

Shoku yō Kiku EDIBLE CHRYSANTHEMUMS
PURCHASING, STORING & PREPARATION

食用菊



In Japan several varieties of flowers are eaten including chrysanthemums and cherry blossoms. Historical records suggest that the Japanese (especially in the Tohoku or northeast region) have been consuming vitamin-rich flowers since ancient times. One of Japan's autumnal delicacies is fresh edible chrysanthemum. Unfortunately, they may be difficult to source outside Japan.

If you can find a source for the flowers, store them in their original packaging in the veggie bin of your refrigerator; they will keep for 4 or 5 days. Browning is an early sign of spoilage; remove discolored petals (they make fine compost). Petals that fall away from the center (receptacle) without being plucked are past their prime (add to your compost pile).

CAUTION: Only organically grown chrysanthemums should be consumed. **NEVER** use flowers from a floral arrangement; these are typically grown with various chemicals. Other edible flowers such as marigolds and nasturtiums may be easier to source. See PANTRY NOTES on page 3.

KIKU NAMASU 菊なます

Edible Chrysanthemum Petals Pickled in Sweet-and-Sour Sauce

Makes 1 cup of each color, enough to toss with 6 to 8 cups of *sushi meshi* or toss with 2-3 thin-sliced wilted cucumbers to make 10 to 12 portions of "salad."

1 package each of purple and yellow edible chrysanthemums
water with vinegar (to blanch flower petals)

Amazu (Sweet & Sour Sauce, to pickle petals):

- 1/2 cup rice vinegar
- 2-inch piece *kombu*, preferably high glutamate *ma kombu*
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

Make the *amazu* (Sweet-and-Sour Sauce):

In a small saucepan combine the vinegar, *kombu* sugar and salt. Place the pan on the stove and cook over low heat, stirring, just until the sugar and salt melt. Remove the pan from the stove; set aside: you will pour this mixture over the flower petals after blanching them.

Prepare the edible chrysanthemums:

Pull small clusters of petals away from the center (receptacle) of the flower. To minimize bitterness, trim away the white tips with a sharp knife.



Bring a pot of water to a rolling boil, add a few drops of vinegar, and add the petals. Stir and blanch for about 45 seconds. Drain the petals, shower them with cold water and immediately (but gently) squeeze out excess liquid.

Transfer the blanched and drained petals to glass jars.

Pour *amazu* over petals to cover. The petals can be kept, refrigerated in the sauce for up to two weeks. Drain just before using.



PANTRY NOTES

In America, seeds to grow several varieties of edible flowers (such as nasturtium, cornflowers, and pansies) can be found at KITAZAWA SEED Company: http://www.kitazawaseed.com/seed_398-193.html

For information about culinary use of **nasturtium**:

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/flowers/nasturtium/harvesting-edible-nasturtiums.htm>

The whole plant is edible: the stems, leaves, flowers, and seed pods.



For information about culinary use of **marigold**:

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/flowers/marigold/growing-edible-marigolds.htm>

As with chrysanthemum, the petals are edible but green and white parts should be trimmed away.

