

旬
彩
“Washoku”
cooking recipe.

Japanese seasons food



全農

ZEN-NOH

National Federation of Agricultural Cooperative Associations



Spring



Summer

*Appearance, taste...
everything about
Japanese farm products
top quality as well as 'safe'*



Autumn



Winter



Enjoy a wide variety of seasonal food

Japan is a long, narrow country that stretches from north to south. It is surrounded by the sea and mountains cover 75% of its land. The Japanese climate is characterised by four distinctive seasons; spring, summer, autumn and winter. Natural conditions, such as the Kuroshio Current, drastic landscapes of mountains and valleys, and a monsoon, also create different environments in different regions where unique farm products are produced.

Only 12% of the total land area is farmland, yet as many as 240 different types of fruit and vegetables are grown for commercial purposes, and as for rice, which is a staple of the Japanese diet, as many as 300 varieties are grown throughout the country. The Japanese are privileged to have a wide variety of seasonal fruit and vegetables throughout the year and enjoy their rich, healthy food culture.

Food production with quality and safety

Japanese consumers are always after farm products that are tasty and good quality. Farmers carefully select varieties that suit their natural environment and grow them with advanced production technology and through painstaking manual labour. Lovingly grown fruit and vegetables are top quality in every sense; not only good in appearance, such as shape and colour, but also in smell, taste, texture and so on.

Furthermore, the safety of food products is also under strict control in Japan. The Japanese government stipulates the allowable residue levels of agricultural chemicals in foods, and sales of foods with excess residue are prohibited. The appropriate use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers has been encouraged and many methods have been developed to deter pests without using chemicals. Nowadays, environmentally-friendly farming is seen as common sense in Japan.

Farm products produced by honest, hard-working farmers are transported from production centres to local stores, kept as fresh as when they left the production centres by cold chain, which is a system for storing products in a temperature-controlled environment.

People all over the world are beginning to notice how healthy and wonderful the 'WASHOKU' is. The blessing of Mother Nature and long-established, hard-working farmers, who know the importance of food quality and safety, help to ensure that only good ingredients are used in Japanese cooking. We proudly recommend a rich variety of Japanese seasonal food with quality and safety.

is
e'!





*A red, sweet-scented
vitamin C fruit
that gives you vitality*

Strawberry

【*ichigo*】



Many women and children love strawberries because of their cute look. Strawberries were first brought to Japan by the Dutch in the Edo Period (1603-1868). Until the 1960s, strawberries were grown mainly by open cultivation and harvested in May and June, but nowadays, they are available from autumn to the following summer, thanks to cultivar development and greenhouse cultivation.

Changes in cultivation methods include the use of hydroponics instead of soil, and systematic management of temperature and humidity in greenhouses. These changes have increased the work efficiency significantly while ensuring that strawberries are harvested with consistently good quality.

Strawberries are such a popular fruit that many cultivars, including those very sweet, large and juicy ones, are being created under different names all over Japan.

Japan is said to be the third largest

strawberry grower in the world. Besides, the strawberries grown in Japan are mainly for eating fresh and not for processing as in making jam. Japan boasts the highest consumption of edible fresh strawberries in the world.

Strawberries are rich in vitamin C. Once you've had them, you'll never forget the sweet, fruity taste and high aroma of Japanese strawberries.



Main production areas:

Tochigi, Fukuoka, Kumamoto, etc.

Crop calendar:

November to May

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12



*Deliciously enchanting
with juice-filled, melting flesh*

桃

Peach
【momo】



The peach is a plant of the genus *Prunus* of the Rosaceae family. It has cherry-like flowers, and in April and May, peach orchards look like a fairyland with a charming display of peach blossoms. Bud thinning and flower thinning are carried out by farmers, and only carefully selected fruits are left on the tree to develop. This way, all the goodness goes into the fruits to make large, high-quality peaches.

