



JAPAN INFORMATION
AND CULTURE CENTER
在米国日本大使館広報文化センター

TEACHING TUESDAY

HASHI-OKI

Hashi-oki (箸置き) are small, decorative table accessories made to rest chopsticks on. Often found in restaurants, they are used to not only keep chopsticks clean, but also are a visual aid to dining presentation. Hashi-oki are often changed to match the season and the mood of the meal.

Hashi-oki have been used since the Heian period. Originally, a small earthenware holder called a mihashidai (みはしだい) was placed in the center of a tray on food used for offerings. This was eventually adopted in a holder to keep chopsticks warm during state banquets. Although the art of hashi-oki continued to be refined over the centuries, the modern form of hashi-oki came about in the Meiji period, to impress guests and prevent their chopsticks from getting dirty. They have become even more common in restaurants and homes since the 1960's.

Hashi-oki are designed in a variety of shapes and fashioned from materials such as wood, glass, and jade. Some people even use the paper sleeves from disposable chopsticks to fold a chopstick rest. The proper way to use a hashi-oki is to leave an overhang of about 3cm with the tips of the chopsticks, rather than placing the tips directly on the holder. Hashi-oki are placed on the front-left side of the dishes, with the chopsticks parallel to the table edge.