

A Historical Walk Around Kyoto

Dish of *Hamo*



Hamo: “ハモ” or “鱧” by Japanese character

Gion Festival is one of the three largest festivals in Japan. Many tourists come to see the festival as the special feature of summer in Kyoto.

Hamo and Kyoto

Another name for Gion Festival is “*Hamo-Matsuri*(*Hamo-Festival*)” : *Hamo*: a dragger-tooth pike conger or conger pike , a white meat fish from the eel family . One other expectation for the tourists during that season is a *Hamo* cuisine. *Hamo* is the one that represents seasonal specialties of the summer in Kyoto.



Yubiki of Hamo: parboiled *Hamo* mostly served with sour plum sauce

Why did people in Kyoto loved *Hamo*, which was rarely eaten in other regions.

It had been difficult to carry fresh seafood to Kyoto where is far away from the sea before modern high-speed transport developed. *Hamo* was quite appreciated because it was one of the handfuls of fish with very strong vitality which could be transported live to Kyoto even in such hot summer.

Dish of *Hamo*

Hamo was conventionally not easy to eat because it has many small bones, but special skills of cook called “*Honekiri*” (This is a technique performed to treat the small bones by making small cuts in the meat of the fish which is opened from the ventral side without cutting the skin, and which requires proficiency) enabled people to eat *Hamo*. This is the story for *Hamo* became one of represents of the summer in Kyoto.

Now many Japanese restaurants serve *Hamo* dish and those cooks are in competition with their skills and cooking.

There are varied cooking methods such as *Yubiki* (parboiled) or *Teriyaki* (grilled with soy sauce and sweet sake). Anyone can get *Hamo* dish not only in expensive Japanese restaurants but in small casual diners and super markets in Kyoto, where people love *Hamo*.

It may be a little luxury but how about enjoy *Hamo* dishes in various restaurants and shops while walking in a historic city during the summer.