Peach orchards are typically located in basins surrounded by mountains. The temperature difference between the morning and evening and the strong summer sun help peach fruits increase their sweetness and become fully ripened. Peaches that are grown with tender loving care in harmony with nature surrounding them are excellent in colour, shape, size, and of course in taste. Optical sensor technology is used for checking the sugar content and maturity level so that only delicious peaches reach consumers.

The delight of plump, beautifully round

peaches in a gentle colour that have juice-filled melting flesh is reserved only for those who actually eat one. The sweet smell is also an enchanting character of ripe peaches.



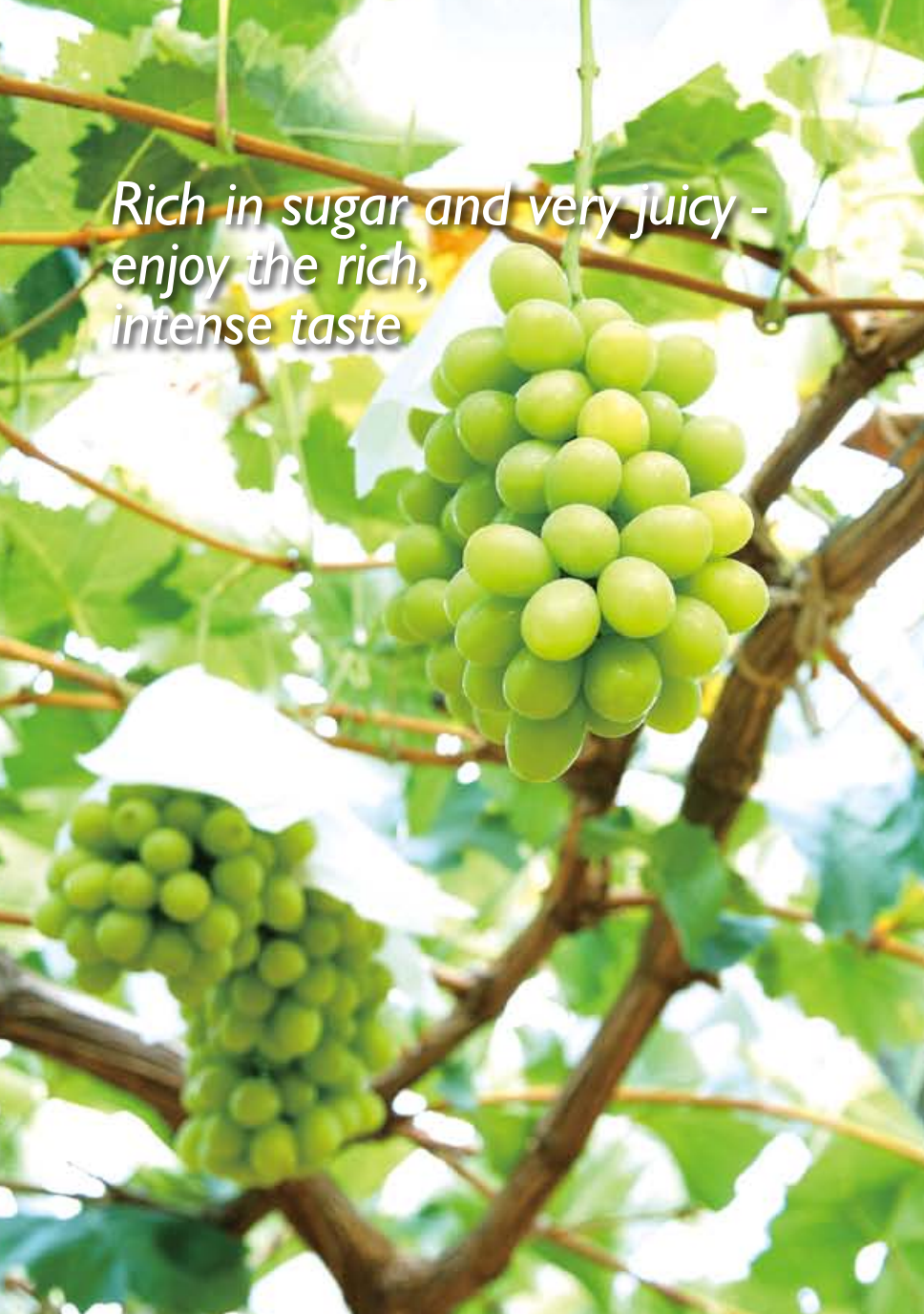
Main production areas:

Yamanashi, Fukushima, Nagano, etc.

