

Traditional dishes for a Japan's Children's Day

Recipe: Chimaki



- 3 cups of *mochigome*, 餅米 or glutinous rice (can be purchased at any supermarket in Japan). Rinse and leave in a colander for 30 minutes before cooking
 - Cooked pork, 150g (cubed, about 1 cm)
 - Dried baby shrimps, 20g (rehydrated and coarsely chopped)
 - Dried shiitake mushrooms, 4-5 (rehydrated and cubed, about 1 cm)
 - Bamboo shoots, 100g (cubed, about 1 cm)
 - Carrot, half (cubed, about 1 cm)
 - Shiitake and shrimp soaking liquid, about 3 cups
 - Soy sauce, 1 tbsp
 - Sugar, 1 tsp
 - Oyster sauce, 1 tbsp
 - Cooking sake, 2 tbsp
 - Salt, 1/2 tsp
 - Pepper, a pinch
 - Sesame oil, 2 tbsp
 - Bamboo leaves, 10 (wiped down with a damp cloth)
1. In a large pot, heat the sesame oil and cook the rice and all other ingredients besides the seasonings and liquids for three minutes.
 2. After the rice starts to glisten, add all the seasonings and the liquids to the same pot. Stir constantly until liquid is gone. Be careful not to burn the rice at the bottom.
 3. Wrap the mixture with the bamboo leaves, make triangles, and tie with thin bits of the leaves. Steam for 10 minutes on medium heat.
 4. Turn off the heat and keep the lid on for an extra 10 minutes before serving.

Recipe: Kashiwamochi



This Japanese sweet (*wagashi*) calls for the seasonal kashiwa oak leaf to wrap the rice cakes in. It will give it its distinct look and name as these rice cakes are named according to whichever leaf it may be wrapped in. Here's what you need to cook it:

- *Jyoshinko*, 上新粉 (a fine/high-grade rice flour, available in any Japanese supermarket), 250g
 - Water, 350cc
 - *Koshi an*, こしあん (smooth sweet bean paste) or *ogura an*, 小倉餡 (sweet bean paste with whole beans), 300-350g (rolled into balls the size of plums, about 30g each)
 - Kashiwa oak leaf, 10 (washed and dry patted)
1. In a heatproof glass bowl, add the flour and water. Mix well. Cover with cling film and microwave for five minutes and 30 seconds at 600w.
 2. Knead 15 to 20 times on a large piece of cling film.
 3. After kneading, put the dough in a Ziploc bag and chill it on iced water for about 20 minutes. Make sure to not get any water in the bag.
 4. After it's chilled, knead it four to five more times.
 5. Break it up into about 10 pieces (about 50g each). Roll them out so they look like stretched pennies, put the *koshi an*, or *oguro an*, onto one end of the oval and fold it over, pinching the edges together.
 6. Cover the less attractive side with the kashiwa oak leaf and *voilà!*