

On Dango-jiru

The summer in Oita is lovely, in the sense that one can always see a never-ending panorama of lush greenery and aquamarine skies; it is at the same time, however, insufferable, in the sense that you are constantly steamed and pickled in your own perspiration. My appetite was massively reduced by the scorching humidity, and I was desperate to eat something with a lot of dietary fibre. It was therefore very timely when my director invited me to a meal of *dango-jiru*, a dumpling dish cooked in a light broth and plenty of vegetables.



Before I ramble on, I should give the *dango-jiru* its due honour by presenting you with a proper introduction. The *dango-jiru* is a dish that features a ribbon shaped, wheat-flour-based *dango* (a sort of dumpling), simmered in a miso broth and an assortment of seasonal vegetables. According to the Oita Prefectural Library, the dish was a staple for the people of Oita from the mid-50s to the mid-60s¹, and is nowadays seen as a symbolic comfort food that initiates a sense of nostalgic sentimentality from Oita expatriates.

While most would agree that the dish was most likely born before the Edo era, its exact origins are unclear, as food consumed by the common people in the time period tend not to be well-recorded. Again, according to what's written on the Oita Prefectural Library, the two most popular legends concerning the birth of the *dango-jiru*, also known as *hocho*, are as follows:

Legend one goes like this – following the accounts recorded in the *Saiyu-zakki (Miscellaneous Notes on the Journey to the West)* by the late-Edo traveller and geographer Furukawa Koshoken after he visited the Bungo Province, legend has it that the famed feudal lord O tomo Yoshishige (also known as Otomo Sorin) loved the taste of abalone intestines. Abalone, however, was difficult to get hold of, so *dango* was used in its stead. Due to the fact that these two ingredients tasted amazingly similar – according to Otomo Yoshishige, at least, riddle me on that – the dish was christened ‘abalone-intestines’, or *hocho* in Japanese.

Moving onto legend two, which also concerns Otomo Yoshishige, this time recorded in *Inshoku keizu (Genealogy of Food and Drinks)* by Higashiyama Ogih. This account recalls the tale of the time when Otomo Yoshishige held a

¹ Original text states ‘the 30s on the Showa calendar’.

warming party for the Kikuchi clan. While Otomo Yoshishige had meant to treat his guests to a meal of hamaguri clams, more people came than he had anticipated, and there simply wasn't enough to be split evenly among everyone. A flat *udon* noodle was used to replace the clams, and Otomo Oshishige told his guests that the noodle was the intestines of *ho* (i.e. the name of a shellfish, or an alternate name for *hamaguri* clams, the same *kanji* character that makes up the *ho* in *hocho*).

If you are unfamiliar with the founding stories of the *dango-jiru* prior to this, then we are on the same page. Nevertheless, I have known of the dish way before I came to Oita – my first acquaintance with *dango-jiru* was from the internet, also during the midst of summer, while I was still at home in Western Australia. Bathing in the remnant heat of the Aussie sun radiating straight into the evening air and right into my room, I sat on my bed in a daze and opened up one of my favourite YouTube channels, Cooking with Dog. The quirky channel features Chef, a mysterious lady who works magic in the kitchen, and Francis, the French Poodle host who narrates homely Japanese recipes in the most calming voice possible. It so happens that they were making *dango-jiru* that day, and I have been tempted to try it out ever since. Alas, three years flew by, Francis has left us for doggie-heaven, and I have arrived Oita, the birthplace of *dango-jiru* itself – it was about time that I made the dish.

If you're also interested in making *dango-jiru*, then read on for a recipe by Cooking with Dog. I attempted it on a weekend, and wondered why I didn't do so sooner, because the result was absolutely delicious. After all, a hearty, healthy dish that comes with entertaining backstories is pretty hard to beat.

