

## Shiratama Dango Dumplings with Tofu

## [Ingredients (4 servings)]

100 g shiratama flour  
 160 g momendofu (firm tofu) or kinudofu (soft tofu)  
 100 g azuki (red bean) paste (sold on the market)  
 [A] 4 Tbsp kinako powder  
 2 Tbsp sugar  
 Salt

\* Kinudofu has a higher water content than momendofu, so when using kinudofu, 140 to 150 g of kinudofu is sufficient.

## [Preparation]

1. Place the shiratama flour and tofu in a bowl, and mix while crushing the tofu. When the two ingredients are mixed well, knead the dough until it becomes as soft as your earlobe. If the dough is floury, add some more tofu; if it is loose, add some more shiratama flour.
2. Tear the dough into bite-size pieces, roll each piece into a ball between your palms, and place the balls on a plate. Bring water to a boil in a pot, and boil several shiratama balls at once. Once they float to the surface, which indicates that they have begun to cook, let them boil for another 1 to 2 minutes.
3. Fill another bowl with ice and water. Scoop the shiratama balls from the boiling water into the ice water and let them cool. After draining them in a strainer, place them in a dish and top with azuki paste and the "A" mixture.

Once the humid summer passes, autumn comes, bringing with it dry air and fine weather. The moon that floats in the clear night skies during autumn is beautiful. In ancient times, if the moon was full moon on or around August 15 of the lunar calendar, it was called a "Chushu no meigetsu," which literally means "moon in mid-autumn," and people enjoyed the tradition of moon-viewing. Under the new calendar, September 15 is moon-viewing day this year.

There are various explanations about the tradition of moon-viewing, but the most widely known is related to offerings such as dumplings and potatoes. Moon-viewing was apparently not simply an event for appreciating the beauty of the moon. Long ago, people farmed while relying on a calendar that was based on the regular waxing and waning of the moon. Grains and potatoes, which are staple foods in Japan, are harvested in autumn. Thus, it is said that people prayed to the full autumn moon for an abundant harvest, or made offerings to the full moon in appreciation for an abundant harvest.

In relation to such offerings of dumplings, we invite you to make shiratama dango. The recipe we introduce here mixes tofu with shiratama flour. Tofu is rich in protein, and makes for an ideal snack at the end of summer when fatigue tends to linger. The dumplings are topped with azuki paste and kinako powder, made from soybeans. Azuki and soybeans are familiar ingredients in Asia, and are used in various dishes in each country. It might be interesting to compare their tastes with those in your home country.

## 豆腐入り白玉団子

## [材料 (4人分)]

白玉粉…100g 木綿豆腐または絹豆腐 (※) …160g  
 小豆餡 (市販品) …100g A [黄粉…大さじ4  
 砂糖…大さじ2 塩…ひとつまみ]

※絹豆腐は木綿豆腐より水分が多いので、絹豆腐を使う場合は量を10~20g程減らしてください。

## [作り方]

1. ボールに白玉粉と豆腐を入れ、潰しながら混ぜ、ひとまとめにしてからよくこねる。耳たぶ程度の軟らかさになるように、粉っぽい場合は豆腐を少量加え、水分が多ければ白玉粉を少量加える。
2. 1を一口大にちぎり、手の平で丸めて皿に並べる。鍋に湯を沸かし、数個ずつ茹でる。火が通り始めると浮くので、さらに1~2分茹でる。
3. ボールなどに氷水を張っておく。2を湯からすくって入れ、冷やす。ザルなどで水気をきり、器に並べ、小豆餡と混ぜたAをかける。

日本は、蒸し暑い夏が過ぎると、空気が乾いて好天に恵まれる秋がやってきます。秋の澄んだ夜空に浮かぶ月は、とても美しく見えるもの。日本では古来、旧暦の8月15日頃に満ちる月を「中秋の名月」と呼び、眺めて楽しむ月見の習慣が伝わっています。新暦では、今年は9月15日が月見の日です。

月見のしきたりについては諸説ありますが、広く知られているのが団子や芋などの「お供え」です。月見は、月の美しさを愛でるだけの行事ではないそうです。昔は、定期的に満ち欠けをする月を観測して作った暦を頼りに、農作業を行いました。日本の主食である穀物や芋は秋に収穫されます。人々は豊かな実りを秋の満月に願い、あるいは感謝してお供え物をしたのだそうです。

今回は、お供えの団子にちなんで「白玉団子」を作りましょう。紹介するのは、白玉粉に豆腐を混ぜる方法です。豆腐はたんぱく質が豊富で、夏の疲労が残る時期のおやつとして最適です。団子には小豆餡と大豆から作った黄粉を添えました。小豆も大豆もアジアの諸国ではお馴染みで、各国で様々な料理が作られていることでしょう。ぜひ母国の味と比べてみてください。