

# DEEPLY REGIONAL JAPAN®

## JAPANESE TECHNIQUE FOR BOILING ADZUKI AND OTHER BEANS

Alongside rice, barley, soybean and millet, adzuki beans are traditionally regarded as a staple by the Japanese. Boiled adzuki forms the basis for many recipes—both savoury and sweet—and can be used as is or mashed into a paste. Boiled adzuki is a popular ingredient in stewed dishes, as well as being made into sweet adzuki paste for classic traditional sweets such as daifuku (filled soft mochi) and yōkan.

There are a few simple tricks to boiling dry adzuki beans. One of them is what the Japanese call ‘nikoboshi’—boiling, tipping out the boiling water, and reboiling in fresh water—which helps to remove the astringency of the beans and any chemical residues. It is convenient to prepare the beans in bulk, then used in your cooking incrementally. The boiled beans will keep in a sealed container in the fridge for up to a week. Alternatively, freeze the boiled beans in portions, so you can defrost small quantities as required.

The boiling technique also works well with other types of dry beans such as the black turtle bean and chickpeas.

### INGREDIENTS

- Adzuki beans, dry c. 1 cup (dry)
- Salt (for boiling adzuki beans) c. 1 level teaspoon in total
- Water As required

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Wash the beans well to remove dirt and other residues. Soak in plenty of cold water for at least 6 hours or until the beans have fully absorbed moisture. Do not oversoak, however, as the beans may start to break apart.
2. Drain the rehydrated adzuki beans and rinse under running water. Place in saucepan, add about half a level teaspoon of salt and just cover with water. Bring to the boil on medium heat. Skim off and discard the froth that floats to the surface. Repeat this several times until very little further frothing occurs, then tip out most of the water carefully.



3. Refill the saucepan with warm water so that the adzuki beans are just covered, and add another half a teaspoon of salt. Bring again to the boil over medium heat, then drop the heat to low and gently boil or simmer until the beans are fully cooked—i.e. soft but still retaining texture, and not falling apart. Stir gently from time to time for even cooking. With soaking and pre-boiling, the beans will not take very long to cook, so monitor regularly. Remove from the heat once the beans are cooked; much of the liquid will have been absorbed, so there shouldn't be a need to drain the liquid, which is full of rich flavours from the adzuki beans.



4. If not using immediately, store your boiled adzuki beans in a sealed container in the refrigerator, and use up within a week. You can also freeze the boiled beans, where it will keep well for up to a month or so.