

## Home-Made Kiriboshi Daikon (Sun-Dried Radish)

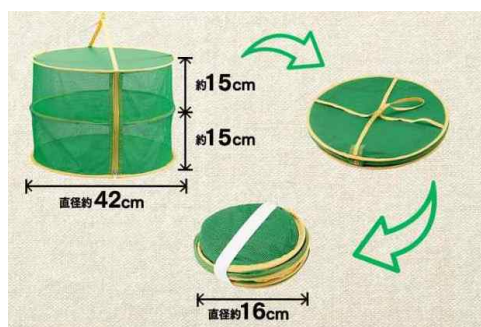
自家製切り干し大根



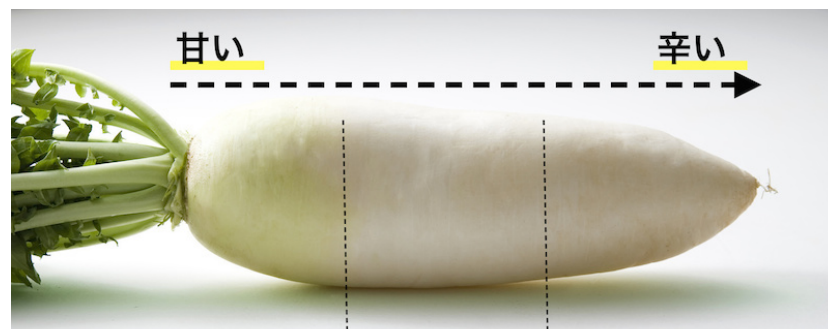
The traditional Japanese pantry is filled with wrinkled and withered-looking items – collectively known as *kambutsu*, literally “dried things.” Although not especially beautiful to look at, *kambutsu* are robustly flavored and nutrient-dense foods. Why? Because as fresh foods dry, their essence is concentrated. Think about the difference between a fresh and dried apricot... or tomato. *Kambutsu* may be considered old-fashioned, but they are truly the modern, too-busy-to-get-to-the-grocery-store, cook’s best friend.

One of the most versatile *kambutsu* is *kiri-boshi daikon* (dried shredded radish). When made *tenpi-boshi* 天日干し (naturally, allowed to dry in well-ventilated sun or shade, rather than chemically dried) the re-hydrating liquid becomes a deeply flavored and nutrient-rich stock. No need to make separate *dashi* when cooking the softened radish.

Daikon radishes are typically large and as different sections are cut and prepared in a variety of ways, bits and pieces remain. These scraps are perfect for making *kiriboshi daikon*. To make your own, chemical-free dried radish you will need some open-weave tray (to enable air to circulate well) or net. Pictured below are several types commonly used in Japan today:



If you will be buying daikon specifically for making *kiriboshi* choose bulbous roots. Different sections have different flavor and texture profiles. The “neck” section near the top tuft (left, below) tends to be sweetest while the tip is typically spicy (right, below). Although any section can be made into *kiriboshi* the center will yield the best overall results.



No need to peel; wipe the skin with a barely damp cloth to remove any dirt or surface bacteria. Cut into planks WITH THE GRAIN. Spread out on a rack that permits air to circulate. Ventilation is key to success -- enabling the daikon to dry, but not spoil..



Depending upon climate and weather, it will take from 2 or 3 days to several weeks for the daikon to air-dry. Once the daikon shreds have dried, store them in air-tight jars or re-sealable bags. Several small containers are better than a single large one; less likely to mold and if one batch does at least you can salvage the remaining ones. Label containers with the date and store them in a cool, dry, dark spot. As daikon dries it will turn darker – from an off-white to beige to golden brown. Dried daikon, even when stored properly, will continue to darken in color as time passes. Monitor for molds and discard if you see any growths.

