

枇杷とほうれん草の白和 *Biwa to Mitsuba no Shira Aé*  
Loquats and Spinach Tossed in Sesame-Tōfu Sauce



The Japanese enjoy combining fruit with slightly bitter greens and tossing the mixture in a creamy *tōfu* sauce called *shira aé*. Traditionally made in a grooved mortar called a *suribachi*, it can also be made in a food processor. Instructions for using both included below. This recipe makes about 1 cup *tōfu* sauce, enough to make 6 to 8 small servings when tossing the loquats with greens.

Ingredients:

6-8 fresh loquats, about 9-12 ounces/280-300 grams

1 ounce/25 grams fresh spinach, blanched and drained

or

1 small cluster mitsuba (*Cryptotaenia japonica*), (about 30 grams) trimmed

4 ounces (about 1/4 to 1/3 large block) *tōfu*, drained of packaging liquid

2 tablespoons sesame seeds, freshly toasted

Pinch of salt

Drop of *mirin*

In a 2-quart pot, bring plain water to a vigorous boil. Add the *tōfu* and cook it for 1 minute (begin counting from the time the water returns to a boil). With a slotted spoon, remove the *tōfu*, draining it well as you set it aside to toast and crush the sesame seeds.

In a heavy skillet set over medium heat, dry roast the sesame seeds, stirring them with a spatula or gently swirling the skillet to keep the seeds in motion. When aromatic and very lightly colored, about 2 minutes, remove the skillet from the stove. The seeds will continue to roast with retained heat so judge color on the light side. While still warm, transfer the seeds to a *suribachi* (grooved mortar) to crush them the old-fashioned way, or to the bowl of a mini-sized food processor the crush them the modern way.

**If you are using a *suribachi*** grind the seeds until completely crushed and slightly oily BEFORE adding the drained *tōfu* you set aside earlier. Continue to grind until the mixture is smooth and thick. Sprinkle with the salt and grind further. Finally, drizzle in a few drops of *mirin*. When ready to use, toss in your fruit or greens and mix. Serve family-style from the *suribachi* bowl, or divvy up into individual portions, mounded in small bowls or cups.

**If you are using a mini food processor**, pulse-process the toasted seeds until crushed and slightly oily. Scrape down the sides BEFORE adding the drained *tōfu* you set aside earlier. Continue to pulse-process until the mixture is smooth and thick. Sprinkle with the salt, drizzle in a few drops of *mirin* and pulse to blend.

Scrape out the sauce and use immediately, or store in a covered glass jar in the refrigerator for up to 2 days. During that time liquid may puddle in the container. If it does, carefully pour this liquid off before using.