

Grilled *Hoba* Miso

Hoba miso is a local dish of the Hida region of Gifu Prefecture. Many variations exist, but it usually consists of homemade miso paste mixed with shiitake mushrooms and spring onions. The mixture is placed on a dried magnolia leaf and grilled over charcoal, then eaten with rice and small side dishes. Popular variants of the dish often include meat or fish on top of the miso mixture. The Hida region is also famous for its beef, which is said to rival Kobe beef in both flavor and texture, and grilled *hoba* miso topped with slices of Hida beef is a fixture on the menu of many restaurants in the area.

Hoba miso is believed to have originated as a result of food preservation techniques used during the harsh Hida winters, when pickled vegetables that had frozen solid were placed on a dried magnolia leaf along with miso paste and grilled. The moisture in the miso paste would prevent the leaf from catching fire while the pickles thawed.