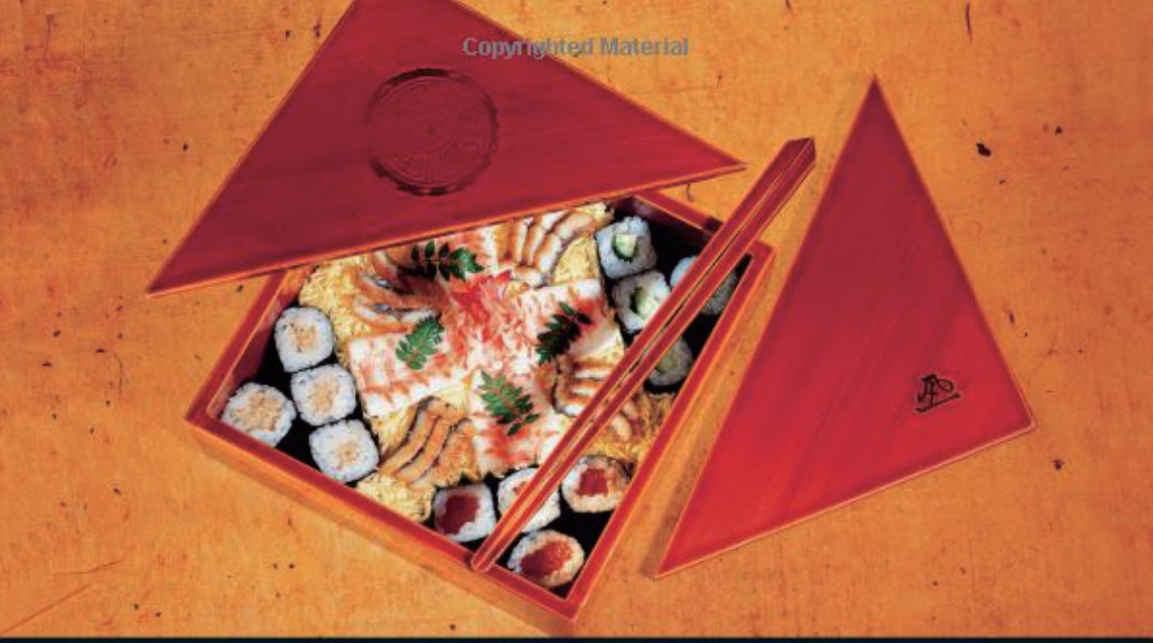
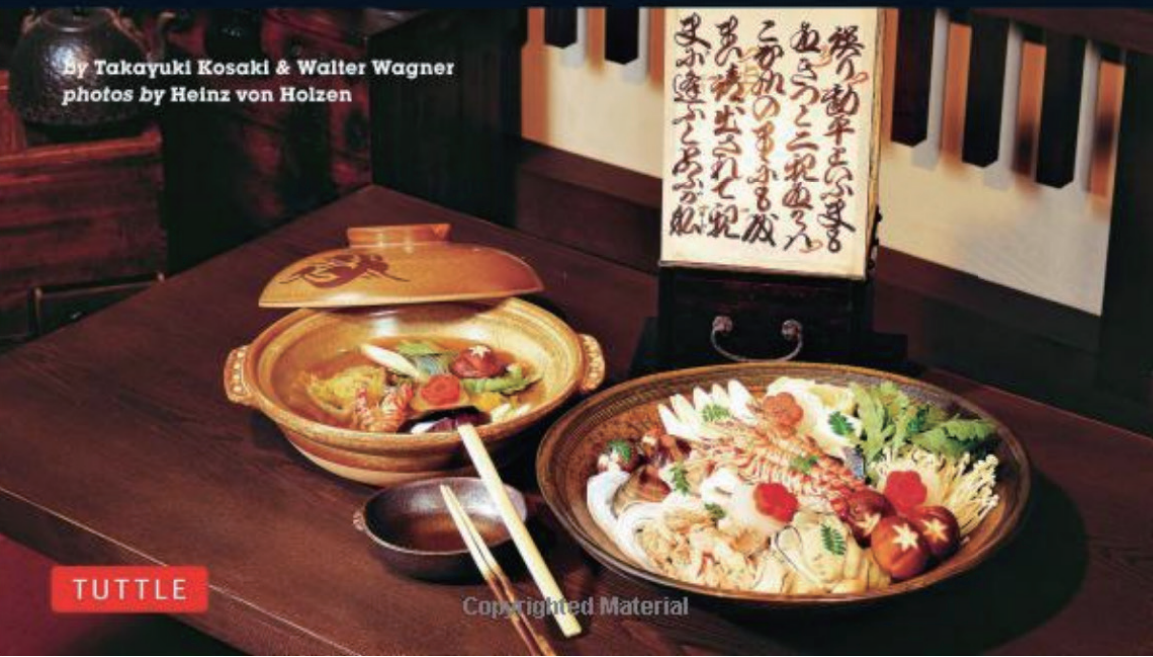


the food of Japan

96 Authentic Recipes from the Land of the Rising Sun

by Takayuki Kosaki & Walter Wagner
photos by Heinz von Holzen



TUTTLE

the food of Japan

96 Authentic Recipes from the Land of the Rising Sun

Recipes by **Takayuki Kosaki and Walter Wagner**
Introduction by **Kathleen Morikawa**
Food photography by **Heinz von Holzen**
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Food in Japan

A cuisine designed for all the senses

More than any other cuisine in the world, Japanese food is a complete aesthetic experience—a delight for the eyes, the nose and the palate. The desire to enhance rather than to alter the essential quality of fresh seasonal ingredients results in a cuisine that is unique, a tribute to nature and to man who, after all, produced the exquisite tableware on which the food is presented.

Japanese restaurants abroad were once frequented largely by homesick Japanese tourists or businessmen longing for a taste of home. Over the past few decades, however, Japanese cuisine has earned an international following and inspired the presentation of French *nouvelle cuisine* as well as a wave of Japanese-influenced dishes from Paris to San Francisco to Sydney. As palates become more adventurous and as health-conscious diners seek foods that are low in fat and sugar and make wide use of soy beans and vegetables, Japanese food is becoming increasingly popular and Japanese ingredients are now easier to obtain internationally.

Surrounded by seas, the Japanese have made the bounty of the sea a vital part of their diet, eating a variety of seaweed as well as many different fish and shellfish. The basic stock of Japanese cuisine, *dashi*, is redolent of the sea, being made from dried kelp (*konbu*) and dried bonito flakes.

There is a Japanese saying that a meal should always include "something from the mountain and something from the sea." The mountain being represented by a range of seasonal vegetables together with the staple, rice. Poultry and meat are also eaten, although these are less important than the humble soy bean, which appears as nutritionally rich bean curd (tofu), as miso, fermented soy bean paste used for soups and seasoning, and in the form of the ubiquitous soy sauce.

