

黄金飯 *Kogané Meshi*

Golden Rice with Sun-Dried Radish & Carrots



Sun-dried vegetables such as *kiriboshi daikon* (shredded radish) are softened in water before cooking with them. Adding a strip of *kombu* to the water used to soften the dried radish enhances and enriches the resulting liquid, transforming it into an intensely flavored plant-based stock. In this recipe, both the softened radish and the deep gold, faintly sweet softening liquid is used. The softened radish is combined with slivers of carrot and cooked with the rice.



Serves 4

- 1 cup Japanese-style short-grained rice
- 1/2 cup sun-dried radish (*kiriboshi daikon*) soaked in 1 and 1/4 cup water
- 1, 2-inch length *kombu* (kelp), soaked with the sun-dried radish
- 2-inch chunk carrot, scraped and coarsely shredded or cut into short julienne strips (about 1/3 cup)
- a few drops of aromatic sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon *saké*
- 1/2 tablespoon sugar OR 1 teaspoon *mirin*
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce OR 1 teaspoon *usukuchi shōyu* if using *mirin*

Wash the rice well with fresh cold water until the water runs clear. After draining the washed rice, set it in your stovetop cooking pot or the bowl of an automated rice-cooker. It will become opaque as it absorbs moisture from having been washed.

Lift the softened radish from its soaking liquid and squeeze allowing moisture to drip into the same bowl that holds the softening liquid. Strain, and reserve

both the liquid and the radish shreds separately. Chop the radish shreds to about 1/4-inch lengths; this will yield about 2/3 cup. The kelp can be saved and re-purposed in several ways; for some suggestions see pages 152-153 in KANSHA (Ten Speed Press, 2010).

Drizzle a few drops of sesame oil into a sturdy pan. As it becomes aromatic add the chopped radish. Stir-fry quickly to lightly coat the pieces with oil. Push aside and make room for the carrots. Stir-fry to combine, add the *saké* to deglaze the pan. Add the softening liquid and cook for 1 and 1/2 minutes. Add sugar and regular soy sauce, OR *mirin* and *usukuchi shōyu*.

Remove the pan from the heat and set aside for 3 to 5 minutes to allow flavors to meld and the cooking liquid to cool somewhat.

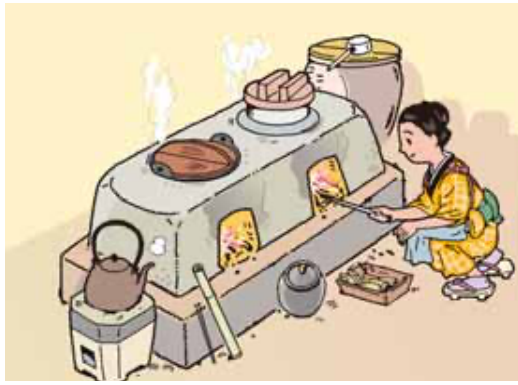
Strain the broth reserving the solids, separately. Add cold water (or ice to rapidly cool the broth if using a thermostatically controlled appliance) to make a scant **1 and 1/4 cups** liquid.



Because the kernels of rice have been soaking up some water post-washing, and you are cooking with a flavored broth rather than water, the proportions of liquid to raw rice are slightly different from cooking plain rice with water immediately after it has been washed.



Once the measured liquid has been added to the rice, return the braised radish and carrots to the pot, laying the mixture on top (do NOT mix it with the uncooked rice). Cook the rice either **stovetop** or in **an automated cooker**.



The Japanese have an onomatopoeic folk jingle that instructs how to cook rice in a pot on a wood-burning stove:

初めチョロチョロ、中パッパ *Hajimé choro choro, naka ppapa*

At first it bubbles, then it hisses.

赤子が泣いても、蓋とるな！ *Akago ga naitemo, futa toru na!*

Even if the baby cries (from hunger), don't remove the lid!

Cooking Rice, stovetop (adapted from KANSHA page 11)

To cook on the stovetop: Place the washed and drained rice in a sturdy, straight-sided pot. Add the water (or, in this case, flavored liquid). Ideally, the rice should sit in its measured water or liquid for 10 minutes before cooking, but if you are pressed for time, add a few extra drops of water, and cook right away.

Cover the pot with a tight-fitting lid. Bring the water to a rolling boil over high heat. You will hear bubbling noises and see the lid begin to dance after several minutes. The first bubbling stage is *choro choro*. Reduce the heat and continue to cook until the water is absorbed (about 5 minutes for the quantity listed in the recipe). You will know this point has been reached when you hear a low hissing sound (the folk jingle calls this *naka papp*).

If it is difficult to rely on the sound of the cooking and you must check visually on progress along the way, peek quickly and replace the lid immediately.

Increase the heat to high again for 30 seconds to dry off the rice. Remove the pot from the heat and let the rice stand, still tightly covered, for at least 10 minutes. Even if you wish to serve the rice piping hot, these final minutes of self-steaming (called *murasu*) are necessary for tender (but not mushy) grains of rice.



Kiriboshi Daikon is readily available outside Japan in Asian groceries. Look for cellophane-wrapped bags of straw-colored, dried-but-still-somewhat-pliable sun-dried shredded radish. *Kiriboshi daikon* will be stocked alongside other dried products such as *kampyō* (gourd ribbons). As with other sun-dried foods, flavor and nutrition are concentrated, especially the sweeter tones and vitamin C.

The stock that results from softening sun-dried radish is quite sweet; when used to simmer vegetables that normally get cooked with sugar and soy, you can often reduce the amount of (or even eliminate) sugar.

On opening the package, you will be aware of a distinctive almost sauerkraut-like aroma. This is perfectly normal. Transfer any unused *kiriboshi daikon* to a re-sealable bag, pressing out air as you close it to slow oxidation (and contain the aroma).

home-style drying (top), commercial drying (bottom)

