

Natto— Traditional Japanese Health Food

日本の伝統的健康食—納豆

Series 2: A History of *Natto*:

第2回 納豆の歴史

No one knows exactly where *natto* comes from. What is needed to make it, however, are soybeans, *Bacillus natto*, and a specific temperature and humidity range. *Bacillus natto* is the Latin name for a bacterium related to hay bacillus, a soil microbe. It is a parasitic organism that attaches to rice plants, and grows on rice straw. Given the climate of Japan, and the fact that both rice and soy beans have been grown since ancient times, it is safe to assume that *natto* has been around for quite a long time.

There are several theories as to how *natto* came about, but here is our favorite:

At the beginning of the 11th century, the emperor of Japan ordered a samurai named Hachimantarō, or Minamoto Yoshiie, to travel with his men from the capital of Kyoto to the far north, to put down a rebellion. Hachimantarō and his men had some boiled soy beans for food, and when he and his men were suddenly attacked by the enemy, they were forced to go into battle, but not before there were able to wrap the boiled soy beans in straw and throw them on their horses. The next day, when Hachimantarō unwrapped the straw bundles, he found that the boiled beans had fermented, but that they now had a lovely fragrance about them. The beans had, in other words, turned into *natto*. After the battle, as Hachimantarō and his men made their way back to the capital, they are said to spread the word about this delightful new food all along their route.



納豆の起源はよく知られていません。しかし納豆を作るには、大豆、納豆菌（パチルスナットウ／*bacillus natto*）、そして適した気温と湿度が必要です。パチルスナットウ（*bacillus natto*）は枯草菌（土の細菌の一つ）と同類であるバクテリア属のラテン名です。これは稲に付着する寄生体微生物であり、藁に付着し育つものです。日本の気候条件や、米と大豆は日本では古代から育てられていることからすると、納豆はだいぶ古くからあるものだと推測して正しいでしょう。

納豆の起源には数説ありますが、その中より一説をご紹介します。11世紀の初め、当時の天皇が八幡太郎（源義家）という武士に、北部で起きている暴動を治める為、当時首都であった京都より兵士を引き連れ北へ向かうように指令しました。その時、八幡太郎と兵士たちは茹でた大豆を食料として持参しましたが、道中急襲にあり、急遽戦う羽目になってしまいました。その直前に食料である茹でた大豆を藁に包み、馬に積みました。次の日になって八幡太郎が藁をあけると中の大豆は発酵していて、何とも言えない香りを発していることに気がきました。つまり大豆は納豆になっていたということです。戦いの後、八幡太郎と兵士たちは首都へ戻り、道中で発見したこの新しい食品を公へ普及したとされています。

**The first Natto factory in America!
Not imported and frozen, but fresh and tasty!**

アメリカに初めての納豆工場が進出！
冷凍輸入でないから新鮮な納豆の味わい！

[Natto]
the traditional
Japanese
fermented
soybean

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Natto Recipe Example

It is best to eat Natto as is. In fact, in Japan, it is customary to eat "Natto on top of steamed rice". In the U.S., some people might have seen Natto used in "Natto Rolls" at some sushi restaurants. To those who like to experience Natto in variety of ways, we would like to recommend some recipe ideas.

Open-face Natto Sandwich

Ingredients

- 1/4 pound soba (buckwheat-noodles), preferably cha soba (tea-buckwheat-noodles)
- 5 tablespoons (rounded) natto
- 1/2 English cucumber, sliced diagonally
- 3 tablespoons diagonally-chopped green onion
- 1/4 cup daikon sprouts (or alfalfa sprouts)

<Soy sauce dressing>

- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons sesame oil

納豆を使ったレシピ例

納豆は、生のまま食べるのが一番良いとされています。実際日本では、「ご飯に生の納豆」というのが慣習になっています。しかしアメリカでは「納豆ロール」などを寿司レストランでしか見たことが無い人も多いでしょう。ここではもっとバラエティー豊かな納豆料理を体験したい人におすすめのレシピを紹介しています。

- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon ginger juice (grate and squeeze ginger to get juice)
- 2 teaspoons white roasted sesame seeds

Cooking method 調理法

1. Put Natto, mayonnaise and pinch of curry powder in a small bowl and mix well.
2. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Spread Natto paste on bread and grill in toaster oven or broil until golden brown.