A number of factors come together to form the main elements of Japanese cuisine. Seasonal and regional specialties set the overall tone for the meal. Historical influences can be seen in the choice of foods, preparation techniques and the custom of eating certain foods at certain times of the year. The presentation of food is of paramount importance, with great care given to detail, color, form and balance. The food provides a showcase for the Japanese arts of porcelain, ceramics, basketware, lacquer and bamboo.

The secret to preparing Japanese cuisine at home is an understanding of a few very simple ingredients and of how a meal is composed; the culinary methods used are actually very easy to master. But the most important requirement of all is simply a love for good food prepared and presented with a sense of harmony.

The Evolution of Japanese Cuisine

Japanese cuisine today is the result of two millennia of culinary influences imported from the outside world, refined and adapted to reflect local preferences in taste and presentation, resulting in a style that is uniquely Japanese.

Rice cultivation, believed to have come from China, began in Japan around 300 B.C. Rice was used as a form of tribute and taxation until the early 20th century, and it became a rare luxury for the farmers who produced it—they had to survive on barley, buckwheat and other grains.

Meat and milk were part of the Japanese diet until the late 7th century. When Buddhism emerged as an important force in the nation, restrictions were placed on meat consumption. In the 8th century, meat-eating was officially prohibited and the forerunner of today's sushi appeared.

Chinese influence on Japanese cuisine continued to be strong for the next three centuries. It was from China that Japan learned the art of making bean curd, and how to use chopsticks. China was also the origin of soy sauce, said to have come from the Asian mainland in the 8th or 9th century, although today's Japanese-style soy sauce is a product of the 15th century. Tea was first introduced from China in the 9th century, but gradually faded from use, only to be reintroduced by a Zen priest in the late 12th century.

OPPOSITE: Early breakfast at a traditional inn on the slopes of Mount Fuji.
BELOW: A tiered lacquer box containing special foods that are served during the first week of the new year.

In the Heian Period (794–1185), Japan's distinctive style of cuisine began to develop. The capital was moved from Nara to Kyoto and the thriving aristocracy had the time to indulge its interests in art, literature, poetry, fine cuisine and elaborate games and pastimes. Elegant dining became an important part of the lifestyle and the aristocracy were not only gourmets but gourmands who supplemented their regular two meals a day with numerous between-meal snacks. Today, *kyo ryori*, the cuisine of Kyoto, represents the ultimate in Japanese dining. This is exemplified by *kaiseki*, which features an assortment of carefully prepared and exquisitely presented delicacies.

In 1885, the government moved to Kamakura where the more austere samurai lifestyle and Zen Buddhism fostered a healthier, simpler cuisine. *Shojin ryori* (vegetarian Buddhist temple fare), heavily influenced by Chinese Buddhist temple cooking, features small portions of a wide variety of vegetarian foods prepared using one of the five standard cooking methods. *Shojin ryori* guidelines include placing emphasis on food of five colors (green, red, yellow, white and black-purple) and six tastes (bitter, sour, sweet, hot, salty and delicate). It was an extremely important culinary influence during its time and this emphasis on certain tastes, colors and cooking techniques lives on today. *Shojin ryori* also led to the development of *cha kaiseki*, food served before the tea ceremony, in the mid-16th century.

Japan's trade with the outside world from the 14th to 16th centuries brought many new influences. *Kabocha*, the much-loved, green-skinned pumpkin, was introduced via Southeast Asia by the Portuguese in the 16th century. The

Bitter Sweet

Few things are as quintessentially Japanese as the ritual tea ceremony which, for the non-Japanese, seems to encapsulate all of the mystique, discipline and refinement of Japanese culture. *Cha-no-yu*, the Way of Tea, began in the 15th century and in its early form, placed much emphasis on displaying and admiring imported Chinese art objects.

The Way of Tea gave rise to two of the more interesting aspects of Japanese cuisine: *cha kaiseki*, Japanese haute cuisine designed to be served as a light meal before a tea ceremony, and *wagashi*, traditional Japanese sweets which became an important accessory to the tea ceremony from the mid-16th century on. *Wagashi* today vary from the rather light treats enjoyed with a cup of pale green tea in the afternoon to the exquisitely delicate and often extremely sugary *wagashi* offered to neutralize the bitter taste of the powdered green tea.

Kanten, an agar agar-based gelatin, is an important ingredient in the sweets. When made into a jelly, *kanten* is a pliable sculpting material in the hands of a skilled craftsman who can swiftly carve a pale purple portion of *kanten* into a beautiful hydrangea in full bloom in spring, or create goldfish afloat in a cool sea of jellied *kanten* in summer.

Due to their association with the tea ceremony and the ancient aristocracy, *wagashi* sometimes bear names that allude to the literature and poetry of the distant past.

Although there are some standard favorites available all year-round, most *wagashi* makers vary their products according to the changing seasons. *Sakura mochi*, a soft rice dumpling tinted cherry blossom pink, filled with bean jam and wrapped in a cherry tree leaf, is popular during spring time. *Kashiwa mochi*, a similar cake wrapped in an oak leaf, is eaten in May. Autumn foliage is replicated in October and snow-capped mountain designs take over in winter. In January, the Oriental zodiac's animal for that year makes an appearance.

A visit to a traditional Japanese sweet shop is indeed a treat for the eyes as well as the stomach.

ABOVE: The formal tea ceremony, with its bitter powdered green tea, led to the creation of delicate *wagashi* sweets during the 16th century. OPPOSITE: An array of tiny portions of exquisitely presented food typical of Japan's haute cuisine, *kaiseki ryori*.

Dutch followed a century later and introduced corn, potatoes and sweet potatoes. European cooking techniques created some interest and developed into what came to be known in Japan as "the cooking of the southern Barbarians" or *nanban ryori*. It is from the Portuguese *pao* that Japan derived its word for bread, *pan*. The Portuguese are credited with introducing tempura (batter-fried foods) as well as the popular cake, *kasutera* (castilla). The culinary cross-cultural communication was not entirely one-sided—the Dutch are rumored to have taken soy sauce back to Europe with them.

During the Edo Period (1603–1857), Japan underwent almost three centuries of self-imposed seclusion from the outside world. The nation looked inward—and a highly refined and very prosperous merchant class with the cash to pursue its sophisticated tastes in food and the arts gradually arose. Noodle restaurants proliferated during this period and *nigiri-zushi* (seasoned rice wrapped in toasted seaweed) was invented.

The Meiji Period (1868–1912) marked the return of contact with the outside world. In the late 19th century, beef was again allowed on the menu, and the early 20th century brought growing interest in foreign treats such as bread, curry, ice cream, coffee and croquettes.

