

it goes back to when Japanese sweets shops called “Fujiya” started to sell it in 1922. Other countries have original cakes, but Japanese decoration cakes are also nice. Please try it if you come to Japan in Christmas season.

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Japanese Food on New Year’s Day

I will introduce the traditional Japanese dishes that are eaten on January 1st. It is called *sechi* cuisine. It is a dish that we eat together with our family and relatives on January 1st and is the first dish we eat in the New Year. Various ingredients are beautifully packed in a multi-tiered box, giving a gorgeous and congratulatory impression. It can be said to be one of the typical Japanese dishes at this time of year.

What I would like to pay attention to this time is the ingredients for the dishes. The ingredients of the dishes have wishes. If you eat while remembering the meaning, it will be more enjoyable to eat. The following are examples of such foods:

Kuromame (black bean). The color black is said to have a power of amulets, and it has the meaning of dispelling evil spirits and the desire to work diligently enough to get a black tan.

Kazunoko. *Kazunoko* is a herring egg, and there are many eggs. From this, it is a lucky charm that wishes for the prosperity of descendants.

Tazukuri. This is a sardine fry which is boiled sweetly. The fields that used sardines as fertilizer for crops had become a good harvest. Therefore, we eat this with the hope that the grains will grow abundantly.

Gobo-tataki (seared burdock). Burdock roots go deep into the ground, so it is hoped that the foundation of the house will be strong.

Kamaboko. This is a processed seafood product colored in red and white. Red means amulet and white means clean. The combination of these two colors is called *Kohaku* in Japanese, and *Kohaku* is traditionally a sign of congratulations.

Datemaki. Datemaki is a sweet omelette which is a scroll in shape. A scroll is one of the oldest forms of Japanese books, Scrolls are related to books, and *Datemaki* contains wishes for the fulfillment of scholarship and lessons.

Kuri-Kinton. Kuri-Kinton is a sweet dish with a luxurious golden color using chestnuts. Its shape and color symbolize a golden coin. Therefore, it is popular as a lucky charm that brings good luck.

Namasu. This is a thinly sliced marinated vegetables and seafood. It is said to be in the shape of *Mizuhiki*, and it represents wishes for peace. This *mizuhiki* is a paper decoration used for celebrations in Japan, and it corresponds to the decoration string attached to the wrapping paper and envelopes of gifts.

Shrimp. When shrimp is boiled, its waist is bent like an elderly person. From this, we hope that we can live a long life.

Chikuzen-ni. *Chikuzen-ni* is a set of three-kind boiled vegetables. The first one is lotus roots. It is said that prospects are clear because there are many holes. Secondly, *taro* is considered to be a lucky charm for the prosperity of descendants because it has a lot of small potatoes. Root vegetables that take root in the soil have the meaning of praying for long-term happiness.

Amazingly, all dishes are full of meaning and symbols. *Osechi* cuisine is a wonderful dish filled with the humor and wishes of our ancestors. Please try it if you come to Japan.