



**粒餡 *Tsubu An***  
(Chunky Red Bean Jam)

Chunky red bean jam is a Japanese classic. Some of my favorites ways to enjoy it are sandwiched between pancakes to make *dora yaki*, spread on toast (instead of fruit jam) to make Ogura Toast, and as a topping for ice cream (vanilla is best, I think). Although many commercially made bean jams are available in Asian groceries, most are overly sweet. Try making your own using the recipe below. For extended storage I recommend you divvy up the bean jam in several small jars (rather than a single large one).

Some Japanese will throw off the first batch of cooking water to ensure bright color and reduce musty flavors. This procedure is called *shibumi kiri* or "removing astringency." Others will save the nutrient rich liquid and drink it (hot, or chilled) as a beverage (*adzuki* "tea"). Yet others will use the bean liquid to water plants (herbs and flowers benefit from this nutrient-rich water).

Makes 2-2 and 1/2 cups jam

3/4 cup dried *adzuki* beans  
7 cups, total (not used at one time), cold water  
3/4 cup white sugar  
3 tablespoons brown sugar  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon *usukuchi shōyu* (light-colored soy sauce)

Place the beans in a 3-quart pot with 2 and 1/2 cups of cold water (fresh, cold water will be added several times during the cooking process). Over medium heat, bring the water to a boil.

Reduce the heat to maintain a steady, but not very vigorous, simmer. Cook the beans for about 5 minutes, or until the water turns wine-red. Strain the beans, removing this first batch of cooking liquid from the pot. This procedure is called *shibumi kiri* or "removing astringency." Rinse the pot to remove any *aku* (froth, scum, or film) that might be clinging to the sides, before returning the beans to the pot. Save the nutrient-rich liquid strained from the beans to drink (hot or chilled).

Add 3 cups fresh cold water to the pot with the beans. Place the pot over medium heat to cook. When the liquid comes to a boil, adjust the heat to maintain a steady but gentle simmer. Do not cover the pan. Cook until the water barely covers the beans, about 25-30 minutes. Add 1/2 cup cold water (this is referred to as *bikkuri mizu* or "surprise water") and continue to cook over medium heat, skimming away froth and loose skins, periodically. Repeat the "surprise water" treatment every 15 to 20 minutes until the beans are very tender, about 35 to 40 minutes. Use the "pinch test" to determine this:



To properly check for tenderness, take a bean from the pot and when cool enough to handle comfortably. Place the bean between your thumb and pinky finger, pressing gently. It should yield easily. (This pinch test is most accurate if done between your thumb and pinky, usually a “weak” finger and therefore exerting less pressure in the pinch. If a simmered bean can yield to this weaker pressure, you are sure it is tender.)

Add the white sugar, stir, and simmer for 20 minutes (after the addition of the sugar, the sauce will darken and appear less cloudy than before). Add the brown sugar, stir, and simmer for about 5 minutes or until the sauce becomes glossy and very thick (you should be able to draw a line that remains visible for several moments when you scrape the bottom of the pan with your spoon or spatula).



Add the salt and soy sauce (this will mellow the intense sweetness of the jam and help “set” the consistency), stirring to mix well. Set aside to cool, uncovered. The sweet bean mixture will stiffen as it cools.



Transfer the cooled jam to glass jars, label them with the date, and seal with a tight-fitting lid. Store in the refrigerator for up to 2 months. Once opened its best to use within a week or 10 days.