

Japanese Home Cooking

Enjoy a Variation of the Representative Japanese Dish of Tempura *Kakiage*

Ingredients (Serves 4)

- 2 tbsp dried sakura ebi shrimp • 1 onion • 1 carrot
- About 20 strands of mitsuba parsley
- Tempura flour or weak flour • Chilled water
- Frying oil

Preparation

- ① Cut onion in half in the direction of the grain and slice thinly. Cut carrot into julienne strips. Cut the roots off the mitsuba and chop the leaves and stem into 3 cm lengths.
- ② Place vegetables and dried sakura ebi in a bowl.
- ③ Add tempura flour (weak flour) to the above, and mix well.
- ④ Gradually add water to the above in small amounts, and mix lightly until the batter is slightly lumpy (do not overmix).
- ⑤ Heat frying oil in a pan. Using cooking chopsticks or a spoon, drop bite-sized batches of the batter into the oil. Gently hold the batches in place so that the ingredients do not scatter, and fry until crisp and thoroughly heated. Remove from the oil and drain excess oil on paper towels or a wire rack.
- ⑥ Serve with salt, as preferred.

★ Tempura is a Japanese dish of seafood and vegetables dipped in a batter of flour and water (and sometimes eggs) and deep-fried. It is a simple dish, but the use of seasonal ingredients makes it one of the most popular dishes in Japan. Kakiage is a type of tempura made by coating mixed ingredients or batches of small ingredients with batter and deep-frying them into flat round shapes. Along with shrimp tempura, kakiage appears near the top of the menu in most tempura specialty restaurants. Kakiage is commonly served on a bowl of rice with a generous helping of seasoning sauce (Japanese dashi soup broth, shoyu and mirin mixed and brought to a boil) as “kakiage-don,” or on a bowl of soba or udon noodles as “kakiage soba” and “kakiage udon.”

★ The above recipe includes dried sakura ebi, but you could also use raw shrimp, kobashira (small scallops), shirasu (dried whitebait) or other such seasonal seafood for an even more authentic taste. Instead of a regular onion, you might also want to try the juicier and more mild-tasting shin-tamanegi variety of onion that comes to market in early spring. Seasonal vegetables such as edible wild plants, bamboo shoots, soramame (broad beans), and rape blossoms are ideal ingredients for tempura and kakiage in the springtime. Appreciating the seasons through the fresh tastes of seasonal ingredients is certain to enhance your stay in Japan.

日本のおふくろの味

和食の代表格・天ぷらを堪能 かき揚げ

材料 (4人分)

- 乾燥桜えび 大さじ2 • たまねぎ 1個 • にんじん 1本
- みつば 20本ほど
- 天ぷら粉または薄力粉 適量 • 冷水 適量 • 揚げ油 適量

作り方

- ① たまねぎは縦半分にして薄切りにする。にんじんは千切りにし、みつばは根元を切り落とし、3cmほどの長さに刻む。
- ② ボウルに①と乾燥桜えびを入れる。
- ③ ②に天ぷら粉 (薄力粉) を入れ、粉を全体にまぶすように混ぜる。
- ④ ③に冷水を少しずつ入れ軽く混ぜる。全体に粉っぽさがなくなればOK。
- ⑤ 揚げ油を温める。④をさいばし等で一口大にまとめ、油に落とし、散らばらないようにさいばしで押さえながら、火が通ってサクッとなるまで揚げる。揚げ上がったら、油をよく切る。
- ⑥ お好みで塩等を付けていただく。

★ 小麦粉を水で溶いた衣 (卵を加える場合もあります) に魚介や野菜をくぐらせ、油で揚げた料理为天ぷらです。季節の素材に衣を付けて揚げるだけのシンプルなお料理は、日本料理の代表格でしょう。天ぷらの一種であるかき揚げは、複数の材料または一つ一つの大きさが小さい材料を、衣で円形に平たくまとめて揚げたもので、天ぷら専門店では海老の天ぷらと共に揚げたメインの一品といえます。また、ご飯の上に乗せて天つゆ (だし汁にしょうゆ・みりん等を加えて煮立てたもの) をかけた「かき揚げ丼」や、「かき揚げそば」「かき揚げうどん」は、かき揚げの食べ方の定番です。

★ 今回のレシピでは乾燥桜えびを使用しましたが、生のえびやこぼしらなど、季節の魚介類を使うと本格的です。また、たまねぎは、通常のものより水分が多く辛みが少ない「新たまねぎ」と呼ばれる品種のものが春先に出回りますので、是非使ってみてください。天ぷらやかき揚げは、季節の野菜を使って作るのがお勧めです。春は山菜やたけのこ、そらまめ、菜の花..... どのような材料でも美味しく作れます。是非旬の食材を味わい季節を感じて、日本での生活を楽しんでください。