In the postwar period, purists have decried the decline of Japanese home cooking citing the electric rice cooker, instant noodles in styrofoam cups, instant miso soup, powdered *dashi* stock and ready-made pickling preparations that provide "homemade" pickles in minutes. Yet the numerous cooking programs on Japanese television

and the number of cookbooks in the bookstores confirm that modern Japanese are still very much interested in the preparation of good food.

The Japanese desire to adapt outside influences to local tastes has never waned and has produced such unique blendings of East and West as green tea ice cream, seaweed-flavored potato chips and cod roe spaghetti. And deep is the shock of the visitor to Japan who bites into a frozen chocolate-colored ice cream, only to discover he has bought an *azuki* or red bean bar instead.

Regional Cooking Styles

The extremes in Japan's climate—from the very cold northern island of Hokkaido to the subtropical islands of Okinawa—result in a range of regional cuisines that are as diverse as the land itself.

In Hokkaido, with its wide open spaces and climate that is not conducive to rice cultivation, people have acquired a taste for potatoes, corn, dairy products, barbecued meats and salmon. Their special version of Chinese noodles, called Sapporo *ramen*, is often served with a dab of butter. Seafood *o-nabe* (one-pot stews) featuring crab, scallops and salmon are also a specialty of the region.

There is a great difference in the food preferences of the residents of the eastern Kanto region (centered around Tokyo and Yokohama) and the western Kansai region (Kyoto, Osaka and environs). In the Kansai area, fermented soy bean soup, or miso, is almost white compared with the darker brown and red miso favored in the Kanto region. Eastern and western Japan are also divided by differing tastes in sushi, sweets and pickles. The Kyoto area is identified with the light, delicately flavored cuisine of the ancient court—true haute cuisine—and many in western Japan feel Tokyoites are a little heavy handed with the soy sauce.

Nagoya, located halfway between Tokyo and Kyoto, is known for its flat *udon* noodles and *uiro*, a sweet rice jelly. Pilgrims visiting the Buddhist temples on Shikoku Island would be sure to try the island's famous Sanuki *udon* noodles, fresh sardines and mandarin oranges. Kyushu Island is known for its tea, fruits and seafood products, and for the Chinese and Western culinary influences that developed because of Nagasaki's role as a center of trade with the outside world. Visitors to Nagasaki make it a point to taste its *kasutera* sponge cake, which is said to be as authentically rich as those made in Spain.

On the subtropical islands of Okinawa, dishes featuring pork are favored. Sweets made with raw sugar, pineapples and papaya are also popular, as are several powerful local drinks: for example, *awamori*, made from sweet potatoes, as well as *habu* sake, a type of liquor that comes complete with a deadly *habu* snake coiled inside the bottle.

A Food for All Seasons

One striking aspect of Japanese cuisine is the emphasis on seasonal cuisine. Every food has its appropriate season, ensuring that Japanese tastes are in harmony with nature, and that the ingredients are the freshest possible.

Connoisseurs delight in the first appearance of any seasonal speciality, and are eager to partake of the first bonito fish or new green tea in spring, or the first mackerel or *matsutake* mushrooms in autumn.

The Japanese year is filled with holidays and festivities that require special seasonal delicacies: appropriate sweets and sweet sake for the Doll Festival parties held for little girls on March 3rd and rice dumplings for moon-viewing parties in September.

The most important of seasonal dining specialities is *osechi ryori*, the special foods that are served during the first week of the new year. Dozens of items are decoratively arranged in tiered lacquer boxes, which are brought out again and again over the first few days of the new year, providing housewives a little respite from the non-stop eating (and serving) that marks the holiday. Customs vary from home to home and region to region, but the typical New Year foods usually include *kamaboko* fish sausages bearing auspicious bamboo, plum and pine designs, *konbu* seaweed rolls tied into bows with dried gourd strips, boiled black beans, chestnuts in a sticky sweet potato paste, herring roe, shredded carrot and white radish in sweet vinegared dressing and pickled lotus root. Vegetables such as shiitake mushrooms, radishes, lotus root, carrots and burdock are boiled in a soy sauce and *dashi* broth. The savory steamed egg custard known as *chawan-mushi* is also often eaten at this time.

Many Japanese mushroom varieties, such as *shimeji*, *enokitake* and shiitake are now widely available outside Japan. Other varieties, such as *matsutake*, are more esoteric and only make a rare appearance in Japanese specialty stores.

A Portable Feast

The *o-bento* or box lunch is a Japanese institution which consists of white rice and an assortment of tiny helpings of meat, fish, vegetables, egg, fruit and a pickled plum (*umeboshi*), all arranged in a small rectangular box.

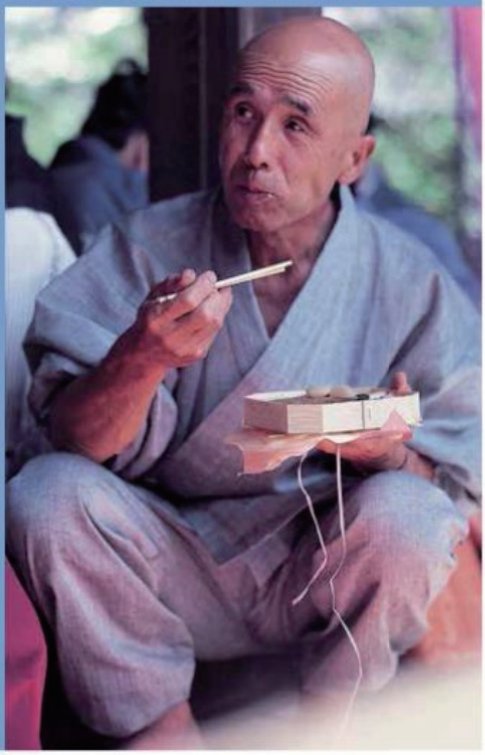
The pickled plum is believed to aid digestion and is a method of keeping the rice from spoiling. If other ingredients are not available, an *o-bento* may consist only of a red pickled plum planted in the center of a field of white rice; this is called a *Hinomaru bento* or "Rising Sun flag lunch."

Since only small portions of each food are included and a well-balanced variety of foods is necessary, preparing a proper *o-bento* can be a time-consuming ritual. As with almost all Japanese dishes, attention to detail and attractive presentation are paramount.

A homemade *o-bento* is considered a tangible symbol of a wife's or mother's love and devotion. A young husband may be embarrassed by the time and tender loving care devoted to the preparation of the lunch box known as the *aisai bento* ("loving wife's lunch") and be hesitant to eat it in front of colleagues. Children, less easily intimidated, glory and gloat over their lunch boxes. They compare and trade delicacies, demonstrating a sense of security and pride in the love of a mother who will wake at 5 A.M. to fry chicken tidbits, make rectangular omelets, and create panda bear and beagle faces out of seaweed and vegetables.