Crop calendar:

June to September 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

*Rich in sugar and very juicy -
enjoy the rich,
intense taste*



葡萄

Grape
[budou]



Grapes are the oldest and most produced fruit in the world. It is said that there are as many as 10,000 grape varieties, and about 80% of the world's total grape production is for making wines. Meanwhile, about 80% of Japan's total grape production is for eating fresh. Varieties, such as 'Delaware', 'Pione', 'Kyoho', 'Muscat of Alexandria' and 'Shine Muscat', are available in summer and autumn. They come in different sizes; big and small, and different colours; purple, light green, etc. Also, different varieties have different distinctive scents and tastes to enjoy.

In Japan, grapes are grown using a unique 'overhead trellis-type' cultivation method where grapevines are arranged horizontally, as far away from the ground as possible, so that the rain doesn't splash mud on the bunches of grapes. Trellises are built on mountain slopes in full sun. In natural conditions, where it becomes hot during summer and the temperature

plummets at night around the ripening time, grapes gradually intensify their distinctive taste and scent.



Main production areas:
Yamanashi, Nagano, Yamagata, etc

Crop calendar:
May to November

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12



*A fruit that represents
the Japanese autumn
with a good old taste*

柿

Persimmon

[kaki]



Persimmons are said to be origin to Japan and China. They have been cultivated since the Nara Period (710-794), and 'kaki', their Japanese name, is familiar in Asia and Europe nowadays. There are many local varieties, the number of which is said to be 1,000, because they can grow only in their native regions.

There are sweet persimmons and astringent persimmons, and astringent ones are shipped after removing the astringency by carbonic acid gas. Well-known sweet varieties include 'Fuyu', 'Jiro' and 'Taishū', and 'Hiratanenashi' and 'Tone wase' are well known among the astringent varieties.

Persimmons are generally characterised by their gentle sweetness, but the texture varies depending on the variety. For example, Fuyu has soft flesh, Jiro is somewhat crunchy and Hiratanenashi has a smooth texture.

Fresh persimmons are rich in vitamin C. Astringent persimmons lose their astringency and become sweet when they

are peeled and sun-dried. 'Hoshigaki', sun-dried persimmons, couldn't be more delicious when dried during a cold, dry Japanese winter. The only downside is that vitamin C is reduced during the drying process, but they are packed with carotene and dietary fibre, and are popular as a healthy food rich in natural sugar.



Main production areas:
Wakayama, Nara, Fukuoka, etc.

Crop calendar: September to December. November to February (dried)





*Packed with goodness
- enjoy the sweet taste of
warm and fluffy sweet potato*

甘藷

Sweet Potato

【satsumaimo】



Baked, deep-fried in tempura batter, steamed, simmered, eaten as a sweet snack... the sweet potato is a versatile, tasty vegetable. The name both in English and in Chinese is self-explanatory; 'potato that is sweet'. It is called 'satsumaimo' in Japanese because it is originated from the 'Satsuma' region. Sweet potatoes were originally from Mexico and Central America. They found their way into India, Southeast Asia and China, and finally arrived in Japan. They settled in Okinawa and Kagoshima (Satsuma), and because they grow well even in poor soil, they often saved people from famine. Sweet potato cultivation was much encouraged in the Edo Period (1603-1868) and they became common all over the country.

