

Edo-Style Hand-made Soba Manual

Edo-style hand-made Soba
Aoyama Gakusha
President, Tadaaki Ishino

1. Tools for hand-made Soba

A. Ki-Bachi or Kone-Bachi (Mixing bowl)

A wooden bowl called Ki-Bachi or Kone-Bachi is used for mixing and kneading buckwheat flour, flour and water.

Stainless or plastic bowl may be used for substitution.

B. Noshi-Dai or Men-Dai (Flattening board)

Noshi-Dai is for flattening soba dough. A flat and smooth plywood or the like may be used instead.

C. Men-Bou or Uchi-Bou (Rolling pins)

Three rolling pins are usually used in Edo-style Soba to flatten the dough. One is called Noshi-Bou for flattening (about 90cm. long), and the other two are called Maki-Bou for winding (about 110cm. long). For 500g. of flour, one rolling pin (60~90cm. long) would do.

D. Soba-Bouchou (Knife)

Soba-Bouchou is a large, rectangular, single edged knife specially designed to cut flattened and folded dough. The average size is 30cm. long, weighing about 900g..

Using Soba-Bouchou is advised.

E. Mana-Ita or Kiri-Ita (Cutting board)

A large (home) cutting board may be used.

F. Koma-Ita (Sliding board)

When cutting the flattened and folded dough, this board is used to determine the thickness of the Soba like a ruler.

G. Furui (Sieve)

Furui is used to sift buckwheat flour and flour to even out the particle of flour (30 mesh) and to reuse the surplus Uchi-Ko remaining after the whole Soba making process is completed (80 mesh).

H. Nama-Fune or Kiri-Dame (Container box)

Nama-Fune is a container box to keep the thin cut Soba.

I. Measuring cup and scale

A measuring cup (500 ml.) is for measuring the amount of water accurately, and a scale for measuring the flour.

(2) Add water in 3 portions.

At first, add 60% of the total amount. 150ml. when the total is 250ml., and 90ml. when the total is 150ml..

Secondly, add 30% of the total amount. 75ml.:250ml., and 45ml.:150ml..

Finally, adjust little by little, making sure not to let the flour get too watery. It is easier to adjust when you find it too dry.

B. Mizu-Mawashi (Mixing flour and water)

It is not too much to say that the taste of Soba depends on how flour and water is mixed.

- Mix buckwheat flour , flour and water thoroughly and stir until water penetrates into the flour. Perform quickly.

(First step of adding water)

- Level out the total amount of flour.
- Add 60% of the total amount of water.
- Mix flour and water thoroughly .
- Use fingers of both hands, turning hands inward in circling motion called Uchi-Mawashi.
- Small particles change to sesame- seed size as water penetrates into the flour.

※Do not make a chunk at this stage.

※Do not knead yet.

※Do not let the flour fly out of the bowl.

(Second step)

- Level out the sesame-seed size of flour.
- Add 30% of the total amount of water.
- Mix well until water penetrates evenly.
- Mix well until the particles change to the size of bread crumbs and then to broad beans. Mix the ingredients from the bottom of the bowl using your fingers to let air between the particles.
- The particles gradually change into the size of a small potato from that of a broad bean.

※Do not knead yet at this stage.

※Do not let the flour fly out of the bowl.

※The color of the chunk of flour would change and Soba flavor can be enjoyed.

(Final step of adding water)

- Add water little by little for fine tuning.
- Perform Uchi-Mawashi (mixing with all fingers, turning hands in ward in circling motion) to let water penetrate evenly.
- Particles get together , and the chunk changes to the size of a large dumpling.
- Check the condition of the chunk and add small amount of water by hand if needed.
- Clean the flour on your hands.

※Check the bottom of the bowl to see that the particles are not left.

※Do not make the dumpling size into a mass.

C. Neri (Kneading)

- After Mizumawashi, the large dumpling-size buckwheat is to be kneaded.
- Making use of the curved surface of the bowl, knead the dough from the rim to the center.
- The dough would gradually become smooth with earlobe firmness.

※Do not press the dough downward.

※Knead the dough with the palm of your hands, using your weight.