The most famous of the commercially made *o-bento* are the *ekiben*, the box lunches available at most of the nation's train stations. These vary greatly from one area of the country to another and are considered to be an important way of promoting regional delicacies, customs and crafts. In Takasaki, Gunma Prefecture, a region known for its doll-making industry, the lunch boxes are sold in little red plastic bowls shaped like a Daruma doll, the plastic cover resembling the face of the Daruma. It is a distinctive local touch that has made Takasaki's *ekiben* famous nationwide. For many travelers to Japan, tasting all the different local *ekiben* along their route is no less than a vital part of the trip.

Everyone enjoys an *o-bento* box lunch—from school children and businessmen to Buddhist monks at a temple festival.

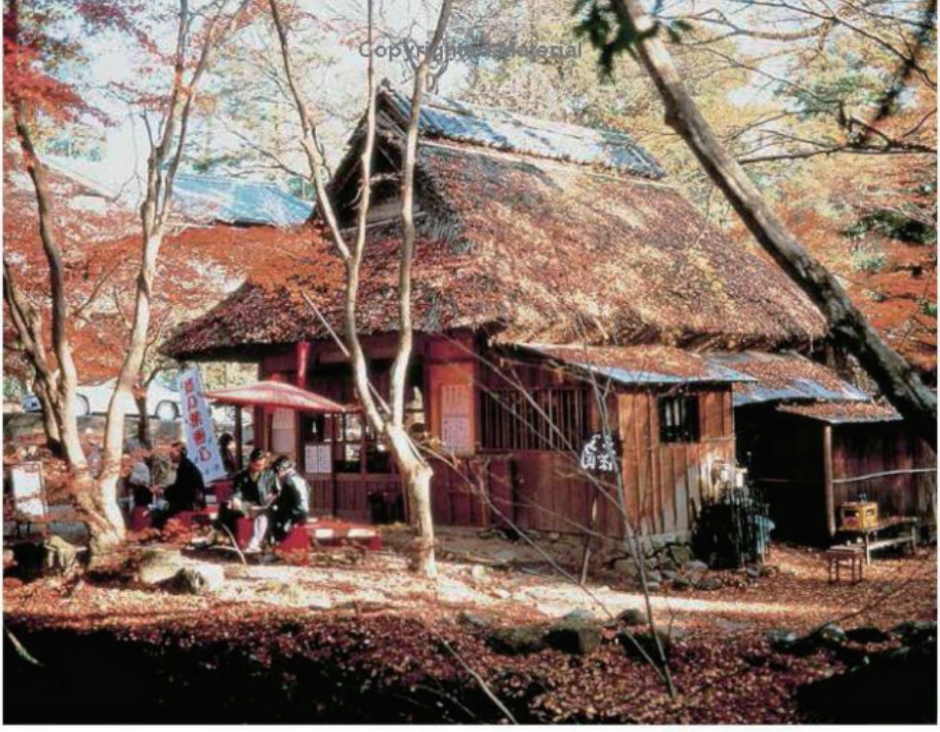


The staple accompaniment for these dishes is *o-mochi*, which are rice cakes that can be grilled or boiled in a soup known as *o-zoni*. *O-zoni* and *o-mochi* are traditionally served on New Year's morning. These chewy treats must be eaten carefully, for each year several elderly diners choke to death on their New Year *o-mochi*.

Once, all Japanese families made their own rice cakes, but now it is a tradition that is chiefly maintained in the countryside. *Mochi-gome*, a special type of glutinous rice, is prepared and molded—while it is still hot—into a ball and placed in a large round wooden mortar where the rice is pounded rhythmically. The final product is rolled out into a flat cake and cut into rectangular pieces. In present-day Japan, housewives living in the countryside freeze some of these special cakes, so that they can be defrosted at short notice throughout the year whenever some special occasion arises.

Pastimes and events in the traditional Japanese calender are intimately linked to the related foods of the season, enriching and celebrating the daily rhythm of life. Fruits and vegetables are eaten at the height of their season, or their *shun*, and some fine restaurateurs keep their ears on the ground for the latest news or sighting of the freshest seasonal foods—this never remains a secret for long. Japanese culture continues to be fed by the produce from the forest, seas and fields, prepared skillfully, tastefully and simply.

Cherry blossoms signal the coming of spring, and in top Japanese restaurants, diners may be served a cup of cherry blossom tea with several delicate blossoms floating in the clear, slightly salty beverage. Cherry blossom viewing



parties are a seasonal must for the majority of Japanese. *O-bento* lunch boxes are packed full of delicacies to be eaten beneath the fragrant blossom, although at this time, the emphasis is most often on *o-sake* (the drink) rather than *o-bento* (the food).

Bamboo sprouts are another spring delicacy, as are the year's first bonito and rape blossoms. Spring is also the time when nature lovers take to the forests to hunt for edible wild plants such as bracken (*warabi*) and fiddleheads (*zenmai*).

Summer marks the time for eating grilled eel, which is believed to supply the energy needed to survive the sticky and humid weather. It is also the time for octopus, abalone and plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, especially the summer favorite, *edamame*—fresh soy beans boiled in the pod, dusted with salt and popped into the mouth as the perfect accompaniment for beer on a hot summer's night. Another summer dining treat is cold noodles served with *dashi* and soy sauce dip.

Strings of persimmon set out to dry can be seen dangling from the eaves of many a farmhouse in the countryside during autumn. This is also the season for roasted chestnuts, soba noodles made from freshly harvested and ground buckwheat, and for mushroom hunting. *Matsutake*, highly prized variety of mushrooms savored for their distinctive fragrance, appear during autumn and connoisseurs crave seasonal soups and rice dishes flavored with this delicacy. *Matsutake* are most prevalent in the cold mountainous areas of central Japan. So greatly valued are the mushrooms that marketing them is a big business in the remote and mountainous areas of Japan, where villagers struggle to defend their crops of "brown gold" from poachers. Their concern is easily understood when one realizes that *matsutake* can be sold for approximately $100 per pound in a normal year.

Late autumn is the best time for preserving the year's vegetable harvest for winter. A large variety of pickling methods are popular in Japan, the most common using miso (fermented soy bean paste), salt, vinegar or rice bran as preservatives.

The onset of winter brings fugu sashimi, strips of raw blowfish which can be a deadly delicacy if the poison in the liver and ovaries is not removed correctly by a licensed chef. Other winter favorites include mandarin oranges and *o-nabe*, one-pot stews designed to warm the body on a cold winter's night. On the final day of the year, it is customary to eat soba, for it is believed that the long noodles will guarantee health and longevity in the new year.

ABOVE: Traditional thatch-roof wooden farmhouses, such as this one in Gifu Prefecture, are increasingly rare in Japan, and therefore have become the focus of special seasonal outings, for example, to view the autumn foliage as shown here. Seasonal foods also play a central role in one's enjoyment of the rustic scenery on these occasions.
RIGHT: Each season has its special foods. Restaurants and private homes change their serving dishes to suit the season, as in this autumnal spread.

