

Let's Cook and Eat the Tastes of the Season!

— Goya Champuru —

Okinawa is one of the Nansei Islands in southern Japan, which flourished as the Ryukyu Kingdom in olden days. Today, it is one of the largest beach resorts in Japan and a highly popular domestic travel destination among the Japanese people, with its distinctive culture and customs a source of attraction to many. Goya champuru is an Okinawan dish of stir-fried goya ("champuru" originally means "mixed up"). It is considered one of the representative dishes of the region that exhibits a highly unique food culture.

Goya is a summer vegetable belonging to the uri (gourd) family of vegetables, and is also called niga-uri, literally meaning "bitter gourd." Some find the bitter taste disagreeable, but depending on how the goya is cooked, the bitterness can turn into a pleasing taste. Moreover, the bitterness stimulates gastrointestinal activity and helps relieve summer fatigue. Another advantage of goya is that it is rich in minerals.

In addition to its nutritional aspects, goya is also attracting attention for its ecological aspect, as represented by the term, "goya curtain," that is frequently heard today. A goya curtain is made by planting goya plants beneath a window and letting their vines extend upward so that they create a natural curtain outside the window and shade the room from direct sunlight. It serves two purposes, by helping to cut air-conditioner costs and delivering a harvest of goya.

[Ingredients (four servings)]

- 1 goya (niga-uri)
- 1 block of hard tofu
- 2 whole eggs, beaten
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 Tbsp sake
- Bonito flakes
- Sesame oil

[Preparation]

1. Remove excess moisture from the tofu by wrapping it in a cloth and squeezing it, or by placing a bowl or other heavy item on it as a weight.
2. Cut the goya in half lengthwise, spoon out the seeds and pulp, and cut into 5mm-thick semicircular slices. If you do not prefer the bitter taste of goya, rub the goya slices with a sprinkling of salt, rinse, and drain the excess moisture.
3. Heat sesame oil in a frying pan, add the tofu, and crumble it while stir-frying (be careful not to crumble it too much).
4. Add the goya slices, stir-fry some more, and season with salt and sake.
5. Pour the beaten egg into the frying pan and stir with large strokes until mixed. Then, mix in a sprinkling of bonito flakes.

※This is the basic recipe for goya champuru. You can enjoy variations by adding other vegetables or thin slices of pork. In Okinawa, luncheon meat and tuna are also common ingredients for goya champuru.

た 食べよう！ つく 作ろう！ しゅん あじ 旬の味

— ゴーヤチャンプルー —

南西諸島の1つで、かつては「琉球」という王国として栄えた沖縄は、日本屈指のリゾートとして日本人の人気国内旅行先となっており、またその独自の文化・風習に魅力を感じる人も多くいます。ゴーヤチャンプルーは沖縄料理で、ニガウリ（ゴーヤ）の炒め物（チャンプルー＝元々の意味は「ごちゃ混ぜ」）のこと。独自の食文化を持つ沖縄の代表料理といってもいいものです。

瓜の1種である夏の野菜ゴーヤは、ニガウリという名称通り苦味があるので、苦手な人もいるかもしれませんが、上手く調理すれば苦味も美味しくいただけます。その苦味の働きを活発にするので、夏バテ解消に効果的。ビタミンも豊富です。

最近では「ゴーヤカーテン」という言葉もよく聞かれ、栄養面だけではなくエコロジーの観点からも、人々のゴーヤへの注目が高まっています。ゴーヤカーテンとはゴーヤを窓の下などに植え、ぐんぐん伸びるツルと葉を自然のカーテン替わりに夏を涼しく過ごすという取り組みですが、これで冷房代も抑えられてゴーヤも収穫できれば一挙両得ですね。

[材料 (4人分)]

ゴーヤ (ニガウリ) …1本 木綿豆腐…1丁 溶き卵…2個 塩 …小さじ1/2 酒…大さじ2 かつお節…適量 ごま油…適量

[作り方]

1. 木綿豆腐は布巾で包んで絞るか重石をして、水気を切る。
 2. ゴーヤは縦半分に切り、スプーンで種とワタをこそげ取り、5mm幅に輪切りする。苦味が苦手な場合はその後軽く塩揉みして水気を切る。
 3. フライパンにごま油を入れ火にかけ、1を入れ、適当に崩しながら炒める（あまり崩し過ぎないように）。
 4. 次に2を入れて炒め、塩と酒を入れて味を整える。
 5. 溶き卵を流し入れ、大きく炒め、最後にかつお節を入れて軽く炒めればでき上がり。
- ※このレシピは基本ですので、他の野菜や豚の薄切り肉をいっしょに炒めてもOK。また沖縄ではこの他によくランチオンミートやツナなどが入ります。