

Plenty of  
Recipes

Primary Edition

# Gochiso

Ultimate Japanese Gourmet Magazine

**Wagashi** —Traditional Japanese confectionery

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# WAGASHI (traditional Japanese confectionery)

## Wagashi Through the Seasons



### The beneficial effects of wagashi

Wagashi is great for various reasons. First of all, it is gentle to the body. Wagashi is made using primarily plant-based ingredients, so it's naturally low in fat. Most wagashi confections are made from simple ingredients, and there are many kinds that can be enjoyed even by people who are allergic to eggs, wheat or nuts. Secondly, there are stories behind wagashi. Classic wagashi confections

are likely to have anecdotes associated with them or legends concerning the origin of their names. It's fun to learn about these anecdotes and legends. Lastly, wagashi represents the four seasons. It plays an essential role in expressing seasonal beauty in the Japanese tea ceremony. Indeed, the Japanese have long taken pleasure in appreciating each season through artfully crafted, sweet-tasting wagashi. For these reasons wagashi is

good for the body as well as the mind.

### What is wagashi?

Wagashi is the generic term for Japanese-style confections, which include not just sweets, but also savory snack foods like the soy-sauce-flavored *arare* or the recent hit, *wasabi* peas. However, when a Japanese person talks about wagashi it usually means doughy, sweet-flavored *namagashi* (moist con-

## Seasonal Wagashi Recipes

### Spring

#### Anmitsu (Jelly cubes with fruit and bean paste on top)

Anmitsu is a relatively new wagashi, originating in the 19th century. There is no specific way to create anmitsu. You can add your favorite fruit or put a scoop of ice cream on top.



#### Ingredients (serves 6):

4 g *kanten* powder (agar) (1 envelope)  
2 cups water  
3 tablespoons sugar  
Canned or fresh fruit (as desired)  
1 cup bean paste  
(For *kuromitsu* [dark syrup])  
1/2 cup light-brown sugar  
1/4 cup water



kanten powder

#### Directions:

1. Prepare the *kuromitsu*. Put light-brown sugar and water into a pot, and bring the mixture to boil over high heat. Continue to boil for 1 minute, then turn off the heat. Allow the syrup to cool.
2. Dissolve *kanten* powder in water and heat the mixture over medium heat while stirring with a wooden ladle. When the liquid comes to a boil, lower the heat and simmer for about 2 minutes.
3. Add sugar in *kanten* mixture, bring the mixture to boil, then take the pot off the stove.
4. Pour the liquid *kanten* into a rectangular mold and let it cool in a refrigerator for at least 1 hour.
5. Remove the hardened *kanten* from the mold and cut it into small cubes.
6. Place the jelly cubes in a serving bowl, add cut fruit and bean paste. Pour on the *kuromitsu*.



fections) or *han-namagashi* (semi-moist confections). Take *manju* (sweet buns) for example: slow-cooked, sweet *azuki* bean paste is wrapped inside a soft bun that has designs crafted onto it. Wagashi has its own distinctive Japanese style and is irresistibly fascinating.

### Unraveling the history of wagashi

The first confectionery in Japan were citrus fruits which were harvested for the 11th emperor in the first century A.D.. The fruits were called *tachibana* and were not sweet at all but sour. Of all the fruits, persimmon was the sweetest thing to eat until sugar was introduced to Japan in around sixth century, which was the same period of time when grain milling and processing technologies were being developed. One can readily imagine that those technologies were probably applied to producing confections. Although *manju* and *yokan* (a jellied sweet made of azuki bean paste) are types of wagashi, they originated overseas and were not confections at first.

They became sweets after having been brought to Japan. For instance, *yokan* had its origin in lamb soup. It was first incorporated into *shojin-ryori* using azuki beans instead of lamb meat, which is the origin of *mushi* (steamed) *yokan*. Then it evolved further into *neri* (jellied with agar) *yokan*. Since the primary ingredients of *neri yokan* are azuki beans, sugar and *kanten* (agar), what started as lamb soup was gradually transformed into something completely different.



The Japanese tea ceremony has flourished ever since Sen no Rikyu established it in the sixteenth century.

Wagashi has always been served during tea ceremonies and thus has rapidly developed as well. The appreciation of the changing seasons and the beauty of nature is an important part of the Japanese tea ceremony. Because the tea ceremony back then was a practice performed only among the upper class, confections must have been pure luxury. Once the capital of Japan was transferred from Kyoto to Edo (today's Tokyo), confectioners in Kyoto and Edo competed against each other with their skills, and as a result more sophisticated confections were created. *Kyo-gashi* (Kyoto original sweets) are still treasured due to their history and technique, and also due to the geographical advantage of having easy access to such luxurious ingredients as Tanba no *kuromame* (black beans from Tanba) and *wasanbon* (a type of Japanese sugar). Incidentally, the concept of wagashi was formed to distinguish it from *yogashi* (Western confections), which was introduced from Europe after the nineteenth century.

Although Wagashi is often made using a steamer, the recipes here require only a microwave or pots, so you can easily try them at home.

## Kashiwa mochi

(rice cake wrapped in an oak leaf)

*Kashiwa* leaves (oak leaves) symbolize descendant prosperity. *Kashiwa mochi* is served on May 5 to celebrate the healthy growth of boys and to wish for their prosperous future. To eat, remove the leaf and hold the mochi by hand.



### Ingredients (makes 5 pieces):

- 2/3 cup *joshin-ko* (refined rice powder)
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 3/4 cup boiling water
- 1/3 cup *koshi-an* (strained azuki bean paste)
- 5 *kashiwa* leaves (oak leaves)



### Directions:

1. Divide the bean paste into five equal parts, and roll it into balls. Wash the *kashiwa* leaves with water.
2. Combine the *joshin-ko* and sugar in a heat-resistant bowl. Add the boiling water all at once, and mix well until the mixture has no lumps.
3. Cover with plastic wrap and microwave for 4 to 6 minutes or until the dough is translucent and elastic.
4. Place the mochi dough on a sheet of plastic wrap and fold the wrap over. Knead the

mochi lightly through the plastic wrap until evenly smooth. Divide the mochi into five equal parts.

5. Cover your palm with a sheet of plastic wrap and place one portion of the mochi on top. Press the mochi into an oval and place one *koshi-an* ball in the center. Fold the mochi in half and pinch the edges to seal. If the *koshi-an* is on the edges, the mochi won't seal properly. So be sure that each oval is big enough.



6. Wet the *kashiwa* leaves with water. Wrap each piece of mochi with one *kashiwa* leaf.
7. To enhance the fragrance of the leaves and the texture of the mochi, wrap each piece loosely with plastic wrap and microwave for 1 minute.
8. Keep them wrapped to cool for about 30 minutes.

### How is wagashi related to the seasons?

Wagashi is deeply related to the seasons. Some of the typical spring wagashi are *sakura mochi*, which uses salted cherry leaves; *nanohana kinton*, which features a beautiful contrast of green and yellow; and *kashiwa mochi*, which is wrapped in a kashiwa (oak) leaf. The summer-themed wagashi includes *waka-ayu*, a baked confection shaped like the ayu fish; *kuzukiri*, a jelly formed like spaghetti; and *mizu yokan*, a jellied sweet made of azuki bean paste and agar. The fall-themed wagashi includes *tsukimi dango*, full-moon shaped dumplings; *ohagi*, roughly crushed glutinous rice covered with azuki bean paste; and *kuri kanoko*, which is made with an abundance of chestnuts. Typical winter wagashi includes *oshiruko*, sweet azuki

bean soup; and *manju* and *mame daifuku*, sweet azuki bean paste wrapped inside *mochi* with salty beans mixed into it. The wagashi confections served during tea ceremonies feature seasonal designs, most of which employ floral motifs. Some of the other seasonal motifs are *sansai* (edible wild plants) and the *uguisu bird* (Japanese bush warbler) for spring, refreshing water and fish for summer, fall leaves and the moon for fall, and snow and frost for winter. Many wagashi sweets have poetic names, as well as exaggerated, simplified or stylized designs. For that reason they're also delightful to the eye. Wagashi confections are mainly ordered through wagashi stores for tea ceremonies, but they can also be enjoyed as a snack.

### Wagashi and everyday lives

In various regions of Japan there are numerous wagashi sweets designed or named after famous local folk tales or *waka*, an ancient style of Japanese poetry, and many of these sweets have developed into gifts and souvenirs.

Wagashi is also deeply associated with seasonal events. Japan has various annual events, such as the celebration of the healthy growth of children, the tradition to welcome the returning spirits of ancestors, and harvest festivals. Various types of special wagashi are made according to events. This is similar to the American tradition of eating candy corn on Halloween and pumpkin pie on Thanksgiving Day. Many of the wagashi sweets relating to seasonal events are often enjoyed as

## Seasonal Wagashi Recipes

### Summer

#### Minazuki (a triangle-cut soft rice cake topped with sweet beans)

The shape of this confection represents a piece of ice in summer, which was valuable in the old days. In Kyoto, *minazuki* is eaten on June 30, when shrines carry out the ritual of praying for good health.



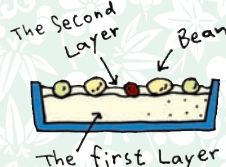
**Ingredients** (serves 4):  
1/2 cup wheat flour  
1 tablespoon cornstarch  
3 1/2 tablespoons sugar  
1 cup water  
1/2 cup *amanatto* (simmered sweet beans)



amanatto

#### Directions:

1. Mix the flour, corn starch and sugar with a whisk. Add water and dissolve completely.
2. In a heat-resistant container with a flat bottom (about 6 x 6 inches), pour in 90 percent of the flour mixture.
3. Cover with plastic wrap and microwave for 3 minutes.
4. Uncover and spread the *amanatto* evenly over the entire surface. Pour the rest of the flour mixture over the *amanatto*.
5. Cover with plastic wrap again and microwave for 2 minutes. Let it cool. Cut and serve.



#### Mizu yokan (a sweet confection made of azuki bean paste and agar)

This is a typical summer sweet. In some parts of Japan, people prefer eating *mizu yokan* during the winter season. Chill in a refrigerator before serving.



**Ingredients** (makes 6 custard cups):  
4 g *kanten* powder (agar) (1 envelope)  
3 cups water  
4 tablespoons sugar  
3/4 cup *koshi-an* (strained azuki bean paste)



kanten powder



koshi-an

#### Directions:

1. Moisten the custard cups with water and set aside.
2. In a pot, dissolve the kanten powder with the specified amount of water. Stir continuously with a wooden spoon over medium heat until it boils. Lower the heat and continue to simmer for another 2 minutes.
3. Add the sugar and bring it to a boil. Stir in the bean paste a little at a time, and let it dissolve. Simmer for about 2 more minutes then turn off the heat.
4. Immerse the outside of the pot in cold water. Stir occasionally using a wooden spoon so that the bean paste won't sink to the bottom. Once the steam is gone, take the pot out of the water.
5. Quickly pour the yokan liquid into the prepared custard cups before it starts to coagulate. Cool in a refrigerator for at least 1 hour.
6. Remove from the cups by inverting onto serving plates. Eat with a spoon.



snacks throughout the year.

### What's inside wagashi?

Wagashi confections are made primarily from sugar, beans, yams, nuts, powdered grain, starch and kanten (agar). These ingredients are all quite mild, so high-quality ingredients, advanced skills and experience are required to make truly delicious wagashi; Japan even has qualification exams for wagashi confectioners.

If a beans and sugar combination is too extreme for you, there are some types of wagashi that are made without beans. *Suama*, for instance, is made from just rice powder and sugar. *Kasutera*, which is of Portuguese origin, is a moist, sweet sponge cake. Also, *kuzukiri* (made from bracken starch) are usually not

combined with azuki bean paste.

Although the wagashi made by professional confectioners are delicious and widely available, some snack-type wagashi are easy to make at home. You can also make manju at home, but it might be difficult to succeed on your first try. Skill and experience make all the difference. As the proverb says, "When you order Mochi (rice cake), it's better to left to the Mochi man."

### To enjoy wagashi

Ever since yogashi was introduced and accepted in Japan, there have been attempts to integrate wagashi and yogashi to make new types of confections. Nowadays, western-style wagashi is becoming more popular. It often con-

tains ingredients like chocolate and butter and is made using traditional techniques. However, there are also Japanese-style Yogashi confections, such as green-tea-flavored ice cream and sponge cake with azuki bean paste. If you're about to try wagashi for the first time, you might start with these Japanese-style yogashi.

Wagashi has evolved with the changing seasons. Amid our busy lives, we can sometimes sense the seasonal changes through the wagashi sweets displayed in stores. We encourage you to take a short break and have some wagashi sweets with a cup of green tea, black coffee or straight tea to help you appreciate the beauty of the season, and contemplate the traditional festivals held in Japan.

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## Fall

### Tsukimi dango (rice dumplings)

In the fall, the lower humidity brings clearer air, causing the moon to look particularly beautiful. *Tsukimi dango* is the name for dumplings that are offered to the moon, together with Japanese silver grass and farm crops on the night of the moon viewing day. Fifteen dumplings are stacked in a pyramid shape. *Tsukimi dango* can be enjoyed in various ways, for example with azuki bean paste or *kinako* powder (toasted soybean flour), or eaten alone without toppings.



#### Ingredients (serves 4):

- 1 cup *joshin-ko* (refined rice powder)
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2/3 cup boiling water
- (For *mitarashi* sauce)
- 1 1/2 tablespoons cornstarch (dissolved in a small amount of water)
- 1/2 cup water
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 1/2 tablespoons *mirin* (sweet rice cooking wine)



joshin-ko



mirin

#### Directions:

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil.
2. Combine *joshin-ko* and sugar in a bowl. Pour 2/3 cup of boiling water at once and stir with a wooden spatula.
3. Once the dough is cooled enough to handle, knead it well until there are no lumps. Wet your hands with water and roll the dough into small balls about 1 inch in diameter.
4. Gently drop the balls into the remaining pot of boiling water. Continue to boil for about 3 minutes or till the balls start to float near the surface.
5. Scoop up the floating dumplings one by one and drop them into cold water. Continued to cool under cold running water.
6. Once the dumplings are cooled, remove the moisture from the surface and serve. If you are to stack the dumplings in a pyramid shape, make sure the surface of each dumpling is completely dry.
7. For *mitarashi* sauce, combine the water, sugar, soy sauce and *mirin* in a pot. Simmer a while.
8. Add the dissolved corn starch and stir constantly. Once the sauce comes to a boil, simmer for 1 more minute and remove from heat. Pour the sauce over the dumplings before serving.



