

紅白なます

New Year's Salad
Kohaku Namasu



The classic version of this red and white “salad” is made of finely shredded *daikon* radish and carrot, accented with *yuzu* (citron peel) and dried fruit. It is dressed in a sweet-and-sour sauce. Red and white (the carrots are red, the radish is white) is often chosen for a celebratory menu in Japan. This particular dish typically is included in *Osechi* (New Years food). It also makes a nice addition to Western holiday tables of roast meat and/or smoked fish. Serve the red and white salad gently mounded into lemon shells made from lemons cut in half, with their fruit scooped out.

Makes a generous 2 cups to serve 6-8 people.

3 and 1/2-inch piece (about 7 ounces) *daikon* (white icicle radish)

1-inch piece (about 2 ounces) carrot, preferably a combination of ordinary orange carrot and *kyoninjin* (red “Kyoto-style” carrot) sometimes called *kintoki ninjin*

1/2 teaspoon coarse salt

1/4 teaspoon zest or 1-inch strip of fresh *yuzu* (citron) or lemon peel sliced thread-thin

1/2 small *hoshi-gaki* (dried persimmon), apricot and/or mango very finely shredded

1/2 cup Sweet-and-Sour Sauce (*Amazu*, see recipe below)

Peel the *daikon* (peels can be set aside for other dishes such as *kimpira*) and slice the *daikon* as thinly as possible. Stack the slices, then shred very finely. Place shreds in a bowl and sprinkle with half the salt; squeeze to wilt, pouring off accumulated liquid. Peel the carrot and slice as thinly as possible. Stack the slices, then shred very finely. When the vegetables are pliable, rinse off excess salt and squeeze again. Place wilted, rinsed and squeezed shreds in a glass jar with room to add 1/4 cup of *amazu*.





Remove several broad strips of peel, vertically (NOT from the diameter of the fruit). Lay the strips on your board and shave away the pith. With the tip of your knife, draw lines through the peel to create thread-thin strips. OR, use a microplaner to make zest.

Add the citrus strips or zest and any dried fruit strips you have decided to include to the jar holding the wilted vegetables. Pour *amazu* (sweet-and-sour sauce; recipe below) over the vegetable-and-peel mixture to just cover them; stir well to distribute. Marinate for at least 1 hour at room temperature and up to 3 days in the refrigerator. Drain just before serving.

***Amazu* (basic sweet-and-sour sauce)** Makes 1/4 cup

- 1/4 cup citrus juice and/or *su* (rice vinegar)
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1-inch square piece of *kombu* (kelp), optional to enhance flavors

Combine all the ingredients in a small saucepan. Let the kelp soak with the other ingredients for at least 20 minutes before placing the saucepan over a source of heat. This will ensure that the kelp's natural glutamates mellow the acidity of the sauce and enhance the sweetness of the *daikon* and other vegetables and fruit marinating in it.



Over low heat, slowly bring the mixture to just before a boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar and salt. Cook until the sugar and salt has completely melted. Let the sauce cool in the pot before transferring it to a glass jar with the kelp. When completely cooled, cover the top of the jar with clear plastic wrap and tightly seal. The sauce can be stored in the refrigerator for up to two months.