D. Kukuri, Kiku-Neri(Lumping together)

- When kneading is completed, lump up the dough into the shape of a disk.
- Lump the dough and knead the outside to the center and form the shape of a round pedestal which should resemble a chrysanthemum.

※Use your palm so as not to leave finger marks.

E. Heso-Dashi (Releasing the trapped air)

- This process is to release the air in the dough.
- Change the shape of the dough from a plinth to cone.
- Place the tip of the cone to the bowl and press the dough with your palm.

※The thickness of the disk of the dough should be even.

※When this process is finished, wash your hands.

《 Process of Flattening 》

A. Maru-Dashi (Flattening into a circle shape)

- Maru-Dashi is a process of flattening the dough from a round disk shape.

(Step 1. Kagami-Dashi)

- Sprinkle Uchi-Ko over the Noshi-Dai.
- Place the disk of dough on the Uchi-ko sprinkled Noshi-Dai and sprinkle Uchi-Ko on the surface of the dough.
- Press and spread the disk of dough with your palm , turning the disk a little by little , making it rotate one round.
- Make the disk of dough evenly thick and circular.
- When using 500g. of flour, the diameter comes to 25~30cm.

※Do not crush the edge of the dough.

(Step 2. Maru-Dashi (flattening into a circle shape))

- Make the dough into a circle shape using a rolling pin.
- Sprinkle Uchi-Ko over the surface of the circular dough.
- Thin the dough with a rolling pin, from the center to the upper edge.

Repeat this process 6 times, each time turning the dough clockwise in 10 minutes angle.

- The process of Maru-dashi is completed when the dough forms a fine circle with thickness

of 5~7 mm .and the diameter of 50 cm. when using 500g. of flour.

※When using a rolling pin:

- (1) Hold the rolling pin lightly with your thumbs up, moving smoothly .
- (2) Always roll the pin from the bottom to the top, turning the dough itself and not yourself.

B. Yotsu-Dashi or Kado-Dashi (Flattening into a square shape)

- Yotsu-Dashi is a process of changing the shape of the dough from a circle to square.
- The whole process of Soba making must be done swiftly so as not to let the dough get dry (do not let the dough catch a cold).
- Sprinkle only minimum amount of Uchi-Ko over the surface of the dough.

(Step 1)

- Wind the dough around the rolling pin and roll it to flatten.
- Repeat this process of flattening 4~5 times.

※When flattening the dough:

- (1) Do not damage the edge of the dough when winding it around the rolling pin.
- (2) Do not lift the dough when moving it on the Noshi-Dai.
- (3) Place your hands on the rolling pin (at the bottom of the dough with your fingers facing inward as in shaping the base of an equilateral triangle) and letting your fingers of both hands cling together as you roll the pin to the top and detaching your hands as you roll it back to the bottom.
- (4) The targeted size of Yotsu-Dashi is within the length of the rolling pin.

(Step 2)

- Wind the dough around the rolling pin and turn the pin 180 degrees, and then spread the dough unwinding it from the pin.
- The shape of the dough becomes bilaterally symmetrical and lozenge-shaped.
- Repeat this process 3~4 times.
- After this process , the top and bottom of the dough would form the same shape and thickness.

(Step 3)

- Turn the dough-winded rolling pin in an angle of 90 degrees and then unwind the dough and spread it.
- The dough would be bilaterally symmetrical and lozenge-shaped.

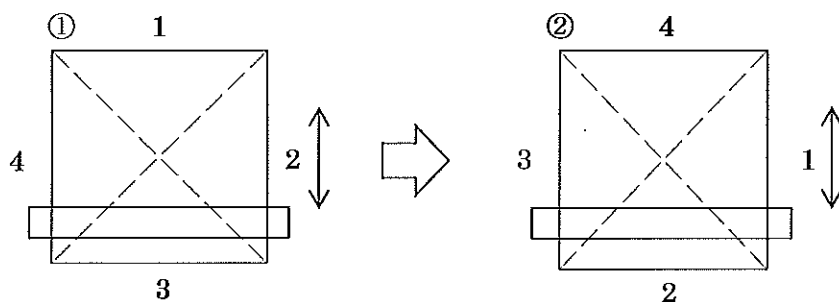
(Step 4)

- With this flattening, the dough would be a square.
- Turn the dough in an angle of 180 degrees, wind it around the rolling pin, and roll and flatten it 3~4 times.
- When Yotsu-Dashi is finished, unwind the dough from the pin and spread it, turning it in an angle of 45 degrees.