# Seasonal Wagashi Recipes

## Fall

*Ohagi* is eaten during the week of the fall equinox, which is the time to honor the souls of ancestors. The same confection is also eaten during the spring equinoctial week under the name *bota mochi*.

### Ohagi

(sweet rice balls covered with azuki bean paste)



#### Ingredients (makes 6 pieces):

- 1/2 cup glutinous rice
- 1/8 cup *uruchi-mai* (regular rice)
- 3/4 cup water
- Pinch of salt
- 1 cup tsubushi-an (crushed azuki bean paste)

#### Directions:

1. Put tsubushi-an in a heat-resistant bowl and microwave for 4 to 5 minutes to remove the moisture. Let it cool.
4. Combine the glutinous rice and nonglutinous rice, and wash with water. Put the combined rice in a heat-resistant bowl and pour in the specified amount of water. Let stand for at least 1 hour.



tsubushi-an

5. Cover with plastic wrap and microwave for 7 minutes.
6. Let stand to cool for 10 minutes. Add salt then mash the rice with a potato masher or a wooden spatula until the rice is about halfway mashed.
7. Place a sheet of plastic wrap on your palm and place one sixth of the rice mixture on it. Wrap the rice mixture in the plastic wrap and form it into an egg-shaped ball. Remove plastic wrap. Repeat the process to make a total of six balls.
8. Place another sheet of plastic wrap on your palm. Spread an adequate amount of tsubushi-an evenly on it, then place one ball of the rice mixture on top. Enclose the rice ball completely with the tsubushi-an and shape it.



## Winter

### Dora-yaki (Japanese azuki bean pancakes)

*Dora-yaki* is a popular snack. Nowadays some *dora-yaki* come with chestnuts or whipped cream in addition to azuki bean paste. To eat, just use your hands.



#### Ingredients (makes 4 pieces)

- 2 large eggs
- 4 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/3 cup *mirin* (sweet rice cooking wine)
- 1 cup azuki bean paste

#### Directions:

1. Beat the eggs in a bowl. Add sugar and honey, and continue to beat till the color is whitish and the texture thickens slightly, but no peaks.
2. Add the mirin and stir rapidly.
3. Combine the flour and baking powder and sift twice. Quickly stir into the egg mixture.
4. Cover with plastic wrap and let stand at room temperature for 10 minutes.
5. Heat a nonstick skillet over medium-low heat, and pour in enough mixture to make a pancake about 3 inches in diameter.
6. Cover and continue to cook till the pancake has a bubbly surface and slightly dry edge. Flip and cook for 1 more minute. Cook the rest of the mixture the same way to make a total of 8 pancakes.
7. As soon as the pancakes are cooked, stack them in a vinyl bag to keep moist.
8. Put a 1/4 cup of azuki bean paste on one pancake and cover with another. Gently press the edges to seal.



### Kintsuba (baked azuki bean cake)

The shape of *kintsuba* was originally round because it was shaped after the Japanese sword *tsuba* (sword guard). *Kintsuba* is made with yams, but sometimes azuki beans or *uguisu* beans (simmered green peas) are used instead.



#### Ingredients (makes approximately 10 pieces):

- 2 cups *satsuma-imo* (Japanese yam with yellow flesh), peeled and diced (approx. 1 medium)
- 3 tablespoons sugar (For coating)
- 5 tablespoons soft wheat flour
- 1 tablespoon *katakuri-ko* (potato starch)
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1/3 cup water



#### Directions:

1. Boil the *satsuma-imo* a pot until it is soft.
2. Discard the water and mash the yam in the pot using a potato masher. Mix in the sugar.
3. Using a wooden spatula, stir the yam mixture over low heat until it has a consistency until it has consistency that is slightly firmer than mashed potatoes but still creamy. Adjust the consistency by adding water.
4. Line a square-shaped container (or a milk carton, etc.) with plastic wrap. Put the mashed yam into the container and spread evenly.
5. Let stand for about 1 hour to harden. Gently remove the yam mixture from the container and place it on a cutting board. Cut into bite-sized squares.
6. For coating, combine the ingredients in a bowl and mix well until the mixture has a pasty consistency.
7. Dip the entire yam pieces into the coating and cook all the surfaces in a nonstick frying pan over medium heat.

## WAGASHI FROM NIJIYA MARKET



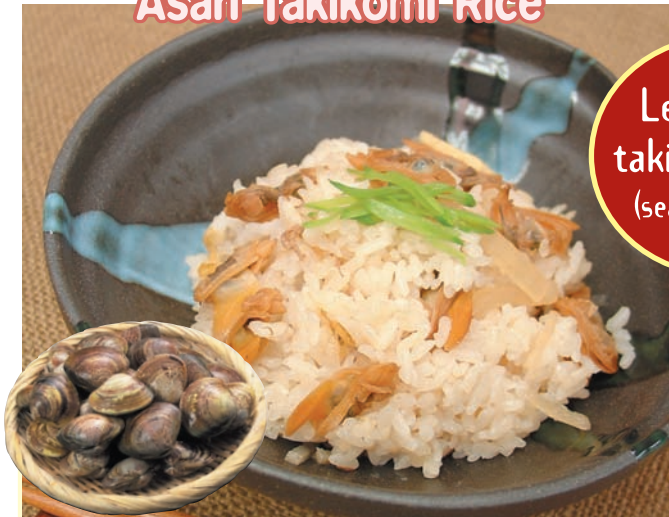
# Nijiya Rice

Nijiya Market carries Furusato Rice (a private brand item), along with popular organic rice brands such as “Akitakomachi,” “Nijiya Rice” and glutinous rice. As for organic rice, both white and brown rice are available. We offer three different polishing levels of 30, 50 and 70 percent, to suit your preferences.

Some people want to try brown rice for its health benefits, but it can be a bit difficult to eat. For such customers, we recommend starting with organic rice with a 30 percent polish rate. It’s easier to eat and at the same time allows you to enjoy the flavor of brown rice. Our rice is available in convenient 5 lb. and 12 lb. sizes.



## Asari Takikomi Rice



Let's cook  
takikomi rice!  
(seasoned rice)

### ◆INGREDIENTS (Serves 3 to 4):

1 abura-age (thin, deep-fried tofu)  
1/2 medium daikon radish  
About 3 cups dashi soup stock  
3 gou (18 oz) rice  
Salt (adequate amount)  
About 7 oz Asari clams (without shells)

### For the broth for Asari clams

3 tablespoons sake  
2 tablespoons mirin (rice wine)  
3 tablespoons soy sauce  
Ginger root (small amount)

### ◆DIRECTIONS:

**1.** Preparation: Rinse the rice 30 minutes to 1 hour before cooking; drain in a strainer. In lightly salted water, clean the Asari clams by hand with a light kneading motion; drain in a strainer. Julienne the ginger root. Peel the daikon radish and slice into strips. Pour boiled water over the

abura-age to remove the excess oil, drain, and cut it into thin strips.

**2.** Cook the daikon radish in large amount of boiling, lightly salted water for a few minutes. Drain it in a strainer.

**3.** In a saucepan, heat the broth ingredients till boiling. Add the clams. Simmer, stirring constantly with chopsticks. (Never overcook the clams, as they will shrink.)

**4.** Place the rice and broth in a rice cooker. Pour dashi soup stock up to the 3-gou level, and then add the abura-age and daikon. Cook on the “regular” setting. Once the rice is done, add the Asari clams; stir to fluff. Serve in bowls, garnished with kinosaya peas (snow peas) if desired.

## Takenoko Takikomi Rice (bamboo shoots)



### ◆INGREDIENTS (Serves 3 to 4):

10.5 oz takenoko (bamboo shoots)  
1 abura-age (thin, deep-fried tofu)  
1/2 medium carrot  
For the broth:

1 cup dashi soup stock  
1 tablespoon mirin  
2 tablespoons light-colored soy sauce  
3 gou (18 oz) rice  
About 2 cups dashi soup stock

### For the seasoning:

2 tablespoons sake  
1 tablespoon mirin  
2 tablespoons light-colored soy sauce

### ◆DIRECTIONS:

**1.** Preparation: Rinse the rice 30 minutes to 1 hour before cooking; drain in a strainer. Thinly slice the takenoko into desired size. Finely chop the carrot. Pour boiled water

over the abura-age to remove excess oil, drain, and cut into thin strips.

**2.** In a saucepan, cook the takenoko, carrot and abura-age in dashi soup stock. Once it boils, add mirin and light-colored soy sauce. When it boils again, lower the heat and cover, simmering for about ten minutes. Remove from heat and cool.

**3.** In a rice cooker, put the rice and the broth from step 2 above. Pour dashi soup stock up to the 3-gou level.

**4.** Stir in the sake, mirin and light-colored soy sauce. Add the simmered ingredients from step 2, and cook on the “regular” setting. Once the rice is done, stir to fluff. Serve in bowls, garnished with kinome (pepper leaf buds) if desired.

# JAPANESE DELI

Hiromi Hayashi — *The top chef in Japanese Delicatessen*

*“Eat deliciously cooked seasonal vegetables”.*  
*Nijiya brought such Japanese traditions into its deli.*



#### About the writer:

He is the principal of “Nihon Food Service Senmon Gakuin” He owns a deli food factory in Okinawa. He is also active as a consultant of food business. His practical advice from management to menu selection to cooking has helped many delis and grocery stores throughout Japan. “American Seafood Restaurant” in Akasaka, Tokyo is one that he led to success. His cooking is reputed not only tasty but also healthy. He has written several books and created a monthly magazine “Souzai Deli Jyoho Mansaibin”.

Japanese are sensitive with the change of seasons and always try to have seasonal food, especially vegetables. Even delis there change their vege menu according to the season. I am hoping, therefore, to have these seasonal vegetable dishes at my delis and hoping American people will enjoy them.

Speaking about cooking vegetables, I found “blanching” has become a trend. Blanching is cooking vegetables in liquid very quickly. In Japan blanching lettuce is becoming popular. I suggest blanching lettuce in oden broth. Cook a head of lettuce in oden broth for 1 minute and eat with mustard like regular oden. (Oden is a typical winter dish with some winter vegetables and fish cakes cooked for a long time in a large pot.) It is very good. Same as tomato. Cook peeled whole tomato in the oden broth for 2 to 3 minutes. Romaine lettuce or watercress will work wonderfully, too. These are worth try.

You may think lettuce and tomato are for salad. You actually see many people eating a big plate of salad or raw vegetable with dip here in the States. Vegetables, however, shrink into 1/3 of its raw volume when cooked. That means you can eat 3 times more vegetables without bloating. For health reasons, too, I wish to spread the benefits of blanched green leaves to everybody in America.

With Japanese dishes, what is necessary is rice.

I think Japanese are the only ones in the world who like to eat rice plain unseasoned. In most rice eating countries either Spain or Italy or South East Asians, rice is usually cooked or fried with seasoning. Chinese more likely mount other food on top of plain rice and eat them together. Koreans often pour soup over plain rice. But in Japan, the rice declares its independence. Japanese love to taste the subtle but rich sweetness of rice itself. Because of that, we are particular about the cooking technique as much as we care about the rice grain.

So how can we cook rice right? Here are some tips from me. Rinse and soak the rice in water at least one hour before cooking. If you don't enough time, soak it in warm water (about 105°F) for at least 15 minutes. The point is to let the rice absorb water beforehand.

People also say you should let the rice sit and self steam in the cooker for a while after it is finished cooking. This is true especially if you want to keep rice tasty even after it is cooled.

But do you really know when you can have the truly very best rice? It comes right after the rice is cooked, before self steaming begins, at the moment the electric cooker tells you “it's done”.

In the course of “kaiseki”, a small amount of this gem of rice is served at the very first course. It is called “ichimonji gohan”.



When you open the lid of the bowl at your left, you will find it in horizontal rectangular shape. This rice is scooped from the side of the cooker at the moment cooking is done. But this ultimate taste would disperse in a blink. That's why the chef serves only one bite or two in hope that the guests will experience this precious moment.

The “ichimonji gohan”, by the way, is always accompanied with a bowl of soup and sunomono. Sunomono is a cold dish with sugared vinegar. With traditional Japanese meal, “sunomono” is always served first to increase the appetite. It is a must item in a bento box, too.

In spring, “nuta” is a popular kind of sunomono. (Nuta sauce is made with sugared vinegar and miso) Wakegi and clam nuta, wakegi and chopped tuna nuta, wakegi and octopus sunomono, hotaru squid will take the place of octopus in late spring. Kabu radish sweet and sour pickle, orange radish pickle (pickled in vinegar, orange juice, sugar and salt) are good choices.



## Everyone's Favorite, Nijiya's Sozai Deli Dishes

# Japanese Dishes

Over the past several years, Nijiya Market has been dedicated to providing a variety of delicious deli dishes, like those you see in the food floors of department stores in Japan, and has added a number of popular items to our menus. Kinpira gobo (sauteed burdock root) packs dietary fiber, which is a well-known aid to bowel movement. Okara (tofu pulp) is also a good source of dietary fiber and a low-calorie food. Its calcium content is comparable to an equal amount of milk, making it effective for the prevention of bone loss (osteoporosis). Hijiki seaweed is rich in vitamin A, which helps maintain healthy skin, and iron, which helps prevent excessive sensitivity to cold, stiff neck and shoulders, and malignant anemia. Other popular dishes we carry include potato salad, macaroni salad, gobo salad, simmered vegetable dishes, broiled salted fish (such as mackerel) and simmered fish dishes. Along with these popular standard items we also offer limited-time-only dishes using seasonal fish and vegetables. These selections are part of the secret to our continuing customer satisfaction.



Kabocha nimono



Chikuzen-ni



Potato Salad



Okara



Takenoko nimono



Sansai



Simmered hijiki seaweed

Would you like to make traditional Japanese dishes?



**Kinpira gobo**  
(sauteed burdock root)

#### INGREDIENTS (4 Servings):

1 medium burdock root  
2 tablespoons sake  
2 tablespoons dark soy sauce  
1 scant tablespoon sugar or to taste  
1/4 tablespoon red pepper flakes (ichimi) or seven-spice mixture (shichimi)

#### DIRECTIONS:

1. Cut burdock in shavings as if sharpening a pencil. Keep cut burdock in water to avoid discoloration.  
2. Coat the bottom of a frying pan with a few tbsps oil, heat, and add vegetable. Stir-fry

over high heat till vegetable begins to soften (about 3 minutes). Add the sake to the pan, stir in the soy sauce and sugar, and continue frying over medium heat till the liquid has been almost completely reduced. Stir occasionally to keep the vegetable from sticking to the pan. Flavor to taste with red pepper flakes or seven-spice mixture.  
3. Serve hot or at room temperature. Keeps one week, refrigerated in a sealed container.

