

Traditional Local Cuisines of Japan

Issue No. 1

Miso Oden ◆ Aichi Prefecture

by CGJNYJIC

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

Our first issue features *miso oden* from Aichi Prefecture. How is it different from regular oden? What kind of place is Aichi Prefecture? Let's explore these questions together!



What is Miso Oden?

Let's start with what oden is: a Japanese one-pot dish with various ingredients stewed in a (usually very lightly seasoned) dashi broth. Miso oden is oden that is seasoned with Hatcho miso, a type of red miso founded in a village of the same name in what is now Okazaki City, Aichi. It is made with a soy bean base and known for its exceptionally robust flavor that holds up even when stewed. Depending on the household, the miso may be used as a condiment rather than cooked together with the oden.



Aichi Prefecture



Located near the geographical center of Japan, Aichi Prefecture boasts the nation's 4th largest population of over 7.5 million residents. It is home to a number of historical structures as well as modern destinations, including:

- Important Cultural Asset Nagoya Castle
- National Treasure Inuyama Castle
- Meiji Village Museum (open-air)
- Toyota Commemorative Museum of Industry and Technology

For our feline enthusiasts: Aichi is Japan's top producer of the *maneki-neko* (lit. "beckoning cat") charm. The world's largest *maneki-neko* and Maneki Neko Museum are also found here.

Aichi is a dynamic mix of the old and new, where one can enjoy a rich heritage of food, culture, architecture, technology...and more!



HERE



Power Food in Ancient Times



Those familiar with Japanese history may know the names Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu. Revered as the three "Great Unifiers" of Japan from the Sengoku Period (1467–1615), these men are said to have shared their roots in Aichi Prefecture, together with an appetite for dishes prepared with miso.

Due to its exceptional nutrient density and long preservation period, miso was highly valued among soldiers in the olden times. It was especially beloved by Ieyasu, a known "health nut" who lived to the ripe age of 75—almost double the average life span at the time! Many have attributed his longevity to a healthy miso-based diet.

Miso has been a staple in the Japanese diet since historical times, hailed for both its rich flavor and health benefits. Hatcho miso is said to be a particularly nutritious variation of bean miso. It is expected that miso will continue to be a major presence in Japan's food culture from here on as well.



Miso Oden Recipe

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

Ingredients

makes 2-3 servings

Dashi	800ml
(Japanese Broth)	
☆ Hatcho Miso	80g
☆ Cooking Sake	50ml
☆ Mirin	50ml
☆ Sugar	40g
Daikon Radish	¼ cut
Black Konnyaku	½ block
Egg	2
Chikuwa	2 pieces
Satsuma-age	2 pieces
Ganmodoki	2 pieces
Beef Tendon	150g



Instructions

1. Cut the daikon radish into 3cm slices and remove the skin. Parboil the slices (preferably in rice water), then set aside.
2. Hard boil the eggs. Peel and set aside.
3. Cut the beef tendon into bite-size pieces and load them onto skewers. Pass through hot water to remove excess scum, and set aside.
4. Cut konnyaku into conveniently sized pieces. Blanch and set aside.
5. Stir dashi and seasoning (☆) ingredients together in a pot. Bring this to a boil.
6. Add all solid ingredients into the pot. Simmer on low for about 60 minutes.



Tips from the Chef

- ❖ Chill overnight to allow the flavors to seep deeper into the solid ingredients.
- ❖ Enjoy the leftover sauce with other foods such as *kushi-katsu* (deep-fried meat skewers)!

Finished!



Hatcho Miso



Miso is an essential item in every Japanese household pantry. There are varieties of miso based on their base ingredient: rice, barley, (soy) bean, and mixed; however they are most often categorized by their color as white or red miso. Hatcho miso is the most well-known of the red miso group, and is considered the representative of bean misos. Its exceptional flavor is achieved using the traditional techniques and equipment passed down over 300+ years, along with a lengthy 2 year maturing period per batch; production is limited to select Aichi breweries that have long been part of the trade. There is also history to be found in its name: it is said that Hatcho village was thusly named because it was a distance of *hatcho* (Japanese 八丁; about 870 meters) west of Okazaki Castle—the birthplace of the first Tokugawa shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu. Indeed, this product is deeply rooted to the local area in a number of ways.

What did you think of miso oden? It is but one of Aichi's many local specialties, which are widely known as *Nagoya-meshi* and enjoying a rise of popularity within the country in recent years. Some of the ingredients in the recipe may be difficult to find in the U.S., so feel free to substitute your own ingredients to create your own "original Nagoya-meshi"!

SOURCES: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; Aichi Prefecture Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries, Department of Agriculture, Food Education and Marketing Division; Hatcho Miso Cooperative Association; Nagoya Meshi PR Council; Aichi Prefecture Bureau of Policy and Planning, Public Relations Division; AICHI NOW Executive Office; MISO LEGWORK