

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

— Daigaku-imo (Glazed Sweet Potatoes) —

Sweet potatoes are a well-loved taste of autumn. They are sweet and delicious, simply steamed. Because they grow well even in barren land, they were planted and eaten in abundance in Japan during the war when food was scarce. So said, it may sound as though the sweetness of sweet potatoes comforted people during the difficult period of food shortage, but the taste as we know it today is said to be the result of breeding in later years, and was not necessarily as delicious back then.

The times have changed, and a variety of sweet potatoes have emerged today, including the especially sweet and popular Annou potato and purple potato. These are relatively more expensive than other types of sweet potatoes, but there are people who specifically prefer to buy them.

The sweet potato that is used to make daigaku-imo (glazed sweet potatoes), as introduced below, does not need to be particularly sweet, since they will be covered with honey. As a similar dish exists in China, it may have originated from Chinese cooking, but in Japan it is known as daigaku-imo, literally meaning “university potatoes,” for some reason. There are a number of theories as to why they are called by this name, but the accepted theory is that long time ago when glazed sweet potatoes first appeared in Tokyo, they were especially popular among university students. Be that as it may, it appears that sweet potatoes have always been a people's food since ancient times.

[Ingredients (two servings)]

- 1 sweet potato
- Frying oil
- 5 tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- 2 tbsp water
- 1 tbsp sesame seeds

[Preparation]

1. Cut sweet potato into bite-sized chunks or long sticks, immerse in water, and drain well.
2. Heat some oil in a pan and deep-fry the potatoes. When they are cooked through and turn dark brown, remove them from the oil and drain on paper towels.
3. Add sugar, soy sauce and water to a pan and boil them down to a syrup. Then add the deep-fried potatoes and mix until the potatoes are evenly coated with the syrup.
4. Spread the syrup-coated potatoes in a shallow baking pan and sprinkle sesame seeds on them while they are still hot.

た 食べよう！ つく 作ろう！ しゅん あじ 旬の味

— 大学いも —

蒸かすだけでも甘く美味しく、みんなが大好きな秋の味覚、サツマイモ。荒地でもよく育つことから、日本では食べ物の乏しかった戦時中にたくさん植えられ食べられていました。そう聞くと食糧難のつらい時期もあの甘みが人々を癒したように感じてしまいがちですが、実は現在のようなサツマイモの味はその後品種改良の成果だそうで、当時はそれ程美味しいものではなかったようです。

時代はすっかり変わって、今では「安納イモ」や「紫イモ」など、サツマイモの中でも特に甘い種類のものに人気が出て、サツマイモの中では少し高価ですがわざわざそれを買って求める人もいます。

今回ご紹介する「大学いも」に使うサツマイモは、最後に蜜を絡めるので、そんなに甘い種類のものではなくて構いません。この料理は、よく似たものが中国にもあり、どうやら元祖は中華料理のようですが、何故か「大学いも」という名前です。何故「大学」と付くのかは諸説ありますが、ずっと以前に東京でこのように調理したサツマイモが売られ、それが大学生に好まれよく食べられていたのが由来です。やっぱり古来、サツマイモは庶民の食べ物であったようです。

[材料 (2人分)]

- サツマイモ…1本 揚げ油…適量 砂糖…大さじ5 醤油…小さじ1 水…大さじ2 ゴマ…大さじ1

[作り方]

1. サツマイモは乱切りか拍子木切りにし、水にさらしてから水気をよく切っておく。
2. 油を熱し1を揚げる。中に火が通り表面が濃い目のきつね色になったら油から上げて油を切る。
3. 鍋に砂糖、醤油、水を入れて煮詰め、とろみが出たら2を加えて絡める。
4. 3をバットなどに広げて、熱い間にゴマを振ったらできあがり。

〈日本語できるかなの答え〉①トマト②キャベツ③さつまいも (サツマイモ) ④なす (ナス)