

Column

Annual Events in Japan

Traditional Japanese Confection Day: *Kajo no hi*

June 16 used to be called *kajo* in Japan, referring to the custom of eating sweets to ward off evil spirits and to invite happiness. Behind this was the belief that eating nutritious adzuki beans would help people withstand the summer heat. The custom fell away but was resurrected as *wagashi no hi* (Japanese-style confections day) in 1979 by the Japan *Wagashi* Association. In general, *wagashi* are made from plant-based ingredients including rice, wheat, beans and sugar. Many *wagashi* are decorated with animal or flower motifs, for a beautiful symbol of Japanese culture bringing a seasonal sense and festive touch throughout the year.



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The distinctive hues and delicate decorations that distinguish *wagashi* show the master skills of Japanese confectioners

