



The pot is fired before the glaze is applied for a final firing. The more the pot is used, the more striking the black coloring becomes.

### DORAKU GAMA KUCHITSUKI KURONABE

## Doraku Kiln Kuchitsuki Kuronabe

Photography: Satoru Naito, Text: QR

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The warmth of a beautiful Iga earthenware pot stirs the Japanese heart  
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Earthenware pots – the oldest cooking utensils – have been used in Japan since the Jomon and Yayoi periods (14,000 BCE–300 CE). These simple utensils, made by kneading clay and firing them, can be found in many regions around the world, but the mystery is when a lid was added to the pot. Even though opinions vary on the lid's purpose – cooking or storage – Japanese pots already had lids during this long period in history. If we are to blow our own trumpet, the Japanese have been cooking with earthenware for 10,000 years. Japanese cuisine inarguably has its roots in earthenware cooking. The Kuchitsuki Kuronabe featured here encapsulates an earthenware-pot ideal handed down from ancient times. This

gem, produced by the Doraku Kiln in Iga, Mie Prefecture, was made by Masatake Fukumori, the seventh generation current head of the family. Fukumori, who was producing tea sets, switched his focus to earthenware pots and utensils that would make food taste even more delicious. He now creates everything from plates and bowls to sake sets, and 16 types of earthenware pots with various uses.

Fukumori searches for good quality clays for earthenware pots in the mountains of Iga. He digs these up and mixes them to produce a clay suitable for the pots. Using a hand-driven wheel, he carefully throws each pot.

The beautiful black luster is created using an iron glaze called ameyuu. A Kuchitsuki Kuronabe, which uses this glaze, has superior fire-resistance and heat-resistance compared to ordinary

earthenware pots, so its uses reach beyond hot-pot cooking and include stews, steamed dishes and fried rice. Due to its excellent heat retention, a heated earthenware pot remains hot longer. In other words, food can be heated – slowly – bringing out the delicious flavors of meat, fish and vegetables. Earthenware pots are now getting noticed again for this reason.

Man has been cooking in earthenware pots from hunter-gatherer times until a few hundred years ago. The refined beauty of a Kuchitsuki Kuronabe exists among this ruggedness. Cooking with it can only make dishes more delicious.



As the name Kuchitsuki Kuronabe implies, the pot has a lip for use when serving soup and ingredients into the bowls.

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Kuchitsuki Kuronabe  
21 cm: 6,300 yen  
24 cm: 10,500 yen  
27 cm: 12,600 yen