

トマトのお浸し 枝豆、薬味添え 又は おかか掛け
TOMATO no OHITASHI, ÉDAMAMÉ, YAKUMI SOÉ mata wa OKAKA KAKÉ
 Tomato Salad, Showered with *Édamamé*, Herbs and/or Toasted Bonito Flakes



The verb *hitasu* 浸す in Japanese refers to something being barely covered in a liquid. In a culinary context it usually means a barely blanched vegetable that is cooled in *dashi* and allowed to steep for a while (absorbing the flavor of the stock). In hot weather the vegetables can be chilled for several hours, or even days right in the steeping liquid. When ready to serve, the vegetables are often garnished with either briefly blanched vegetables such as *édamamé* or a shower of herbs or smoky, pan-toasted-and-crumpled bonito flakes.

Although spinach or green beans are the vegetables most commonly prepared as *ohitashi*, summer-ripe tomatoes are also wonderful. Plunged in scalding hot water then chilled, the tomato skins slip off easily. Just before serving, the tomatoes are peeled and drizzled with a vinegar-soy-and-sesame oil “dressing” and then finished with either a scattering of vegetables, a shower of chopped or finely shredded summer herbs or briefly toasted *katsuo-bushi* flakes.

Makes 1/2 cup DRESSING:

- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 3 tablespoons vinegar (black, brown, rice) or vinegar made from *saké kasu* (lees)
- 1/2 teaspoon *mirin*, honey, or agave syrup; optional
- 1/2 teaspoon sesame oil

美濃三年酢
Mino Sannen su
 Black vinegar
 (from *saké kasu* lees)



かどや 金印純正ごま油
Kadoya Kinjirushi Junsei Goma Abura
 Kadoya brand, pure sesame oil (gold label)



Peeling tomatoes... This method is especially good for small cherry or grape tomatoes or ones that are odd shaped as many heirloom types are.

Bring water to a rolling boil in a deep saucepan (sometimes I blanch other veggies in this water first and then do the tomatoes last in a series of prep procedures on a busy day). Remove the saucepan from the stove and gently (so you don't splash scalding hot water everywhere) lower the tomatoes into the pan (stem facing up). Count to 5 then "flip" to submerge stem end. Count to 6 or 7 and using a spoon or ladle remove the tomatoes to a colander or strainer. Pour the scalding hot water in the saucepan over the tomatoes. Drain well. Transfer the tomatoes to a dish or bowl and place in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes. I usually do this in the morning as I am cleaning up after breakfast and then have the tomatoes ready to peel for lunch or dinner or the next day.

When ready to use large tomatoes. Remove the harder core (use a "V" cut) and peel back the skin -- it will slip off easily. I usually put the tomato's cut surface to the board and slice wedges from each half. I often spread the wedges out, fan-like.





ALSO... a favorite Japanese "hack" for peeling tomatoes is to place them in a bag and FREEZE them first -- long enough to create a thin film of frost on the surface (usually 3-4 hours). Remove from the freezer; rinse under cold water and the skins will peel easily.

The problem I have with this is the elapsed time -- I want to do all my prep work within 30 minutes. If I did freeze tomatoes, they would be in the freezer for at least 8 hours and more likely 24 and then the taste and texture suffers (not after just 2-3 hours, though).

薬味 **YAKUMI HERB MIXTURE:**



- *myōga*
- *shōga*
- *shiso*
- *asatsuki* or *bannō negi*
- *kaiwaré* sprouts
- *mitsuba*

Choose 3 or more herbs and finely shred or chop. Mix in a fine-mesh net bag and rinse under cold water. Squeeze to remove excess water. Throughout Japan 100 yen shops sell fine-meshed small bags as lint-catching filters for washing machines. They are perfect for rinsing, squeezing, and storing *yakumi* garnishes.

