

# Donabe: Classic And Modern Japanese Clay Pot Cooking



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## Synopsis

A beautiful and lavishly photographed cookbook focused on authentic Japanese clay-pot cooking, showcasing beloved recipes and updates on classics, with background on the origins and history of donabe. Japanese clay pot (donabe) cooking has been refined over centuries into a versatile and simple method for preparing both dramatic and comforting one-pot meals. In *Donabe*, Tokyo native and cooking school instructor Naoko Takei Moore and chef Kyle Connaughton offer inspiring Japanese home-style recipes such as Sizzling Tofu and Mushrooms in Miso Sauce and Dashi-Rich Shabu-Shabu, as well as California-inspired dishes including Steam-Fried Black Cod with Crisp Potatoes, Leeks, and Walnut-Nori Pesto or Smoked Duck Breast with Creamy Wasabi Green Onion Dipping Sauce. All are rich in flavor, simple to prepare, and perfect for a communal dining experience with family and friends. *Donabe* also features recipes from luminary chefs such as David Kinch, Noma Shinobu, and Cortney Burns and Nick Balla, all of whom use donabe in their own kitchens. Collectible, beautiful, and functional, donabe can easily be an essential part of your cooking repertory.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I had always considered a donabe as a vessel for one-pot dishes, mostly hot pots, soups and stews. This book first suggests that then proves through chapters divided by different uses and different styles of donabe that a donabe can be used for many types of dishes. You will find recipes for rice dishes; steamed vegetables and meats; roasted and fried fish, chicken, pork, tofu, and more; smoked meats, seafood, cheese, vegetables; besides the more well-known hot pots,

soups and stews. This is a lovely compilation of Japanese recipes: Rich, warming, exciting and varied in flavors. If you are at all interested in Japanese foods and cooking, this is a book you need to work through. Plus, it has an entire chapter at the end, which gives recipes for dashi, sauces and condiments. It should be noted one of the authors of this book, Naoko Takei Moore, is the owner of Toiro Kitchen, a big seller of donabe cookware in the US. A good move on her part? Maybe. Her website has many styles and pieces of cookware offered for sale. And quality donabe from the Iga Province of Japan is not inexpensive. Also on her store website are a LOT of donabe recipes. I have checked, and except for the basic rice cooking instructions, the 104 recipes on the website do not really overlap those in this book. Some come close, but they are different. You might want to take a look at those recipes, because they will give you a feel for those in this book. And be sure to check out the "Look Inside" feature on this product page. Ten Speed Press always does such a great job with this feature. A real donabe is not mandatory to make good use of this cookbook: I have been wanting to buy a quality donabe for several years now, and this book has helped me with my decision-making.

Having lived in Japan, I've amassed quite a collection of Japanese cookbooks and housewares, the one exception being a donabe, a clay pot used to stew, simmer, steam, and smoke. Perhaps best known as the vessel in which oden is cooked, the donabe is an extremely versatile tool and durable as well. From the words *do* (土), *earth*, and *nabe* (鍋), *pot*, *donabe* are used to cook dishes known as nabemono, including shabu-shabu. There are relatively few works in English that focus on the donabe, so I was thrilled to review Naoko Takei Moore and Kyle Connaughton's *Donabe* when it came out. Naoko grew up in Tokyo, and like many Japanese, associated donabes with hot pot until she had rice made in a double-lid donabe; it turned out to be one of the most striking food discoveries that she ever experienced. She began to network with an Iga-based artisanal pottery company to import their donabe to the United States. Six styles of donabe pots are covered here: classic, rice cooker, soup and stew, steamer, tagi ne style, and smoker. Note that donabe are best used with gas or on a portable butane stove (a common fixture in most Japanese homes and hotpot restaurants); they should not be used on induction or ceramic cooktops. Like other clay vessels, do not submit your donabe to drastic changes in temperature or heat when empty as the clay may crack. With proper care and seasoning, a donabe can last for several decades of faithful use. After a very thorough 50-page introduction into the history, production, seasoning and care of donabe, the six types of recipes begin. Rice measurements are based on the traditional Japanese unit *go*. Nonrice measurements use US measurements

with metric equivalents. An extensive glossary provides additional guidance on ingredients and resources.

Focusing entirely on cooking using a Japanese clay cooking pot, Donabe is the ultimate authority on the subject. I grew up next to a part of the U.S. which had a large Japanese community. Visiting Japanese grocery stores and eating at family-run restaurants geared toward that community was the norm for me. My favorite dishes were often what I thought of as simply soups, which nevertheless featured a wealth of flavors and ingredients. Now, my spouse and I continue to love Japanese cooking, but we live far from any Asian markets or authentic restaurants. Donabe has helped me learn how to make many of our favorite recipes myself. It is a truly authentic work on Japanese home-style *donabe* cooking. Donabe pots are a specially-made clay pot, used for one-pot cooking over an open flame (gas range included). The authors are by an American chef who has cooked professionally in Japan for years, and a native whose career revolves around popularizing donabe cookware around the world. Together, they've created what appears to be the definitive work on the subject. That said, however, many of the dishes include Japanese ingredients not readily available in our area, like kombu, sake, mirin, various mushrooms, fresh yuzu and mizuna greens. So, for my cooking, we made do and used regular white mushrooms, bottled yuzu sauces, and our Dutch oven. Everything we have tried has been outstanding – authentic and delicious flavors, yet most are very easily prepared. One-pot cooking at its best. So far, we've enjoyed the Chicken Hot Pot, which is like the best chicken soup you've never had, and my family's favorite, Gyoza Hot Pot, which is super easy (and super cheap, since our local market now sells big frozen bags of gyoza, premade, for just a few bucks).

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