

Granny's Sun-Dried Radish

Gomoku Kiri-Boshi Daikon, Sobo-fu 切り干し大根、祖母風



In many frugal households in Japan piles of shredded radish can be seen spread out to dry on straw mats. These bits and pieces salvaged from bruised or malformed roots are transformed into *kiriboshi daikon*, a tasty, nutritious food. The ancient no-waste practice of *kansha* is alive and well in Japan.

The dried radish produces a lovely, rather (naturally) sweet broth when softened; this can be used to cook the radish strips (without additional sugar): using food fully, a true expression of *kansha*.

This is a basic recipe (similar to the version in KANSHA pg 142) with strips of *abura agé* (fried *tōfu*) to add protein and carrots (for color and additional nutrition). Sometime I add barely blanched green beans or snow peas (at the last minute to keep them bright) to make a more colorful *mélange*.

Makes 6 to 8 servings.

1 cup (about 2.5 ounces) *kiri-boshi daikon* (dried radish ribbons), softened for 20 minutes in 2 cups water, drained and squeezed (reserve this liquid and use as stock), then cut into 1-inch lengths
1 teaspoon *goma abura* (aromatic sesame oil)
1 tablespoon *saké*
1 small carrot (about 2 ounces), scraped and cut into thin julienne strips
1 and 1/2 tablespoons soy sauce
8 to 10 slender green beans or snow peas, blanched and cut into slivers on the diagonal, optional
1/4 teaspoon *shichimi tōgarashi* (7-spice mixture)

Heat a skillet (preferably with a non-stick surface) and add the *kiri-boshi daikon* strips. Stir to dry off excess moisture from the pieces. Drizzle in the sesame oil, toss and stir to coat the *kiri-boshi daikon* strips and continue to toss and stir over high heat for another minute.

Add the *saké* to “de-glaze” the skillet (it will sizzle and the alcohol will begin to evaporate). Add one and 1/2 cups of stock (the liquid from soaking the dried daikon strips).

Bring to a gentle boil and simmer for 5 minutes, using an *otoshi-buta* (“dropped lid”). Add the carrots, replace the dropped lid and simmer for another 2-3 minutes until the vegetables are tender. Add more stock, if need be, to keep from scorching.

When there is only a bit of liquid remaining in the skillet, add the soy sauce, swirling the skillet to distribute evenly. Cover with the dropped lid and continue to simmer until aromatic, well colored and nearly all the liquid has been absorbed, about 2-3 minutes. Remove from the stove and allow the mixture to cool naturally in the skillet, with the dropped lid in place. It is during this cooling-down period that flavors develop and mellow.

Just before serving, add the blanched green bean slivers and toss to distribute well. Sprinkle with the 7-spice mixture. Serve at room temperature. Any leftovers will keep well for 3 or 4 days, refrigerated.