#### INGREDIENTS (4 Servings):

2 oz hijiki  
2 oz carrots  
1 x age (deep-fried tofu) puff  
1/3 x block hard tofu  
5 x green beans  
2 tbl sesame oil  
1 cup dashijiru (soup stock)  
3 tablespoons soy sauce  
2 tablespoons sake  
2 tablespoons  
1 teaspoon white sesame seeds lightly sauteed

#### DIRECTIONS:

1. Rinse the hijiki in a fine-mesh strainer under cold running water. In 3 times the amount of warm water, soak for 10 to 15 minutes. Remove the hijiki with a tea strainer. (Sand and pebbles will sink to the bottom of the bowl.) Return to fine-mesh strainer and drain off excess water. Grate the carrots into matchstick slivers. Dip the age puff for 30 seconds in boiling water, and cut into matchstick

slivers. Place tofu in a heated skillet and mash with a spatula. Let it simmer in its own water until reduced to small crumbs. Snap the ends off the green beans and place in boiling water for 1 to 2 minutes. Immerse in iced water, drain, and cut into 1/2-inch-long pieces.  
2. In a heated skillet, saute sesame oil, hijiki, carrots, age, and tofu (all completely drained of water). When ingredients have acquired a shiny appearance, add dashijiru, shoyu, sake and mirin. Reduce heat to low and cook, stirring frequently, until liquid has been absorbed. Turn off heat and add green beans.  
3. Place B in serving dish, sprinkle with sauteed sesame seeds. If you like, add seven-taste pepper to taste.

# THE STORY OF NORI

## ABUNDANCE IN VITAMINS AND MINERALS. EAT "THE SEA VEGETABLE" EVERYDAY FOR YOUR HEALTH!

The Japanese food scene in the United States has been changing dramatically these days. In fact, it was not long ago that "nori" was disliked by many non-Japanese because of its appearance (a black paper like sheet!) and somewhat fishy flavor. But as sushi has gained popularity, its companion "nori" has also naturally become popular, although it is still called "sea weed".

Now in some places, it is promoted as "sea vegetable" and is almost becoming an English word along with "sushi", "tofu" and "sake". Sushi rolls using "nori" is now available almost at any major super market deli.

Nori also seems to have attracted people with its "Nutrition Facts". Non-fat, and low in calories, it is an alkaline food that contains plenty of dietary fiber, good protein, chlorophyll and various vitamins and minerals. It also has betaine and taurine which helps reduce cholesterol. What other foods can you find healthier than this?

Nori has been indispensable food for Japanese for a long time.

It is said that Japanese people were already eating "nori" in the 7th century. They began cultivating it some time in the Edo period (1603-1867). The main nori farm in that era was Edo Bay (present Tokyo Bay). The nori raised there was called "Asakusa Nori" because it was collected at the mouth of Asakusa River. Both production and sales of

Asakusa Nori was completely controlled by the regime.

As the production increased, the farming area expanded. As Tokyo became modernized, the farming area spread farther out of Tokyo. Currently Ariake Bay in Kyushu is said to produce the highest quality nori.

At present, 10 billion nori sheets are produced and consumed a year in Japan. Nori is one of the essentials in Japanese food. From simple rice and nori breakfast to sushi to soba noodles, it is no exaggeration that Japanese can not live without it. Therefore, both demand and supply have kept increasing each year even though the Japanese diet has become westernized.

Japan is not the biggest producer of nori in the world. China is. However because Japan restricts the importation of nori to protect domestic producers, the major part of China's production goes to the States. As a result, American nori lovers enjoy high quality nori at significantly lower prices compared to the Japanese.

Now how can we determine the quality of nori?

Good nori should be even, aromatic, shiny and almost black deep green in color. But you may find a wide range of prices among similar looking nori sheets on the shelf. For example, the same size 10 sheet package on the bottom is \$1 per pack and the top is \$6 "produced in Japan" pack.

Nori's grade and price are determined by the production site, species, harvested season, texture, aroma, gloss, shape, flatness, coloring through the light, coloring after roasting, crispness and dissolving sensation in the mouth. The most expensive nori is Ariake produced. The cheapest is produced in China. The difference between these two is apparent; however, it is not easy to tell the difference between a \$2 and \$3 nori.

To learn how to choose good quality nori, there is nothing that takes the place of experience. Let's start with less expensive nori. Once you learn to distinguish the difference, try higher grades. While you are testing, you will gain good calcium, various vitamins and minerals, all of which may help ease stress and calm your nerves.

Nori is largely categorized into two types. "Crispy" and "Tasty and tough." The "Crispy" nori has a soft texture and grows in quiet waters such as Ariake Bay. This popular nori is crispy, as described, and aromatic, good for dishes that should be eaten soon after served, like rolls at the sushi bar, hand rolls or simply with plain warm rice.

The "tasty and tough" nori is thicker, darker and tougher because it grows in a rather rough sea like Seto Sea. Since its real taste emerges after it softens, it should be used for something you eat later, such as the sushi rolls or rice balls for lunch. Don't use the "tasty and tough" nori in place of the

“crispy” nori, otherwise you will very likely end up wrestling to bite off a tasteless hand roll.

Although these two types are so different, there is no particular description or warning on the package. You have to figure it out by yourself. So if you are not sure, buy a few different brands and taste them to compare. You will find the difference quite easily.

The other key to maximize the taste of nori is to eat as quickly as possible after opening the package. Thanks to the modern technology of desiccant and packaging, the nori in a package hardly deteriorates as it used to. Nori is no

longer a seasonal food, but is available year round. It is fresh at the time of the harvest, and will stay fresh for a long time. However, once it is exposed to the air and especially to moisture, oxidation quickly takes place. The original flavor and taste will be lost and never be restored. Use your open Nori right away. Do not lament over old leftovers. If you really want to save some leftover nori, double pack it

in air tight plastic bags and store it in the freezer.



## Quick and Easy Recipes with Nori

### ROASTED NORI SOUP



**INGREDIENTS (SERVING 4):** 2~3 sheets nori, 1/2 onion, 2 strips bacon, 3 TB corn kernels, 5C water, 2T chicken soup granule or consomme granule, sesame oil, salt, pepper and soy sauce to taste, green onion for garnish

1. Thinly slice the onion and bacon.
2. Boil the water in a sauce pan and resolve the soup granule. Add onion and bacon and cook for a while. Add corn kernels and finely torn nori pieces.
3. Adjust the taste with salt, pepper, and soy sauce. Add a small amount of sesame oil for flavor and garnish it with finely chopped green onion.

### LETTUCE AND NORI SALAD



**INGREDIENTS (SERVING 4):** 2~3 sheets of yakinori, 1 head of lettuce, and sesame oil and soy sauce for taste.

1. Rinse the lettuce. Dry well and tear it into bite size pieces.
2. Put the lettuce in a salad bowl and sprinkle the torn nori pieces over.
3. Pour sesame oil over then soy sauce. (It is critical to pour sesame oil first, otherwise it will be too salty.)
4. Before serving add a small amount of vegetable oil and toss it well.

### POTATO AND NORI TEMPURA



**INGREDIENTS (SERVING 4):** 2 sheets of yakinori, 4~5 large potatoes, salt, oil for frying

1. Peel and grade the potatoes. Squeeze the water out of the potatoes. (A coffee filter works well for this process)
2. Cut the nori sheet into 6 rectangular shapes.
3. Spread the graded potato onto the nori sheets. About 1/8" thickness.
4. Deep fry the potato and nori sheets for crispy golden brown. Serve warm with salt.

### SPINACH AND NORI BUTTER SAUTE



**INGREDIENTS (SERVING 2):** 3~4 nori sheets (torn into pieces), 1 bunch spinach, butter for sauteing, soy sauce, salt and pepper for taste

1. Clean the spinach (organic is recommended). Cut out the root and cut into bite size, about 1" long.
2. In a sauté pan, melt enough butter and saute the spinach quickly with high heat.
3. Add torn nori pieces at one time and cook a little more. Add small amount of soy sauce from the side of the pan and adjust the taste with salt and pepper.

# KOYA-DOFU

## An amazing, nostalgic flavor



**HOMEMADE KOYA-DOFU**  
A surprisingly easy recipe!  
Try it at home!



**Things you need:** Nijiya Organic-tofu (momen-dofu [firm cotton-strained tofu]), 1 container to put tofu in

### Directions:



**1** Place the tofu in the container and let the excess water drain away for 10 minutes. Put the tofu in the container and then place it in the freezer.



**2** Once the color turns yellowish and the tofu is completely frozen, take it out of the freezer.



**3** Defrost, then gently squeeze to remove the excess water. Cut and season as desired. (To defrost, you can either thaw it at room temperature or use a microwave.)

Nobody knows who came up with *koya-dofu* first, though it's certainly a traditional Japanese flavor that dates back to ancient times. *Koya-dofu* is made simply from soybeans, and has long been enjoyed throughout Japan under the names "Shimi-dofu" or "Koyasan-dofu." It looks just like a hard sponge, and it doesn't even appear to be edible or fresh. *Koya-dofu* could have been destined to simply die out, but now it is appreciated for its distinctively high nutritional value. *Koya-dofu* is an excellent, storable healthy food that Japan can boast to the world. Its nostalgic taste is now becoming increasingly popular and is soon to emerge as a dynamic influence on modern cooking.

### WHAT IS KOYA-DOFU?

*Koya-dofu* is made by freezing the slightly firmer *momen-dofu* (cotton-strained tofu). Let it mature until it reaches a sponge-like consistency then remove the excess water. Once dried, you have *koya-dofu*. In the making of *koya-dofu*, soybean nutrients, protein and fat are extracted and concentrated. This explains why *koya-dofu* is rich in a variety of nutrients. The efficacy of *koya-dofu* has been demonstrated in various studies and has drawn considerable attention. Some of its many benefits are: Effectiveness in suppressing cholesterol levels, mitigating dioxin accumulation its elimination from the body and facilitating its excretion, preventing the hardening of the arteries, which can cause various diseases, and helping excrete harmful elements from the body. Thus, *koya-dofu* has beneficial effects on lifestyle-related diseases, menopause, osteoporosis and obesity. *Koya-dofu* can help protect our health and delight us with its healthy, nostalgic flavor. Why not incorporate more *koya-dofu* into your menu and ensure your family's health?

### THE NUTRITIONAL VALUE OF KOYA-DOFU

*Koya-dofu* is a reliable friend in supporting the growth of your children, and will help them build strong bodies. The

protein in *koya-dofu* makes up the fundamental structures of somatic cells and helps build strong muscles. Its calcium helps build strong bones and ensure a stable emotional state. The lecithin content of *koya-dofu* supports our brain functions such as memory, concentration and learning ability.

### When You Are Pregnant or Nursing

*Koya-dofu* is rich in iron, which is an essential element for women. Especially if a woman is pregnant or nursing, iron is the most important nutrient she needs to replenish. If a mother's iron intake isn't sufficient, she can suffer the effects of anemia. Iron deficiency in infants can cause delayed development. So, if you're a nursing mother we especially recommend eating *koya-dofu*. It's a nourishing food that supplies babies and mothers alike with important nutrients such as protein, iron and calcium, and it facilitates the excretion of dioxins accumulated in the body.

### Enhance Your Beauty and Health

Because *Koya-dofu* is a low-calorie protein food, it doesn't cause weight gain and therefore it is an ideal diet food. It also contains plenty of iron and vitamin E, so it's effective in making your skin feel firmer and younger and can prevent iron-deficiency anemia, fatigue and low

motivation. Koya-dofu is also high in lecithin, calcium and isoflavone. Lecithin can provide positive effects for women who want to lose weight, while calcium and isoflavone can help prevent the emaciation and bone loss caused by extreme dieting. To help you lose weight in a

healthy way, koya-dofu is a perfect food.

### Anti-aging Effects

Koya-dofu contains vitamin E, which has beneficial effects not only in the preventing of skin aging and wrinkling but can also aging in the prevention of

premature aging of the body. Another benefit is that linoleic acid and altered proteins caused by the freezing help suppress cholesterol levels. The lecithin is essential for overall brain activity and is therefore thought to be effective in preventing senile dementia.

## Try these quick-and-easy koya-dofu recipes and many variations:

### Koya-dofu no Fukume-ni (Simmered Koya-dofu)

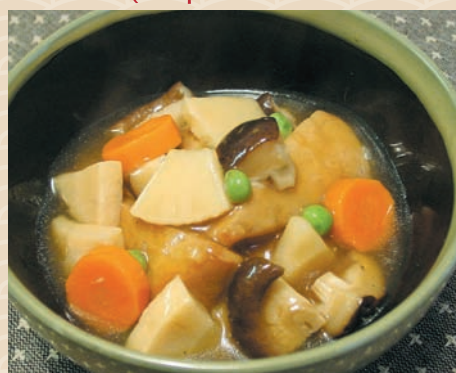


**Ingredients** (serves 4):  
3 oz. koya-dofu (about 6 blocks)  
1/4 carrot  
8 *kinusaya* pea pods  
- For seasoned broth:  
400ml dashi soup stock  
4 tablespoons sugar  
2-1/2 teaspoons soy sauce  
2-1/2 teaspoons *mirin* (sweet rice cooking wine)  
Pinch of salt

#### Directions:

1. Heat water in a saucepan and make a seasoned broth.
2. Add dry koya-dofu (no soaking required) to the broth and simmer over medium heat.
3. Continue to simmer over medium heat for about 10 minutes or until most of the water has evaporated.  
(When your koya-dofu already comes with dashi soup base, follow the directions provided on the package.)

### Koya-dofu no Age-ni (Deep-Fried and Simmered Koya-dofu)



**Ingredients** (serves 2):  
1 oz. koya-dofu (about 2 blocks)  
2 dried *shiitake* mushrooms  
1/2 carrot  
1/4 *takenoko mizuni* (blanched bamboo shoots)  
12 green peas  
2 tablespoons sugar  
2 tablespoons soy sauce  
400ml dashi soup stock  
An adequate amount of *katakuri-ko* (potato starch) and cooking oil for deep-frying

#### Directions:

1. Soak dried koya-dofu in warm water until softened. Gently squeeze the excess water from it, then cut each block into 4 triangles of equal size. Dredge in *katakuri-ko* and deep-fry in oil.
2. Cut the carrot into chunks. Soak the dried shiitake mushrooms in water until softened, then cut into quarters. Cut the bamboo shoots into thin ginkgo-leaf shapes. Simmer the prepared vegetables in the stock.
3. Season the cooked vegetables. Add koya-dofu and allow it to absorb the flavor in the soup.

