

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

— Two Types of Rice Dishes for Spring —

April marks the beginning of a new year for the majority of schools and companies in Japan. However, as Japan is the only country in the world whose fiscal year begins in April, discussions have arisen in recent years mainly among universities, about beginning the school year in September as in most other countries and joining the global mainstream. If such a change were to be made, it is regrettable that we might have to say goodbye to the familiar traditions of taking commemorative photos of entrance ceremonies under the cherry trees in full bloom and holding ohanami cherry blossom viewing parties for new employees.

In any case, whether the new fiscal year begins in spring or not, spring is a season that uplifts people's hearts. The two rice dishes we introduce below—takenoko gohan (bamboo shoot rice) and mame gohan (green pea rice)—are mixed rice dishes that use ingredients that come into season in spring, and are perfect for bento boxed lunches and rice balls. You might want to take such a rice meal to lunch with your new friends outdoors on a warm sunny day and enjoy the blessings of spring.

Takenoko Gohan (Bamboo Shoot Rice) [Ingredients (makes three cups of rice)]

3 cups rice
1 bamboo shoot (raw or boiled)
1/2 tsp salt
2 Tbsp soy sauce
3 Tbsp sake
1 Tbsp mirin sweet sake
Japanese dashi broth

[Preparation]

1. When using a fresh, unskinned bamboo shoot, cut a slit in the skin, boil in a pot of water with some rice bran for about an hour until it becomes soft, and peel off the skin.
2. Wash the rice and let it drain for about 30 minutes.
3. Slice the bamboo shoot into bite-sized pieces.
4. Put the rice and bamboo shoot slices in the rice cooker along with the seasonings, add some Japanese dashi broth, and pour in water up to the three-cup mark. Turn the rice cooker on and cook as you would regular plain rice.

Mame Gohan (Green Pea Rice) [Ingredients (makes three cups of rice)]

3 cups rice
150g split peas (removed from their pods)
2 tsp salt
1 Tbsp sake

[Preparation]

1. Wash the rice and let it drain for about 30 minutes.
2. Wash the split peas and drain in a colander.
3. Place the rice in the rice cooker, pour in water up to the three-cup mark, add the split peas, salt and sake, and cook as you would regular plain rice.

た 食べよう！ つく 作ろう！ しゅん あじ 旬の味

— 春のご飯2種 —

日本の殆どの学校や会社では、4月から新しい年が始まります。しかし4月から新年度が始まる国は実は世界中で日本だけだそう。最近では大学などを中心に、他国で多く採用されている9月始まりにし、グローバル化しようという議論も起きています。さて、そうなる日本では見慣れた光景の、満開の桜の下での入学式の記念写真や新入社員歓迎の花見はどうなってしまうのでしょうか？

ともあれ、新年度であろうとなかろうと春というのはなんとなく心がワクワクする季節です。今回ご紹介する「たけのご飯」と「豆ご飯（グリーンピースご飯）」は、どちらも春ならではの食材を使った炊込みご飯で、お弁当やおにぎりにもピッタリ。暖かくなった戸外で新しい仲間と食べるのも楽しいのではないのでしょうか。皆さんも春を満喫してください。

たけのご飯

[材料 (3合分)]

米…3合 たけのこ (水煮されたものでも可) …1本
塩…小さじ1/2 醤油…大さじ2 酒…大さじ3
みりん…大さじ1 和風だし汁…適量

[作り方]

1. たけのこは皮付きの場合は皮に切れ目を入れ、沸騰させぬかを入れた鍋で1時間程茹でて柔らかくし、皮を剥いておく。
2. 米は研いで30分ほど置いておく。
3. 1または水煮たけのこを食べやすい大きさに薄切りにする。
4. 炊飯器に米とたけのこ、調味料を入れた後、和風だし汁を加えて規定の水量にする。普通に炊けばできあがり。

豆ご飯

[材料 (3合分)]

米…3合 えんどう豆 (さや無し) …150g 塩…小さじ2
酒…大さじ1

[作り方]

1. 米は研いで30分ほど置いておく。
2. えんどう豆は洗ってざるに上げておく。
3. 炊飯器に米と規定量の水を入れ、そこにえんどう豆と塩、酒を入れ、普通に炊けばできあがり。