

SUKIYAKI

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When Townsend Harris, the first U.S.A. Minister to Japan, was stationed at Shimoda on the peninsula of Izu, he wanted to eat meat. As the Japanese were not meat-eaters, no beef was available on the market. A farmer offered him a cow. It was tied to a citrus-tree near by and butchered to furnish the Minister with beef. It was the first cow butchered in Japan and there is a monument erected in commemoration of the event. It is said that all the farmers in the neighbourhood hid their cows lest they might be eaten by the U.S. Minister. Japanese were not beef-eaters, for they considered quadrupeds unclean, though we have records according to which kine were eaten way back in history. So Sukiyaki is a dish of modern invention or introduction. Though there are several stories about the obscure origin of Sukiyaki, the most authentic one attributes it to an incidental invention by a farmer, who roasted beef on his plow or spade; hence the name of Sukiyaki (lit. spade-grilled). According to Chinese tradition So-ho found by chance, that the burned or roasted meat of a pig is very tasty. Sukiyaki is, also called Gyunabe or beef-pan, because Sukiyaki is now prepared in an iron pan instead of a spade.

The chief constituents are: Beef, finely sliced; leeks: cut short; onions; tofu;
bean-curd; konnyaku; a gelatine-like vegetable food; etc.

mushrooms, spinach, bamboo-shoots, and several other kind of vegetables together with according to the season.

When the Nabe of pan is heated over charcoals in a Hibachi, (fire brazier), or on a gas or electric stove, it is greased with suet, lard or fat and shoyu or Japanese sauce is added as well as some sugar. Adding of some sake will make the beef taste better. When the sauce is boiling the vegetables are put into the pan.

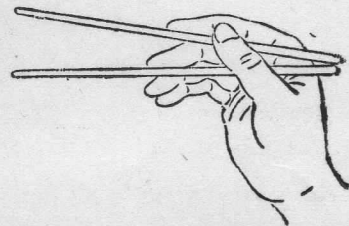
They have to be turned several times and when they are getting brown, and emit an enquisit smell the slices of beef are put in and turned over several times. As soon as they are a little browned on both sides, they are taken out with a pair of chopsticks and eaten. We eat Sukiyaki so thak if is not too hot and usually direct from the pan. But we often use a small dish in with an egg is beaten and the cooked beef placed in it first. Beef tastes better when browned a little, only instead of well done. Piece after piece of meat goes into the pan and is taken out, and the sauce in the pan becomes richer and its taste improves as the meal progresses.

Beef is not a necessary constituent of Sukiyaki. We have Tori-nabe(lit. chicken-pan) for chicken-meat is substituted for the beef and when shell-fish is used, we call it, instad of the Sukiyaki, Hamanabe(lit. Beach-pan).

HOW TO MANIPULATE CHOPSTICKS

Chopsticks are handled usually by the right hand. Their upper part is held between the thumb and the forefinger, or rather, the former presses them upon the first joint of the latter. The lower part of one stick rests on the third joint of the ring-finger, while that of the other is held between the third joint of the middle finger and the ball of the forefinger. In picking up a thing, pair of chopsticks may be compared to the jaws of the human mouth. The stick on the ring-finger remains steady like the upper jaw, while the other held between the forefinger and the middle finger moves as freely does the lower jaw. The manipulation of choppticks is as simple as anything its use depends upon practice.

It is something that the Japanese never do to take anything from chopsticks direct to chopsticks. We do not do this because of a certain association. When we go to a cemetery to pick up bones or ashes of a dead person, the bones are handed from chopsticks to chopsticks, before they are put into an urn. So we consider it to be somthing unlucky to take anything also from chopsticks direct to chopsticks.



Scholars agree that chopsticks ate of Chinese origin, though they mentioned in such an old book as the Nihonbashi (written 720 A.D.) But our ancient chopsticks were only one slender piece of wood or bamboo bent like a pair of tongs.

The Japanese for chopsticks is "Hashi", which literally means "end" of "tip". We call a lip, kuchi bashi (lit. mouth-tip).