



UC Tokyo Study Center Newsletter

Winter 2008 冬

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Message from Tokyo Study Center

****Office Closed:**

December 25th, 2008

through

January 5th, 2009**

Greetings from Tokyo Study Center!

I'm sure that during your winter break, many of you will go travelling to explore more of Japan or to nearest countries or just going back home in the U.S. Either way, if you will be absent from your current residence, make sure to sign-out with us!! (It can be done from the EAP Website below, e-mail, phone, or in person) Also, note that our office will be closed during winter break, but if you have an emergency situation, please do not hesitate to contact us at our emergency cell phone. Have a great and safe winter break! And let us know how you are doing if you get a chance.

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From left to right:

(back) Susan-sensei, Sakurai

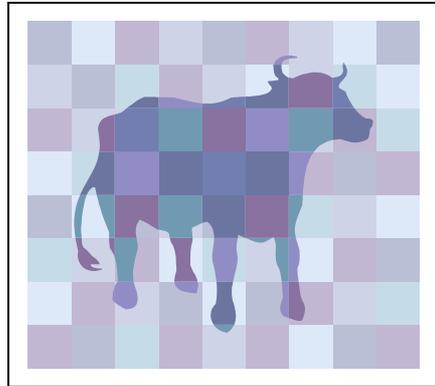
(front) Takahashi, Suzuki, Onnagawa





ねんがじょう-PREPARING FOR THE NEW YEAR

Every year, as the temperature gets colder towards winter, people in Japan start preparing for a new year. Light-ups for Christmas in shopping malls and sales of Christmas cakes have become popular more than ever before, but as people begin to hear footsteps of the new year, local shops also start advertising for New Year's specialty food called “おせち料理(Osechi Ryori)” and post offices: sales of 年賀状(ねんがじょう) or New Year's Greeting “postcard”. New Year's Day has been a special occasion in Japan, and traditionally, Japanese people would clean up their house most thoroughly compared to other times of the year usually around the last week of December. This is in hopes of and preparation to welcome a new year with a refreshed and cleaned-up mind and home. It can also be seen in schools and workplaces and it's specially called “大掃除(おおそうじ)” or translated as “Big Clean-up”. When you have some garbage as a result of your おおそうじ, please make note that garbage collection might not be in service for a few days or in some cases for a whole week at the end of the year and the beginning of a new year. Information can be found at each city's Websites.



年賀状(ねんがじょう) is a postcard which Japanese people traditionally send to relatives, friends and co-workers with a personal message and touch along with the other preparations for a New Year. The idea is pretty much the same as Christmas or Season's Greetings Card in the U.S. Japanese people prefer to send them out before December 25th, this way, Nengajo can be delivered on the first day of a new year, which is considered a most polite timing. Traditionally, after the turn of the year, Japanese people used to physically go visit relatives and neighbors, but now mostly replaced by Nengajo. Moreover, nowadays, though more and more youngsters replace 年賀状 postcards with e-mails or even mobile e-mails, it is still considered the most polite to send 年賀状 postcards with hand-written messages to give thanks for the past year and greet each other for the coming of the new year.

What usually is used as a mascot and a decoration on 年賀状 is a specific animal, and for the year 2009(平成 21 年), it is an ox. These animals change each year with 12-year cycle and this was originally adapted from Chinese zodiac system. How to figure out what your Chinese zodiac is by the year you were born. For example, if

you were born in 1988 or 昭和 63 年, you are a year of Dragons or 辰年(たつどし). The year 2008 has been a year of mouse/子年(ねずみどし), and the year 2009 will be a year of an ox/丑年(うしどし) and so on.



The fun part about receiving 年賀状 is not only about how cute next year's animal symbol greet you or happy feeling of hearing from your friends and relatives, but just by receiving them, you might win a High-Resolution Digital TV with Blu Ray Disk Recorder or SLR camera kit. That is because each postcard for this special occasion has lottery number on it. Drawing for prizes will be held on January 25th, 2009, and the results of drawings will be published on newspapers and on Japan Post's Website. (<http://www.yubin-nengajp/index.html>) Other than Digital TV and camera, prizes for next year include Automatic Massaging Chair, pair travel package with

accommodations at famous 'ryokan/inn', Wii + Wii Fit, Digital Dictionary and so on! If you win prizes, you can go to the nearest post office to inform and pick up between January 26th and July 27th in 2009. If you receive a New Year's card from your friends in Japan and you haven't sent them one yet, it's a good idea to send them a New Year's card in return! (But you do not need to send us a postcard.)

