



TOKYO/KANTO-STYLE Oden



OSAKA/KANSAI-STYLE Oden

These basic recipes assume 6 to 8 people will share from the same pot of ODEN.

TOKYO/KANTO-STYLE Oden Broth:

- 6-8 cups *dashi* stock:
 - 6-8 cups water
 - 1 or 2 pieces (each about 4-inch/10-centimeter long) *kombu* (kelp)
 - 1 cup OR 2 *fureshu pakku* packets *katsuo-bushi* (bonito) fish flakes
- 1 tablespoon *saké*
- 2 tablespoons *mirin* (syrupy rice wine)
- 1 teaspoon *usukuchi shōyu* (light-colored soy sauce)
- 1 tablespoon *shōyu* (soy sauce)

OSAKA/KANSAI-STYLE Oden Broth

- 6-8 cups *dashi* stock:
 - 6-8 cups water
 - 1 or 2 pieces (each about 4-inch/10-centimeter long) *kombu* (kelp)
 - 1 cup OR 2 *fureshu pakku* packets *katsuo-bushi* (bonito) fish flakes
 - 3-4 dried sardines (*iriko* also called *niboshi*), heads and crumbly guts removed
- 2 tablespoons *saké* (rice wine)
- 1 and 1/2 tablespoons sugar
- 3 tablespoons *shōyu* (soy sauce)

FIRST make DASHI STOCK, either Tokyo/Kanto-Style OR Osaka/Kansai-Style... OR Vegan/Vegetarian KELP ALONE stock (Place kelp in a pot with water to cover; use as a cold-water infusion or heat gently and then let cool), then proceed with either recipe):

Soak *kombu* in water for at least 20 minutes, preferably an hour or more. If you wish to make further in advance, soak up to 12 hours ahead. Refrigeration is recommended in warm weather.

Place in a pot over medium heat and gradually bring to a simmer. When you see bubbles form at the bottom of the pot and a few begin to travel up the sides to break on the surface, remove the pot from the heat and add fish flakes. STEEP the stock, DO NOT STIR. After 3 to 4 minutes, strain the stock through a clean cloth or sturdy paper towel-lined net into a glass or ceramic bowl. Allow the stock to cool to room temperature before using, or store in a glass jar for future use (up to 3 days, refrigerated). *Dashi* does not freeze well. Set DASHI STOCK aside to add to the pot AFTER you have filled it with various items.

NEXT choose your items for the pot...

Although there are no absolute rules governing the inclusion of ingredients in the pot, here are some suggestions for planning a meal with *oden* as your featured dish (the "main course" of your meal). Aim for variety: at least 5 different items to include in your pot. To achieve nutritional balance and aesthetic harmony, consider color, texture, nutrition, shape and size of the various ingredients. Provide at least 3 or 4 pieces of protein per person (list below offers suggestions). In addition, count on at least 2 or 3 vitamin and/or mineral-rich ingredients per person (list below offers suggestions).

At street stalls and in pubs, *oden* is most often nibbled while quaffing beer or sipping *saké*. In the home, plain rice is often served on the side, with an assortment of pickled vegetables.

Protein-packed items:

Many kinds of sausage-like items are made from **surimi** 搥り身 fish paste.

Collectively these are called **neri seihin** 練製品

Typically pollock and cod (both are mild, white-fleshed, deep-sea creatures) are used, though some *neri seihin* will also contain shark (*samé* 鮫), snapper (*tai* 鯛) and conger eel (*hamo* 鰻). The flavor of many *neri seihin* is enhanced with shellfish: *kani kamaboko* or “imitation crab” uses an essence extracted from crab shells and/or scallop (ground *hotaté* 帆立 and/or essence extracted from scallop shells).

Many varieties of **tōfu** 豆腐 are commonly used in *oden*.

Some are FRIED such as 厚揚げ [atsu agé] thick fried *tōfu* or 茶巾 [chakin] pouches of fried *tōfu* that are stuffed with *omochi* [pounded sticky rice] and がんもどき [ganmodoki or ganmo] vegan dumplings made from *tōfu* and minced vegetables bound with grated *yama imo* yam. *Tōfu* can also be grilled or broiled 焼き豆腐 [yaki-dōfu].

OTHER protein-rich items include:

牛筋 **beef tendon** [gyū sujī] skewered

竹輪麩 **wheat dough sausage** [chikuwa bu]

ゲソ **octopus legs** (usually skewered),

ゆで卵 **boiled egg** [yudé tamago]

Vitamin/mineral-rich items (vegetables):

- 大根・人参 *daikon*, carrot wheels or chunks

Wheels or chunks of *daikon* and/or and carrots that are especially soft will have been par-boiled in *togi-jiru* (water left after washing rice) before being added to the pot. Doing so preserves nutrients and flavor (the starchy rice water seals in these elements) while tenderizing otherwise dense and hard vegetables.

- じゃが芋 *iyagaimo* potato (waxy variety)
- 結び昆布・昆布巻き *musubi kombu*, *kombu maki* (tied with gourd ribbons) **kelp knots**

KONNYAKU 蒟蒻 (コンニャク) comes in a variety of shapes and sizes including 糸こん *ito kon* threads, also known as **musubi konnyaku** 結び蒟蒻 knotted bundle of threads and **shirataki** (mass of tangled white *konnyaku* threads) 白滝 (しらたき) literally “white waterfall”

Fill your pot...

Place your items in a shallow, wide pot, clustering similar items and making sure that the pot is packed snugly. Pour in enough seasoned *dashi* (either Tokyo-style or Kansai-style or vegan/vegetarian) to barely cover the items in your pot. Place the pot over low heat and simmer over medium-low heat for at least 15 minutes and preferably 30 minutes or more. Throughout, check levels of liquid to prevent scorching. Allow the contents of the pot to cool down to room temperature (it is during this stage of cooking that the broth is absorbed into the simmered items)



There are special *oden nabé* pots (above, left) that have dividers with holes that allow the simmering liquid to move freely from one section to the other.

Just before serving, re-heat slowly until barely simmering. Serve with *karashi* mustard.