Eating and Cooking Japanese Style

For hundreds of years, the Japanese kitchen was a simple dark room with a wood burner, a large crock for holding water, another crock or wooden tub for holding pickles and a wooden counter for cutting. These early kitchens were certainly not bright and pleasant places, but the process of cooking and eating together was made more cheerful by the use of the *irori*, a large open hearth heated with charcoal and positioned in the middle of the main room of the house. A hook above the hearth held a kettle of boiling water for tea, or for one of the one-pot stews that are an important part of Japanese home cooking. Fish and rice cakes were often grilled here too.

The Japanese kitchen took a major step forward in the early postwar period and today, the kitchen is equipped with many modern electrical appliances, including the all-important rice cooker. However, the basic utensils have scarcely changed and most cooks still prefer to use traditional utensils made from bamboo. These include a variety of bamboo baskets for draining noodles (a colander or sieve makes an adequate substitute), a bamboo rolling mat and a bamboo steamer. The bamboo mats, which should be available in any specialty Asian kitchen store, are useful for rolling rice inside wrappers of seaweed (*nori-maki*), for rolling up Japanese omelets, for squeezing the liquid out of cooked vegetables and for a number of other tasks. Tiered bamboo steamers, generally available in Asian stores, can be set above a large saucepan or wok of boiling water.

The average Japanese kitchen will include a mortar and pestle used especially for grinding the sesame seeds that are a vital ingredient in many sauces and dressings (an electric blender is a good substitute). Other important items include a grater for radish, ginger and horseradish; a pan for deep-frying (a wok is ideal); earthenware casserole pots and a variety of sharp knives for cutting meat, vegetables and fish for sashimi.

LEFT: The traditional hearth (*iron*) is now virtually a museum piece in Japan. ABOVE: A bamboo rolling mat is indispensable in a Japanese kitchen. RIGHT: The wooden rice scoop and mixing bowl is used to prepare Sushi Rice (page 26)—the scoop is also a symbol of domestic authority.

The most symbolic kitchen utensil, the *shamoji*, (the wooden scoop used to serve rice), has come to represent domestic authority. When an older woman hands over her *shamoji* to her daughter-in-law, she is symbolically expressing her desire to hand over the management of household affairs to the latter, and is also an unspoken admission that the younger woman has finally passed muster.

Planning the Meal

The two extremes of Japanese cuisine are a full *kaiseki ryori*, an exquisite array of a dozen or more tiny portions of food artfully arranged on superb tableware, and the basic meal consisting merely of boiled rice, miso soup and pickles. Japanese cuisine developed out of austerity, and a sense of restraint rather than lavish display is still inherent in Japanese food today. Do not think that because the individual portions of food that make a Japanese meal are small, you will finish the meal hungry. With the wide variety of tastes, textures and flavors, you are certain to feel satisfied at the end of a meal.

The basis of every main meal in Japan is boiled rice, miso soup and pickles. The accompanying dishes are varied according to availability, season, how much time you have for preparation of the meal and so on.

The Japanese do not categorize their food by basic ingredients (for example, vegetables, beef or fish), but by the method with which it is prepared. Food is thus classified as grilled, steamed, simmered, or vinegared. Because this concept is unfamiliar to Western cooks, recipes in this book have been grouped to follow the basic pattern of a Japanese meal.

A Japanese meal can be divided into three main areas: a beginning, a middle and an end. The beginning would include raw fish (sashimi), clear soups and appetizers. The middle of the meal is made

up of a number of seafood, meat, poultry and vegetable dishes prepared by either deep-frying, grilling, steaming, simmering, or serving as a vinegared salad. To ensure variety, each style of preparation would be used only once for the foods making up the middle of the meal. For example, if the fish was deep-fried, the vegetables might be simmered in seasoned stock, the meat grilled and a mixture of egg and savory tidbits steamed. Alternatively, this variety of middle dishes might be replaced by a hotpot (*nabe*), a one-dish combination which includes ingredients such as seafood, vegetables, meat, bean curd and noodles.

If you are new to Japanese cuisine, you will probably want to keep the menu relatively simple. Thus, planning around the basic soup, pickles and rice, you might like to prepare one appetizer and a couple of other dishes using fish, meat, poultry or vegetables. You might even limit the meal to one simple appetizer and a one-pot dish such as sukiyaki, followed by rice, soup and pickles. As you become more confident, you will find it easier to prepare a greater number of dishes. Do not forget, however, that restraint is a very Japanese characteristic and that it is better to serve three carefully cooked, beautifully presented dishes than six less-than-perfect ones.

The Importance of Presentation

In private homes and many restaurants, all the dishes making up the meal are presented at the same time. At a formal meal, however, the appetizers arrive first, followed by the middle dishes, each served in the order dictated by their method of preparation, concluding with rice, soup, pickles, green tea and fresh fruit.

The presentation of Japanese food is an art that encourages the cook's imagination and creativity. As a German visitor to Japan remarked around the turn of the century, "a person doesn't go to the table as in the West but the table is brought to them from the kitchen already set with food." Individual trays for each diner are set with an assortment of bowls and plates, together with a pair of chopsticks which are finely pointed at the ends (unlike Chinese chopsticks, which are rounded or even blunt at the ends).

The choice of tableware in Japan is influenced by the season as well as by the type of food being served. Restaurants stock four sets of tableware, one for each season, and even private homes have a wide assortment of tableware in different materials, shapes and sizes. Soup and plain rice are always served in round lacquer bowls with a lid, while basketware is preferred for deep-fried foods. Rustic pottery, fine porcelain, glass, and lacquered trays are all used when considered appropriate.

Generally speaking, foods which are round (such as pieces of rolled meat or slices of lotus root) are presented on rectangular or square plates, while square-shaped foods are likely to be served on round plates. Such imagination is shown in Japan, however, that plates and bowls are not just square, rectangular or round; they might be hexagonal, semi-circular, fan-shaped or resemble a leaf or shell. No wonder a Japanese traveling in Europe in the last century dismissed Western food with the remark "every damn plate is round."

It is well worth the effort looking for suitable tableware for your home-cooked Japanese food as it adds enormously to the total aesthetic experience. And just as tableware is important, so too is the garnishing of the food. It has been said in Japan that "a person cannot go out naked in public, neither can food." That carefully placed spray of *kinome* leaves, that tiny sprig of *shiso* leaves and flower buds, that bright red ball of grated white radish mixed with grated red chili are all an integral part of the dish.

In most cases, garnishes are edible. When you are using substitutes for garnishes, remember that even if they are similar in color and shape, you will not be able to duplicate the taste of the original ingredient. It is generally not that important to get the exact garnish for particular dishes, so feel free to select garnishes of tiny flowers and leaves that seem to enhance the particular dishes you are serving.

