Washoku is registered as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. Japanese food culture encompasses a large variety of foods and cooking styles, so it is difficult to explain Washoku in just a few words. Let us introduce Washoku for special occasions such as holidays and celebrations, called Kaiseki and everyday Washoku called Obanzai.
DASHI IS THE FOUNDATION OF WASHOKU CULTURE. KYOTO’S WATER IS THE KEY.

In 2013, Washoku was registered as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. At that time, the following four characteristics of Washoku were described: it uses a variety of fresh ingredients; it is healthy food with superior nutritional balance; it expresses changes in nature; and it is closely connected to festivals, celebrations, and events throughout the year. If asked to describe Washoku in a few words, even the Japanese find it difficult to draw its boundary line. The curry rice served in Japan is quite different from that served in India, and ramen similar to that found in Japan cannot be found in China. "If I have to give one major feature, it would probably be the presence of dashi," says Haruji Ukai, the owner of KINMATA, a well-established inn that boasts a 200-year history of Kaiseki cuisine. "In the same way that Europeans and Americans, who are descendants of hunting peoples, created a culture that makes soup from meat and bones, the Japanese, who are descendants of farmers, established methods of making dashi from kombu (kelp), katsuō (bonito flakes), and shiitake (mushrooms). This is unique in the world. It is part of the world-class culture of Japan." What is essential for superior dashi is the presence of water. "In Europe and America where the water is often hard, dashi cannot be made. It is the soft water of Japan that makes superior dashi. In Japan Kyoto is particularly blessed with high-quality, soft water. Because it is part of Kyoto, I want visitors to experience the essence of Washoku," says Mr. Ukai cheerfully.
K INMATA provides Kaiseki. When participating in the tea ceremony, Cha-kaiseki is served as a meal before the matcha green tea. The Kaiseki is cuisine in courses tailored for enjoying this flow. In Cha-kaiseki, the cup of tea, which enters last, is the climax of the flow, but in Kaiseki, the cuisine is enjoyed for itself. However, the owner organizes everything for the comfort of individual guests, which is the same for both. In Kaiseki, the sakizuke appetizer is the first to appear. Seasonal ingredients decorate a single plate, embodying the season as a whole. The next to grace the stage is wanmono. Next is mukozuke, in which sashimi often makes an appearance. Mr. Ukai says that you can check the restaurant’s sense of style with the sakizuke, the flavor of its dashi with the wanmono, and the freshness of the ingredients it handles with the mukozuke. After that the main dishes including the mushimono lidded items, the takiwase boiled items, yakimono grilled items, and the agemono fried items continue to be served. The order of these courses changes depending on the ingredients of the day and the concept of the owner. Finally, the meal comes to an end with rice, tea, and something sweet. “Hospitality is not just serving delicious cuisine. It is about paying attention to everything, from preparing the rooms and caring for the garden, for the time that our guests spend here. This is our concept of hospitality.”

**MENU LIST**

- Sakizuke (Mae hassun)
- Wanmono soup dish
- Mukozuke seasonal dish
- Mushimono lidded dish
- Agemono fried dish
- Takiwase boiled items
- Yakimono grilled items
- Tea & sweets

The menu items shown in the photograph are from ¥20,000 for one person (excluding tax, from two persons).

**Kaiseki Inn KINMATA**

**ENGLISH SPOKEN**

**WI-FI**

**TEL** 075-221-1039

**ADDRESS** 京都府京都市中京区鶴舞町通四条上ル大日町 407 / 407 Dainichi-cho, Nakagyo-ku, Kyoto

**OPEN** Morning Breakfast 8am-9am, Noon Kaiseki 12pm-1:30pm, Evening Kaiseki 5:30pm-7:30pm

Please arrive within the time indicated above, by reservation only

**CLOSED** Irregular holidays, Breakfast closed Wed. & Thu.

**PRICE** from ¥9,936 & from ¥16,146 *Individual kaiseki, tax included in price, reservations required.

**SMOKING** No WEB http://www.kinmata.com
MUROZUKEN

The sakizuke (photograph on p. 24) and the wanmono (photograph on p. 22) courses are served one after the other. Often sashimi is served. At KINMATA, three types are normally served. KATSUGI, a specialty dealer delivers the recommended fish from the Japan Sea for that day directly to the inn.

MUSHIMONO

Turnips wrapped in tilefish and steamed. It is enjoyed with a thick, starchy sauce with a high-class flavor and a dashi base. The first thing that catches the eye when the lid is lifted is the scarlet of the roe, which is reminiscent of fall leaves. Kaiseki is the setting for the feeling of the changing seasons.

AGEMONO

The taste and appearance embody the fall. Shirasaa prawns are covered in finely chopped chestnuts. The crunch and the sweetness of the chestnuts expand in your mouth. The gingko shaped sweet potato is also the essence of fall.

TAKIAWASE

Seasonal ingredients are heated in dashi. The colors and each of the textures of all the food are prepared carefully. The photograph shows autumn eggplant, representative of fall flavors and raw yuba tofu skin, which is a specialty of Kyoto, and the feel-good crunchiness of thinly sliced ginger in Japanese mustard spinach.

YAKIMONO

Spanish mackerel marinated in Kyoto-style miso and placed between cedar boards and grilled. The cedar boards are heated right before being served to the customer, so their fragrance can be enjoyed. This technique is traditional for Kaiseki cuisine. KINMATA treasures the old, traditional methods of preparation.

TEA & SWEETS

Finally, the omogashi sweets and matcha tea are served. They are not enjoyed together. The convention is that first the sweets are finished, and then the tea is drunk. This is a dish that makes it clear that Kaiseki cuisine has its roots in Cha-kaiseki. The sweets are designed with seasonal sensibility as well.