Ingredients	Instructions
<p>Dango</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All-purpose flour...100g ■ Water...60mL ■ Salt...1 pinch <p>Other ingredients</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Chicken thighs, skinless, cut into bite-size pieces...120g ■ Daikon radish, sliced...80g ■ Carrots, sliced...35g ■ Taros sliced, net weight...100g ■ Gobo (burdock root)...30g ■ <i>Aburaage</i> (thin deep-fried tofu)...1/2 slice ■ <i>Shimeji</i> mushroom, or substitute with <i>shiitake</i> or <i>maitake</i>...70g ■ 1 <i>hakusai</i> cabbage (<i>napa</i>/Chinese cabbage) leaf ■ 1 <i>naga-negi</i> (long green onion), chopped thinly <p>Broth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Water...700ml ■ Niboshi dried baby sardines, head and stomach removed...20g ■ Miso approx. ...30g <p>Toppings to taste</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Yuzukosho</i> ■ <i>Shichimi</i> Chili Pepper <p>Optional additional ingredient</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Konjac 	<p>Dango preparation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Add a pinch of salt to the flour and mix with chopsticks; add water a little at a time and mix in the flour. 2. Press with hand to combine. Knead for 5 minutes until glossy. In Japan, the ideal softness is often described as 'like your earlobe.' 3. Roll dough into cylindrical shape, cut into 8 equal pieces, shape each piece into an oval; cover with dampened towel and sit for 30 minutes at room temperature. <p>Cooking the dashi broth, other ingredients, and dango:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove heads and stomachs of baby sardines and soak in water for more than 30 minutes 2. Make shallow cuts around the burdock root lengthwise, shave with a knife while gradually rotating. 3. Trim off root and stem ends of taro, peel skin lengthwise, slice into 7mm slices. Likewise, slice daikon radish and carrot into 7mm slices. 4. Parboil vegetables, cook for 1 minute, then remove with a mesh strainer. 5. Turn off burner and place chicken thigh into the same pot of water. Remove when it turns slightly white. 6. Pour water into a pot along with <i>niboshi</i> baby sardines, bring to a boil and remove foam; reduce heat to low and simmer for 8 to 10 minutes. Uncover lid slightly to prevent stock from developing fishy odours. 7. Turn off the burner. Remove the <i>niboshi</i> with a mesh strainer and the dashi stock is ready. 8. Heat the stock in a pot and add parboiled vegetable; gradually pull the edges of each dango dough piece and stretch both ends, gently shaking to form a wide and flat noodle shape. 9. Add half of the miso to broth. Dissolve miso in a small mesh strainer to help remove any lumps. Cover and cook for about 5 minutes until the vegetables and the <i>dango</i> soften. 10. Add chicken, <i>aburaage</i> (thin deep-fried tofu), and <i>shimeji</i> mushrooms. 11. Add <i>napa</i> cabbage. Cover again and cook with mushrooms for 2~3 minutes; dissolve rest of miso. 12. Add chopped long green onion and cook until lightly wilted. Top the dish with toppings and condiments to your liking before serving.

▲ Adapted version of recipe by *Cooking with Dog*, used with author's granted permission. For a the original recipe as well as a video version, please visit: < <https://cookingwithdog.com/recipe/dango-jiru/> >

EXHIBITIONS & SCREENINGS

Date	Description	Place	Cost	Contact #
Sep. 28 th ~ Oct 21 st	The Essence of Modern Japan Art – The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto	Oita Prefectural Art Museum (OPAM)	¥800	☎ 097-533-4500
Oct. 2 nd ~Nov. 25 th	Future of Sea and Space	Oita Prefectural Art Museum (OPAM)	Free	☎ 097-533-4500
Oct 2 nd ~ Nov. 25 th	MEGASTAR (Planetarium) -Towards 13.8 Billion Light Years and Beyond-	Oita Prefectural Art Museum (OPAM)	¥500	☎ 097-533-4500
Oct 2 nd ~ Nov. 25 th	Oita Art Promenade by OPAM & Toyo no kuni	Oita Prefectural Art Museum (OPAM)	¥500	☎ 097-533-4500
Nov 2 nd ~ Nov. 25 th	National Treasure: Highlights of Japanese Aesthetics	Oita Prefectural Art Museum (OPAM)	¥800 (600)	☎ 097-533-4500
Dec. 8 th ~ Jan 20 th 2019	Treasure Box of Modern Art – Toshioka Collection	Oita Prefectural Art Museum (OPAM)	¥300 (250)	☎ 097-533-4500

Most Museums and Centers are closed on Monday, or Tuesday if Monday is a public holiday. Student admissions vary, highest cost shown.



STAGE & MUSIC EVENTS

Date	Time	Artist/Event	Venue	Cost	Contact #
Oct.28 th	13:00	'Giuseppe Verdi: Aida', in cooperation with the Grand Opera	iichiko Grand Theatre	¥3,000-¥11,000	☎ 097-533-4004
Oct. 31 st , Nov. 1 st	18:30	Musical My Fair Lady	iichiiko Grand Theatre	Sold Out	☎ 097-533-4004
Nov. 4 th	13:00	Orchestra and Choral Festival	iichiko Grand Theatre	¥1,000-¥2,000	☎ 097-533-4004
Dec. 3 rd	18:30	iichiko presents: KOBAYASHI MICHIO Cembalo Recital, Chapter 2, French Suites (Bach)	iichiko Oto-no-izumi	¥1,500-¥3,000	☎ 097-533-4004

**Ticket prices range from student to most expensive general admission. Prices shown otherwise indicate price for purchase on the day of the event, they may be cheaper if purchased in advance. "w/ drink" prices include a drink, "+drink" prices require the additional purchase of a drink. Times shown indicate start times, doors usually open 30 minutes beforehand.

