

DEEPLY REGIONAL JAPAN®

SCURVY WEED, HIJIKI, ADZUKI AND VEGETABLE 'NIBITASHI'

3 June 2020; UPDATED: 5 June 2020



The scurvy weed, Commelina cyanea

[IMPORTANT NOTE: NEVER consume weeds or wild plants unless you can identify them with 100% confidence. Do NOT collect edible plants from areas that may have been sprayed with chemicals, are polluted with heavy metals and other substances (e.g. near roads, painted surfaces and industrial activity), or contaminated by human or animal excrement. Many edible plants also require treatment or cooking to remove harmful substances such as toxins and anti-nutrients.]

INGREDIENTS

- Scurvy weed, leaves and young shoots (or other edible weeds) c. 2 cups (densely packed)
- Dried hijiki 1 level tablespoon
- Boiled adzuki beans (see separate recipe on how to boil dry beans; alternatively use canned beans) c. 1 cup
- Red capsicum 1 small-sized
- Leek ½ small stem (15 to 20 cm length)
- Katsuobushi (smoked bonito flakes) ½ cup
- Water c. 1 cup
- Japanese soy sauce or tamari 1 level tablespoon or to taste
- Mirin (or sweet white wine/sherry) 1 level tablespoon

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Soak the dried hijiki in cold water until supple. Take care not to soak for longer than necessary otherwise the hijiki will become soggy when cooked. Drain and resoak in water for a further minute or two, drain again and wash under running cold water. If there are pieces of stem longer than c. 2 cm, cut them to size. Set aside.
2. Cut the red capsicum and leek into very thin strips, c. 5 cm long and 3 to 5 mm wide. The leek should be cut lengthwise along the fibre. Set aside.



3. In a saucepan, bring a little over one cup of water to the boil. Once boiling, lower the heat to low–medium and add the katsuobushi. Gently simmer for about 2 minutes uncovered, then remove from the heat. Strain the solids out of the liquid using a sieve. [The spent katsuobushi solids should be kept; they can be finely chopped and added to other cooked dishes for umami. Alternatively, leave the solids in liquid if you do not mind the appearance, and proceed to the next step.]
4. Return the strained liquid (effectively katsu dashi) to a saucepan large enough to hold all ingredients together. Place on medium heat and bring back to the boil. Add the soy sauce/tamari and mirin (or substitute), lower the heat to low–medium, and simmer for c. 2 minutes.

5. Add the capsicum, leek and hijiki. Cover with a lid and simmer over low–medium heat for a minute or two, until the leek strips are starting to soften and bright green in colour (take care not to overcook).
6. Add the boiled adzuki beans and scurvy weed. Remove from the heat as soon as the scurvy weed has wilted. Stand uncovered for a minute, then transfer to a dish to allow cooling to room temperature.
7. Serve immediately as a side-dish to a meal menu. Alternatively, keep in the refrigerator and enjoy over a day or two—the flavour improves with time.