### Koya-dofu and Vegetable Tamago-toji (simmered with egg)



**Ingredients** (serves 2):  
0.5 oz. koya-dofu (about 1 block)  
200ml dashi soup stock  
1/4 onion, 1/4 carrot  
1 dried *shiitake* mushroom  
1/8 cup *takenoko mizuni* (blanched bamboo shoots)  
1/2 chicken pieces  
1/4 bundle of spinach  
1 tablespoon sugar  
1 tablespoon soy sauce  
1 teaspoon sake  
2 egg, lightly beaten

#### Directions:

1. Soak dried koya-dofu in warm water until softened. Drain in a colander, then slice. Cut the chicken into small pieces. Cut the onion into wedges. Cut the carrot and the bamboo shoots into thin rectangular pieces. Soak the dried mushroom in water until softened, then slice. Cut the spinach into pieces 1 inch to 1.5 inches long.
2. Heat dashi stock in an iron pot, then add the prepared ingredients in the following order: chicken, onion, carrot, shiitake mushrooms and bamboo shoots. Simmer until the vegetables are soft.
3. Add koya-dofu and the seasonings. Simmer.
4. Add spinach pieces and stir in the beaten egg.

### Koya-dofu no Goma-ae (Koya-dofu with Sesame Dressing)



**Ingredients** (serves 2):  
0.5 oz. koya-dofu (about 1 block)  
2 sticks imitation crabmeat  
1/2 pack *shimeji* mushrooms  
1/4 pack *konnyaku* (a jelly-like food made from konnyaku potatoes)  
Sake, Soy sauce  
- Goma-dare (sesame dressing):  
4 tablespoons white sesame seeds  
1 tablespoon soy sauce  
1 tablespoon sugar  
1 tablespoon *mirin* (sweet cooking rice wine)

#### Directions:

1. Soak koya-dofu in warm water until softened. Drain in a colander, then cut into thin rectangular pieces.
2. Remove the stems of the mushrooms and break into small clusters. Braise with a small amount of sake and soy sauce.
3. Cook the konnyaku in boiling water and rinse under cold, running water. Cut the konnyaku in half horizontally, then slice into thin rectangular pieces. Wash the imitation crabmeat in boiling water and shred it into small pieces.
4. Mix the dressing ingredients together. Toss with the koya-dofu, mushrooms, imitation crabmeat and konnyaku.

# SOY SAUCE

The taste of soy sauce is one of the most familiar to the Japanese. Originating in ancient China, soy sauce was further developed in Japan and is now used in hotels, restaurants and households all around the world. It is spreading throughout the globe as an all-purpose seasoning, so it's a source of pride for Japan. Today, many kinds of soy sauces are available, and their flavors vary depending on which manufacturing method and ingredients are used. Here we introduce various types of soy sauces and their effective usages, along with the history of soy sauce.



## HISTORY

### ORIGIN OF SOY SAUCE

Soy sauce is a liquid seasoning developed in Japan. However, its roots go back to Hishio, in China. Soy sauce originated as an ancient technique for food preservation that used salt. It was discovered that when food was preserved in salt, it would ferment and mature over time, and that it would become more savory. Various forms of Hishio were introduced into Japan in the early sixth century A.D., such as kusabishio (from herbs), uobishio (from fish) and kokubishio (from grain). Among these basic forms, kokubishio was further refined in Japan. Back then, however, kokubishio was made only from soybeans, whereas today's soy sauce is made from a combination of soybeans and wheat.

### GLOBALIZATION OF SOY SAUCE

The globalization of soy sauce can be traced back to the Edo period. During that time, Japanese soy sauce was exported from Nagasaki, which was the only port open to foreign trade. Most soy sauce was shipped to China, Southeast Asia, India and Sri Lanka, but some made it to the Netherlands in northern Europe, where soy sauce was highly prized as a precious seasoning of the Far East.

Japanese soy sauce was greatly valued, and legend even has it that Japanese soy sauce was used as a secret ingredient in the royal cuisine served at the table of King Louis XIV of France.

Over the centuries, Japanese soy sauce has become popular in more than 100 countries worldwide. The reason soy

sauce is so strongly associated with the lives of the Japanese, and the reason it has prevailed throughout the world, must lie in its delicious flavor.

## TYPES

### HOW TO MAKE SOY SAUCE

There are several manufacturing methods for soy sauce, including soy sauce made by regular “fermenting method”, soy sauce made by “mixed and semi-fermenting method” and soy sauce made by “mixed method.” Eighty percent of Japanese soy sauce is “soy sauce made by regular fermenting method”. While the soy sauce made by mixed and semi-fermenting method and the soy sauce made by mixed methods use ingredients that are broken down and fermented through chemical means, the soy sauce made by regular fermenting method uses microorganisms such as koji mold (*Aspergillus oryzae*) and yeast to create a natural fermentation over a long period of time.

The main ingredients of soy sauce are soybeans, defatted soybeans, wheat and salt. Defatted soybeans have had their oil content removed. Soy sauce is produced through the slow, natural fermentation of koji-mold culture with salt water added. The koji-mold culture is made by mixing the koji mold into the heated ingredients (soybeans and wheat), whereupon the mixture is incubated for a few days. The length of brewing varies depending on the intended type of soy sauce. It can range from several weeks to six months, but some types take even longer.

### TYPES OF SOY SAUCES

The Japanese Agricultural Standards (JAS) divide Japanese soy sauce into the following five categories: koikuchi (dark soy sauce), usukuchi (light-colored soy sauce), tamari (less wheat), saishikomi (twice-fermented soy sauce) and shiro (clear soy sauce).

#### [Koikuchi (Regular soy sauce)]

Koikuchi is the most popular soy sauce in Japan, accounting for a major share of the country's domestic soy sauce production. It is made from nearly equal quantities of soybeans and wheat, and has been perfected mainly in the Kanto region since the Edo period. It is characterized by its fine balance of aroma, color and taste, and can be used not just alone as a table condiment but also as a cook's seasoning for simmered dishes, broiled dishes, soup stock, basting sauce, etc.

#### [Usukuchi (Light colored soy sauce)]

The word usukuchi (light) indicates its color, not its salt content. In fact, it has slightly higher salt content than koikuchi does.

Usukuchi can be used to highlight the natural flavor and appearance of ingredients in the preparation of fish dishes, vegetable dishes, etc. It's characterized by a light color and an aroma that is relatively less intense. Usukuchi isn't suitable for use alone as a dipping sauce or a table condiment, but it's excellent for use in simmered vegetable dishes, clear soups and udon noodle soups.

### [Tamari]

Unlike koikuchi, which is made with roughly equal amounts of soybeans and wheat, tamari is made primarily from soybeans. It's popular in the Chubu region, especially in Aichi Prefecture. Along with the typical use as a sashimi dipping sauce, tamari is also used as coating sauce when baking arare and senbei rice crackers, because it turns a beautiful reddish color when heated.

### [Saishikomi (Refermented soy sauce)]

The word saishikomi (meaning "twice fermented") is derived from a production process in which the soy sauce is actually fermented twice.

Generally, this type has a dark color, a thick texture and a rich flavor. But because saishikomi is expensive, it's used mostly as a table condiment, particularly as a dipping sauce for sashimi and sushi. In the production process of regular soy sauce, salt water is added to koji-mold culture. However, in the case of saishikomi, soy sauce is used instead of salt water.

### [Shiro (Extra light-colored soy sauce)]

In contrast to tamari, shiro primarily uses roasted wheat and only a small amount of steamed soybeans. Its color is even lighter than usukuchi, and its flavor and richness are more subdued. Shiro is used to highlight the appearance of foods, and is used as an addition to soup stock for udon noodles and others.

You can also find the following types of soy sauces in the marketplace:

### [Marudaizu (whole soybeans)]

The soy sauce labeled marudaizu isn't made with defatted soybeans but with whole soybeans, including their oil content. While soy sauce made with defatted soybeans has a sharp, vivid flavor, Marudaizu has a deep, mellow flavor.

### [Yuuki (organic soy sauce)]

Yuuki soy sauce uses organic agricul-

tural products (soybeans and wheat) as its primary ingredients and is produced through a process that's completely separate from the one using non-organic products.

### [Gen-en (sodium-reduced)]

Gen-en soy sauce contains less than 50 percent the sodium of regular soy sauce. In the U.S., this type of soy sauce is designated "Lite" or as "low sodium."

### HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT SOY SAUCE

With its harmony of color, taste and aroma, soy sauce brings out the deeper, more complex flavor of food. So, it greatly affects your cooking results, depending on how you use it. When using soy sauce in cooking, it's essential that you choose properly between koikuchi and usukuchi. It's important to select the soy sauce that will enhance the natural flavors of your cooking ingredients.

### Koikuchi

Because of its fine balance of color,

taste and aroma, koikuchi is a versatile seasoning that can go with just about any ingredient or dish. It lends itself particularly well to teriyaki, nitsuke (simmered dishes) and fish dishes using red fish (bonito, yellowtail, etc.) and blue fish (mackerel, etc.).

### Usukuchi

Usukuchi is characterized by its light color and subdued aroma, and is used to enhance the natural colors of ingredients in cooking.

Usukuchi is particularly recommended for simmered vegetable dishes. It helps retain the color of white root vegetables (taro, lotus root, etc.) and green vegetables. Additionally, usukuchi is an excellent choice if you need to season dishes without adding any color to them, as is the case with chawan-mushi (egg custard) and clear soup.

For more information, please visit the Kikkoman website: <http://www.kikkoman.com/>

### HOW TO ENHANCE THE FLAVOR OF FOOD USING SOY SAUCE

Soy sauce has an amazing ability to enhance the flavor of food and make it more delicious, and can increase the variety of the dishes you prepare. In addition to Japanese food, soy sauce can be used for a variety of dishes as a hidden flavor. It can provide various effects, such as by enhancing the natural flavor of food and incorporating the tastes of different ingredients. Here are some of the ideas you can try in your daily cooking. No doubt you'll be able to find delicious new combinations.

- 1. A final touch for stir-fried dishes**  
(The flavor will be enriched, making the dish more savory and delicious.)
- 2. A secret ingredient for curries and stews**  
(Adding one teaspoon of soy sauce as a final touch will bring out a richer, deeper flavor.)
- 3. A fine combination with Italian dishes**  
(A delicious salad dressing can be made just by combining proper amounts of balsamic vinegar, olive oil and soy sauce.)
- 4. A perfect match with dairy products**  
(In addition to butter, soy sauce is also a great complement to sour cream and cream cheese.)
- 5. Great for dipping sauce**  
(Adding a small amount of soy sauce to salsa and guacamole will enhance the natural flavor of the ingredients.)

# SOBA *(Buckwheat Noodles)*



## HISTORY OF SOBA

Originally, soba was eaten in a form of sobagaki (a dumpling made of soba flour kneaded with boiling water). Until then, the majority of people had enjoyed eating udon noodles, and soba had been viewed only as secondary compared to udon. However, as soba restaurants emerged and spread across the city of Edo (now known as Tokyo), the situation was reversed and soba became more dominant in the market. Back then soba was sold under the name Ni-hachi (two-eight) soba. There are two theories about the origin of this name: One is that soba was made of 80 percent soba flour and 20 percent wheat flour; and another is that the price of one bowl of soba was 16 mon (2 x 8).

## TYPES OF SOBA

When the soba seed (buckwheat seed) is milled, the center of the endosperm is first milled into flour, so its outer seed coat and embryo are likely to be the last to be milled. For that reason the flour made in the initial stage of milling consists mostly of the inner portions of the soba seed, whereas the flour made in the last stage of milling consists more of the outer layers of the soba seed. According to the milling stage, soba flour is generally divided into the first-milling flour, second-milling flour and third-milling flour. Soba can be categorized into the following three types, based on which flour is used:

- Sarashina soba: Made primarily from the first-milling flour, with a white appearance. It has a firm, chewy texture.
- Yabu soba: Made from both the first-milling flour and the second-milling flour. It has a well-balanced color and flavor.
- Inaka soba: Made from all the three flour types. The noodles are thick, dark and rough in texture. It has a strong aroma and natural soba flavor.

Soba is also cultivated outside Japan. It is

widely produced in China, Canada and the U.S. state of South Dakota. Soba is harvested in the fall, and the soba flour is exported in vacuum-sealed packages to maintain that just-ground freshness. Japanese soba is considered outstanding in terms of flavor and appearance, but the qualities of foreign soba noodles have also been improving in recent years due to the advancement of transportation systems and storage methods.

## NUTRITIONAL VALUE

Soba is a simple health food that's highly nutritious but low in calories. Its protein content is twice that of white rice and 1.5 times as much as wheat flour. It's also packed with three to four times more B-complex vitamins than white rice and wheat flour. Soba contains choline, which protects the liver, and rutin, which is effective in preventing brain hemorrhage. It's also a good source of dietary fiber. In addition to regulating bowel movement, dietary fiber binds to cholesterol, thus preventing it from being absorbed in the body. It also slows the absorption of glucose, thus regulating the blood glucose level. Soba can play a role in preventing many adult diseases, including the hardening of the arteries, obesity and diabetes.

## HOW TO EAT SOBA

It is said that soba should be enjoyed in the throat. If you want to enjoy the flavor of soba itself, zarusoba is the best choice. Pick up a small amount of soba noodles with your chopsticks and dip it only halfway into a soy sauce-based tsuyu. Then, slurp it all up while simultaneously drawing air into your mouth, and, without chewing much, let it slide down into your throat. You can enjoy the soba's aroma, the feeling of the soba's texture and the flavor of the tsuyu sauce all together when the noodles pass down into your throat. Since soba is an alkaline food, it goes per-

fectly with such foods as duck meat, itawasa (sliced fish cake with wasabi soy sauce), atsuyaki (Japanese-style egg omelets) and Japanese sake.

Soba has been a part of many quaint scenes and customs in Japanese people's lives since the Edo period, as represented by soba restaurants, soba deliveries, Ni-hachi soba, eating soba with sake, eating soba after drinking sake, etc. In the world of rakugo (Japanese comic monologue), performers slurp up soba noodles with air, making exaggerated slurping sounds. This is certainly a good way to enjoy soba, but when you're with someone who isn't Japanese, please tone down the slurping sound.

Soba is called "buckwheat" in English, and is known all around the world. Soba is widely used in pancakes and crepes in France, and in breads in Russia. For Americans, soba hasn't yet become so prevalent, so for a start it's important that Japanese people enjoy soba and convey their love of this food throughout their Japanese communities. Then, soba will naturally spread among Americans as well. Soba is one of the ultimate Japanese dishes. Just like sushi, I hope the word "soba" will someday become prevalent in the U.S.

