

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

— Yudofu —

Kyoto is a representative tourist city in Japan that receives as many as 50 million tourists per year. Surrounded by mountains, the city is located in a basin where summers are hot and humid and winters are cold. In this sense, it is not particularly suited to sightseeing, but precisely owing to this climate, the city offers a rich variety of seasonal traditions that attract many tourists.

While a representative feature of summer in Kyoto is the kawadoko (also called “kawayuka”), a refined cultural tradition of dining on open-air decks built above a river, the representative feature of this region’s cold winter is the traditional Japanese dish of yudofu. Kyoto, blessed with an abundance of natural groundwater, is well known as a major producer of tofu (close to 90% of tofu is water). As a regional specialty, yudofu can be enjoyed year-round, but it particularly whets the appetite during the cold winter season. It is even used in haiku as a seasonal word for winter. The dish itself is extremely simple, but yudofu restaurants in Kyoto distinctively pay a great deal of attention to bringing out their own character and style, not only in the taste of their tofu and dipping sauce, but also in the views of beautiful winter gardens they offer from inside the restaurants.

Tofu is made from soy beans, and is a good source of protein. It is also easy to digest and low in calories, and is a food ingredient that can be consumed every day for good health. When making yudofu, you might enjoy some creativity by including vegetables and white fish in the pot or preparing various types of sauce.

February brings a succession of cold days not only to Kyoto but also to the rest of Japan. Let a hot pot of yudofu warm you as you savor a cozy winter tradition.

[Ingredients (two servings)]

- 1 block tofu
- 10cm dashi konbu (kelp for making soup stock)
- Ponzu sauce (or soy sauce)
- Yakumi condiments (chopped green onions, bonito flakes, grated Japanese radish, grated ginger, ground sesame seeds, red pepper flakes, etc.)

[Preparation]

1. Pour water into an earthen pot, place the kelp in the pot and let it soak.
 2. Cut the tofu into six cubes.
 3. Heat the water to a boil and gently place the tofu into the pot.
 4. Do not boil the tofu over high heat. It is ready to eat when it simmers and begins swaying in the broth. Add some yakumi condiments to a bowl of ponzu sauce, scoop the tofu from the broth and dip it into the sauce mixture.
- ※You can also enjoy a refreshing taste by adding a slice of yuzu rind to the dipping sauce.

食べよう！ 作ろう！ 旬の味

— 湯豆腐 —

1年間におよそ5,000万もの人が訪れる日本の代表的な観光都市、京都。その地形は周囲を山に囲まれた盆地であるため、夏は蒸し暑く冬は冷え込み、あまり観光に適しているとは言えない気候です。しかしその気候ゆえ季節ごとに楽しめる風物詩に恵まれていて、それがまた観光客をこの地に引き寄せます。

川の上に作った床に設けられた座敷で料理をいただく「川床」（「ゆか」などもとも呼ばれる）という風流な伝統文化が京都の代表的な夏の風物詩なら、この地の寒い冬の風物詩の代表は和食の「湯豆腐」です。地下水が豊富な京都は美味しい豆腐の産地としても知られます（豆腐は90%近くが水分）。この料理も名物として実は年中食べられますが、湯豆腐は俳句の冬の季語にもなっていて、やはり寒い季節にこそ恋しくなるもの。非常にシンプルなお料理なのに、豆腐やタレの味だけではなく座敷から見える庭の冬景色の美しさなど、湯豆腐店それぞれに特徴やこだわりがあるのも京都らしいことです。

豆腐は原料である大豆の良質なタンパク質が豊富で、消化も良く低カロリー。毎日でも摂りたい食材です。自分で湯豆腐を作る時は、鍋に野菜や白身魚などを加えたり、色々な付けダレを試してみるのも良いでしょう。

京都でなくとも寒い日が続く日本の2月です。冬の風物詩を味わいつつ、温かい湯豆腐で暖まってください。

[材料 (2人分)]

- 豆腐…1丁
- だし昆布…10cm
- ポン酢醤油 (または醤油) …適量
- 薬味 (小口ねぎ・かつお節・大根おろし・すりおろししょうが・すりごま・一味唐辛子など) …適量

[作り方]

1. 土鍋に水を張り、だし昆布を入れてしばらく置いておく。
 2. 豆腐は6等分に切っておく。
 3. 1を火に掛け、煮立ったら豆腐を静かに入れる。
 4. 豆腐はぐつぐつ煮ず、湯の中でゆらゆら動くぐらいになったら食べ頃。薬味を入れたポン酢醤油に付けて食べる。
- ※お好みで付けダレにゆずの皮をスライスしたものを添えると、さわやかな風味を楽しめます。