

Aiming for international exchange of food culture and rich eating habits

The goals of the Kikkoman Institute for International Food Culture are to contribute to the international exchange of food cultures, and to offer nutritional education through the introduction of the history of eating habits and food cultures from around the world.



<http://kiifc.kikkoman.co.jp/>

Kikkoman Institute for International Food Culture

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Call for details regarding dates.

KIKKOMAN FOOD CULTURE Nos. 19 & 20 COMPILATION

Vegetables and the Diet of the Edo Period

Part 2: Vegetable Production and the Diet in Rural Villages

The residents of rural villages in Hida province (present-day southern Gifu prefecture) performed a variety of jobs to eke out a living in the remote mountain region. Part 2 presents their lifestyles and diets based on historical documents. While everyday meals consisted primarily of vegetables, expensive seafoods acquired from distant provinces were the center of ceremonial meals. Such ceremonial meals were a part of the characteristics underlying Japan's agricultural society in which importance was placed on maintaining strong interpersonal relationships and family status within the society.

Part 3: The Diet of the Common Townspeople of Edo

Edo was a metropolis with a population exceeding one million by the mid-Edo period (1603–1868). Half of that population was made up of common townspeople. Stories and *rakugo* from near the end of the Edo period tell us that their diet consisted mainly of stewed seasonal vegetables, pickles made from daikon radish and other various plants and vegetables, and tofu dishes and soups. Though the finances of the common people left no room for luxuries, they were very creative in coming up with new recipes to make their diets more enjoyable within their tight budgets.

By Ayako Ehara (Professor Emeritus, Tokyo Kasei-Gakuin University)

Japan's Use of Flour Began with Noodles

Part 4: Critical Points in Noodle History

The noodles initially introduced to Zen monasteries gradually found their way to the general public. Noodles became more and more popular and a number of changes in noodle production methods, names and methods of serving occurred without regard for the customs formalized in Zen monasteries. Based primarily on diaries and other historical materials, Part 4 traces and organizes the course of noodle history.

Part 5: Noodles Took Their Current Form During the Eiroku Era

Dramatic changes in noodles took place over the sixteen-year period from 1558 to 1574. Among these changes was the shift from stretched noodles to cut noodles, from the use of dried noodles to fresh noodles, and from *somen* shops to *kirimugi* shops. As noodles became popular among the common people, information regarding production methods in Zen monasteries and even noodle names became confused, a problem which continues to confound noodle historians even today.

By Hiroshi Ito, owner of Nagaura in Ginza

Cover: *Mitsue-hime Hiina Asohi-no Zu* (1861) by Utagawa Toyokuni III

Hinamatsuri (Doll Festival), celebrated on March 3, was originally a court function of the early Edo period that quickly gained popularity among ordinary people after the Genroku era (1688–1704). Initially, displays were simple, but became more and more ornate over time. The work used on the cover of this issue depicts the Edo style of doll display that includes the Emperor and Empress, five male musicians and two paper dogs to ward off evil.

There are several theories regarding the origin of the diamond-shaped rice cake (*hishimochi*), shown here with five alternating white and green layers. One theory suggests that *hishimochi* originated with the crest of the Ogasawara clan, a high-ranking samurai clan that established the Ogasawara school of etiquette, which resembles a three-layered pyramid of diamond shapes.

Utagawa Toyokuni III (1786–1884) was a prolific *ukiyo-e* artist who took over the Utagawa school established by Toyokuni I. Though he used the name Gototsei Kunisada around the time of the Bunsei era (1818–1829), he later adopted the name of his master, Toyokuni, in 1844.

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