

Osechi Ryouri



Kudos to Babli-san for her meticulous research and hardwork in producing this Osechi set in Kolkata!

Osechi Ryouri is the traditional Japanese New Year food, and the biggest and most important Japanese custom during 'Oshogatsu'. As Christmas gets over, Japanese homes gear up for the New Year. People usually return to their hometowns, pay their first visit to the local shrine in the morning, and sit down under warm blankets of the Kotatsu to enjoy traditional Japanese food.

Osechi Ryouri is a set of colorful dishes that are served in beautiful two, three or four layer lacquerware bento boxes called Ojubako, stacked one on top of the other and placed in the centre of the table on the New Year Day. It stays there for the next three days to be shared by family and friends to celebrate Oshogatsu. Since these traditions date back to pre-refrigeration times, Osechi foods are generally sweet, sour or dried so that they keep well till festivities last.

Each of the items in the bento box has an inner meaning and represents a particular wish for the New Year. Some of these are listed below:

- Kuromame, black beans, symbolizes good health
- Datemaki, sweet rolled omelette, stands for knowledge and learning
- Kuri-kinton, sweetened water chestnuts, its yellow colour represents wish for wealth
- Kamaboko, fishcake, red and white in colour, represents the sunrise of the new year
- Kobu-maki, is kombu wrapped salmon, finds resemblance to 'yorokobu', joy and happiness
- Kazunoko, is herring roe, kazu means number and ko means child, symbolizing fertility.
- Ebi, or shrimp with a bent back represents long life. The red colour is said to ward off evils.
- Tazukuri, dried sweetened baby fish, stands for a good harvest in the new year.
- Renkon, vinegared lotus root, its many holes, helps to get a clearer look into the future unhindered.
- Kohaku Namasu, strips of red carrot and white daikon pickle, served in Yuzu peel, as a mark of celebration and festivities
- Gobo or burdock root is a strong plant with deep roots, symbolizing strength and stability.
- Tai, or Sea Bream, is for celebration or 'Omedetai', so make a wish while removing bones.

Ozoni, Japanese New Year mochi soup is also served alongside the meal when everyone gathers to partake in this most important meal of the year. To enjoy Osechi Ryouri celebratory chopsticks called 'iwaibashi' are used. Here's raising a toast for good luck and good health in this new year.

HAPPY ☆ NEW ☆ YEAR

2025

~ Babli Chowdhury

MEET Mizuki Takahashi

Ms. Mizuki Takahashi is a fluent Bengali speaker and has been gaining popularity by making videos in Bengali about her experiences of Kolkata. She attended the In Nichi Bunkasai last year and hopes to build more bridges between Japan and India.

Q: Self introduction & academic background

A: My name is Mizuki Takahashi. I have been working in Kolkata since March 2023. I majored in South Asian Area Studies and learned Bengali language in my Bachelor's. Now I am doing my Master's and studying on educational issues in Bangladesh.

Q: Experience when you first came in India

A: I visited India for the first time on February 2019 as a part of a short-term study abroad course at my university. I stayed in Kolkata for a month and a half and studied Bengali language and culture at Jadavpur University. At that time, I had only been learning Bengali for around one year and could barely understand what people were saying. What I could only do was to follow my professors and friends. However, thanks to the professors and students in Jadavpur University who continued to look after me and other students from Japan, my language skill improved considerably during my stay. Also, I was fascinated by kindness of people and decided to visit Kolkata again.

Q: Your experience in /about India and Indian people and culture

A: As I mentioned above, I was really fascinated by the kindness and friendliness of people when I visit Kolkata for the first time in 2019. Especially, I remember well about the students who I met in Jadavpur University. They care a lot about me and my friends who visit India for the first time so that we could enjoy our time in Kolkata. We enjoyed chatting over a cup of tea after class, visited some sightseeing spots, enjoyed lassi with local students in College Street, danced together in an event in the university, and more. I believe that they made me attracted in Bengali people and culture. Five years have passed since then, but I still keep in touch with some of them.

Q: Your hobby

A: I love reading. Book is like a “dokodemo-door” to me since it takes me anywhere regardless of time and country. Recently I started reading “Feluda” series. Well, I am not yet competent enough to read the stories in Bengali, so I read them in English... I hope I can read them in Bengali someday.

