

## Zoni

*Zoni* (also spelled *zouni*) is a traditional soup eaten during the Japanese New Year holiday. The soup is usually a clear, seasoned broth to which softened mochi (cakes made from plain steamed glutinous rice) and other ingredients are added. Mochi was first brought to Japan from the Asian continent during the Yayoi period (300 BCE–300 CE). Mochi became a part of the traditional New Year's feast during the Nara period (710–794), and by the Muromachi period (1336–1573), a new dish, *zoni*, had been created in Kyoto. By the Edo period (1603–1868), *zoni* had become popular throughout the country.

Regional *zoni* recipes vary greatly. In western Japan, the broth tends to be made from kombu stock with the addition of miso, and the mochi is often round. In eastern Japan, however, *zoni* broth is usually made with bonito flakes, and soy sauce is added, while the mochi is likely to be rectangular. Styles differ not only from prefecture to prefecture but also among cities and households. The mochi is essential, but otherwise a variety of locally harvested ingredients may be used, including daikon radish, shrimp, carrot, chicken, greens as garnish, beans, or shellfish.

Obama's traditional *zoni* is made with broth based on both kombu and bonito and seasoned with miso. The *mochi* used are circular in shape. Obama *zoni* may also include a sprinkling of brown or white sugar, possibly because the region was known to have traded sugar during the late Edo period. The Kitchen Studio teaches regional *zoni* recipes in December, and the museum serves Obama-style *zoni* to visitors during the New Year holiday.