ABOVE: In the West, diners go to the dinner table. In Japan, the "table"—in a form of a tray beautifully set with many different dishes, each one served in a special plate or bowl—is brought to the diners. RIGHT: A cook's imagination and creativity is displayed in the aesthetic presentation of Japanese food, and strict rules govern the serving and eating of a formal Japanese dinner such as this one.

Japanese Ingredients

Alfalfa sprouts are commonly used as a garnish in Japanese cuisine. Always buy fresh alfalfa sprouts—these should be crisp, without brown tips, and preferably consumed shortly after purchase.

Azuki are small red beans that are sold dried. Dried beans need to be soaked before using. *Azuki* beans are cooked, sweetened and sometimes mashed into a paste to make desserts (see page 107). Cooked, sweetened red beans are readily available canned in Asian supermarkets.

Bamboo shoots are available precooked—whole or sliced—in vacuum packs in well-stocked supermarkets. These precooked shoots are crunchy, with a savory sweetness, and are much easier to use than fresh shoots. Fresh shoots have an infinitely superior flavor and texture but need to be boiled for about 2 hours. Canned bamboo shoots are also common, but not as tasty, and should be drained, rinsed and scalded in hot water before use. Unused bamboo shoots should be stored in the refrigerator covered in fresh water for up to 10 days, with the water changed daily.

Bean curd or **tofu** is a healthy and inexpensive source of protein. Several types of bean curd made from soy beans are widely used in Japanese dishes. **Firm tofu** (*momen tofu*) is usually sold packed in water in containers of about 9 oz (250 g) in food stores. It is firmer and easier to handle than fine-textured **silken tofu** (*kinu-goshi tofu*), which is usually added to soups or enjoyed chilled. These bean curds are often available in plastic trays or rolls designed to be cut with a sharp knife while still in the plastic so they will keep their shape. **Abura-age** (deep-fried tofu slices) are packaged in plastic packets and are available in the refrigerated section of food stores. The bean curd should be blanched in boiling water and drained to remove excess oil before using.

Benitade are maroon-colored sprouts mainly used as a garnish in most Japanese dishes. They have a slightly peppery taste. They can be substituted with alfalfa sprouts or, for a similar color, finely shredded red cabbage.

Burdock is a long, brown and stick-like root that can measure up to 25 in (60 cm) in length. It is sold as a whole root, or halved. When sliced, a root yields about ½ cup. It should be put into water immediately after scraping off the skin to stop it from discoloring. Nutritious and enjoyed for its texture, fresh burdock is often available in Japanese stores and Asian supermarkets. Canned burdock can be used as a substitute.

Chrysanthemum leaves (*shungiku*) come from a particular variety of the chrysanthemum plant which are edible and enjoyed for their distinctive grassy and slightly bitter flavor. Watercress, spinach or celery leaves make good substitutes if chrysanthemum leaves are not available.

Cloud ear fungus, also known as wood ear fungus, is a crinkly, grayish brown fungus that is available dried, sometimes fresh or presoaked. Dried fungus comes in two sizes, and swells to many times its original size after soaking in warm water.

Daikon is a large white radish which can grow to a length of 15 in (40 cm), with a diameter of about 3 in (8 cm). Choose firm, heavy and unblemished daikons. Widely used in Japanese cooking, the fresh root is often served finely grated and eaten with soy sauce. **Pickled daikon radish** is yellow or white in color, and sold vacuum-packed and in jars.

Dashi stock, made from dried bonito flakes and dried kelp, is the basis of most Japanese soups and sauces. Instant *dashi* can be made from liquid concentrate (*katsuo dashi*), powdered *dashi* granules (*hondashi*) and *dashi* teabags (*dashi-no-moto*) which are sold in plastic packets or glass jars in food stores, and provide a practical alternative when small amounts of *dashi* stock are required. The recipe for Basic Dashi Stock is found on page 23.

Dried bonito flakes (*katsuo bushi*)—along with dried kelp (*konbu*)—are the essential ingredients for making Basic Dashi Stock (page 23). The shavings of bonito fish are available in small plastic packets of varying sizes. The larger ones are used to make *dashi* soup stock whereas the finer ones are used as a garnish. They are readily available in Japanese food stores as well as many supermarkets.

Eggplants used in this book belong to the Japanese variety, which is thin,

tender and purple, about 3–4 in (8–10 cm) long. Slender Asian eggplants make good substitutes.

Ginger is widely used as a flavoring for Japanese food. To make ginger juice, finely grate peeled fresh ginger. Squeeze it in a garlic press, or wrap in cheesecloth or muslin and squeeze to extract the juice from 3 in (8 cm) of ginger root. Depending on the age of the ginger (young ginger is juicier), you will obtain 1–2 tablespoons of juice. **Pickled ginger** is eaten as an accompaniment to rice dishes, especially sushi and sashimi. It is made of thin slices of young ginger that have been pickled first in salt, then in vinegar. A pink color is obtained by adding red *shiso* leaves, and sometimes red coloring is also added.

Green tea (*matcha*) is a bitter tea rich in caffeine. The powdered form is used in traditional Japanese tea ceremonies. It is readily available from Japanese stores and is great for making green tea ice cream. To make green tea, whisk ¼ teaspoon of *matcha* powder in ½–1 cup (125–250 ml) warm water.

Japanese cucumbers are short and have a sweeter flavor and a smoother texture than large cucumbers. This variety, also known as Lebanese cucumbers in some countries, is widely available in the fresh vegetables section of food stores. Baby cucumbers or pickling gherkins are good substitutes.

Japanese green peppers are much smaller, and are not spicy. They have a milder flavor than Western bell peppers (capsicum). Generally, 8 Japanese green peppers are equivalent to 1 large bell pepper.

Japanese mustard is quite spicy and is similar to Chinese mustard. It is available prepared in squeeze tubes. Alternatively, canned Japanese mustard powder can be mixed with a little water to form a paste just before use. Do not substitute with European or American mustards, which are either too sweet or too vinegary.

Japanese rice (*gohan*) is a short-grain variety of rice, which has a somewhat stickier texture than other varieties. Japanese short-grain rice, now grown in California and Australia, is available almost everywhere. Never use fragrant Thai or Basmati rice with Japanese food as they tend not to give good results in Japanese recipes.

Japanese soy sauce (*shoyu*) is brewed from soy beans, wheat and salt, and is saltier than Chinese soy sauce. Chinese soy sauce may be used as a substitute but it is worthwhile to purchase a good quality Japanese soy sauce if you will be cooking much Japanese food. Another type of soy sauce, *tamari*, is black and has a slightly smoky, full-bodied flavor that comes from the addition of wheat. *Tamari* is available in most Japanese stores and well-stocked supermarkets.

