

Registered Intangible
Cultural Properties

KYOTO CUISINE

京料理



Culinary Culture Nurtured in Kyoto

Starting from the Heian period, Kyoto's culinary culture has evolved into many forms, cultivated by the developing city and the changing seasons. Its long history has been preserved in the city of Kyoto through *Ryōtei* (luxurious traditional restaurants that specialize in seasonal dishes), *Kappōten* (counter-style restaurants where customers order directly from the chef), and *Shidashi* (catering services), to the point that it has become one with daily life in the region. In 2022, *Kyoto Cuisine* was designated as one of Japan's Registered Intangible Cultural Properties.

About Kyoto Cuisine



The Three Pillars of Kyoto Cuisine

The proprietors, chefs, and *Okami & Nakai* all play their respective roles, working in unison as the three pillars that uphold the *Kyoto Cuisine* experience.

Given that a central component of *Kyoto Cuisine* is the dedication towards hospitality, its style has been refined through feedback from customers provided by their direct communication with the individuals that make up each of the three pillars.



SPRING 春

Spring Hassun 春の八寸



SUMMER

Gion Festival Hassun 祇園祭の八寸



AUTUMN

Simmered Vegetable Stew たくわじめ



WINTER

Duck Dumplings in Icy Pond 鴨真丈薄氷仕立て

The Three Pillars

Proprietors

The proprietor oversees all aspects of management and operation of the establishment, which includes selecting ingredients and creating the menu, choosing the suppliers and tableware, and planning the décor and service as a whole. The proprietor also serves as the overall coordinator for hospitality.



Chefs

The chefs create dishes utilizing techniques specific to each dish and ingredients that are unique to Kyoto (Kyoto vegetables, pike conger, tilefish, freshwater fish, etc.).

The dishes are also presented in a way that reflects the seasons and events that take place throughout the year by using Kyoto-specific techniques and cultural elements with the tableware and customs in mind.



Okami and Nakai

Okami and *Nakai* (senior and junior serving staff) are in charge of providing general customer service, as well as setting up the rooms with decorations like "tokokazari" (hanging scrolls, flowers, and ornaments) that are appropriate for the occasion and season. For guests dining in "zashiki" (Japanese tatami) rooms, they also communicate with the kitchen so dishes can be served with the proper timing, adjustments can be made so that guests can enjoy their meals more comfortably, and so they can explain the cuisine and decorations as needed.





Registered Intangible Cultural Property: Kyoto Cuisine

Since the Heian period (794–1185), Kyoto has been a political and cultural hub of Japan, contributing tremendously to the development of the nation's culinary culture. Throughout this, the integration of preparation, presentation, and hospitality gave rise to what has been designated as "Kyoto Cuisine", a culinary art that embodies the unique culture of Kyoto through food.



1. Characteristics of Kyoto Cuisine

To understand the culinary philosophy of Kyoto, it is important to consider its place among the multivarious culinary arts of Japanese cuisine as a whole. At the heart of all Japanese culinary styles are a common set of cooking techniques upon which each individual form (*Cha-Kaiseki*, Buddhist vegetarian cuisine, etc.) or regional style (Edomae cuisine, Kaga cuisine, etc.) has developed its own techniques of expression—the unique characteristics of Kyoto Cuisine being an example of the latter.

2. The Expression of Kyoto Cuisine

Practitioners of Kyoto Cuisine adhere to the following tenants when expressing the essence of Kyoto through their food:

- A. Capturing and conveying Kyoto's traditions, customs, and natural scenery.
- B. Upholding the standards of moderation and dignity, consistent with Kyoto's traditional sense of beauty.

Every aspect from the selection of ingredients and menu items, to the overall ambiance of the venue, is considered with careful regard to these key points in order to both preserve and express the seasonal culture and customary practices of Kyoto. For example, *ayu* (sweetfish) dishes are served to match the hanging scrolls of *ayu* in May, and in July, *hamo* (pike conger) dishes are used to match illustrations of the Gion Festival. Even the tableware with which food is served is considered part of the meal, and the atmosphere of the venue is also arranged to accommodate each individual guest's needs.

3. The Pillars of Kyoto Cuisine

Practitioners of our culinary art consist of three groups or "pillars": proprietors, chefs, and *Okami & Nakai*. Proprietors are in charge of the entire service, including the menu, overall ambiance of the venue, and ensuring that guests feel welcome. The chefs prepare Kyoto-style dishes with local ingredients (Kyoto vegetables, pike conger, etc.) using techniques specific to Kyoto cuisine. The *Okami* and *Nakai*, female serving staff, senior and junior respectively, then provide guests with exceptional hospitality in line with the cultural values of Kyoto.

In these ways, Kyoto Cuisine shows its historical significance as a living part of our culture, as well as its value as an art form.



Registration Criteria

1. Entertain guests by expressing the culture of Kyoto through cuisine.
2. Represent the culture of Kyoto by preserving the following points:
 - A. Conveying Kyoto's traditions, customs, and natural scenery.
 - B. Upholding the standards of moderation and dignity, consistent with Kyoto's traditional sense of beauty.
3. Demonstrate the cuisine and venue, as well as provide exceptional hospitality.
4. Showcase the unique cultural aspects of traditional Kyoto Cuisine.
5. Offer guests an experience in Kyoto's cultural values expressed through the cuisine and ambiance of the venue, all with exceptional hospitality.

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