The Japanese have a unique tradition of having Soba dishes for dinner or even after dinner on the New Year's Eve. It is often said in Japanese that a good life is "living thin and long", rather than "living large but short." Because Soba is, well, "thin" and "long", it is the perfect dish to represent this idea of a long lived life. So for this year, I think it is a wonderful idea to add a few tasty Soba noodle dishes for your New Year's Countdown party!



# Fresh! Healthy! Beautiful! Creative Sushi

All the staff members at Nijiya's Sushi Department were gathered together in one place, ready for the challenge of creating original sushi. It was a sushi contest to decide who would become our very own "Iron Sushi Chef." The contestants would compete through the creativity, taste and visual appeal of their creations, for which they were given one hour to prepare. They are all skilled at making delicious sushi because that is what they do every day. Winners were determined on the basis of the combination of ingredients, creativity and sense of presentation.

The amount of sushi each contestant makes every day is ten times more than chefs in sushi bars and restaurants make. Not surprisingly, it was fun to see them display their impressive skills. One by one, unique sushi were created and displayed in a row. Some contestants used uncommon ingredients to ensure originality. There was a contestant who had prepared pictures of his designs in order to work on his creation. All the vegetables used in this contest were organic, in consideration of those who would be eating.

Here we introduce five of the most outstanding sushi creations from the contest. We'll gladly accept orders for these, so please contact any Nijiya Market for details.



1. Takuan rolls with ume and yamaimo (pickled daikon radish rolls with Japanese plum and mountain yam) 2. Cucumber rolls with ooba leaf and salmon roe 3. Bountiful seafood rolls 4. White takuan sushi 5. White tuna sushi 6. Fatty tuna gunkanmaki (battleship roll) - Ume flavor 7. Avocado sushi 8. Gunkanmaki with raw ham 9. Squid sushi with raw sea urchin 10. Oyako gunkanmaki (salmon and salmon roe) 11. Asari gunkanmaki (short-necked clams) 12. Spicy rolls with tsubomina greens

## HANA (flower) BONSAI SUSHI

This gorgeous creation is full of originality. It was created by a female chef, whose careful attention to detail complements the beauty of this dish.



## CALIFORNIA HANAFUBUKI (flower storm)

The flower motifs made with gari (sweet pickled ginger) are unique creations. The dish is beautifully finished to resemble a "flower storm."



## HANAZAKARI ENKAI (flower blossom party) SUSHI

New sushi combinations using ethnic ingredients. The dish is full of fun, like a festival.



## HEALTHY SHOKUSAI (colorful ingredients) SUSHI

Healthy combinations with abundant seasonal vegetables direct from a Nijiya Organic Farm.



## RAINBOW MIDARE HANA (wildly arranged flowers)

A colorful creation using rich ingredients. The workmanship of its high-level rainbow rolls is outstanding.

# KABOCHA *(Japanese Pumpkin)*



Did you know there was once a custom in Japan based on the saying that “eating kabocha with shiruko (sweet soup made from azuki beans) on the winter solstice will prevent common colds?” Not many people would know about such a thing these days. Around the winter solstice—the time of the longest night of the year—Japanese people used to eat kabocha, which has high nutritional value and can be stored for lengthy periods, in combination with azuki beans. They wanted to maximize their intake of vitamins, minerals and dietary fiber in order to strengthen the mucous membranes and skin resistance, and thus prevent colds during the winter. It was wisdom developed over generations of Japanese people.

Kabocha originated on the American continental mass. Christopher Columbus found it and took it back to Europe along with tobacco, potatoes and tomatoes. After that, the vegetable traveled around the globe and was brought to Japan from Cambodia on Portuguese ships in 1541, during the Azuchi-Momoyama period. Subsequently it became known as kabocha. That type of kabocha was the one we now call Nihon kabocha. It has a knobby-looking skin and is a variety to which the Japanese people are well accustomed. Today, many of the kabocha in the market are of the type called Kuri kabocha, which was created based on the Seiyo kabocha (buttercup squash) brought from America to Japan during the late Edo period. It's popular for its strong yet sweet flavor and

## *A Flavor of the Earth*

moist, fluffy texture, which is like chestnuts. It's found in the market under such brand names as “Miyako,” “Ebisu,” “Kurokawa,” “Akazukin,” etc. The kabocha we eat in the U.S. is this same Kuri kabocha, which was originally cultivated with seeds brought back from Japan. Blessed with the climate of its originating country, this kabocha is wonderfully delicious.

When kabocha is just harvested, it is still growing. So, unlike other vegetables and fruits, freshness isn't as important. It should be fully matured first, in order to become flavorful. First, kabocha is ripened in a warm place (77°F for 13 days, during which some of the starch converts to carbohydrate). Then it's transferred to a cool place (50°F and stored for about a month in order to increase its carbohydrate content. In this way the just-harvested, dry, bland-tasting kabocha is transformed into smooth, sweet kabocha. Fully ripened, succulent kabocha has a reddish-yellow flesh and a hard skin with a dry, corky stem, and is heavier than it looks. It reaches the peak of ripeness about one-and-a-half to three months after it's harvested.

Kabocha, a deep-yellow vegetable, is a typical example of health food products. It contains a balanced combination of dietary fiber, protein, beta-carotene, vitamins A, B1, B2 and C, calcium, kalium and iron. When beta-carotene is digested, a sufficient amount of it becomes vitamin A1, which is effective against blood and heart diseases as well as other modern diseases. Carotene and kalium help increase the secretion of insulin from the pancreas, which in turn helps control diabetes. Carotene and vitamin C have antioxidant properties, which eliminate radical oxygen, thus preventing the development of cancer cells. Kabocha's abundant dietary fiber stabilizes the digestive system, preventing constipation and all kinds of blood

diseases. It can also be of benefit in dieting and weight loss. Moreover, kabocha seeds contain large quantities of zinc, which enhances taste function and sperm production. Kabocha is loaded with plant nutrients, so it's even referred to as a natural remedy. Now, kabocha is used not just in various dishes but also as an excellent cake ingredient. A kabocha boom is quietly taking place.

As with the fact that there are all kinds of nutrients in kabocha, there are all kinds of dishes that make use of kabocha. Any recipe calling for kabocha will be delicious, such as kabocha rice, daigaku kabocha (candied kabocha), kabocha korokke (croquette), kabocha tempura, simmered kabocha, kabocha soup, kabocha salad, kabocha pickles, kabocha karinto (sweet deep-fried kabocha), kabocha pie, and kabocha gnocchi. In famous cake shops throughout Japan, kabocha Mont Blanc, kabocha pudding and kabocha ice cream are very popular.

It's truly a gift from Mother Earth. When you look at the price, it may be “only a kabocha.” However, if you look at its deliciousness and nutritional value, you may want to say, “Hurray for kabocha!”

*“Sweet and Delicious!”  
Hugely Popular Nijiya  
Kabocha on Sale Now*



## The top three recipes using kabocha

How to Cut Kabocha: For easier cutting, microwave the whole kabocha for five minutes.



### Daigaku Kabocha (Candied Japanese Pumpkin)

#### ■ INGREDIENTS (serves 2)

8.9 oz kabocha  
(about one quarter)  
Cooking oil for deep-frying  
Black sesame seeds as  
garnish  
[Seasoning]  
6 tablespoons sugar  
1 teaspoon soy sauce  
2 teaspoons vinegar  
6 tablespoons water



#### DIRECTIONS:

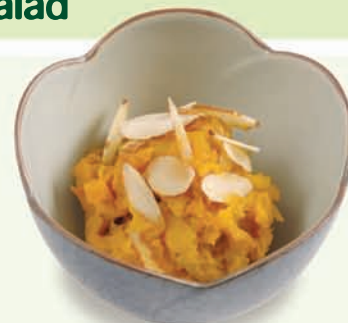
1. Using a deep fryer, immerse the kabocha in oil and fry till crispy and golden. Cool slightly.
2. Place the kabocha back in the oil and fry for another 10 seconds. Drain off the excess oil.
3. In a saucepan, heat the seasoning to a boil. Add the fried kabocha and simmer till no liquid remains in the saucepan.
4. Sprinkle with black sesame seeds before serving.



### Kabocha Salad

#### ■ INGREDIENTS (serves 2)

8.9 oz kabocha (about one quarter)  
2 slices bacon  
0.7 oz sliced almonds  
Sliced onions as garnish (optional)  
Dressing:  
2 tablespoons mayonnaise  
1/2 teaspoon curry powder  
Salt and pepper to taste



#### DIRECTIONS:

1. Roughly peel the kabocha, cut into bite-sized pieces, and microwave.
2. Combine all the ingredients for the dressing. Toast the sliced almonds in a skillet.
3. Cut the bacon into slices 0.5" wide, and cook in a skillet.
4. Roughly mash the cooked kabocha, then add the bacon and sliced almonds. Stir in the dressing.
5. If desired, sprinkle with the sliced onions before serving.



### Kabocha Pudding

#### ■ INGREDIENTS (serves 2 to 3)

8.9 oz kabocha  
(about one quarter)  
3 eggs  
10 oz milk (For richer flavor,  
replace 1.7 oz with whipping  
cream.)  
5 tablespoons sugar  
1 tablespoon butter  
Cinnamon (optional)

Caramel Sauce:  
5 tablespoons sugar  
2 tablespoons water

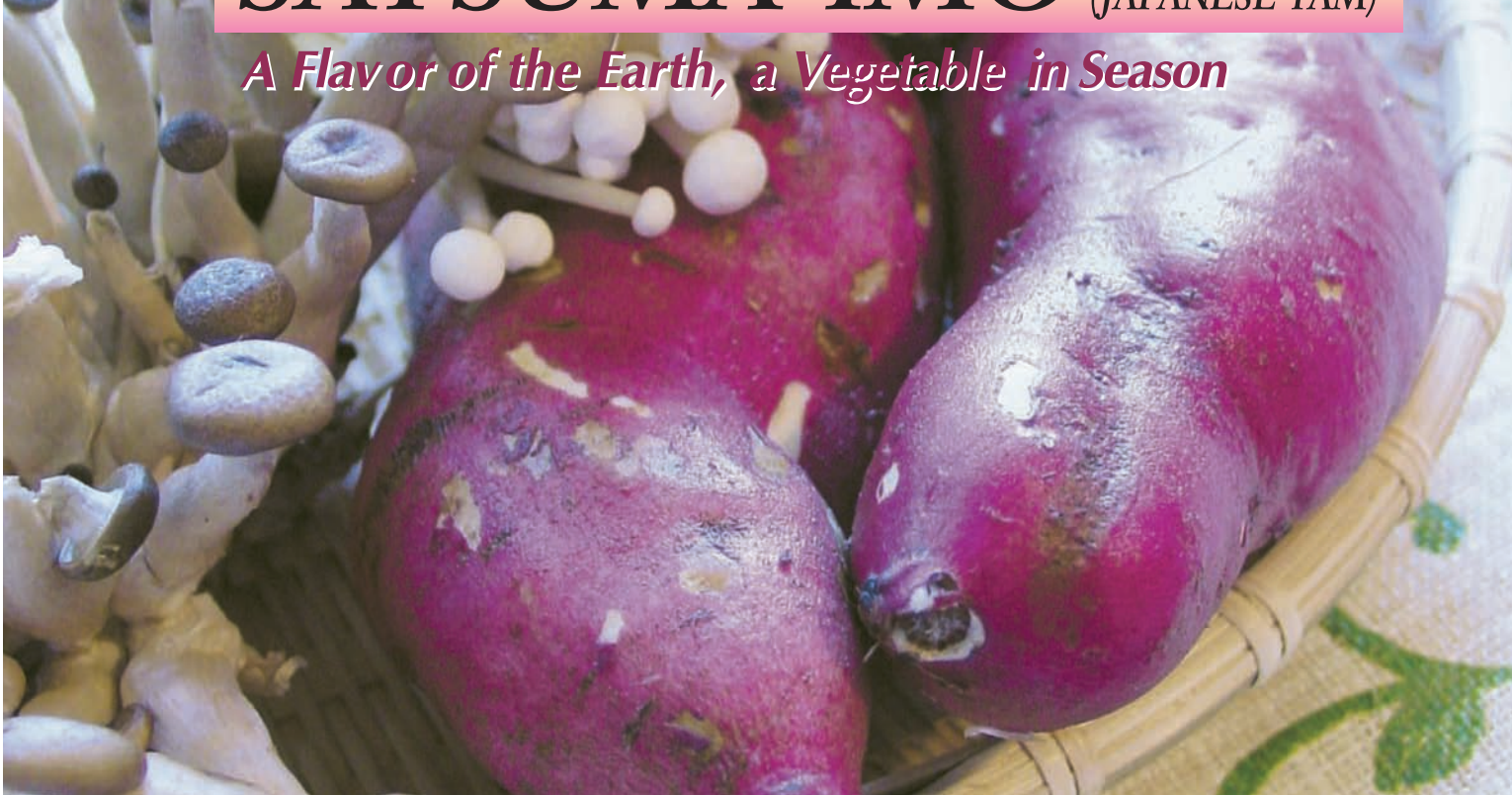
#### DIRECTIONS:

1. For caramel sauce, in a small saucepan heat sugar and water till bubbly and golden brown; remove from heat and add 1 tablespoon water. Pour into custard cups lightly greased with butter (not included in the above ingredients).
  2. Remove the skin and seeds from the kabocha and cut into bite-sized pieces, then plunge into water. Cover with plastic wrap and microwave for six to seven minutes or till tender.
  3. Mash the hot kabocha and add sugar and butter; strain. Add eggs and milk; strain again. Once the kabocha mixture becomes smooth in texture, pour into prepared custard cups.
  4. For steamed pudding: In a saucepan boil 1" of water. Place custard cups filled with kabocha mixture and cover with a clean dishcloth. Cook on high heat for 30 seconds, then simmer on low heat for about 20 minutes. If desired, sprinkle with cinnamon before serving.
- For baked pudding: Pour lukewarm water into a shallow baking pan. Place custard cups filled with kabocha mixture in the baking pan, and bake at 350°F for 30 minutes or till a wooden toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. If desired, sprinkle with cinnamon before serving.