<p>Nengajo with Otoshidama <u>January 25, 2009</u> →Lottery Drawing Day</p>	
<p><u>January 26 to July 27, 2009</u> →Pick up prizes if you win something!</p>	



おせちとおせち-NEW YEAR'S CUISINE

In Japan, there's a tradition to prepare special feast for the first three days of the New Year, called Osechi Ryori (おせち料理). Along with Osechi Ryori, usually a soup with vegetables, meat and mochi called お雑煮(Ozoni) are also served. Osechi Ryori is usually prepared during the last days of the preceding year, or ready-made Osechi might be purchased. Osechi Ryori is filled with traditional specialties and usually

each food items in it represent wishes for health and prosperity. What's inside and how to cook Osechi Ryori and Ozoni differs from region to region and or by family tradition and backgrounds. Interestingly enough, with the case of Ozoni, there's a general distinction between West and East side of Japan with around the areas of Kanazawa, Gifu, Mie and Wakayama as the dividing center line. Generally speaking, families in West side of Japan usually eat round and boiled rice cakes in their Ozoni. On the other hand, people in the East side of Japan eat square-cut and broiled rice cakes in their Ozoni. Soups and ingredients also differ from region to region. In most cases, East side of Japan and West side except Kinki (Osaka, Kyoto, Nara etc.), San'in, Echizen and some parts of Shikoku, soups for Ozoni are clear and seasoned with soy sauce and salt. In the other areas, soups can be made with white or red miso, or azuki/sweet red bean paste. As ingredients, people like to add the area's specialties such as salmons in Niigata or broiled gobies for "dashi/soup stock" in Sendai. If you got interested and become a little hungry, why don't you cook your own and try yourself how "Ozoni" taste like. And let us know the results and your impression of your first try of Ozoni or if you had a chance, on other new year's specialties in Japan!

お雑煮:関東風 / Ozoni: Kanto ver.



****Ingredients for 4 people****

- *8 pieces of square-shape Kiri-mochi
- *100g chicken thighs *1/2 Carrot
- *2 bundles of Komatsuna leaves
- *4 fresh Shiitake mushrooms
- *5 cups of Dashi Jiru/soup stock**
- *1 teaspoon Usukuchi Soy Sauce
- *pinch of salt *skin of Yuzu to garnish

お雑煮:関西風 / Ozoni: Kansai ver.



****Ingredients for 4 people****

- *8 pieces of round-shape Maru-mochi *6cm
- Ninjin/carrots
- *6cm Daikon/Japanese radish
- *2 'Satoimo' potatoes
- *80-100g White Miso
- * 'Aonori' seaweed to taste
- * 5 cups of Dashi Jiru/soup stock**

1. Cut chicken thighs into bite-size pieces. Peel carrots and cut into flower shape or in thin rectangles. Boil Komatsuna leaves with salted water until changes color, take out and squeeze out water from leaves, and cut into 3cm length.

2. Take out shank from Shiitake mushrooms, and slice skins of Yuzu into thin pieces. Start broiling Mochi with Oven-Toaster, grills or grids/yakiami until they browns and puffs up and become soft. (like picture below)



3. Put aside Mochi when they are brown. Then pour in Dashi jiru, chicken, carrots and shiitake into sauce pan and bring into boil. When it started to boil, remove scum as necessary. Lower heat and adjust the seasoning with soy sauce and salt.



1. Cut Daikon and Ninjin into round slices. Peel Satoimo and knead a little with salt, then wash away slimy parts and cut into about 8mm-thick slices.



2. Boil Daikon, Ninjin and Satoimo until they are still firm in the middle. Bring water into boil in the other pan and put Maru-mochi and simmer until soften.

3. Pour 'Dashi jiru' into a saucepan and add vegetables and simmer until soften while removing scum as necessary. Dissolve white miso with 'Nijiru' and bring to boil then turn off the heat.



4. Place Daikon at the bottom of "Owan/soup bowl" then Maru-mochi and other vegetables. Pour in the soup and garnish with 'Aonori' seaweed right before serving. **DEKIAGARI!**

4. Place broiled Mochi into soup bowl/Owan and other ingredients. Pour in hot soup from the sauce pan and garnish with skins of yuzu on top. **DEKIAGARI!**

<<Reference Websites>>

<http://www.victory-shop.jp/ozouniresipi.html>
http://www.oseki.info/ozouni/post_32.html

NOTES

*In Kanto area, it is rare to find round-shape mochi and can be vice versa in Kansai area. If you find round-shape mochi in Kanto area (or square shape mochi in Kansai), you may want to try it with the recipe from the area different from your current residence!

**"Dashi Jiru" can be purchased in a supermarket in a bottle, it's also called "Dashi no moto", then use it after diluting it with water per instructed ratio. But if you want more challenging recipe, then you can make "dashi" from scratch.

If you are not a "soup" kind of person, there are plenty of other ways to eat mochi. Most popular way to eat mochi other than in "ozoni soups" would be with soy sauce & seaweed(Isobe), kinako & sugar(Abekawa), or grated "daikon" radish(Daikon Oroshi). But some others are: *Mochi with natto *Karami mochi *Mochi with "Pon-zu" and seaweed and the list goes one and on... If you get creative and invented new ways to eat mochi, let us know with your recipe!

One of the most used expressions for a New Year's card in my childhood was "おもちを食べ過ぎて、お腹をこわさないでね"(I hope you don't eat too many 'mochi' so you won't have a stomachache!) And to conclude this newsletter, I'll send you all the same message because mochi can be addictive.

And if you like, what about singing the following children song, which is about getting anxious for the coming of the new year, while you wait for the year to turn.

歌・『お正月』

<http://www.worldfolksong.com/songbook/japan/oshogatsu.htm>