



- Explore the regions -



Warming a Kyoto winter is a hot serving of *yudofu* from a large pot with *kombu* on bottom.

Savory Choices of the Ancient Capital

The ancient capital of Kyoto is known for its history, culture, and architecture as well as sacred sites like temples and shrines. What is not obvious to the visitor of this city with a compelling past and fascinating present is the array of delectable choices for dining in or out that give you a sense of the local flavor as well as local food culture.

Kyoto Pref.

From Noodles to Tofu

Travelers often enjoy tasting local delicacies of their destination. When it comes to Japan's ancient capital of Kyoto, *nishin soba* (buckwheat noodles topped with herring), *senmaizuke* (sliced pickled radish),



Said to originate in the Nanzenji temple area during the Edo period (1603–1868), *yudofu* appears in certain period literature as a specialty of an eatery in front of the temple.

warabimochi (bracken-starch dumplings), and bread are among the city's delicious dishes. For this time of year, however, *yudofu* (boiled tofu in a simmering hot pot) is highly recommended. A large pot of water with *kombu* kelp on the bottom is brought to a boil with cubed tofu that is then dipped in a separate bowl with a broth of soy sauce, mirin, sake, and *dashi* stock. The steaming, tasty tofu is served up with green onion, *yuzu* citrus, grated *daikon* radish, bonito shavings, or other condiments. The simplicity of this wholesome dish calls for quality ingredients. As tofu is about 80 percent water, the highly rated water quality of Kyoto—a flat plain surrounded by mountains—derives from rainfall that percolates down as underground water that makes for delicious *yudofu*.

Unlike hard water that “hardens” tofu, Kyoto's soft water has few minerals and a clean taste, making it perfect for cooking



A savory cube of steaming tofu is soon immersed in a diner's bowl, with dipping sauce and condiments.

tofu as silky-smooth *yudofu*. It's said that tofu arrived in Japan from China around the seventh or eighth century along with Buddhism. Tofu's main ingredient is the soybean, a fine source of protein essential to Buddhist vegetarian cuisine known as *shojin ryori*. Though it may have started as part of Nanzenji temple area's *shojin ryori*, *yudofu* has *dashi* stock free of fish with a uniquely fresh taste.



Various *obanzai* side dishes, with cooked rice, miso soup, and pickles, add up to a hearty and healthy winter's meal.

Simply Delicious Home Cooking

Another savory choice of the former capital of Kyoto appeals as a delicacy that comes highly recommended, also influenced by the vegetarian diet of Zen Buddhism, and is known as *obanzai*. This delectable way to dine is a style of traditional home cooking that has been passed down from generation to generation among Kyoto families. Adding to the rich flavor of this distinctive fare is incorporation of umami from a tasty stock of kombu kelp and bonito shavings that will wonderfully cook up seasonal

vegetables and a variety of dried ingredients.

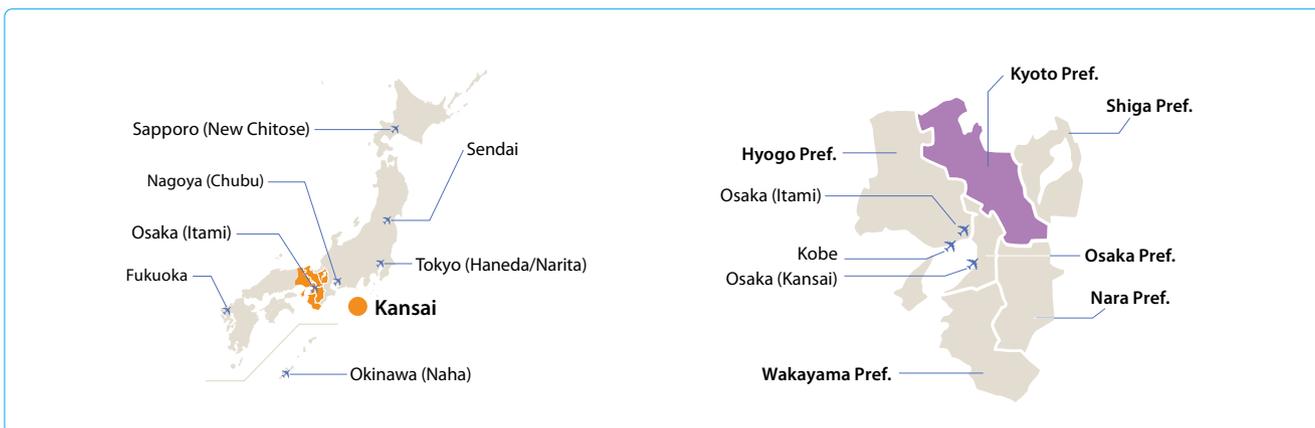
The syllable of *ban* in *obanzai* can be rendered in English as “daily use” or “plain and humble.” This style of cooking unique to the city has long been popular in Kyoto homes, as it bears the lineaments of simplicity and frugality and is aligned with the morality of wisely making use of all scraps, ranging

from vegetable peels and leaves to any and all remains left after stock has been extracted. The true flavors of the ingredients shine through in this simple and hearty cooking, while the lightness of the seasoning makes it good for everyday consumption. Preparation as well as appreciation of Kyoto *obanzai* requires much love and devotion but not much cost while delivering fresh, in-season flavors in their true state. In that sense of genuine flavors reflecting their time of year, *obanzai* is arguably the most luxurious kind of Japanese cuisine.



Bamboo shoots mixed with Japanese herb leaf buds (*sansho*, Japanese pepper) make a zesty, nutritious side dish.

Getting There: ANA serves Osaka (Itami and Kansai) from many cities across Japan, including Tokyo (Haneda and Narita), Sapporo (New Chitose), Fukuoka, and Okinawa. Kyoto can be reached by bus in less than an hour from Itami Airport and in about 1.5 hours from Kansai Airport.



Looking Ahead

The next theme of Get to Know Kansai is “Sightseeing,” set for February, featuring a trip to Awaji Island via Akashi Kaikyo Bridge (Hyogo Pref.) and the *omizutori* ceremony of Todaiji temple (Nara Pref.).

Handy URL

Visit the special website of Tastes of JAPAN by ANA Kansai.



Save on domestic flights within Japan by booking early and accessing lower fares!