# SATSUMA-IMO (JAPANESE YAM)

*A Flavor of the Earth, a Vegetable in Season*



## Roots

The Satsuma-imo, or Japanese yam, originated in the region of Mexico and Guatemala and was a common crop earlier than 3000 B.C. It was brought to Europe in the fifteenth century by Christopher Columbus, and was introduced from Spain into China at the end of the sixteenth century. After that, the Satsuma-imo was brought from China through the Ryukyu Islands, Tanegashima and Satsuma, at the southern tip of Japan. In the mid-Edo period, Konyo Aoki, a scholar of Western studies, began cultivating the plant in the Kanto region, and soon it was a widespread crop. The Japanese name “Satsuma-imo” is derived from the fact that the Satsuma (Kagoshima) region was the one in which this vegetable was raised. It is well known that the Satsuma-imo helped many people survive during a time when food was scarce in Japan. Later, many new varieties were created to satisfy the tastes of the Japanese. In the U.S., the Satsuma-imo is called “Japanese yam” to distinguish it from the sweet potato. In Japan, Satsuma-imo goes by other names

too. It’s called “kara-imo” or “ryukyu-imo” in the Satsuma (Kagoshima) region and “nmu” or “kara-imo” in the Ryukyu (Okinawa) region. In the six centuries after Columbus brought Satsuma-imo to Europe, it had traveled around the globe, being named after the regions where it was cultivated. Thus it was transformed into the delicious Satsuma-imo we enjoy today.

## Nutritional Value

The Satsuma-imo, which is abundant in starch and sugar, is also rich in calcium, vitamin C, kalium and dietary fiber. Its vitamin C content is comparable to grapefruit, and is also resistant to heat. The type with yellow flesh contains carotene. When the Satsuma-imo is cut, a slimy white substance appears on the surface. This is called jalapin, a resin component that aids in digestion. Jalapin works together with dietary fiber, which explains why eating Satsuma-imo can relieve constipation. When cooked at 160 to 180°F for several hours, Satsuma-imo’s natural sweetness and sugar content are increased through enzymatic action, making it even more delicious.

## Season

Since the Satsuma-imo is available all year, it’s hard to tell when Satsuma-imo is in season. In the U.S., the greatest production of Japanese yams centers in Livingston, California. The first crops arrive on the market in early August, but full-fledged harvest starts in September, when the product is at its best. The harvesting period lasts until March or so, after which the Satsuma-imo you see on the market are generally taken from cold storage.

A highly popular Satsuma-imo called “Beniazuma” and “Benikomachi” has a bright red skin and light yellow flesh. “Nakamurasaki,” which has a brownish yellow skin and purple flesh, has a more refined flavor and pronounced sweetness. Thanks to its abundant carotene, it’s one of today’s most popular varieties. It’s ideal for use in dishes like Kinton (sweet mashed Japanese yam), Imoan (mashed Japanese yam), and Imo Yokan (a block-shaped cake made of Japanese yam).



## Takikomi Rice with Satsuma-imo

### ■ INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4):

1 1/2 cups rice  
 1/2 cup glutinous rice (Japanese mochigome)  
 1 small Satsuma-imo  
 2 packs fresh mushrooms (any variety)  
 1 small piece fresh ginger root [A]  
 2 tablespoons sake  
 1 teaspoon salt  
 1 teaspoon light-colored soy sauce  
 Black sesame seeds for garnish

### ■ DIRECTIONS:

1. Rinse the rice and glutinous rice together till the water runs clear. Put in a rice cooker and add the specified amount of water, then reduce the amount of water by 2 tablespoons (the

amount of seasoning [A]).

2. Cut the yam lengthwise into quarters, and slice each quarter crosswise into 0.25-inch thickness (0.7 cm). Immerse in salted water (as salty as seawater) for about 10 minutes (but not more than 15 minutes).

3. Cut the mushrooms into bite-size pieces. Peel the ginger root and slice into julienne strips, cutting with the grain.

4. Stir [A] into the rice 1; place Satsuma-imo, mushrooms, and ginger root on top, and cook immediately.

5. Once the rice is done, let it rest several minutes in the rice cooker. Scoop in a serving bowl and sprinkle with black sesame seeds.

## Satsuma-imo Korokke (Japanese Yam Croquettes)

### ■ INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4):

3.5 oz. (100g) ground raw chicken  
 2 Satsuma-imo  
 1/2 chopped onion  
 1 egg  
 1 cup dry bread crumbs  
 1/2 cup flour  
 Cooking oil for deep-frying  
 Salt and pepper to taste

### ■ DIRECTIONS:

1. Peel the yams and cut into 1-inch thick (3 cm) slices. Soak in water. Place the yams in a saucepan

filled with cold water and cook till tender. Test with a wooden toothpick, which should come out clean. Drain and mash.

2. Finely chop the onion and cook in a skillet. Add ground chicken and cook till it's no longer pink. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

3. Combine the yams, onion and chicken in a bowl; remove and shape into rectangular rounds. Coat with breadcrumbs and fry in oil at 360°F till crispy and golden.



## Healthy Daigaku-imo (Candied Japanese Yams)

### ■ INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4):

1 large Satsuma-imo  
 Cooking oil for deep-frying  
 Black sesame seeds for garnish [A]  
 1/2 cup sugar  
 1/4 cup water  
 1 teaspoon soy sauce  
 1/2 teaspoon sesame seed oil

### ■ DIRECTIONS:

1. Cut the yam into 2-inch thick (5 to 6 cm) slices. Peel the skin deeply, and set the skin aside. Cut the yam lengthwise into six to eight equal parts of

half-moon shape. Slice the skin into strips of equal length and immerse together with the yam in salted water (as salty as seawater). Pat dry.

2. Heat oil. Place the yam in oil while the temperature is still low. Gradually increase the temperature and continue frying till crispy.

3. For sauce, in a saucepan heat [A] till thickened and bubbly. Remove from heat, drizzle over hot Satsuma-imo, and toss to coat.

4. Sprinkle with black sesame seeds and stir gently before serving.



ITO EN's Japanese green tea beverages are all natural, unsweetened and rich in tea antioxidants. Without artificial coloring or flavoring, ITO EN tea reveals the pure, clean taste of Japanese tradition.



## Deep-Fried Dishes



Among all Japanese homestyle dishes, tempura and other deep-fried dishes are particularly popular. However, it can be dangerous to handle a large amount of heated cooking oil, and many people don't like cleaning up spattered grease or dispose of used oil. This is when Nijiya deep-fried dishes come in handy. The meat counters and delis in Japan's supermarkets are thriving, and people even wait in line to buy popular tonkatsu, kushikatsu and yakitori.

Often deep-fried dishes don't taste good. This because of oxidation of the

oil, the preservatives or chemical seasonings that are used to keep the oil from oxidizing.

Nijiya deep-fried dishes are made with natural ingredients and seasonings. They're cooked and fried with our original techniques to attain a crispy exterior and a tender, juicy interior.

Japanese people of the Meiji period thought of "the West" as "Europe." During this period many dishes were imported from France, Germany and England, and over the ensuing years they were further developed and tailored to Japanese people's tastes. Today they're categorized as Western-style dishes.

Typical Western-style dishes include korokke (Japanese potato croquette), tonkatsu and ebi furai (deep-fried breaded shrimp), etc., which are all-time favorites.

Korokke has long been a popular dish and one that is representative of Japan.

*Tempura, tonkatsu (breaded deep-fried pork cutlet), kushikatsu (skewered deep-fried pork) and yakitori (skewered grilled chicken)*

### EASY HOMEMADE SAUCE FOR DEEP-FRIED FOODS

#### ● TARTAR SAUCE

Combine a small amount of Japanese mustard with mayonnaise and stir in chopped onions and parsley. It goes great with seafood, deep-fried chicken and sandwiches.



#### ● FRY SAUCE

Heat white wine till it boils. Stir in twice as much ketchup as the white wine, a small amount of soup bouillon cube, butter and pepper.

This sauce is excellent for korokke, tonkatsu, hamburgers, kushikatsu, etc.



It is flavored in various ways through the use of potatoes and other select ingredients.

Tonkatsu is a great dish in the sense that it has produced tonkatsu-ya, restaurants specializing in the dish. It's a simple food made of pork, breadcrumbs and cooking oil. However, it isn't that simple to make delicious tonkatsu. Tonkatsu is also used in the best-selling donburi (rice bowl) called katsudon. Tonkatsu is simmered in dashi soup stock, egg and green onion, and is then placed atop white rice.

Ebi furai, aji furai (deep-fried breaded horse mackerel), whitefish furai (deep-fried breaded whitefish), kushikatsu, tempura, fried curry bread, anko (red bean paste) donuts, etc.: these deep-fried dishes represent our memories and dreams.



# THE STORY ABOUT FU 麦

(Japanese dried wheat gluten)

“A marvelous Japanese ingredient”

## FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT FU —

*Fu* is not a bread, nor is it a cracker. It isn't a snack food, nor is it a staple food. Although it is made from wheat flour, you don't see *fu* in the flour-consuming nations of Europe or North America. *Fu* is a uniquely Japanese specialty. Just like *koyadofu* (freeze-dried tofu), *miso* (fermented soybean paste), *katsuo-bushi* (dried fish flakes), *niboshi jako* (dried tiny fish), sushi and soba (buckwheat noodles), there is nothing like it anywhere else in the world. *Fu* is spongy, soft to the bite, and doesn't have much flavor or weight. In fact, it was nearly forgotten, even in Japan. However, in recent years *fu* has drawn attention again because, being made from flour gluten, it's an excellent protein food containing zero fat and an abundance of wheat nutrients. *Fu* is great to include in the diet since it helps manage one's weight and health. It also becomes delicious when prepared as a dish, which is easy to do. For these reasons *fu* has made a big comeback, which has revitalized long-established *fu* stores throughout Japan. Moreover, because *fu* doesn't have much flavor, it blends well with other ingredients. Many delicious *fu* recipes have been created for ultimate Japanese cuisine like *kaiseki-ryori* and *shojin-ryori*. Now *fu* is becoming more popular than ever!

## HISTORY OF FU —

The history of *fu* dates back to the Muromachi period, when it was eaten by

monks and imperial courtiers. Legend says that Sen no Rikyu, who had established the Japanese tea ceremony during the Azuchi-Momoyama period, served roasted *nama-fu* (raw wheat gluten) seasoned with miso (soybean paste) and sugar for a tea ceremony, which had then become popular as “*fu no yaki* (roasted *fu*).” In the Edo period *fu* was popularized for its delicious flavor and high nutritional value. It became an indispensable ingredient as a good source of protein since protein-rich foods were scarce at that time. *Fu* was loaded onto *kitamae-bune* (cargo ships), the major means of distribution at the time, and soon its use spread nationwide. Not just in Kyoto, but everywhere from Hokkaido in the north to Okinawa in the south, you can find local specialty *fu* products and *fu* dishes. Even in the remote countryside, there are many long-established *fu* stores that have been in existence for a hundred or even two hundred years.

## A VARIETY OF FU —

*Fu* is solidified wheat gluten (protein). To begin with, wheat flour is divided into hard flour and soft flour. The outer layer of the wheat kernel is rich in gluten and is milled into hard flour, which becomes sticky when kneaded. The inner portion of the wheat kernel, which doesn't contain much gluten, is milled into soft flour. Soft flour doesn't become sticky when kneaded, and therefore it is suitable for use in *tempura*, cakes,

*okonomi-yaki* (Japanese-style pancakes) and other foods. To make *fu*, you first knead the hard flour with water which forms a dough, then allow it to rest. After this you wash out the starch, what's left of the dough is wheat-protein gluten, the primary ingredient in *fu*. Add glutinous rice to this and steam or boil it, and you will have *nama-fu* (raw-*fu*). Some of the types of *nama-fu* are *yomogi-fu*, *awa-fu*, *goma-fu* and *saiku-fu*. One method of preparation to add flour to the gluten, knead it well and roast it until a toasty aroma is released. Once this has dried you will have *yaki-fu* (roasted-*fu*). The varieties of *yaki-fu* include *komachi-fu*, *anpei-fu*, *matsutake-fu* and *temari-fu*. When the dough is wrapped around a pole and roasted, it is called *kuruma-fu*. Incidentally, the type of *fu* most readily available in America is *yaki-fu*. *Fu* exhibits many regional characteristics and has countless types and names. When made by a skilled *fu* maker with quality ingredients and water, *fu*'s wonderful flavor is brought out. The following types of *fu* have these local characteristics: wheel-shaped *kuruma-fu* in the Hokuriku and Tohoku regions; *koppapan* bread-shaped *anpei-fu* in Yamaguchi Prefecture; *hanbei-fu* served by a long-established *fu* restaurant in Kyoto; *age-fu*; *fu-gashi*; the Okinawa specialty *fu* exclusively for stir-frying; *matsutake* mushroom-flavored *matsutake-fu*; and *sukiyaki-fu* exclusively for use in *sukiyaki*.





## ENHANCE THE FLAVOR OF YOUR EVERYDAY DISHES! —

Compared to bread crumbs, the holes in the surface of fu are smaller, which means that fu has a higher rate of water absorption and greater moisture retention. In fact, fu's water-retention ability is 1.5 times higher than that of bread crumbs. Also, fu has a smooth texture because the gluten particles are small. By exploiting these characteristics, fu can be used for a variety of dishes. Fu is routinely used in *sumashi-jiru* (clear soup) and miso soup, but you can also substitute bread crumbs with fu to make hamburgers. Fu will help keep meat juicy and give it a smoother texture. Add fu to

*iwashi-tsumire* (minced fish) and *dashimaki tamago* (Japanese rolled omelet), and these foods will become even more delicious by absorbing plenty of dashi stock. You can even use fu in cakes, pudding, *okonomi-yaki* (Japanese-style pancakes) and *tako-yaki* (octopus balls) making them unbelievably delectable and juicy.

## EAT FU TO STAY HEALTHY —

Fu might not appear very nutritious, but in fact it has many health-benefiting properties. Because fu is a good protein, it's an ideal food for enhancing your beauty and helping to control your weight. Additionally, you can expect even more beneficial results

by combining fu with other foods. When combined with eggs, for example, it helps in the elimination of neutral fat and cholesterol present in the blood. If eaten with carbohydrates such as rice or noodles, wheat albumin mitigates the rapid rise of blood sugar and helps burn carbohydrates, thus preventing obesity and the onset of diabetes. Combining fu with cooking oil helps prevent infectious diseases. Combining fu with fish or meat containing vitamin B helps prevent the loss of DHA and EPA, which keeps our skin beautiful. We encourage you to rediscover the power and delicious flavor of this traditional Japanese ingredient, and to learn more about it. Let's use nutritious fu more often!

### Dashimaki Tamago (Japanese rolled omelet)

**Your omelet becomes smoother in texture, juicier, healthier and doubled in size!**

#### Ingredients (serves 2):

3 eggs  
0.3 oz. yaki-fu  
100 ml dashi soup stock (We use "Nijiya Tsuyu Tennen," a soup base, diluted with 5 times the amount of water.)

