

Traditional Local Cuisines of Japan

Issue No. 4 **Yokosuka Navy Curry** ♦ **Kanagawa Prefecture** By CGJNYJIC

Traditional Local Cuisines of Japan is a series introducing the history and food culture of various Japanese locales through their unique *kyodo-ryori* – timeless regional cuisines made with local ingredients and techniques.

This issue introduces *Yokosuka Navy Curry*, a specialty from Yokosuka City of Kanagawa Prefecture. Read on to learn all about this all-time favorite curry rice dish and its connection with the Navy.

What is Yokosuka Navy Curry?



Curry is considered a household staple in present-day Japan. But did you know that it first came to the country as a common naval meal? It is said to have traveled ashore through the town of Yokosuka, a significant port city that is home to the U.S. Naval Base and Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force; from there it spread throughout Japan. For this reason, Yokosuka City brands itself as the “Town of Curry” and features the *Yokosuka Navy Curry* as its local culinary specialty. The dish comes with a strict set of rules—preparation must follow a specific recipe from a 1908 naval culinary book, and it must be served in a set together with a glass of milk and salad.

Kanagawa Prefecture

Kanagawa Prefecture is located in the Kanto region of Japan, bordering Tokyo to the north and facing the sea on the east and south. Despite having the nation's second-largest population, it is the fifth-smallest prefecture in size. Kanagawa is known to attract tourists both domestic and from abroad with popular destinations such as hot springs and the Open-Air Museum, together with the breathtaking landscapes of the town of Hakone.



Hakone



It is also home to a 37-foot tall Great Buddha statue in Kamakura, and the Shin-Yokohama Ramen Museum in Yokohama City. Yokosuka in particular is known as the port city where U.S. Commodore Matthew Perry arrived with his fleet of “Black Ships” in 1853. The arrival is considered a major historical catalyst which eventually led to the end of Japan's isolationist “Sakoku” period.

Trivia: In 1853, Tokugawa Ieyoshi was the 12th shogun of Japan.



History of Curry Rice

Curry was first introduced to Japan in the Meiji era (1868-1912), when beriberi—a diet deficiency which leads to a nervous system ailment—was a serious concern within the Japanese Navy. To combat this problem, they adopted curry from the British Navy menu, which was a nutritious stew of meat and vegetables. Flour was used to thicken the stew, and bread substituted with rice to better suit the Japanese palate. This new curry rice creation became an instant hit among the sailors and brought about a dramatic reduction in the number of beriberi patients throughout the ranks. The delicious malnutrition remedy rapidly spread across bases, and subsequently made its way into the mainstream by way of retired military personnel. Such is said to be the origin of the Japanese-style curry rice widely eaten today.



Yokosuka Navy Curry Recipe

This recipe is by Chef Shogo Tsutsumi of the CGJNY Ambassador's Residence.

Ingredients

makes 6 servings

Beef	300g
Potato	400g
Carrot	250g
Onion	500g
Beef Tallow	140g
Flour	2 tablespoons
Curry Powder	6 tablespoons
Beef stock	1200ml
(can be substituted with <i>fond de veau</i>)	
Salt & Pepper	to taste
Bouillon powder	3 tablespoons
Ketchup	2 tablespoons
Honey	2 tablespoons
Sugar	1 teaspoon
Vegetable oil	as needed

Ready
to
serve!



Instructions

1. Cut the beef into bite-size pieces. Season with salt and pepper and set aside.
2. Peel and cut the carrots and potatoes into small cubes. Dice the onions and finely mince the beef tallow.
3. Add half the beef tallow into a pot and heat until it begins to steam. Add the onions and stir fry at high heat for about 3 min, then add and cook the beef until the surface turns pale. Add potatoes and carrots and sauté for another 2 minutes.
4. Lower heat to medium and continue to sauté for 5 minutes. Add beef stock. Once boiled, lower the heat and simmer for about 20 minutes until vegetables are cooked tender. Add the bouillon powder and carefully skim off any scum.
5. In a separate frypan, heat the rest of the beef tallow on low until it starts to melt. Add flour and stir until the mixture begins to bubble and turns golden brown. Add curry powder and mix until it thickens.
6. Add the resulting contents from step 5 into the pot and mix well; the liquid should thicken. Adjust taste with salt, pepper, ketchup, honey and sugar.

The Three Delicacies of Yokosuka

The city of Yokosuka features three gourmet dishes that represent the town's development as a substantial seaport from past to present day. The first is the star of this issue "Yokosuka Navy Curry". This dish has helped revitalize Yokosuka as the "Town of Curry", and can be only enjoyed at select restaurants or the annually held Curry Festival. The second and third gourmet recipes—both gifted from the U.S. Naval Base as a gesture of friendship towards the city—are the "Yokosuka Navy Burger" and "Yokosuka Cherry Cheesecake". The burger was originally popular in American military vessels as a quick and easy meal for the lookouts. The cheesecake is of the prominent "New York-style" variety and topped with cherries as a tribute to the cherry blossoms of Japan. If you're ever in Yokosuka, be sure to give these gourmet treats a try!



Nowadays, Navy Curry is still a popular menu item for the Maritime Self-Defense Force, said to be served regularly on Fridays. This tradition is said to have begun as a strategy to help crew keep track of time while at sea. If you ever have trouble deciding on a Friday menu, try taking a crack at this nostalgic naval recipe!

SOURCES: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries; Kanagawa Prefectural Government, Official Kanagawa Tourism Website; Yokosuka Travel Guide; Yokosuka City; Curry City Yokosuka