Many sweet potato varieties are cultivated nowadays, including the floury 'Beniazuma', and the starchy 'Beniharuka' and 'Silk Sweet'. They are harvested in summer and autumn, and by storing them for 1-3 months, the sweetness increases and the texture changes from floury to starchy.

Steamed and sun-dried sweet potatoes, 'hoshi-imo', have a more intense taste with a higher nutritional value. The sweet potato is a non-additive, traditional food. Enjoy it simply as a snack.



Main production areas:
Kagoshima, Ibaraki, Chiba, etc.

Crop calendar: September to March, December to February (dried)



*If you can taste the difference
between varieties,
you're a 'rice connoisseur' -
pick your favourite taste*



米

Rice

[*kome*]



In Japan, new rice varieties are developed every year. So far, more than 700 varieties have been developed, of which about 300 varieties are apparently grown all over Japan. The most well known variety 'Koshihikari' is a superstar; it's been dominating most of the rice acreage in Japan since 1979. Rice growers continue to develop and promote new varieties that are as good as or even better than Koshihikari.



In Japan, many rice-producing regions are surrounded by mountains with heavy snowfalls in winter. In spring, melting snow carries all the goodness down rivers and streams. Nutritious water is used for the irrigation of paddy fields where rice cultivation begins in full swing. Careful and regular irrigation management along with the growth of rice plants is the key to successful rice cultivation, and cold mineral-rich melted snow water is very important for good quality in taste.

Mountains and valleys create drastic landscapes where the water is pure, and in summer, the sun is hot and strong during the day and the temperature drops at night. These natural conditions ensure fine quality rice.

Rice is grown by environmentally-friendly methods with the smallest possible amounts of pesticides and chemical fertilisers; in Japan, rice cultivation with safety and assurance in mind is simply common sense.

Viscosity, hardness and sweetness vary from variety to variety. You will surely find the taste you like.

Well known varieties and their features

[Koshihikari]

Sweet, starchy and shiny. A synonym for well-balanced, premium quality rice.

[Akitakomachi]

Light and easy to swallow. Ideal for breakfast.

[Nanatsuboshi]

Moist when cooked. Tasty even after it's gone cold.

[Hitomebore]

Large grains and a robust texture.

Pleasantly fragrant and filling. A lighter taste than Koshihikari.

[Hinohikari]

Shiny and starchy. Tasty even after it's gone cold. Ideal for making rice balls.



*Experience the sweet aroma
and the supreme
melt-in-the-mouth texture!*

和牛

Wagyu
[wagyu]



Sukiyaki, shabu-shabu, teppanyaki... Japanese hot pot and grill recipes using Japanese Wagyu beef are very popular both in Japan and abroad. Highly flavoursome and finely textured, Wagyu beef is the only one of its kind in the world. The fat marbling of Wagyu beef is called 'shimofuri', which is a pattern of 'sashi' (marble lines) that propagate to look like a fine mesh. The beautiful marble pattern resembles frost, and the melt-in-the-mouth texture and the sweet, rich taste are truly unforgettable. Wagyu is a variety unique to Japan and has been improved over many years,

thanks to the dedication of agricultural organisations and beef farmers. Wagyu cattle are fed on carefully selected feed with clean water. They are also kept in clean, temperature-controlled barns, and careful attention is paid to each one of them to make sure that they do not suffer stress.

Calves that were born in Japan are each given ID numbers and are registered on a database together with distribution information from birth to sale of the resulting meat. This way, it is easy to obtain, from the ID number labelled on a packet of beef, information about when a calf was

born, who reared it, and so on. This 'beef traceability system' is well established in Japan.

Wagyu cattle are reared not only with tender care but also to a very high safety standard. Enjoy tender, delicate and highly flavoursome Wagyu beef with confidence.



Let's cook! Basic Japanese recipes

Gohan-cooked rice

Wash the rice



Place the rice in a large bowl. Pour in some water. Stir quickly and discard the water.



With a little amount of water left in the bowl, wash the rice with your open fingers. Keep your fingers vertical while stirring the contents.