#### Directions:

1. In a plastic bag, crush the yaki-fu to a powder. Combine it with beaten eggs and dashi stock.
2. Cook the egg mixture in a rectangular omelet pan in the same way you cook a regular rolled omelet.



### Kuruma-fu no Nimono (simmered kuruma-fu dish)

**Add Seasonal Vegetables for Your Own Delicious Masterpiece!**

#### Ingredients (serves 2):

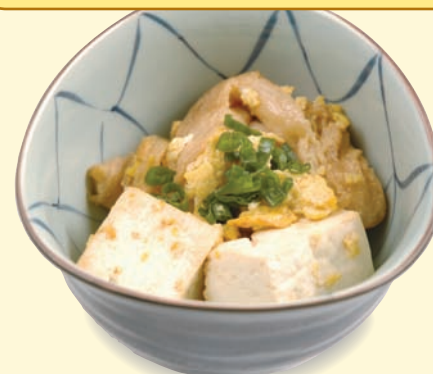
1 oz. kuruma-fu  
200 ml dashi soup stock (We use "Nijiya Tsuyu Tennen," a soup base, diluted with 5 times the amount of water)  
Add seasonal vegetables of your choice, such as carrots, *sayaendo* (peas in the pod), *satoimo* (Japanese taro), etc.  
*Konnyaku* (a jelly-like food made from konnyaku potatoes)  
*Kaiware daikon* (Japanese radish sprouts) for garnish  
*Mitsuba* (Japanese wild parsley) for garnish

#### Directions:

1. Soak the kuruma-fu in water until it becomes soft.
2. Simmer the dashi stock and add the vegetables. Add whitefish or chicken if desired.
3. Squeeze the excess water from the fu, and cut it into pieces of adequate size. Add to the simmering vegetables.
4. Turn off the heat. Scoop into a serving bowl, then garnish with *kaiware daikon* and *mitsuba*.



### Fu Chanple (Stir-fried fu)



**A quick-and-easy Okinawa-style recipe**

#### Ingredients (serves 2):

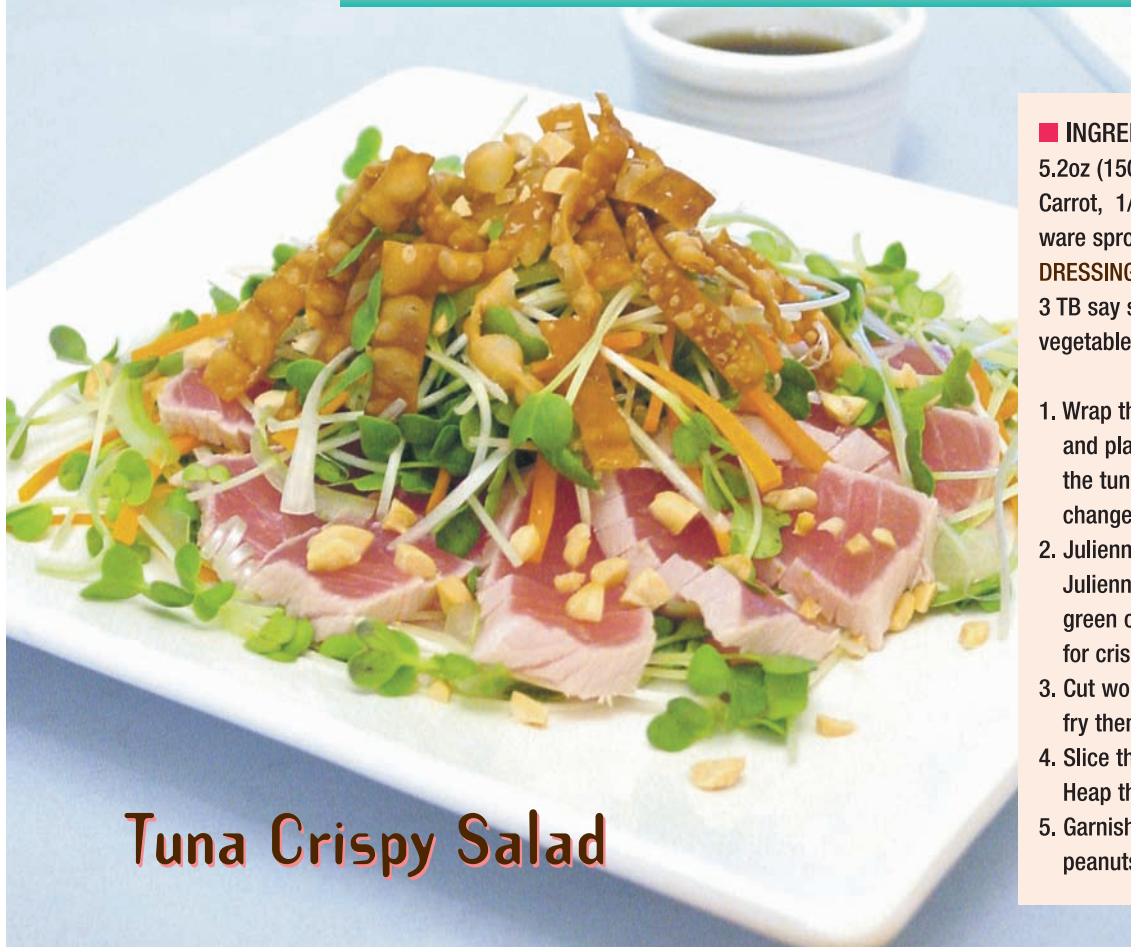
1.5 oz. Kuruma-fu  
1 egg  
1/4 block momen-dofu (cotton-strained, firm tofu)  
200 ml dashi soup stock (We use "Nijiya Tsuyu Tennen," a soup base, diluted with 5 times the amount of water)  
Miso  
Cooking oil  
Chopped green onions (for garnish)

#### Directions:

1. Heat the dashi stock in a pot. Soak the fu in the soup until it is soft. Let it cool, and gently squeeze out the excess water.
2. Heat the oil in a pan. Cut the tofu and fu into pieces of adequate size, and stir-fry in the pan.
3. Season to taste with miso, then pour in beaten egg. Cook until the egg is somewhat solid.
4. Garnish with green onions if desired.

A wide variety of fu products are available at Nijiya Market. Fu is ideal for *sukiyaki*, *osuimono* (clear broth) and miso soup along with many other recipes. Try the healthy fu recipes from *Gochiso* magazine!

# Sea Food in Season **TUNA**



## Tuna Crispy Salad

### ■ INGREDIENTS (serving 4)

5.2oz (150g) tuna sashimi block, 1 celery stalk, 1/2 Carrot, 1/2 Tokyo negi (green onion), 1 pack kaiware sprouts, crushed peanuts for garnishing

### DRESSING:

3 TB soy sauce, 2 TB sake, 2TB sesame oil, 3 TB vegetable oil, 2 TB lemon juice, 1 TB grated ginger

1. Wrap the tuna sashimi block in a piece of gauze and place in a strainer. Pour boiling water over the tuna. As soon as the color of surface changes, cool the tuna in ice water.
2. Julienne celery and carrot in about 1 1/2" length. Julienne only white part of Tokyo negi (large green onion) hair thin and leave it in cold water for crispness.
3. Cut won ton skin into about 1/3" strips and deep fry them to golden.
4. Slice the tuna and place them onto a plate. Heap the well dried vegetables top on the tuna.
5. Garnish with fried won ton skins and crashed peanuts. Drizzle the dressing before serving.

Japanese food has gained popularity in not only the States but almost all over the world. Eating raw fish is quite a unique custom. Even so sushi and sashimi have been successfully adopted in many countries. The more these raw fish dishes become popular, the more people also have become aware that raw fish is a healthy and luxurious choice of food.

Among the raw fish, "tuna" is undoubtedly the No. 1 choice in both Japan and the States. In its consumption, no other country can beat Japan. Overwhelming 55% of the world's tuna lands in Japan. The US comes next. The US not only consumes but catches tuna and exports to the world's largest market, Japan. At the same time, the US imports fresh tuna by air from other countries, too.

The quality of tuna is different from

species to species. But handling skills after being caught and shipping technologies play a big role in quality, too. When tuna is caught, it must be gutted and refrigerated as quickly as possible. Then it is packed in a box with ice for air shipping. Tuna's characteristic red flesh is so delicate that its bright color would go dull in a minute if the storing temperature exceeds 5°C or if it is exposed to the air. Therefore, no matter how big it is, tuna has to be shipped in whole if intended to be used raw.

Tunas are huge fish. We never see a whole tuna lying in a glass case at a store. Tuna is sold as beef is sold in portion. These portions also have names like, "akami", "chutoro", or "nakauchi" like beef, "sirloin", "fillet", "rib", depending on the part of body. Each part has a different taste, a different use and of course,

a different price.

Tunas live in the open seas such as Pacific, Atlantic and Indian Oceans. They reach the adult size in three years and keep growing larger. Their beautiful streamline makes them fast and strong swimmers. It is said that tunas can swim over 100 km per hour and could cross a vast ocean. Like other fish, tunas intake the oxygen through the gills. Once they stops swimming the oxygen can not come into their system. Thus tunas must keep swimming day and night their entire life.

The followings are characteristics of three main types of tuna:

### **"Black Tuna" (Hon Maguro)**

These are the king of the tunas. The largest, fattiest and finest ones are probably seen only at some high end Japanese



## Tuna Zuke Don

### ■ INGREDIENTS (serving 4)

1C rice, 1TB sake, 1 piece (about 5cm long) dashi konbu, 7oz (200g) tuna sashimi block, 1 large sheet of yakinori (see weed), ginger sliced needle thin for garnish, wasabi (optional)

Vinegar mixture: 1/2C rice vinegar, 3TB sugar, 2T salt

Marinade: 3TB soy sauce, 1TB dashi (fish broth)

1. Wash rice and soak it in water for 30min. Add sake and konbu to the rice and cook normally. Leave it with the lid on for 10 min after cooked, then transfer the rice to the mixing bowl.
2. Boil the vinegar mixture quickly and cooled. Pour it over rice and mix. Be careful not to knead the rice.
3. Pour boiling water over tuna. As soon as the color changes, cool it in ice water.
4. Marinade the tuna block for 2~3 hours. Turn it a couple times in the marinade.
5. Mix thinly cut yakinori with rice and put it into four individual bowls. Slice tuna about 1/8" width and place them onto the rice. Drizzle remained marinade mixture and garnish with thinly sliced ginger.

restaurants. Fishing grounds for these fish are the North Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans and Mediterranean Sea. Because of their size (over 880 lbs) and quality, even some portions could cost a fortune. Undoubtedly it is a Japanese delicacy. But black tunas found at the world famous Tokyo Tsukiji Fish Market are often imported from the States. That means the black tuna offered in the States must be as good as the one offered at high end restaurants in Japan.

Speaking of price, the most expensive tuna is called "shibi" or "blue fin tuna" in English due to its blue fins. It is 2 year old, 16" to 39" long juvenile tuna that is caught mostly near Japan. Its taste is often described as "melting".

### "Big Eye Tuna" (Mebach Maguro)

The name tells you how they look.

They have big eyes. 78" long and 330 lbs, they are considered as a smaller version of black tuna. These beautiful red flesh, pleasant texture and firmness make perfect sushi and sashimi. Even though it is more expensive and the taste of the fatty part, ("toro") of a big eye tuna is not as appealing as that of black tuna, its appearance surely wins it over. South Pacific countries and Ecuador are the main exporters to Japan.

### "Yellow Fin Tuna" (Kihada Maguro)

"Yellow Fin Tuna" got its name because its fins turn golden yellow when it gets excited. This is the most distributed tuna in the States. Although it does not have a fatty "toro" part, it does have a wonderfully light and "unforgettable" taste. You can enjoy the taste of raw yellow fin tuna in the States, which is not available in Japan, with a reasonable price

### ■ INGREDIENTS (serving 2)

5.2oz (150g) tuna sashimi block, Tokyo negi for garnish, 2~4 leaves of basil for garnish

Red wine reduction sauce: 1C red wine, 1/2 onion finely chopped, 1 clove garlic finely chopped, paprika, salt, pepper to taste, olive oil

1. Slice only white part of Tokyo negi as thin as hair and leave it in ice water for crispness.
2. Make sauce. Cook onion and garlic in olive oil till the onion becomes translucent. Add red wine and cook to reduce the volume to 1/4 of original volume. Add salt, pepper and paprika for taste.
3. Cut the tuna for steak, about 1/2" thickness. Saute the tuna in the pan with a little bit of olive oil. Adjust the doneness.
4. Garnish the steak with basils and Tokyo negi. Serve with the red wine sauce.

## Tuna Steak



thanks to the large volume caught in the vast fishing grounds of Hawaii, Miami, Gulf of Mexico, Pacific coast and off shore of Baja California.

Now we know what types of tuna are available. But how can we choose good tuna? First, think which you prefer, rich or light taste. Naturally, tuna in cold water or caught in winter is fattier. On the contrary, tuna in warmer water is low in fat, offers a lighter taste and bright red colored flesh.

Next, simply pick one that looks good. Choose dense and rich looking tuna. Color may be important, although it has nothing to do with the taste. Bright red tuna may be more suitable for sashimi for the color is more appetizing. After all, regardless which you choose, please eat it on the day of purchase.

## Hugely popular Nijiya sushi

Nijiya Market has been providing high-quality sushi since the day it was founded, and our sushi selections have always been popular with our customers.

We offer freshly made sushi every day. Regular menus available in all of our markets are makizushi (rolled sushi) such as California rolls, spicy tuna, eel, yellowtail, salmon and futomaki (large rolls), and nigirizushi (hand-formed sushi) such as tuna, yellowtail, salmon, shrimp and egg.

In addition to these regular menus, each of our markets provides its own unique sushi, which are rapidly gaining in popularity. At our West L.A. location, yuba (bean curd skin) roll is particularly popular for its exquisite appearance and healthy ingredients.

We use organic Akita Komachi rice for our sushi. In fact, our desire to offer healthy foods for our customers is the key to their popularity. Our regular customers order Nijiya party sushi trays for special events and other occasions.



California Roll

California Roll

Futomaki

Spicy Tuna

California Roll & Inari

Sukeroku

Unagi Roll



Tuna Avocado Bowl

Diamond Chirashi

Sanshoku Roll

Tuna Roll

Salmon & Avocado Roll



Nigiri Set

Chirashi Sushi

Tuna Nigiri

Salmon Nigiri

Yellow Tail Nigiri

Battera

Yakisaba Sushi

Yuba Roll

Let's make California rolls!



