

# Chef on Perilla: Its Charms and Culinary Dedication

Chef Mitsugu Imura, Executive Chef at a wedding-venue restaurant, created a course menu using Tamura's perilla. Dishes for a wedding must deliver not only exceptional flavor but also a gentle, healthful quality. Perilla answers that desire—an ingredient that nourishes the body while elevating the dining experience. Here, Chef Imura shares what he finds compelling about Tamura's perilla and the new possibilities he discovered through cooking with it.



## Q1 What characteristics and appeals did you notice when using Tamura's perilla oil?

**A** Chef Imura

The cold-pressed oil has a clean, refreshing aroma. It pairs beautifully with raw vegetables, giving a bright, fresh note—so I used it that way in this menu.



## Q2 How do you use perilla seeds differently?

**A** Chef Imura

For the meat en papillote in this course I used seeds. Since the parcel gets soaked with sauce and juices, the toasty note doesn't develop further with heat. I used the seeds with texture in mind to add a pleasant crunch to the dish.

By contrast, the opening prawn dish takes advantage of that: we coat the prawns with perilla, then fry them at high temperature so the oil and heat draw out that toasty aroma. Toastiness, in a way, needs the drying effect that comes from direct heat.



### Q3 How do you adapt perilla' s distinctive flavor in your dishes?

A **Chef Imura**

Think of olive oil: some varieties taste sharp when sampled alone, yet that edge disappears when paired with a salad. Perilla behaves the same way. In a tomato marinade, for example, the tomato' s aroma overlays the perilla and balances it perfectly. By layering flavors, you can soften perilla' s stronger notes and make it harmonize with the dish.



### Q4 What aspects did you focus on most in this course?

A **Chef Imura**

The seeds, the powder, and the oil each release their aroma at different moments. Whole seeds give off fragrance the moment you bite into them, while the oil announces itself as soon as the dish is served.

I combined them with that sense of timing in mind. For ingredients with strong aromas, like cheese, I tend to use the oil so the scent reaches the diner first.

Texture is also important—the little pop of the seeds is something I wanted to preserve, so you' ll find them used generously in dishes like the meat course. I wanted guests to enjoy that texture from the first bite to the last.





**Q5** How is the memorable “perilla salt” made?

**A** Chef Imura

We mix powdered perilla with salt — it’s an easy way to bring perilla into home cooking, not just as an oil but as a seasoning. Try sprinkling a little over sashimi for an interesting twist.

**Q6** Are there any easy ways for home cooks to use perilla?

**A** Chef Imura

You can substitute perilla for sesame in many dishes—where you’d normally sprinkle sesame, try perilla instead. It works on ramen, salads, and even sashimi, where the seeds add a pleasant pop. Think of it as a simple ingredient swap: just as you’d replace cucumber with a similar-textured vegetable, you can naturally use perilla in place of sesame.