Instructions



Get a thick saucepan with a lid that fits tightly. Place the rice with 3 cups of water in the saucepan. Leave for 20-30 minutes.



Place the saucepan, with the lid on, over a medium heat and bring it to the boil. Turn the heat down and cook further for 10-15 minutes. While cooking, do not remove the lid.

Measurements

1 teaspoon : 5ml, 1 Tablespoon : 15ml, 1 cup : 200ml,

Dashi (stock) : bonito fish stock

All serving measurements are approximate.

※In the case where certain ingredients are not available from local stores, use alternative ingredients.

Rice is cooked in a thick saucepan to get a fluffy, delicious result.

Ingredients (for an amount easy to cook in one go)

Rice...3 cups (600ml)

Water ...3 cups (600ml)

Instructions



Add more water, stir quickly again, and discard the water. Repeat this 2 or 3 times.



Drain the rice into a sieve and leave for 20-30 minutes.

Cook the rice in a Saucepan



Turn the heat off and leave for 10 minutes. Keep the lid on.



Dampen a rice paddle with a little water, and loosen the rice by turning over the entire contents from the bottom of the saucepan.



Onigiri -rice balls

Let's learn how to make onigiri in three different shapes- a triangle shape, a drum shape and a barrel shape. Using both hands, compact rice "gently and rhythmically". Enjoy onigiri with a filling of your choice.

Onigiri in a triangle shape



Ingredients (for 4 pieces)

Hot cooked rice ...400g
Grilled salmon ...1 piece
Nori (dried laver seaweed)
...2 sheets
Salt ...a pinch

Instructions

- 1.** Grill the salmon, remove all the skin and bones, and break up the flesh roughly. Cut the nori sheets into 5cm × 15cm strips.
- 2.** Place 100g of cooked rice in a rice bowl (or a small bowl). Empty on a flat surface to cool a little.
- 3.** Dampen your hands with water, and rub them together with a pinch of salt to spread the salt over the palms of your hands.



- 4.** Place 100g of cooked rice in one hand. Make a small recess in the middle and place some salmon in the recess. Compact gently with your hands by wrapping the salmon with the rice.



- 5.** Put the fingers of one hand together and bend them forward so as to make the hand in an "L" shape. Between the L-shaped hand and the other hand, compact and roll the rice rhythmically a few times until it has three corners to resemble a triangle.



- 6.** To finish off, wrap the rice piece with the nori sheets.

角

Onigiri in a barrel shape



Ingredients (for 4 pieces)

Hot cooked rice ...320g
Dried bonito flakes ...5g
White roasted sesame seeds
...1 tablespoon
Salt ...a pinch

Instructions

1. Divide the rice in quarters.
2. Dampen your hands with water, and rub them together with a pinch of salt to spread the salt over the palms of your hands.
3. Place the rice in one hand and squeeze gently to make a tubular shape. Flatten both sides with your thumb and two fingers, and compact and roll the rice a few times until it resembles a barrel.



4. Mix the bonito flakes and the sesame seeds in a saucer. Roll the barrel-shaped rice piece in the mixture to coat it evenly.

Onigiri in a drum shape



Ingredients (for 4 pieces)

Hot cooked rice ...400g
Umeboshi (pickled plums)
...medium 4
Aonori (Japanese basil)
...small leaves 8
Salt ...a pinch

Instructions

1. Place 100g of cooked rice in a rice bowl (or a small bowl). Empty on to a flat surface to cool a little.
2. Dampen your hands with water, and rub them together with a pinch of salt to spread the salt over the palms of your hands.
3. Place 100g of cooked rice in one hand. Make a small recess in the middle and place an umeboshi in the recess. Compact gently with your hands by wrapping the umeboshi with the rice.
4. While compacting the rice, cup one of your hands so that after rolling a few times, a round shape with a flat face on either side is achieved.
5. Press aonori leaves gently, one on each flat face.