Q: Any memorable experience in Japan or in any other country

A: It is quite difficult for me to write my experience in Japan, as I am not much conscious of the culture and customs of my own country. Well, a few months ago, I temporarily returned to Japan from Kolkata. During my stay in Japan, I went to a bookstore and noticed the size of books what are called ‘bunko’ books in Japan are quite small compared to books in India. They are a little bigger than a smartphone and easy to carry. Perhaps the reason why I love reading is that I was born and raise in Japan where books can be carried and be read anywhere.

Q: Your opinion about differences of Japanese and Indian culture

A: This is a comparison between Kolkata and Tokyo, where I was born and raised rather than a comparison between India and Japan, but I feel that people in Kolkata interact more closely with other people than those in Tokyo. In Kolkata, I often see people chatting over a cup of tea at a street stall, or drivers of cars next to each other open their windows and chatting though they don't know each other. These kind of scenes are not often seen in Tokyo. I believe that this kind of interaction has nurtured Kolkata's rich culture.



~ Alope Basu

Yojijukugo Session



On the evening of October 27th, Khushboo Sensei, conducted an engaging online session titled "Yojijukugo." Yojijukugo, or four-character compound words, are commonly used in Japanese and consists of four Kanji characters that convey standalone meanings or idiomatic expressions. The session began with Sensei explaining the meaning and structure of Yojijukugo, introducing some widely used compound words to illustrate their construction and significance. Once participants grasped the basic definition and function of Yojijukugo, Sensei presented several well-known compound words along with idiomatic expressions that themselves serve as Yojijukugo. The session concluded with an exercise where Sensei shared a worksheet of compound words for participants to solve, reinforcing their learning and testing their knowledge. This final activity provided an effective recap of the session's content and gave participants the chance to apply what they had learned. The Yojijukugo session was highly educational and informative, aiding participants in expanding their Kanji knowledge and vocabulary. Additionally, it offered practical insights into the nuances of Japanese expressions, proving to be a valuable resource for learners on their language journey.

~ Adesh Kumar Sahoo

Celebrating a Legendary Milestone At Bijoya Sammiloni



Like every year we all at NKKS gathered at Sarat Samity for the Biyoja Sammiloni on November 16, 2024 to greet each other with warmth and spend an evening with frolic and laughter. This year we also celebrated our beloved Sensei Kazuko Nigam's 50th year of teaching Japanese in Kolkata. The program commenced with two melodious songs by Babli san, Sumana, Papiya san and Joita San. With the flow of songs there were other group songs sung by few more members with Anupam san's brilliant acoustic guitar accompaniment. A video prepared by students summarizing the legacy of Nigam sensei was screened that received joyous applause. Sensei shared her true vision and mission for developing all her students in Japanese language fraternity with her ever loving ways. We also recollected our Sensei's great achievements and how she has been felicitated twice for her contribution in strengthening India Japan relationship. Sensei was felicitated with a small token of love on behalf of all students by NKKS president Babli Chowdhury who as a vote of thanks finished the evening with a beautiful poem recited especially for Nigam Sensei. We all relished delicious snacks including rice crackers and hoped to meet again next year with even extra zeal.

~ Rupashree Biswas

Fun n Frolic at NKKS Picnic 22 December 2024



2024 marked the 50th year of Nigam sensei teaching Japanese in India. Lets us all wish for her good health and happiness!!!

Riddle

~ Khushboo Agarwal

いろはいろでも、不正な(ふせいな)いろってなーんだ??



Riddle Solution

(Nov - Dec 2024)

あんこ

UPCOMING
EVENTS

18 January 2025 (Sat)
3.00 PM

5th Japanese Language
Singing Contest

@BITM

2 February 2025 (Sun)
5.00 PM

Business Japanese

~ by Malyashree Bhaduri Nagamura

(online link will be sent by email)

Find the Person

~ Tisyagupta Pyne

Fill in the Blanks to Find Out the Famous Japanese Personality

1. てんきよほうによると__めがふります。
2. あのひ、ともだちがいえにもどってこなかった。だからけいさつはとりしら__をした。
3. __ __かんせんによってとうきょうからほっかいどうまでいきました。
4. __ __ ははながながいです。

Ans: _____ さん。
One of the longest running prime minister of Japan who unfortunately died in 2022.

Find the Person Solution

(Nov - Dec 2025)

いし ぐろ か ずお

石黒一雄 さん



Scan the QR codes to watch the videos !

Japanese New Year



[Click here](#)

Mizuki visits JU



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