community Manager)

Admin

Reply to [Emily](#) 1 month ago

Hi Emily! We are so happy to hear you enjoyed the dish!

Thank you for trying Nami's recipe and for your kind feedback! 😊

👍 0

➡ Reply

Laura G

1 month ago

This recipe is really yummy! I've had chicken teriyaki before so I was curious how the tofu would compare. I actually like the tofu better!

★★★★★

👍 0

➡ Reply

Naomi (JOC Community Manager)

Admin

Reply to [Laura G](#) 1 month ago

Hi, Laura! We're delighted you enjoyed the dish! 😊

Thank you for trying Nami's recipe!

👍 0

➡ Reply

Sarah

1 month ago

I made this teriyaki tofu bowl for the June cooking challenge and it was very tasty. I think I let the tofu sit in the sauce a bit too long as it wasn't crispy, but still delicious. I'm not vegetarian and we didn't miss meat at all and I added some bonito flakes on top at the end. This is a great way to still get lots of protein without having meat at every meal. Thanks for another great recipe I can add into my rotation!

★★★★★

👍 0

↩ Reply

Naomi (JOC Community Manager)

Admin

💬 Reply to Sarah ⌚ 1 month ago

Hi, Sarah! Thank you for trying Nami's recipe.

We're pleased to hear you enjoyed the Tofu version! Thank you for including this in your meal rotation!



👍 0

↩ Reply

Bonnie

⌚ 2 months ago

Hi Nami,

I made this teriyaki tofu bowl and it turned out great! I probably should have used a baking pan instead of a mixing bowl to coat the tofu cubes with cornstarch. The coating wasn't even when I pan-fried them.

★★★★☆

👍 0

↩ Reply

Naomi (JOC Community Manager)

Admin

💬 Reply to Bonnie ⌚ 2 months ago

Hi, Bonnie! Thank you for trying Nami's recipe and sharing your experience with us! 😊

We hope your next try results in perfectly covered pan-fried tofu!

Happy cooking!

👍 0

↩ Reply

Anna

⌚ 4 months ago

Dear Nami,

I got another question:

In some recipes I read that the tofu must be pressed before marinating, they write that it can't take the

marinade well without pressing it's water out. I think that is physically not right, because liquids mix. And why first press liquid out, then let it soak liquid again? It don't make sense to me.

What do you think as a tofu pro?

👍 0 ➡ Reply

Naomi (JOC Community Manager) Admin

🗨 Reply to [Anna](#) ⌚ 4 months ago

Hello, Anna. Did you know that tofu is actually made up of around 90% water?

Pressing the tofu before marinating helps eliminate extra water, preventing the marinade from being diluted with excess water that comes out of the tofu. This results in flavorful tofu with a marinade. We hope this explanation makes sense to you. 😊

👍 1 ➡ Reply

Anna

⌚ 4 months ago

Dear Nami,

because I don't press tofu often I use a cutting board under and above the tofu, then just place a full bottle of oil on top. I got ones from olive oil which are not round so then won't roll away and I can place them over the whole lenght. I was doing fake fish fries with tofu and nori and this trick came in handy. The vegan community seems to making fake fish products of tofu and wakame and nori mainly and it tastes really good. As I love experiments I was surprised how much like fish it tastes, but well, I thinks it's the ocean taste, not only fish got it. I think we all like to thank the japanese ancestors for their food inventions as they are so tasty and enriche so much meals.

👍 0 ➡ Reply

Naomi (JOC Community Manager) Admin

🗨 Reply to [Anna](#) ⌚ 4 months ago

Hello Anna, Thank you for reading Nami's post and sharing your cooking experiences with us. Fake fish fries sound unique and delicious, too. 😊

👍 0 ➡ Reply

Stephanie

⌚ 1 year ago

Hi Nami, can I choose to bake the tofu instead of pan frying it? and add the sauce after? If so, how should I bake this?



0



Reply

Naomi (JOC Community Manager)

Admin

Reply to [Stephanie](#) 1 year ago

Hi Stephanie, Thank you very much for reading Nami's post and trying her recipe!

Yes, you can bake Tofu instead of pan-frying it. You can lightly coat the Tofu with oil, then coat it with starch. Bake at 400°F for 15 minutes and flip it and another 15 minutes.

Please reduce the cooking time as need it. 😊

We hope this helps!



