

Fermented Condiments

Fermented condiments such as miso, soy sauce, vinegar, sake, and mirin are essential for flavoring washoku. Japan gets hot and humid in the summer, so it has a well-developed tradition of fermented foods, in common with other Asian countries. The process of salting and fermenting soybeans and grains breaks the proteins of the raw materials down into amino acids, to create condiments bursting with umami ingredients.

MISO

This is one of Japan's most representative condiments, made by boiling or steaming soybeans and mixing them with koji culture and salt to ferment and mature. It is used in miso soup and simmered dishes. One characteristic of miso is its regional diversity, with different areas using different types.



SOY SAUCE

Soy sauce is made by adding salt water to koji made from soybeans and wheat to produce moromi, which is fermented and matured. It is widely used for dishes such as sashimi, grilled fish, simmered dishes, and stir fry. The five types are koikuchi (strong), usukuchi (light), tamari, saishikomi (refermented), and white.

KOJI

Koji is the foundation of fermented condiments such as miso, soy sauce, vinegar, sake, and mirin, which are essential for flavoring washoku.

NIHONSHU

(JAPANESE SAKE)

Japan's culture has grown up around rice cultivation, and rice has been a precious food. Every individual grain was thought to be a shelter for a god, and similarly, the ability to make sake was seen as a divine gift. Sake has been used since ancient times as an offering to the gods, and as a means of approaching the divine.

It also has an important role in cementing ties with family, relatives, and the local community.

For example, sake offered to the gods is always shared out and drunk by all those present after the ceremony. Drinking the same sake as the gods, and sharing it among the people, strengthens local ties and community cohesion.

Sake has the important roles of bringing out the flavors of washoku and bringing people's hearts together.