Kinome are tender sprigs of the prickly ash tree. The leaves have a decorative appearance and a distinctive taste that makes them a popular garnish during the warmer months. They are readily available in Japanese stores and can be kept refrigerated for about a week. Sprigs of watercress make an acceptable substitute but the flavor is different.

Dried kelp or **konbu**, probably the most important seaweed in Japanese cooking, is an essential ingredient in Basic Dashi Stock (page 23). It has a dark brown color, often with whitish patches of salt and is sold in strips or small folded sheets. Wipe with a damp cloth but do not soak before using. When cooked, it expands into smooth, green sheets which are discarded before serving. 1-in (2½-cm) squares of **salted dried kelp** (*shio-konbu*), available in plastic packets, are either enjoyed as a snack or used as a savory accent in some dishes.

Konnyaku, made from a type of potato, is sold either in powdered form or as grayish brown, jelly-like noodles or blocks kept in plastic packets—these should be stored in water in the refrigerator. Also known as devil's tongue, it has a chewy texture, is bland but is high in minerals with no fat.

Lotus roots have a delicious, crunchy texture and a decorative appearance when sliced, thus making the roots a popular vegetable and garnish in many Japanese dishes. They are sold fresh, covered in mud, or cleaned, in vacuum packs in Asian food stores. The canned version lacks the texture of the fresh root, and should be scalded before use.

Mioga is a pretty, pale pink ginger bud with green tips. Although it is a member of the ginger family, *mioga* is not spicy, unlike most gingers. Only its flower and bud are eaten. The buds are very fragrant when thinly sliced and are used as a garnish, in salads or made into vinegar pickles.

Mirin is a type of sweetened rice wine sold in bottles in Japanese stores.

It is used only for cooking—the alcohol dissipates through cooking. Use 1 teaspoon sugar added to 2 teaspoons sake as a substitute for 1 tablespoon *mirin*.

Miso is a protein-rich, salty paste made of fermented soy beans. It has a distinctive aroma and flavor, and is a very important ingredient in Japanese cuisine. Miso must be kept refrigerated and is sold in plastic packs or tubs in the refrigerated section of Asian food stores. It comes in different grades, varieties and colors and the taste ranges from very salty to mild to sweet. The word "miso" used in this book refers to the common brown miso used for soups and sauces and which is easily available in well-stocked supermarkets. **White miso** is actually a light yellow paste, light in flavor and is one of the least salty varieties. White miso is good for both soups and dressings. **Red miso** is reddish brown in color, with an emphatic flavor, and is used for winter soups and stews. Other varieties include **inaka miso** or country miso, which is sweeter and grainier and can be eaten as a dip with fresh vegetables.

Mitsuba, a member of the parsley family, is used as a herb in soups, in salads and with fried foods. Celery leaves or parsley are good substitutes.

Nori, also referred to as laver, is toasted, crisp and sold in very thin, dark green sheets of varying sizes—these sheets are used for wrapping sushi. The sheets used in this book measure 9 x 7 in (23 x 17 cm) pieces, and are packed in bundles of 10. *Nori* is also available as thinly shredded strips or flakes, both of which are used as a garnish served with rice.

Ponzu is a popular Japanese citrus-scented soy sauce dressing available ready mixed in bottles (see page 24). Its main ingredient is the fragrant rind of the *yuzu* orange.

Enokitake mushrooms | Nameko mushrooms | Oyster mushrooms

Shimeji mushrooms | Shiitake mushrooms

Mushrooms are grown commercially, though the mushroom season is eagerly awaited in Japan, as fresh wild mushrooms are highly sought after. Fresh **shiitake mushrooms** have an excellent flavor. **Dried black** or **Chinese black mushrooms** are similar to shiitake mushrooms. **Enokitake mushrooms** or golden mushrooms are clusters of slender cream-colored stalks with tiny caps, and are sometimes available fresh and canned—the tough end of the stems must be discarded before use. Fresh **oyster mushrooms** (*maitake*) are also sold in cans. **Nameko mushrooms** have a slippery texture and attractive reddish brown caps; as their season is short, they are more commonly found in jars or cans. Although rather similar to *nameko* mushrooms in terms of size and shape, **shimeji mushrooms** lack their slippery texture.

Rice vinegar is fermented from rice. Japanese rice vinegar is less acidic than malt or wine vinegars, and has a mild and pleasant fragrance. It is widely available—but slightly diluted cider vinegar or a good quality Chinese rice vinegar, slightly diluted, can be used as substitutes.

Sake or rice wine is available in many different qualities. Besides being popular as a drink, sake is an important ingredient in Japanese cooking. Widely available in liquor stores or in supermarkets where licensing laws do not prevent its sale, it is also sold as cooking sake in Asian supermarkets. Keep refrigerated after opening. Chinese rice wine or very dry sherry are alternatives.

Salted salmon flakes, also known as *shio zake*, is a common ingredient in Japanese rice parcels (*onigiri*), and is also used as a topping for rice. These salted salmon flakes are sold in packets, which are usually available in the refrigerated seafood section of most Japanese supermarkets. Alternatively, prepare your own by flaking poached salmon and adding a little salt.

Sansho is a peppery powder made from the seeds of the prickly ash tree. *Sansho* powder is available in small glass bottles in Japanese stores. If you cannot find it, freshly ground Sichuan pepper may be used as an acceptable substitute.

Sato-imo potato, also known as taro potato or small baby yam, has a fine creamy texture when well cooked and a subtle, mildly sweet flavor that is slightly different from that of Western potatoes. If *sato-imo* potatoes are not available, use the alternatives given in the recipes in this book.

Sesame seeds come in black and white varieties. The latter is more common, although both types are used in Japan. White sesame seeds are often toasted and crushed to make a paste—you will need 4 tablespoons to make ¼ cup (60 g) of sesame paste. If you do not want to do this yourself, you can buy ready-made

Udon

Somen

Rice vermicelli

Noodles are made from various starches (wheat, rice, beans and roots) and are enjoyed both hot and cold in Japan. **Udon**, a common type of wheat flour noodles, comes in various widths and is either flat or round. Packets of dried *udon*, whitish beige in color, are readily found in Japanese stores. **Somen** noodles are also made from wheat, but are very fine and are white in color. **Soba** noodles are made from buckwheat flour. They have a distinctive taste and are sometimes flavored with green tea, in which case their normal beige-brown color is replaced by green. Dried soba noodles are widely available in packets. *Hiyamugi*, or fine white **rice vermicelli** noodles, are identical to the vermicelli used in Chinese cuisine. **Shirataki noodles** are made from *konnyaku* starch and they can be replaced with cellophane or glass noodles, which are made from mung bean flour. Soak them in warm or hot water until they swell and become transparent.

Chinese or Japanese sesame pastes which are usually sold in bottles. Smooth peanut butter makes a good substitute. Middle Eastern tahini, which is slightly bitter, has a different flavor, as the sesame seeds have not been toasted before grinding; add a bit of sugar if you are using tahini as a substitute.

