



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

# TEACHING TUESDAY

## YUZU

Yuzu (ユズ, 柚) fruit are native to East Asia and are characterized by a bright yellow peel and a distinctive, tangy aroma. A frost-hardy fruit, yuzu grows all over Japan, even in the harsh weather of the Tohoku region. Ripe, yellow yuzu become available around October, but unripe fruit, known as ao-yuzu, with a dark green peel are a good summer fruit.

The yuzu fruit has been used by the Japanese since it was introduced in the Nara Period for a variety of purposes, including culinary, bathing and medicinal. The aroma is considered the most important element of the yuzu. The juice is often mixed with soy sauce, broth, tea, or even honey, to make delicious drinks and ponzu sauce. The rind is used as a garnish, or in yuzu-gama (seen above), a bowl for formal meals. The ao-yuzu are often mashed to make a Kyushu-based seasoning called yuzu kosho (“yuzu pepper”).

Japan also has a custom of bathing with yuzu, especially on the winter solstice, in what is called yuzuyu. Whole or halved yuzu fruits are floated in the hot water of the bath and is said to guard against colds, treat the roughness of skin. The aroma also relaxes the body and mind. Medicinally, the seeds were historically used to treat itchiness and skin irritations. Yuzu can be hard to find outside of Japan, but the juice and rind are becoming more and more popular in the United States.