

(Yuki Nabé) 雪鍋  
**SNOW HOT POT**



The Tohoku region is aptly called “snow country” with its frequent, heavy snowfalls that blanket the area from mid-October through April. The harsh reality of such weather is playfully, poetically brought to table with *yuki nabé*, or **Snow Hot Pot**. The “snow” in this case is grated *daikon* radish heaped on other ingredients already bubbling away in a lightly seasoned broth. What else you choose to put in your pot is up to you: leafy greens, leeks, carrots, mushrooms, cabbage and *tōfu* perhaps. Most families add fish to the pot; *tara* (cod) is the most popular choice.

Written with calligraphy that combines fish 魚 with snow 雪 using *tara* (cod) 鱈 to make your *yuki nabé* enhances the snow imagery. A vegan version of *yuki nabé* can be made with various kinds of *tōfu* – firm, grilled, fried – in lieu of fish.

In Japan, *nabémono* one-pot hot-pots are typically prepared in earthenware vessels called *donabé* and eaten gathered around a hearth or table fitted with a cooking unit. Similar results can be achieved using an enamel-lined dutch oven on a kitchen burner, bringing it to table for all to enjoy while piping hot.

Serves 4-6.

- Fresh cod fillet, preferably with skin intact, about 1 lb (450 grams)
- 1 block firm *tōfu* about 14 ounces (400 grams)
- wedge of *hakusai* cabbage, about 10-11 ounces (300 grams)
- fresh (*shitaké*, *maitaké* or *shiméji*) mushrooms, about 3 and 1/2 ounces (100 grams)
- 2 *naga negi* leek, about 3 and 1/2 ounces (100 grams)
- *shungiku* (chrysanthemum greens), *mitsuba* (trefoil), *seri* (cress), carrots
- *daikon* radish, about 1 lb (450 grams)

simmering liquid for the pot:

- 4 inches (10 cm) *kombu* kelp
- 3 tablespoons *saké*
- 3 cups (700 cc) water

*ponzu* dipping sauce:

- 3 tablespoons fresh-squeezed citrus (lemon, lime, orange, yuzu, grapefruit)
- 1 teaspoon sugar, *mirin* or honey
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1/4 loosely packed *katsuo-bushi* fish flakes (optional)
- shichimi tōgarashi* 7-spice blend (optional)

Prepare your various ingredients, laying them out attractively on a large platter:



- Rinse fish in cold water, dry with paper towels and cut into bite-sized pieces.
- Drain and press *tōfu* to remove excess moisture; cut into 8-12 cubes.
- Trim the *naga negi* leek and cut on the diagonal in 1/4-inch slices.
- Cut the *hakusai* into 1-inch pieces.
- Trim the mushrooms and break into small clusters.
- Rinse *shungiku*, trim away woody bottoms before cutting into 1-inch lengths.
- Peel (or scrub) carrots and slice into thin rounds or sticks.
- Peel (or scrub) the *daikon*, grate and place in a cloth-lined strainer to remove excess moisture.



Place the *kombu* in your *donabé* with the water and *saké* to cover. Let sit for 5 to 10 minutes as you prepare your *ponzu* dipping sauce.



Place the citrus fruit juice, sweetener (sugar, *mirin* or honey) soy sauce and water in a small suacepan. Add the *katsuo-bushi* flakes for a smoky aroma and greater depth of flavor. Bring the mixture to a simmer over low heat, stirring to dissolve the sweetener. Set aside for 2-3 minutes before straining to remove the fish flakes.

Place *kombu* in the *donabé* and arrange *hakusai*, leeks, mushrooms, carrots and fish on top. Wait to add leafy greens and *tōfu*. Place the pot over a low flame, cover, and slowly bring to a simmer. After 2 or 3 minutes, remove the lid and skim away any froth. Now add the *tōfu*, re-lid and continue to simmer for 2 to 3 minutes. Add the *shungiku* or other leafy greens, re-lid and simmer another minute. Remove lid and spoon the grated *daikon* over the ingredients in the pot. Serve piping hot.

Set out *ponzu* sauce and *shichimi* spice and invite everyone to help him/herself from the pot. ENJOY...