0



Reply

Linda

2 years ago

Great recipe! I followed the recipe as is but the tofu doesn't stay crispy like yours when I add the sauce. Wondering if there's a trick to this?



0



Reply

Naomi (JOC Community Manager)

Admin

Reply to [Linda](#) 2 years ago

Hi Linda! Thank you very much for trying Nami's recipe and for your kind feedback!

The tips are the pan should be hot at Step 5 and quickly toss the tofu with the sauce and serve immediately. The longer the tofu sits with the sauce, the texture will be soggy.

We hope this helps!



0



Reply

Laura

2 years ago

Are there any substitutions one can use for the sake?



0



Reply

Naomi (JOC Community Manager)

Admin

Reply to [Laura](#) 2 years ago

Hi Laura! Thank you very much for reading Nami's post and trying her recipe!

You can substitute Sake with dry sherry or Chinese rice wine. If you cannot consume alcohol in your

cooking, you can replace it with water or broth/dashi.

<https://www.justonecookbook.com/sake/>

We hope this helps! 😊

👍 0

➡ Reply

Rachel

🕒 2 years ago

Delicious, easy, and my kids love it!

★★★★★

👍 0

➡ Reply

Marcel Raphael

🕒 2 years ago

Namiko,

We've been following your recipes and videos for nearly 2 years now. I am American and my wife is Chinese, but we're planning to move to Japan soon. We're so glad to have a trustworthy source to help us to learn Japanese recipes in advance to help our family adjust better to the environment before we go.

Your recipes are usually spot on as far as taste and specific enough direction-wise for people to follow and get the desired results. We really love the fact that you included a lot of Japanese-style Chinese foods on the website, too. We just tried the teriyaki tofu recipe today and it was delicious!

There is one requested we'd like to make. At some point in the future can you give instructions on how to make a Japanese dinner feast? I noticed there was a special webpage for Osechi (which we have enjoyed using 2 years in a row 😊 for the Japanese new year, but is there anything that you can show us about how to prepare step-by-step and make a whole table of food (with recommended recipes) for several dinner guest?

Thanks again for everything that you, Mr. JC and the JOC team do!

Marcel, 白雪 and little baby Haruhi

👍 1

➡ Reply

Naomi (JOC Community Manager)

Admin

🗨 Reply to [Marcel Raphael](#) 🕒 2 years ago

Hi Marcel!

Nami and all of us at JOC are so happy to hear you have been following our recipes and videos for years!

Thank you very much for using our site to enjoy many Japanese foods. ☺

How excited to move to Japan!! It will be much easy to access many ingredients too! 🥰

To prepare for a Japanese dinner feast, we recommend reading these posts that Nami and JOC team put together:

Plan a Japanese Meal: One Soup Three Dishes “Ichiju Sansai” (一汁三菜)

<https://www.justonecookbook.com/ichiju-sansai/>

Japanese Dining Etiquette 101 食事のマナー:

<https://www.justonecookbook.com/japanese-dining-etiquette/>

Japanese Dining Etiquette 101 (Part 2) – Reader’s Questions 食事のマナー:

<https://www.justonecookbook.com/japanese-dining-etiquette-guide/>

We hope this is helpful, and let us know if you have any other questions!

👍 0

➡ Reply

Masae

🕒 2 years ago

This cooked tofu recipe is the best I've come across and I am not a vegetarian! I followed Nami's recipe exactly as instructed using medium tofu, draining it for 45 minutes and using potato starch. JOC recipes are precise and make all the difference. Incredible texture and flavor. Thank you!!

👍 0

➡ Reply

Naomi (JOC Community Manager)

Admin

💬 Reply to [Masae](#) 🕒 2 years ago

Hi Masae! Aww... 🥰 Nami and all of us at JOC are so happy to hear you enjoyed this recipe and many others.

Thank you very much for trying Nami's recipe and for your generous words.

👍 0

➡ Reply

Gorei Tada

🕒 2 years ago

Thank you for this recipe Nami. What can I substitute the sake with? My husband's qllerguc to all alcohol.

👍 0

➡ Reply

Naomi (JOC Community Manager)

Admin

💬 Reply to [Gorei Tada](#) 🕒 2 years ago

Hi Gorei! Thank you very much for reading Nami's post and trying her recipe!

You can simply omit sake and replace it with water or broth/dashi. 😊

We hope this helps!

👍 0

➡ Reply

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