Sukiyaki

This is a dish that brings out the best of beef for you to enjoy. Here is a recipe for the Kanto region-style sukiyaki with a special base called "warishita".

Ingredients (for 4 servings)

Paper-thin slices of beef for sukiyaki...400-600g
Leek...2
Shiitake mushrooms...8
Firm tofu (bean curd)...1
Shirataki (noodles made of plant roots)...1 bag (250g)
Shungiku (edible chrysanthemum leafstalks)...200g
Beef tallow...as appropriate

Warishita base

dashi...1/2 cup
soy sauce ...1/2 cup
sake (Japanese rice wine) ...3 tablespoons
mirin (Japanese sweet rice wine)...2 tablespoons
sugar...2 tablespoons

Instructions

1.

Cut the leek diagonally and 2cm wide. Discard the stems of the shiitake mushrooms and make slits over the caps. Cut the tofu in half lengthwise, and then in quarters crosswise. Discard growing tips of shungiku.



2.

Drain the shirataki in a sieve, cut it to an easy-to-eat length and rub it with salt. Place the shirataki in boiling water and cook for about 5 minutes. Drain the shirataki.



3.

Put all the warishita base ingredients in a bowl, and stir well until all the sugar dissolves.



4.

Heat a sukiyaki pan (or a large frying pan). Put the beef tallow in the pan, and once the fat has melted, put some of the beef slices into the pan. Cook the beef slices so as to untangle them, as they are very thin strips. Cook both sides. Once the beef has changed colour, add some of the leek. Cook briefly. Add some of the warishita base, and as it is beginning to boil, add some of the shiitake mushrooms, the tofu and the shirataki in that order. Turn the heat down and simmer.



5.

Lastly, add some of the shungiku, and start eating with any ingredient that has been cooked and ready to eat. Add more ingredients as you eat along.



Grape Tart

Jewelled with plenty of Shine Muscat and Kyoho grapes, this tart perfects the combination of sweet and juicy grapes, smooth custard and light tart pastry.

Ingredients (for an 18cm tart tin)

Shine Muscat ... 14 grapes

Kyoho ... 9 grapes

Tart pastry

unsalted butter ... 40 g	granulated sugar ... 30 g
beaten egg ... 1 tablespoon	cake flour ... 80 g
ground almonds ... 20 g	butter ... a small amount

Custard

egg yolks ... 2
granulated sugar ... 60 g
cake flour ... 40 g
milk ... 300 ml
Vanillabean ... 3 cm
fresh cream ... 50 ml

Instructions

Tart pastry

1.

Place in a bowl the granulated sugar and the butter that has been softened to room temperature.

Whisk well until pale and creamy.

Add the beaten egg and whisk thoroughly.

2.

Fold the ground almonds and the sifted flour into the mixture with a rubber spatula. Cool the mixture in the refrigerator.

3.

Place the pastry between two sheets of cling film.

Roll out with a rolling pin until slightly bigger than the tart tin.

Grease the tin with a little butter and line with the pastry.

Prick the pastry all over with a fork and cool in the refrigerator.

4.

Place greaseproof paper over the tin.

Place a weight and bake in the oven at 180°C for about 15 minutes.



Custard and finishing touch

1.

Place the egg yolks and 30 g of granulated sugar in a bowl. Whisk them together, and mix in 40 g of flour.

2.

Add the heated milk, vanillabeans and 30 g of granulated sugar, a small amount at a time, and whisk well.

3.

Sieve the mixture into a pan. Stir well with a wooden spatula on medium heat until creamy. Continue to stir while the mixture thickens. The mixture will suddenly stop sticking to the pan; the custard is complete.

4.

Remove the pan from the heat. Spread the custard on a baking sheet and place cling film directly on top to prevent contact with air. Cool in the refrigerator.

5.

Once cooled, mix in a small amount of the fresh cream, three or four times, to make a creamy texture.

6.

Place the custard in the baked tart case. Cut the grapes in half and arrange them on top.



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