- At the end of this step, the dough would be a square.

C. Niku-Wake (Adjusting the thickness)

- After Yotsu-Dashi, the diagonal lines (corner to corner) are thin enough, but the four sides are still relatively thick.
- Adjusting the thickness of the four sides is called Niku-Wake.
- As shown in the illustration bellow:
 - ① At first adjust the thickness of sides 2&4 with the rolling pin, winding the dough around the pin and turning it in an angle of 90 degrees.
 - ② Adjust the thickness of sides 1&3 with the rolling pin in the same way.



D. Haba-Dashi (Adjusting the width)

- Haba-Dashi is the process of adjusting the width (to 84~86cm.) prior to Hon-Noshi (Ultimate flattening).
- It is preferable to do Haba-Dashi while in the process of Niku-Wake.
- During the process of the above illustration ①, spread the length from the top to bottom (1 and 3) to 84 ~86cm..

E. Hon-Noshi (Ultimate flattening)

- In the process of Hon-Noshi, the square dough is adjusted to eliminate uneven thickness.
- Both rolling pins or either may be used when using 500 g. of flour, one short rolling pin may be good enough.

(Step 1)

- Wind the squared dough around a rolling pin and flatten.
- Repeat this process 3 ~4 times.

(Step 2)

- To make the thickness even, turn the dough winded pin in an angle of 180 degrees and flatten further.
- At this point, the dough should be considerably thin and must be handled with care.
- As in Step 1, wind the dough around the rolling pin and flatten and repeat the process 3~4 times.

(Step 3)

- The dough should now be flattened to a rectangular shape.
- Adjust the uneven thickness.

- Uneven part can be easily recognized as the folded area would seem to be rippling.
- See to it that the dough doesn't get too flat.

F. Tatami (Folding)

- The process of Tatami is to fold the dough after Hon-Noshi into 8 layers for cutting.
- Sprinkle Uchi-Ko on the dough each time the dough is folded to prevent the layers from sticking.

《 Process of Cutting 》

Kiri (Cutting)

Kiri, unlike the rather inconspicuous mixing and kneading, is regarded as one of the most brilliant skills in Soba making.

(Step 1)

- See that the surface of the cutting board is flat and smooth, and then spread Uchi-Ko over it.
- Place the dough folded into 8 layers on the board.
- Place a sliding board on the folded dough and start cutting.
- Thickness of Soba is determined by moving the knife downward vertically and slanting the knife to push the sliding board.
- Place your left hand softly on the sliding board 5 cm. from the edge and press lightly, only with your fingertips.

(Step 2)

- One set of Soba cutting should be about 30 cuts.
- Hold one set of Soba and shake off surplus Uchi-Ko.
- Place it in the Nama-Fune or on the Noshi-Dai.
- Repeat this process until all of the dough is cut into Soba.
- To prevent exposure of Soba to air, keep them in a lidded Nama-Fune.

《 Cleaning up 》

- The whole process of Soba making is completed when all tools: Furi, Ki-bachi, Noshi-Dai Uchi-Bou, Kiri-Ita, Koma-Ita, Soba-Bouchou, etc. have been cleaned up.

《 Cooking Soba 》

- Bring water to boil in a large pot and cook fresh Soba, disentangling the noodles.
- The amount of fresh Soba to be cooked at one time is for 1 ~2 people (150~300g).

- While cooking ,disentangle Soba 2~ 3times softly and slowly using chopsticks.
- One Soba comes to boil, lower the heat. Do not add cold water.
- Cook for 50 ~90 seconds.
- Let cooked Soba swim in a bowl of cold water and rinse off.
- Sprinkle iced water over the noodles and then place them in a large bamboo colander.

《 Serving 》

- Place Soba onto a flat bamboo basket, small portion at a time, to drain off excessive water.
- Serve Soba in a bamboo basket, handling with care.

End

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