VENUES

Cantaloop II =3-2-30 Miyako-Machi
Nakayama Dai 5 Building 6F Oita City
iichiko Oto-no-Izumi=Oasis Tower 1F Oita City

iichiko Grand Theatre=Oasis Tower 1F Oita City
T.O.P.S BittsHall.=Ikushi 5-783, Oita City



Greetings from the new editor:

Good day all, I am Xin Lan XIE, the new editor-in-chief who will be inheriting Sheridan's work for the Tombo. The weather has cooled down significantly, which means it'll be easier for me to partake in two of my favourite pastimes – eating good food and taking a stroll in the neighbourhood. I will be going all around the prefecture for the Tombo in the future, so please keep your eyes peeled!

Festivals and Events

Date	Event Description	Location	Contact #
Sep. 2 nd ~ Dec. 15 th	Kunisaki Odayaka Exposition 2018 Running for the 29 th time this year, this hands-on event offers insights to the way of hospitality and everyday day life.	Kunisaki City	☎ 0978-73-0962
Oct. 6 th ~ Nov. 25 th	The 33rd Japanese National Cultural Festival, Oita 2018 & The 18th Japanese Arts and Cultural Festival for Citizens with Disabilities Come and visit the biggest festival held in the nation.	Oita Prefecture	☎ 097-529-6283
Oct. 8 th	Yufuin Beef-eating and Yelling Party After consuming local Bungo Yufuin beef, participants have the opportunity to yell to their hearts' content in a competition to see who boasts the loudest voice.	Yufuin City Yufuin-cho, Namiyanagi Farm	☎ 0977-85-4464
Oct. 13 th	Saiki Onyujima Island Sweets Olle Trek 2018, the Tastes of Autumn Want to spend some leisurely time on an island with beautiful scenery and scrumptious food? Local cuisines other than sweets are also on offer. Ticket costs 1500 yen per participant.	Saiki City Onyujima Island, Kangaroo Square (<i>kangaroo-hiroba</i>)	☎ 0972-22-3942
Oct. 13 th ~14 th	Lord Sorin Festival Celebrating the life and legend of the feudal lord Otomo Sorin, the day offers a gourmet corner featuring local delicacies with Western influences and stage plays depicting the golden age of Oita.	Oita City, Oita Station Oita Station Funai Chuo Gate Square	☎ 097-537-7043
Oct. 14 th	Yufuin Kemuri Marathon Tournament for Health A major event where you can enjoy the beautiful nature of Kagurameko Lake and Shidakako Lake.	The surrounding areas of Kagurameko Lake and Shidakako Lake	☎ 0977-21-6161
Oct. 14 th	Sumiyoshi Shrine Reitaisai Celebration Come to the Sumiyoshi Shrine, which stands on top of a hill in Ogafukae, and witness the shinkosai ceremony and performances of kagura on the day.	Hayami-gun, Hiji- machi, Sumiyoshi Sharine	☎ 0977-73-3158
Oct. 17 th ~18 th	Doburoku (Raw Sake) Festival A unique festival that does Oita proud. Visitors are given the chance to get a taste of free doburoku.	Kitsuki City Shirahigetawara Shrine	☎ 0978-52-2222
Oct 20 th ~ 21 st	Kangetsusai (Moon-viewing Festival) Gaze upon the bamboo lights lit up by local citizens and stroll down streets enchantingly illuminated by moonlight and gentle flames.	Kitsuki City, area near the foot of the castle	☎ 0978-63-0100
Nov. 3 rd ~ 5 th	Usuki Takeyoi Bamboo Lantern Festival Take delight in the traditional streets of Usuki as they are bathed in the luminescence of bonbori lanterns and other bamboo-crafted objects.	Usuki City Surrounding areas of Nioza and Machihatcho	☎ 0972-63-1111
Nov. 9 th , Nov 11 th	Millennium Lights Around 30,000 bamboo lanterns will transform the Kagetsugawa River and the conserved groups of traditional buildings in the Mameda-machi into a dream-like space.	Hita City Area surrounding Mameda-machi	☎ 097-537-7043
Nov. 10 th ~11 th	Onokawa Battle Royale Festival With the theme being 'Battle of Hetsugigawa', processions of warriors will enact scenes of the battlefield with formations of cavalry, gun corps and archers.	Ohnogawa River riverbed and surrounding areas	☎ 0973-22-2036
Nov. 11 th	Autumn Leaves Walk Savour every bit of the flamboyant autumn leaves with your own eyes while taking a walk through the Takkirikeikoku Ravine.	Usa City Area surrounding Mameda-machi	☎ 0978-42-6195
Nov. 17 th	Admission-free Day at Mt Takasaki Meet and greet the monkeys at Mt Takasaki, free of charge.	Oita City Takasakiyama Natural Zoo	☎ 097-537-7043
Nov. 18 th	The 38th Oita International Wheelchair Marathon Come down and cheer for the competitors as they race on their wheelchairs at lightning speed.	Oita City	☎ 097-533-6006
Dec. 23 rd ~ 24 th	Beppu Christmas HANABI Fantasia Get enthralled on this special day by showy fireworks booming through the winter night whilst listening to children sing.	Beppu City Kitamatogahama- cho	☎ 0977-24-2828

