

Some of my friends will also add mayonnaise for more fat and flavor.” The resulting dish is rich, creamy and pleasantly pink.

Like ramen before it, *mentaiko* spaghetti is now making its way across the Pacific, appearing in restaurants around the United States for the first time, often with unique twists. At LA’s Del Rey Kitchen, for example, the dish is bolstered with *masago* (capelin roe), plus butter sauce and *nori* for an added burst of umami.

Chef Mark Hellyar spent two years working in Japan prior to opening Momotaro in Chicago last fall. There, he serves a buttery version spiked with *rayu* sesame oil and fresh ginger juice. “People go out for *mentaiko* in Japan like people here go out for spaghetti and meatballs,” Hellyar says.

“It’s salty, sweet, fishy and strong, so it’s good to sit on top of something that can carry the flavor, like spaghetti, rice or potatoes,” says Katsuya Fukushima, chef and co-owner of Daikaya, in Washington, D.C., which serves the roe with spaghetti and over rice.

While *mentaiko* is a comfort food in Japan, stateside tastes remain a hurdle. “We describe it on the menu as ‘spicy cod roe,’ but still that’s a little scary,” Fukushima says. “Maybe we should call it ‘spicy cod caviar.’”



**HATCHING A NEW TREND**  
Momotaro’s  
*mentaiko* spaghetti



**BOARDING PASS** ➔ If you’re craving *mentaiko* at Momotaro, United offers nearly 600 daily flights to Chicago. Try Economy Plus extra-legroom seats for more space on your flight. For more information visit [united.com](http://united.com).

**MAUI**

## PETAL PUSHERS

Hydrosol drops bring a floral bouquet to your cocktail

Kerry Mekeel rolls up to work at Maui’s Hotel Wailea in a black pickup truck full of vibrant young green coconuts that will soon be split open with a machete and used in cocktails, alongside fresh-pressed juices, local kombucha and housemade syrups. But the unsung star ingredient at her poolside apothecary bar, The Cabanas, just might be her lineup of hydrosols, or floral waters. Made by steam-distilling plants, hydrosols are subtler than perfumey essential oils—though you still need only a few drops to impart a fresh-from-the-garden scent and flavor.

“Bad mixers nauseate you,” Mekeel says. “But you feel clean with hydrosols. The frequency of the plant gives you a natural high. Not only are you getting the scent and flavor of the plant matter, but also the full medicinal value of the plant.” In her Flower Power concoction, Mekeel adds just a few drops of lavender essence to gin, lemon juice, housemade rose syrup and club soda. **“This is truly a lady’s drink,” she says. “Everything is so subtle, but you feel the lavender and rose and want to hug yourself.”**

Bartenders across the country are distilling their own blooms. One drop of orchid hydrosol resting in an orchid petal amplifies the floral taste of Crème d’Yvette in the Cocchi Americano and of the grappa in the High Violet at Chicago’s Allium. Hibiscus hydrosols show versatility in Asian- and Latin-inspired drinks, from a sparkling sake slushie at San Jose’s RockBar Theater to the hibiscus margarita at Mexican Sugar, in Plano, Texas. In NYC, freshly crushed and distilled rosewater finishes the gin-based Rhubarb and Rose cocktail at The Gander. —AMBER GIBSON

**FLOWER POWER** *Yields one drink*

- 2 oz. Hendrick’s gin
- 1 oz. housemade rose syrup (recipe below)
- 1 oz. fresh Meyer lemon juice
- 2-4 drops lavender hydrosol

*Shake ingredients, top with carbonated filtered water. Garnish with lemon zest.*

**ROSE SYRUP RECIPE**

*Combine equal parts dried heirloom or antique rose petals, organic light brown cane sugar and filtered water. Heat on low to melt sugar and gently extract flavor and color of rose.*



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