

半兵衛麩

Bento Box Museum

In today's world, it is easy to find any kind of food throughout the year. Many inexpensive, disposable plastic containers are also available. However, in exchange for this convenience, we may have become less sensitive to the beauty of nature, the appreciation of the four seasons, the warmth of the earth and wood, and the importance of cherishing what we use.

Our business has been a "fu" (wheat gluten) shop for over 330 years. You might wonder, "Why a museum for a fu shop?" The reason is our desire to pass down the culture of food.

Many of our customers, who are skilled chefs, carefully select ingredients, incorporate seasonal elements into their dishes, and take great care in choosing tableware, preserving the traditions of Kyoto cuisine. Through our Kyoto-style fu, we contribute to their efforts.

The Hanbey Fu Obento Box Museum was established to introduce the beauty of Japanese food culture.

Thanks to the recommendations of our visitors, we became a member of the Kyoto City Museum Liaison Council in 2009.

Thank you for visiting us.

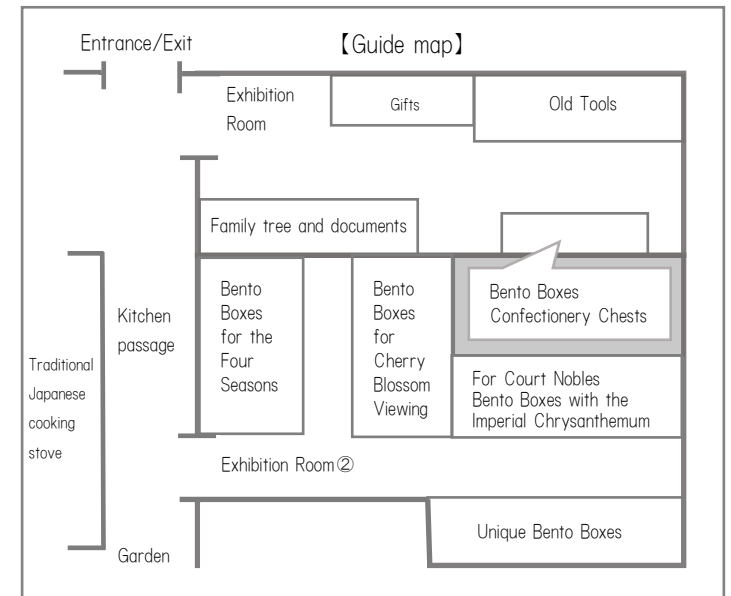


MAP

You are welcome to visit freely during Hanbei Fu Main Store's business hours. (Admission Free)

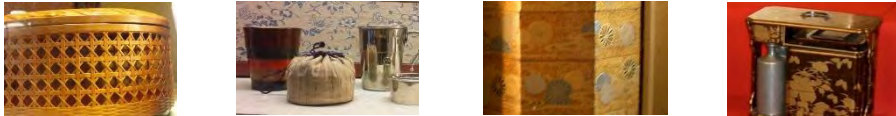


Hanbei Fu



- Aesthetic sensibility and the spirit of “Mottainai”-

At the Obento Box Museum,
We primarily exhibit tableware and sake vessels designed for outdoor use. These are not simply containers for carrying food; each obento box reflects the season and the artisan’s creativity, infused with meticulous craftsmanship. For cherry blossom viewing, some boxes are decorated with mother-of-pearl inlays depicting scattered petals. For summer, materials that allow air to pass through create a refreshing atmosphere. For boat outings, boxes shaped like boats add to the experience. The exquisite gold lacquer and mother-of-pearl inlays are not only artistically beautiful but also technically outstanding. For everyday use, there are obento boxes, chopsticks, and tea utensils with innovative designs for easy portability—many of which we can still take inspiration from today. Carefully crafted with longevity in mind, these items have been well maintained, preserving their beauty even after more than a century.

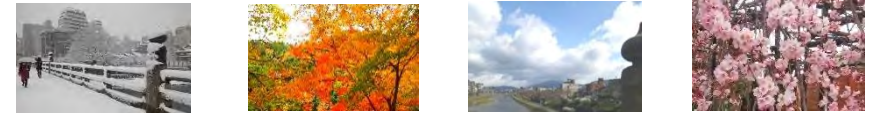


- BENTO abroad -

The word "BENTO" has now been adopted in many countries beyond Japan. In places like New York and Paris, "BENTO" often refers to pre-cooked meals packed in disposable containers, sold for quick and easy consumption. Many busy business people purchase these "BENTO" to satisfy their hunger when they have little time to spare. Japan, too, has numerous obento shops offering similar convenience. However, we want people around the world to know that Japanese obento is not just about convenience. It is deeply rooted in culture and tradition. We hope to share this cultural significance of obento with people overseas.

- Preserving food culture for the future -

Japan has four seasons, and each season has nurtured a variety of culture while appreciating the beauty, harshness, and brightness of nature. In the culinary world, it is not just cooking techniques but also ingredients, tableware, and presentation that reflect this “four seasons”, allowing us to appreciate the beauty and sophistication of our culinary skills. However, as elements of Japan’s long-cultivated traditions are gradually fading, we believe that by valuing these techniques and traditions, we can evoke a sense of appreciation and perhaps inspire change for future generations. Here, we hope you can catch a glimpse of the thoughts and sentiments of those who came before us regarding food.



- Enjoying Meals -

"Food is not merely a means of nutrition for survival. If that were the case, it would be nothing more than feed." Unlike animals that eat feed, humans have cherished food as part of their culture. That is why we value meals, including the pleasure of thinking about what to eat, how to cook and eat it, what kind of tableware we use, where to eat it, and with whom. This perspective on food extends to the joy of packing an obento, heading out with family or friends, and savoring a meal in nature—on the fields, in the mountains, by a river or the sea, or beneath the full bloom of cherry blossoms.