What's Going On?

From the Plaza

Free Legal Consultations for International Residents

The Oita International Plaza is holding free legal consultations for foreign residents on *the third Wednesday of every month*.

- When: **Oct. 7th, October 17th, November 4th, November 21st, December 2nd, December 19th**
- Time: **13:00-16:00**
- Consultant: **Sei Ito** (Administrative Solicitor)
- Venue: **Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)**

Free Tagalog Consultations

The Oita International Plaza is holding free consultations in Tagalog.

- When: **October 10th, October 16th, November 3rd, November 20th, December 1st, December 18th**
- Time: **13:00-16:00**
- Consultant: **Rhodora Yoshitake** (President of the Oita Philippines Friendship Association)
- Venue: **Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)**

Free Chinese Consultations

The Oita International Plaza is holding free consultations in Mandarin.

- When: **Every Thursday 10:00-13:00 (except December 27th)**
- Time: **10:00-13:00**
- Consultant: **Kodama Uenyu**
- Venue: **Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)**

(*Dates and times are subject to change. Please contact the Oita International Plaza before coming.) TEL: 097-533-4021

Free Consultations Regarding Immigration, Residency, and Citizenship

The Oita International Plaza is holding free consultations regarding immigration, residency, and citizenship on the first Sunday of each month.

- When: **July 1st, August 5th, September 2nd**
- Time: **13:00-16:00**
- Languages available: **Japanese and English**
- Interpretation into **languages other than Japanese and English** may be available with a reservation (there are no guarantees). The reservation must be made 2 days prior to the consultation day.
- Venue: **Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)**

International Event Notifications

The Oita International Plaza will be announcing some international events that take place within Oita Prefecture on our social media pages in order to support organizations proactively fostering international relations. Facebook - <http://www.facebook.com/oitaplaza> Twitter - <http://twitter.com/oitaplaza> If you are interested in relaying information about an event, please send e-mail at the Plaza. Mail: kobayashi-ikuyo@emo.or.jp

Japanese Lessons

Himawari Japanese Volunteers

Support for people learning Japanese in order to help them enjoy their lives in Oita, now at three different locations.
Wasada Public Hall Wed. 10:00-11:30
Meiji Akeno Public Hall Wed. 14:00-15:30
Tsurusaki Public Hall Sat. 10:00-11:30
For more information contact Ms. Fukata TEL: 097-527-2614
E-MAIL: nihongo_himawari_oita@yahoo.co.jp

Nihongo Rakuraku-talk

Beppu City Hall offers free Japanese lessons every Monday from 14:00-15:30. For more information contact the Beppu International Affairs Division
TEL: 0977-21-6133 E-MAIL: int-ma@city.beppu.oita.jp

Sakura Japanese Class

Come study Japanese with friendly volunteers and teachers in a pleasant atmosphere. Sakura Japanese Class is held every Monday from 10:15-12:00 at the Oita University International House in Nishiki-Machi, Oita City. Classes are free of charge. For more information call Ms. Ohashi
CELL: 090-7866-2486

AIUEO Japanese Lessons

Volunteers offer free Japanese lessons on Tuesday and Friday from 10:20-11:50 at I-NESS near Oasis Tower as well as Thursday nights at Compal Hall from 18:30-20:30. Lessons are also offered in Beppu at the Beppu Foreign Tourist Information Office on Tuesday mornings from 10:00-12:00. For more information contact:
Ms. Miyase CELL: 090-8353-2485 (day lessons)
Ms. Kato TEL: 097-532-5940 (night lessons)

