

EXPERIENCE THE JAPANESE FOOD CULTURE IN KYOTO

Washoku is registered as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. Japanese food culture encompasses a large variety of foods and cooking styles, so it is difficult to explain *Washoku* in just a few words. Let us introduce *Washoku* for special occasions such as holidays and celebrations, called *Kaiseki* and everyday *Washoku* called *Obanzai*.

和食

Washoku



DASHI IS THE FOUNDATION OF WASHOKU CULTURE. KYOTO'S WATER IS THE KEY.

In 2013, *Washoku* was registered as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. At that time, the following four characteristics of *Washoku* were described: it uses a variety of fresh ingredients; it is healthy food with superior nutritional balance; it expresses changes in nature; and it is closely connected to festivals, celebrations, and events throughout the year.

If asked to describe *Washoku* in a few words, even the Japanese find it difficult to draw its boundary line. The curry rice served in Japan is quite different from that served in India, and *ramen* similar to that found in Japan cannot be found in China. "If I have to give one major feature, it would probably be the presence of *dashi*," says Haruji Ukai, the owner of KINMATA, a well-established

inn that boasts a 200-year history of *Kaiseki* cuisine. "In the same way that Europeans and Americans, who are descendants of hunting peoples, created a culture that makes soup from meat and bones, the Japanese, who are descendants of farmers, established methods of making *dashi* from *kombu* (kelp), *katsuo* (bonito flakes), and *shiitake* (mushrooms). This is unique in the world. It is part of the world-class culture of Japan." What is essential for superior *dashi* is the presence of water. "In Europe and America where the water is often hard, *dashi* cannot be made. It is the soft water of Japan that makes superior *dashi*. In Japan Kyoto is particularly blessed with high-quality, soft water. Because it is part of Kyoto, I want visitors to experience the essence of *Washoku*," says Mr. Ukai cheerfully.



beautiful rendition of seasonal sensibility

KAISEKI

KINMATA provides *Kaiseki*. When participating in the tea ceremony, *Cha-kaiseki* is served as a meal before the *matcha* green tea. The *Kaiseki* is cuisine in courses tailored for enjoying this flow. In *Cha-kaiseki*, the cup of tea, which enters last, is the climax of the flow, but in *Kaiseki*, the cuisine is enjoyed for itself. However, the owner organizes everything for the comfort of individual guests, which is the same for both.

In *Kaiseki*, the *sakizuke* appetizer is the first to appear. Seasonal ingredients decorate a single plate, embodying the season as a whole. The next to grace the stage is *wanmono*. Next is *mukozuke*, in which sashimi often makes an appearance. Mr. Ukai says that you can check the restaurant's sense of style with the *sakizuke*, the flavor of its *dashi* with the *wanmono*, and the freshness of the ingredients it handles with the *mukozuke*. After that the main dishes including the *mushimono* lidded items, the *takiawase* boiled items, *yakimono* grilled items, and the *agemono* fried items continue to be served. The order of these courses changes depending on the ingredients of the day and the concept of the owner. Finally, the meal comes to an end with rice, tea, and something sweet.

"Hospitality is not just serving delicious cuisine. It is about paying attention to everything, from preparing the rooms and caring for the garden, for the time that our guests spend here. This is our concept of hospitality."



MENU LIST

- *Sakizuke (Mae hassun)*
- *Wanmono* soup dish
- *Mukozuke* seasonal dish
- *Mushimono* lidded dish
- *Agemono* fried dish
- *Takiawase* boiled items
- *Yakimono* grilled items
- Tea & sweets

The menu items shown in the photograph are from ¥20,000 for one person (excluding tax, from two persons).

懐石・宿 近又

KAISEKI INN KINMATA

ENGLISH SPOKEN Wi-Fi

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OPEN Morning Breakfast 8am-9am, Noon Kaiseki 12pm-1:30pm, Evening Kaiseki 5:30pm-7:30pm
Please arrive within the time indicated above, by reservation only

CLOSED Irregular holidays, Breakfast closed Wed. & Thu.

PRICE ☀ from ¥9,936 ☾ from ¥16,146 *Individual *zashiki*, tax included in price, reservations required.

SMOKING No WEB <http://www.kinmata.com>





MUKOZUKE

The *sakizuke* (photograph on p. 24) and the *wanmono* (photograph on p. 22) courses are served one after the other. Often sashimi is served. At KINMATA, three types are normally served. KATSUGI, a specialty dealer delivers the recommended fish from the Japan Sea for that day directly to the inn.



MUSHIMONO

Turnips wrapped in tilefish and steamed. It is enjoyed with a thick, starchy sauce with a high-class flavor and a *dashi* base. The first thing that catches the eye when the lid is lifted is the scarlet of the roe, which is reminiscent of fall leaves. *Kaiseki* is the setting for the feeling of the changing seasons.



AGEMONO

The taste and appearance embody the fall. *Shirasa* prawns are covered in finely chopped chestnuts. The crunch and the sweetness of the chestnuts expand in your mouth. The ginkgo shaped sweet potato is also the essence of fall.



TAKIAWASE

Seasonal ingredients are heated in *dashi*. The colors and each of the textures of all the food are prepared carefully. The photograph shows autumn eggplant, representative of fall flavors and raw *yuba* tofu skin, which is a specialty of Kyoto, and the feel-good crunchiness of thinly sliced ginger in Japanese mustard spinach.



YAKIMONO

Spanish mackerel marinated in Kyoto-style miso and placed between cedar boards and grilled. The cedar boards are heated right before being served to the customer, so their fragrance can be enjoyed. This technique is traditional for *Kaiseki* cuisine. KINMATA treasures the old, traditional methods of preparation.



TEA & SWEETS

Finally, the *omogashi* sweets and *matcha* tea are served. They are not enjoyed together. The convention is that first the sweets are finished, and then the tea is drunk. This is a dish that makes it clear that *Kaiseki* cuisine has its roots in *Cha-kaiseki*. The sweets are designed with seasonal sensibility as well.