

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

— Kurigohan (Chestnut Rice) —

In the April issue of this newsletter, we introduced two types of rice dishes for spring. In this issue, we introduce *kurigohan*, or chestnut rice, which is considered a representative rice dish for autumn. The old Chinese and Japanese calendar divided the year into 24 seasons. According to this calendar, the period from August 23 to September 6 by the new (Gregorian) calendar is called *shosho* (処暑), literally meaning “end of heat.” In reality, the days are still quite hot during this time of year, perhaps due to global warming in part, but you can pick up some beginning hints of autumn from the vegetables and fruits that appear in stores.

Chestnuts are mainly eaten in China, South Korea, Europe and Japan. China is the largest producer of chestnuts in the world, but in autumn, freshly harvested chestnuts produced in Japan make their appearance in markets. Japanese chestnuts are characteristically larger than their Chinese counterparts. Tanba chestnuts are especially large and sweet, but they are produced in such small quantities that they have become a much-prized delicacy. (Tanba is an old name for the area that lies across part of today's Kyoto, Hyogo and Osaka prefectures.)

The outer skin of chestnuts is called *onikawa* (literally, “demon skin”), and the inner skin that sticks to the nut is called *shibukawa* (literally, “bitter skin”). The inner skin of Japanese chestnuts is especially difficult to remove. For this reason, cooking fresh chestnuts could be a bother, but the taste of the season is certainly worth the trouble. Below, we introduce a chestnut recipe that makes it easy to peel off the skins.

[Ingredients (for six)]

3 cups rice
500g fresh chestnuts (unskinned)
540ml water
2 Tbsp sake
1/2 Tbsp mirin sweet sake
1 1/2 tsp salt

[Preparation]

1. Wash the rice. Boil the chestnuts for about 3 minutes.
2. After the chestnuts come to a boil, leave them in the hot water until they cool down somewhat. Remove the outer skin by cutting an incision with a knife and prying them open with your hands. Then peel off the inner skin with a knife.
3. Put the rice, water, and seasonings in the rice cooker and swirl them together. Add the chestnuts, turn the rice cooker on, and cook as you would regular plain rice. Serve with a sprinkle of sesame seeds, as desired.

た 食べよう！ つく 作ろう！ しゅん あじ 旬の味

— 栗ご飯 —

今年の4月号で春のご飯2種をご紹介しましたが、今月号では秋のご飯の代表格とも言える「栗ご飯」をご紹介します。中国や日本の旧暦には、1年を24の季節に分けた「二十四節気」というものがあり、それによれば新暦で8月23日から9月6日に当たる頃は「暑さが収まる」という意味の「処暑」と呼ばれる季節です。近頃は温暖化のせい、実際にはまだまだ暑い日が続きますが、店先に並ぶ野菜や果物などからも、少しずつ近づいてくる秋の気配を感じてください。

クリは主に中国や韓国、ヨーロッパ、そして日本で食用とされており、世界の中ではその大半を占めるのが中国産ですが、秋には獲れたての日本産の生栗が店先に並びます。日本産のクリは中国産より粒が大きいことが特徴で、中でも大きく甘いことで知られる「丹波栗」（「丹波」とは現在の京都府、兵庫県、大阪府の一部に当たる地方の古称）は、生産量が少ないこともあり珍重されています。

ちなみにクリの外側の皮を「鬼皮」、実に張り付いて覆っている皮を「渋皮」と呼びます。日本産のクリは渋皮が剥がしにくいことも特徴です。そのため生栗の調理には苦労しますが、この季節ならではの味を是非作ってみてください。皮を剥きやすいレシピをご紹介します。

[材料 (6人分)]

米…3合 生栗 (皮付き) …500g 水…540ml 酒…大さじ2

みりん…大さじ1 1/2 塩…小さじ1.5

[作り方]

1. 米は研いでおく。生栗は3分ほど茹でる。
2. 茹でた栗はそのまま湯に漬けておき、粗熱が取れたら皮を剥く。まず鬼皮に包丁で切り口を入れて手で剥き、その後渋皮を包丁で剥がす。
3. 炊飯器に米と分量の水、調味料を入れ、ざっくり混ぜた後、栗を入れ、普通に炊けばできあがり。食べる時にお好みでゴマを振る。