

An Illustrated **GUIDE** to (mostly *surimi*) **ODEN** Items



Various ingredients find their way into pots of *oden*; regional preferences are evident when you travel around Japan. This illustrated guide includes the most commonly enjoyed *oden* ingredients that prove puzzling to people who have not been brought up in a Japanese household.

This guide focuses on items made from **fish paste** (*surimi*). A separate document, **An Illustrated Guide to (vegetarian & vegan) ODEN Items** can be downloaded from the Kitchen Culture blog posted on January 12, 2021.

Products made from **surimi** 搥り身 **fish paste** are collectively known as **NERI SEIHIN** 練製品. Typically mild-tasting, white-fleshed, deep-sea fish such as pollock and cod are used to make *neri seihin* though sometimes shark (*samé* 鮫), snapper (*tai* 鯛) and conger eel (*hamo* 鰻) are used. The flavor of some *neri seihin* is enhanced with crab (*kani kamaboko* or “imitation crab” uses an essence extracted from crab shells) and/or scallop (ground *hotaté* 帆立 and/or essence extracted from scallop shells).



Satsuma agé



chikuwa



hanpen



tsumiré



gobō maki

薩摩揚げ [**Satsuma agé**] fried fish paste, often mixed with vegetables or seafood; the name Satsuma refers to an area of Kyushu where foods fried in oil became part of the diet in the Edo period.

竹輪 [**chikuwa**] cylindrical sausages made by wrapping fish paste around bamboo poles and grilling them (*chiku* is one way of reading the calligraphy *take*, bamboo). The resulting sausage is hollow; the surface of some are browned and wrinkled, others are blistered.

はんぺん [**hanpen**] spongy, soufflé-like textured “sausage” has been eaten since the 16th century. The texture comes from whipped egg whites and ground *yama imo* yam being added to the basic fish paste. *Hanpen* are typically square (or, when cut on the diagonal in half, triangular) in shape.

つみれ [**tsumiré**] fish balls most made from ground sardines (*iwashi*) and other oily fish such as mackerel.

牛蒡巻き [**gobō maki**] fish paste wrapped around slender batons of burdock root; some are deep-fried, others steamed and then simmered.

OTHER items include:

牛筋 **beef tendon [gyū suji]** skewered, bottom row center

竹輪麩 **wheat dough sausage [chikuwabu]** top row center, to the left of daikon

結び昆布 **kelp knots**

つみれ **[tsumiré]** fish balls most made from ground sardines (*iwashi*)
bottom row right bottom edge of pot

ゲソ **[geso]** octopus legs skewered, top row left, in between kelp knot and daikon wheel

ゆで卵 **boiled eggs [yudé tamago]**

