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

## - Renkon-mochi (Lotus Root Dumplings) -

There is probably no one who does not know the lotus plant. The aquatic plant that is native to India can frequently be found in water environments, particularly throughout Asia. Its beautiful, large flower is a sacred symbol to various religions, and is also used in many designs. In some countries, the flower and leaves of the plant are made into tea, and the stems and fruit are consumed as food or sometimes as medicine. In Japan, the underground stems of the lotus plant are called renkon, or simply hasu, in some cases, and are considered a vegetable that comes into season at around this time of year. Although the lotus is enjoyed in countries throughout Asia, there are surprisingly few countries where the underground stems are consumed as food. In fact, it is eaten mainly in Japan and China only. Because of its holes, from which it is said "the future can be seen," the lotus root is considered an auspicious food item in Japan, and is frequently used in New Year's dishes.

The lotus root dumpling, or renkon-mochi, we introduce below is similar to the daikon-mochi, or daikon radish dumpling, in Chinese cooking. The auspicious holes of the lotus root unfortunately become irrelevant as the root is grated, but the chewy texture is moreish. As December is a season for holding parties with elaborate feasts, renkon-mochi could be arranged into a fancy Hamburg steak to match the occasion. It also makes for healthier hamburger than just using meat.

### [Ingredients (four servings)]

400g lotus root (3 to 4 segments)

2 Tbsp katakuriko starch

Butter or vegetable oil

Soy sauce or other choice of sauce

### [Preparation]

- 1. Peel the lotus root and grate it.
- 2. Drain the grated lotus root, add some katakuriko starch, and shape into appropriate-sized patties with your hands.
- 3. Heat a frying pan greased with butter or vegetable oil and cook the patties made in step 2 until both sides are brown. Enjoy them by dipping in soy sauce, a mixture of soy sauce and vinegar, a mixture of soy sauce and sugar, or other desired choice of sauce.
- % They can be made into lotus root hamburgers by mixing in some ground meat and garnishing them with ketchup or sauce.

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# — **蓮根餅** —

さて今回ご紹介する蓮根餅は、中国料理にある「大根餅」にも似ています。見通せて縁起が良いハスの穴は、残念ながらすりおろしてしまうので無くなってしまいますが、もちもちとした食感は後を引きます。また12月は少し豪華な料理を作ってパーティーなどという機会もあるかもしれませんが、そのような時は蓮根餅をハンバーグのようにアレンジするのも良いと思います。お肉を使うよりヘルシーなハンバーグになります。

## [材料 (4人分)]

<sup>thにん</sup> 蓮根…400g(3、4節) 片栗粉…大さじ3 <sup>ぱたーまた きらだあざら できりょう しょうゆ</sup> バター又はサラダ油…適量 醤油などお好みのたれ

## [作り方]

- 1. 蓮根は皮を剥き、おろす。
- 2. 1の水をよく切ってから、片栗粉を混ぜ、手で適当な大きさの円盤型に成型する。
- 3. フライパンを熱し、ボターかサラダ油をひいて2を焼く。焼 いる。 き色が付くように両面を焼いたらできあがり。醤油や酢醤油、 砂糖醤油などお好みのたれで食べる。