### INGREDIENTS (one roll):

1 yakinori (roasted seaweed)  
300g sushi rice  
4 tablespoons masago  
Kaiware sprouts (adequate amount)  
3 to 4 leaves lettuce  
2 pieces imitation crabmeat  
Canned crabmeat (adequate amount)  
1/6 avocado

### DIRECTIONS:

1. Peel and pit the avocado, then cut into quarters. Cut the roots off the kaiware sprouts.

2. Spread sushi rice over the yakinori and sprinkle masago evenly across the rice; turn it over.  
3. Place strips of lettuce and imitation crab in the center, and arrange the rest of the filling along the strips.  
4. Start rolling from the front edge toward the back, holding the ingredients in place as you go. Put the seam side down and cover with plastic wrap. Using a makisu (bamboo rolling mat), firmly form the sushi into a tunnel shape. To serve, cut the roll in half and then slice it into equal parts.

# Easy to make, and absolutely delicious! How to make fresh tofu

Soybeans are rich in nutrients for maintaining your health, including isoflavone, saponin and lecithin.

Soybeans are believed to prevent all kinds of modern ailments and adult diseases. They lower the blood cholesterol level and limit the formation of the lipid prooxide, thus preventing blood clots and hardening of the arteries. They also improve intestinal health by preventing indigestion, constipation and the resultant skin problems. What's more, the antioxidants in soybeans can suppress cancer development and inhibit calcium efflux, thus helping prevent heart disease, osteoporosis and menopausal symptoms.

You can have a perfectly balanced meal by eating soybeans to seafood, grains and fresh vegetables containing unsaturated fat. As you may know, soybeans have been a staple food for many of the Japanese people who are over 100 years old today.

By acquiring a few techniques, you can make unbelievably delicious tofu in your own home. All you'll need is Nijiya Soy Milk (original), which is made of organic soybeans, and Natural Nigari (bitter) liquid.

Homemade tofu has exceptional flavor, so it's perfect for your guests. So, why not give it a try?



Currently on sale at Nijiya Market, in response to high demand!  
Nijiya Soy Milk, which is rich in the nutrients and natural flavor of organic soybeans, and Natural Nigari liquid.

Let's make  
homemade tofu!

You can make incredibly delicious tofu and yuba (bean curd skin) using Nijiya Soy Milk (original), made of organic soybeans, and Natural Nigari.

You might find it a bit hard at first, but once you get the hang of it, it will be easy. We're certain you'll be hooked on this new taste sensation!



\* The point to remember when making tofu or yuba is that soy milk must never boil. Also, if you want to savor the delicate flavor of tofu, we suggest eating the tofu as an appetizer using less seasoning.

\* Cooking time varies according to the type of microwave you use. Consider the cooking time directed in the recipe only as a guide. A secret to successful tofu/yuba making is to set the timer for less than directed at first, and then extend the cooking time little by little as you check for doneness.

## Ingredients for momen-dofu (firm tofu)



### INGREDIENTS (2 Servings):

30 oz Nijiya Soy Milk (original) / 3 to 4 teaspoons Natural Nigari liquid

### DIRECTIONS:

1. In a saucepan, heat soymilk over low heat till it reaches a temperature of 175°F.
2. Remove from heat and add nigari, stirring lightly with a spoon. (The soymilk will start to coagulate.)
3. Line a strainer with cotton cloth (or paper towel) and pour in the soymilk mixture. Let the extra liquid drain.
4. Carefully remove the cloth from the strainer and take out the coagulated tofu. Serve with the desired condiment and/or sauce.

# Reporting from an ORGANIC FARM



*When growing vegetables and grains, you need to have definite goals. The ultimate goal in organic farming is the continuous production of “safer, more nourishing” vegetables and grains that serve to maintain human health. To achieve this, organic farming entirely eliminates the use of chemical fertilizers, insecticides, herbicides and hormonal agents. Instead, plants are grown in a symbiotic relationship with microorganisms.*

## ■ COMPOST

The more crops you grow, the leaner the soil becomes. Traditionally, fertilizers become necessary so that nutrients can be replenished in the soil. Compost is the non-chemical fertilizer used in organic farming.

Compost is made by fermenting various organic materials by using microorganisms. Many different kind of microorganisms carry out the fermentation process according to the types of organic materials and environmental factors such as the changes in temperature and humidity. After about three months, there is an increase in the number of the microorganisms that are most likely to live symbiotically with plants, the compost is added to the soil.

However, plants can't directly absorb the organic nutrients that exist in the compost, such as nitrogen, phosphorus and potash. Instead, these organic nutrients are fed to the microorganisms living within the soil. The plants wait for particular kinds of microorganisms that can break down the organic nutrients into inorganic nutrients, which the plants can in turn absorb.

Plant leaves use sunlight, water and carbon dioxide in the air to synthesize sugar and release oxygen. Then, a part of the synthesized sugar is released from the plant roots as mucigel, which causes large numbers of microorganism colonies, in various kinds, to form around the roots.

Some microorganisms can live symbiotically with plants, but certain others are harmful to plants. Other types of microorganisms don't have any effect on plants. As with the nature of things, most microorganisms are either harmful to plants or have nothing to do with plants. What characterizes organic farming is the fact that crop plants take up all of the essential nutrients through their roots by forming a symbiotic relationship with the microorganisms that are effective for their growth.

Each plant exists in a symbiotic relationship with effec-

tive microorganisms while preparing a defense against the invasion of harmful microorganisms. This is done through the production of antibodies. To defend against foreign invaders, insect pests, harmful microorganisms and viruses, a plant produces different kinds of antibodies depending on what the threat is, and then stores and circulates the antibodies throughout the body of the plant. Symbiotic microorganisms and antibodies differ throughout the family of plants. A plant produces different kinds of antibodies and lives symbiotically with different kinds of microorganisms depending on the environment, species, family and genus to which it belongs. Thus the world of organic plants is built on a countless variety of intricate combinations.

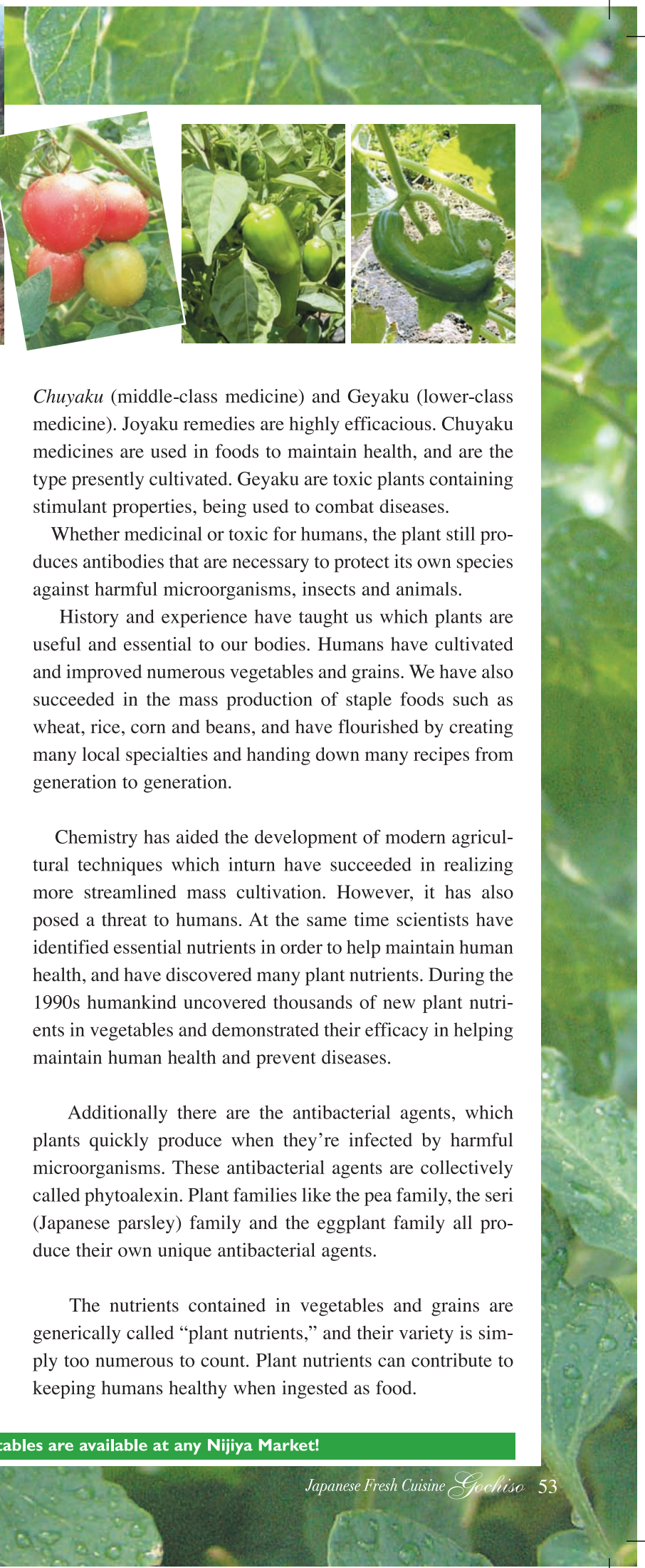
Because organically farmed crops are grown among all kinds of microorganisms, they must keep producing antibodies in order to defend against invaders. If they succumb to those threats, the plants will stop growing, become ill and be destroyed.

According to various environmental factors, various antibodies are produced, which affects the flavor of the vegetables being farmed. Differences in soils, composts or the preferences of the producer give the crops unique qualities and regional characteristics. However, harvests are sometimes abundant and sometimes poor. Some harvested crops are irregular in size and shape, and some are worm-eaten. Therefore, an organic farmer can never rest easy.

## ■ CONVENTIONAL FARMING

The goal of modern agriculture is the steady mass production of uniformly good-looking vegetables and grains. To achieve this goal, conventional farming has adopted the highest level of technology in modern science.

Sterile cultivation—such as the gas sterilization of soil—chemically synthesized fertilizers and genetically-engi-



neered seeds are the three sacred treasures of conventional farming. They have benefited the growth of crops and made all-season farming and continuous harvesting possible. The yield quantity of a single crop has also increased, and new agricultural techniques have been established.

Hormonal agents enhance the efficiency of production by facilitating the uniform growth of crops. Insecticides entirely prevent the damage that harmful insects would cause. Herbicides kill unwanted plants, thereby contributing to the reduction of labor costs. In this way, conventional farming mass produces crops that have no flavor but plenty of sweetness. That is because their primary constituent is the sugar synthesized by chlorophyll, which is a major component of plant leaves. Sometimes post-harvest chemicals are used to maintain freshness. In supermarkets you will always see vast amounts of uniformly shaped, sweet-tasting, juicy vegetables.

Conventional crops are grown using inorganic chemical fertilizers, which are directly absorbed into the plants. No microorganisms, whether effective or harmful, are involved in the cultivation process, and the crops are protected by pesticides. It is just like a person who calls himself an athlete but doesn't do any practice, or a champion who doesn't participate in any games. Conventional farming has produced weak-smelling cilantro, shapely vegetables containing only sweetness, vegetables that don't taste the way vegetables are supposed to, and vegetables that contain no plant nutrients. What's worse is that the conventional farming has created the social problem of residual pesticides.

## ■ HERBAL MEDICINE

Herbs and spices originally grew in the wild and have been used as medicinal plants for their high nutritional values. Every country has its own medicinal plants, which have traditionally been used since the ancient days. Traditional Chinese medicine is academically well established, being generally divided into *Joyaku* (upper-class medicine),

*Chuyaku* (middle-class medicine) and *Geyaku* (lower-class medicine). *Joyaku* remedies are highly efficacious. *Chuyaku* medicines are used in foods to maintain health, and are the type presently cultivated. *Geyaku* are toxic plants containing stimulant properties, being used to combat diseases.

Whether medicinal or toxic for humans, the plant still produces antibodies that are necessary to protect its own species against harmful microorganisms, insects and animals.

History and experience have taught us which plants are useful and essential to our bodies. Humans have cultivated and improved numerous vegetables and grains. We have also succeeded in the mass production of staple foods such as wheat, rice, corn and beans, and have flourished by creating many local specialties and handing down many recipes from generation to generation.

Chemistry has aided the development of modern agricultural techniques which in turn have succeeded in realizing more streamlined mass cultivation. However, it has also posed a threat to humans. At the same time scientists have identified essential nutrients in order to help maintain human health, and have discovered many plant nutrients. During the 1990s humankind uncovered thousands of new plant nutrients in vegetables and demonstrated their efficacy in helping maintain human health and prevent diseases.

Additionally there are the antibacterial agents, which plants quickly produce when they're infected by harmful microorganisms. These antibacterial agents are collectively called phytoalexin. Plant families like the pea family, the seri (Japanese parsley) family and the eggplant family all produce their own unique antibacterial agents.

The nutrients contained in vegetables and grains are generically called "plant nutrients," and their variety is simply too numerous to count. Plant nutrients can contribute to keeping humans healthy when ingested as food.

Nijiya Farm's safe, fresh organic vegetables are available at any Nijiya Market!

# Fresh produce and healthy groceries

In addition to Nijiya's original items, which are produced with particular emphasis on flavor, quality and safety, we offer a wide variety of delicious foods for you to enjoy. We look forward to meeting you at our stores!



**NIJIYA MARKET**

## San Diego Store

3860 Conroy St., #109, San Diego, CA 92111  
Phone: 858-268-3821 Fax: 858-268-4273

## Rolling Hills Store

2533B Pacific Coast Hwy., Torrance, CA 90505  
Phone: 310-534-3000 Fax: 310-534-0897

## Sauvante Store

2130 Sauvante Blvd., #105, West L.A., CA 90025  
Phone: 310-575-3300 Fax: 310-575-3933

## Torrance Store

2121 West 182nd St., Torrance, CA 90504  
Phone: 310-366-7200 Fax: 310-366-7751

## Puente Hills Store

17869 Colima Rd., City of Industry, CA 91748  
Phone: 626-913-9991 Fax: 626-913-4990

## Little Tokyo Store

124 Japanese Village Plaza Mall, Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Phone: 213-690-3290 Fax: 213-690-1191

## Mountain View Store

143 E. El Camino Real, Mountain View, CA 94040  
Phone: 650-691-1600 Fax: 650-691-0628

## San Francisco Store

1737 Post St., San Francisco, CA 94115  
Phone: 415-563-1901 Fax: 415-563-0716

## San Mateo Store

1956 S. El Camino Real, San Mateo, CA 94403  
Phone: 650-212-7398 Fax: 650-372-8687

## San Jose Store

240 Jackson St., San Jose, CA 95112  
Phone: 408-275-6916 Fax: 408-289-8369