

Japanese Foods Near You

— Foods That Are Made into Decorations —

Mochibana (literally, “*mochi* flower”)

Mochibana is a decoration made by attaching small clusters of red and white *mochi* to willow branches to resemble plum blossoms, and is displayed on Lunar New Year (refers to January 15 today). It symbolizes a prayer for agricultural fertility in the New Year, and celebrates the year's rich harvest in advance. The willow branches represent ears of rice hanging low with the weight of their harvest.

Blowfish lantern

An inflated blowfish looks almost comical. The blowfish lantern is made by removing the insides of the fish, fixing up its appearance, drying it, and spraying it with varnish. It takes some skill, especially in removing the skin without ripping it. Sold in souvenir shops and frequently found in Japanese-style pubs, the blowfish lantern has an even rounder appearance than the real blowfish, and makes for cute decoration. It is hard to believe that the lantern is made from a real blowfish.

Easter egg

Easter is a Christian festival commemorating the resurrection of Christ. To celebrate Easter, people give Easter eggs as gifts to each other or display them as Easter decorations. Anyone can easily make Easter eggs. First, make a small hole on the top and bottom of a raw egg and blow out the yolk and egg white. After washing the eggshell with water and letting it dry, all you need to do is draw pictures and patterns on the shell using watercolor paint or other coloring implements. It might be fun to make and decorate your room with many Easter eggs.

身近にある日本の食物

— 加工して飾り物にする食物 —

餅花(もちばな)



しだれ柳などの枝に、紅白の餅をちぎって付けたもので、小正月（現在では、1月15日を言うことが多い）に飾ります。一年の五穀豊穰を祈願する予祝の意味を持っており、その年の豊作を前もってお祝いします。しだれ柳が稲穂の垂れる豊作を表現しています。

ふぐ提灯



お腹の膨らんだ魚のふぐは愛嬌があります。ふぐの中身をとり出して、外見を整え乾燥させ、ニスやスプレーで吹きつけて作ります。皮を破らないように外すなど、ちょっと作り方は難しいです。土産店で売っていたり、居酒屋につり下げているふぐ提灯は、お腹がさらに丸く膨らんでいて、とても可愛い飾り物です。魚を加工して作ったとは思えません。

イースターエッグ



キリスト教の行事にイースター（復活祭）があります。イースターの贈物や装飾にイースターエッグがあります。皆さんも簡単に作ることができます。まず、生卵の上と下に小さな穴を開けて黄身・白身を取り出します。水できれいに洗って乾かしたあと、水彩絵の具などで好きな模様を描くと出来上がりです。たくさん作ってお部屋に飾っても楽しいです。