

Traditional Local Cuisines of Japan

Issue No. 11

Harakomeshi ❀ *Miyagi*

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.

The 11th issue features *Harakomeshi*, a simple yet luxurious rice dish from Miyagi Prefecture.

What is Harakomeshi?



Harakomeshi is a savory bowl of broth-infused rice topped with cooked salmon and salmon roe, originating from the small town of Watari in Miyagi Prefecture. Sitting at the mouth of one of the longest rivers in the Tohoku region, the Abukama River, Watari enjoys a bountiful salmon season from September to November. This harvest period is the only time that *harakomeshi* becomes available, making it quite the seasonal catch for locals and visitors alike. The name is a combination of *harako* (lit.

"belly-child"), the name for salmon roe in the Tohoku dialect, and *meshi*, which by itself means "meal", but denotes a rice dish when used as a suffix.

Miyagi Prefecture

Located in the Tohoku region of northeastern Japan, Miyagi Prefecture is well-known for its fresh delicacies, breathtaking scenery, and some of the best hot springs in Japan.



Okama

One of its most famous sightseeing destinations is Okama, an ancient crater lake at the center of the Zao Mountain range and known for its seemingly mystical color changes depending on the weather. Head east to the coastline, and you'll find one of the three most scenic views in all of Japan: Matsushima Bay, where 260 pine-covered islets float upon emerald waters. Another visitor favorite is Naruko Onsen, an ancient hot spring village made up of five unique hot spring areas.

With all its natural beauty and many places of interest, Miyagi Prefecture has become a place of healing for visitors from all walks of life.



Matsushima



A Warrior's Hospitality

Harakomeshi is said to share a history with the one of the most iconic warlords in Japanese history, Date Masamune. As the very first lord of the Sendai Domain, he ruled over Iwate, part of Fukushima, and all of present-day Miyagi Prefecture during the Edo period. Date was known as *Dokuganryu*, or "One-Eyed Dragon" for his brilliance as a warrior despite being blind in one eye.

Legend has it that Date first encountered *harakomeshi* during a visit to the Watari area to inspect construction along the river.



He was presented with the dish by local fishermen, and loved it so much that he personally popularized the dish throughout the region. The fearsome samurai was said to have been an avid cook himself, who often served the Tokugawa Shogun his own homemade dishes under his philosophy, "Hospitality means humbly serving seasonal dishes prepared by the host himself."



Harakomeshi

This recipe is by Chef Yasuhiro Shima of the CGJNY Ambassador's Residence.

Ingredients

serves 3-4

Instructions

Rice (uncooked)	300 g
Salmon (flesh)	200 g
Salmon trimmings (if available)	
Salt	As needed
Ikura (cured salmon roe)	300 g

Seasoning:

Konbu dashi (kelp stock)	540 ml
Soy sauce	36 ml
Mirin	36 ml



1. Wash rice to remove excess starch. Soak in water for one hour, then drain with a sieve or strainer.
2. Cut salmon into small slices and season with salt. Salt the salmon trimmings if you are using any. Let sit for 10 minutes to draw out excess moisture.
3. Lightly boil salmon slices in water to seal in flavor and remove excess water & any scales, blood, and odor.
4. Combine seasoning ingredients in pot and bring to a boil. Add salmon and trimmings, and let simmer for 5 minutes. Take care to skim off any scum.
5. Remove salmon slices from pot and set aside. Strain and cool the broth.
6. Pour rice from step 1 into a clay pot. Add 360 ml broth from step 5 and bring to a boil. Cover and simmer on low for 15 minutes.
7. Turn off heat and let rest for 10 minutes. After 10 minutes, remove lid and fluff the rice with a rice paddle by gently turning it from the bottom and stirring.
8. Completely cover the rice with salmon slices and ikura. Dig in!

Watch Chef Shima's demonstration
on our channel!

[youtube.com/user/CGJNYchannel](https://www.youtube.com/user/CGJNYchannel)



Chef's Tip:

Garnish with mitsuba or ooba leaves for a pop of fresh color and flavor!

Harakomeshi Day



Countless "official" anniversaries are celebrated each day, around the world. In Japan alone, there are over 2,100 anniversaries recognized by the Japan Anniversary Association, some of which you may also be familiar with: Pocky & Pretz Day (November 11th), established by the snack giant Glico to celebrate their internationally popular stick-style snacks, and Pokémon Day (February 27th), which commemorates the launch date of the franchise's renowned game series.

To celebrate *harakomeshi* as Miyagi Prefecture's signature dish (and to promote it in other regions), Watari-cho has designated October 8th as the official "Harakomeshi Day." The date was chosen because October is the first month of the salmon-fishing season in the region, and for the phonetic play of "ha" in "hachi" (Japanese for the number "eight") in the name of the dish.

We hope you will use the recipe above to join the town of Watari in celebrating Harakomeshi Day this fall!