Seven-spice chili powder (*shichimi*) is a mixture of several different spices and flavors. It contains *sansho*, ground chilies, hemp seeds, dried orange peel, flakes of *nori*, white sesame seeds and white poppy seeds. **Shichimi togarashi**, a similar but spicier condiment, consists of several types of chilies and spices. Both are available in small bottles in Japanese stores.

Shiso leaves (also known as perilla leaves) have an attractive dark green color, sometimes with reddish veins, and are widely used in Japanese cooking either as an ingredient or a garnish. It is a member of the mint family, and the leaves have a hint of basil and spearmint flavor. They are crisp-fried as tempura, used to garnish sushi, or minced and added to rice served with sashimi. Decorative sprigs of **shiso flowers** are sometimes used as a garnish.

Sour plums or **umeboshi** are salty pickled plums which retain their fruity fragrance. They are very popular with plain rice, eaten as part of breakfast in Japan, and are believed to aid digestion. These dull red plums are available in jars, and should be refrigerated after opening.

Wakame is a type of seaweed with a pleasant chewy texture and subtle flavor. It is often used in soups and salads. Wakame is sold either dried (it looks like a mass of large crinkly green-black tea leaves) or in salted form in plastic bags. Reconstitute dried seaweed by soaking in water before use. The salted version should be rinsed thoroughly before use.

Wasabi is a pungent root similar in taste to ginger and hot mustard. It is sold fresh, as a prepared paste, or in dried powdered form. Fresh wasabi root should be peeled and grated from the stem top down and should be used within 1–2 days of cutting before it loses its freshness and pungency. The powdered variety may be cheaper, but it is actually powdered horseradish colored green with mustard added. **Wasabi paste** can be made from the powder or the root. Real wasabi is more expensive but has a more potent flavor.

Whitebait, also known as **silverfish**, *shirauo* or Japanese icefish, is found throughout Japan. This fish grows to a length of about 4 in (10 cm) when fully mature. It is commonly used to make tempura, and may also be added to *chawan-mushi*.

Yamato-imo is a type of mountain yam which is grated and used raw for its gluey texture and bright white color. Suitable substitutes are suggested in individual recipes in this book. When cooked, the yam takes on a deliciously soft consistency.

Yuzu oranges have a unique fragrance—reminiscent of lemons, mandarin oranges and limes—which give *ponzu* sauce its distinctive flavor. The essence of *yuzu* is sold in little bottles. Substitute with a very fresh lemon.

Japanese Seafood

Bonito

Bream

Clam

Crab

Flounder

Hairtail Cutlassfish

Half Beak

Lobster

Pufferfish

Redfish

Spanish Mackerel

Squid

Sweetfish

Tile Fish

Tuna

Whitebait

Whiting

Yellowtail

Preparing Authentic Japanese Recipes

Planning a Japanese Meal

Japanese meals generally consist of many small dishes offering a range of different tastes, colors and textures. A typical meal might include a simple pickle like Pickled Cabbage, Carrot and Cucumber (page 26), a soup like Miso Soup with Mushrooms (page 41), a sushi or sashimi dish (see pages 58–67), accompanied by one or two vegetable or tofu dishes, and white rice, fried rice or noodles. Light dishes are generally served first, followed by heavier dishes. Rice or noodles are served last (see pages 13–14 for more information).

Ingredients

The ingredients used in this book can be found in markets featuring Asian foods, as well as any well-stocked supermarket. Many Japanese ingredients are now available in the condiments and spice section of large supermarkets. When the recipe lists a hard-to-find or unusual ingredient, see pages 16–19 for possible substitutes. If a substitute is not listed, look for the ingredient in your local Asian or Chinese food market, or check the mail-order and website listings on page 112 for possible sources.

The basic ingredients needed to prepare a Japanese meal include sake, Japanese rice, *mirin*, dried kelp (*konbu*), rice vinegar, wasabi, *nori*, Japanese sesame oil and Japanese soy sauce. You may substitute Japanese sesame oil and Japanese soy sauce with the Chinese varieties, even though these do not produce quite the same result. Bonito flakes, used in *dashi* stock—the ubiquitous stock base for soups and sauces—are another essential ingredient. If bonito flakes are unavailable, use instant *dashi* stock granules.

Always buy short-grain Japanese rice for an authentic Japanese meal. This variety is stickier than other long-grain varieties. As Japanese cuisine places such emphasis on the freshness of the ingredients, be sure to purchase the necessary items on the day of cooking.

Portions

Japanese meals are often served in individual portions, as main dishes and condiments are normally placed on a tray set before the diner. However, there are dishes, especially the one-pot dishes, that are consumed in a group. As a general rule, the recipes in this book will serve 4–6 people.

Basic equipment

Japanese food preparation methods are very simple, and just a few basic utensils are needed to produce an authentic Japanese meal. The essential equipment includes a rice cooker, a cutting board, a sharp knife, Japanese chopsticks (*hashi*)—these differ from Chinese chopsticks, as they are thinner and more pointed at the ends—a bamboo mat for rolling sushi (*makisu*) and a Japanese grater (*oroshigane*). If you plan to serve Japanese food regularly, you may want to buy a set of Japanese-style tableware, which consists of plates of varying shapes, individual saucers as well as soup and garnish bowls.

Soup Stocks

Basic Dashi Stock

1 strip dried kelp (*konbu*), (4 in/10 cm long), wiped with a damp cloth
4 cups (1 liter) water
4 cups (50 g) dried bonito flakes

Soak the dried kelp in a saucepan of water for 1 hour. Simmer over medium heat. Just before the water comes to a boil, remove and discard the kelp. Sprinkle the bonito flakes into the water and remove the saucepan from the heat immediately. As soon as the flakes sink, strain the stock and discard the flakes.

Note: The stock keeps refrigerated for 3 days. To make instant *dashi* from granules (*hondashi*), add ½ teaspoon *dashi* stock granules to 1 cup (250 ml) hot water. The granules contain salt, so taste before adding the full amount of salt called for in the recipes.

Yields 4 cups
Preparation time: 7 mins
Cooking time: 7 mins

Cold Soba Dashi Broth

1 cup (250 ml) Basic Dashi Stock (above)
2 tablespoons Japanese soy sauce
¼ cup (60 ml) *mirin*

Place all ingredients in a saucepan, bring just to a boil over medium heat and remove from the heat immediately. Serve with cold soba noodles. Keeps refrigerated for up to 4 days.

Yields 1¼ cups
Cooking time: 7 mins

Sauces and Batters

Ponzu Dipping Sauce

1 strip dried kelp (*konbu*), (about 2 in/ 5 cm long), wiped with a damp cloth
⅓ cup (85 ml) *yuzu* orange, or lemon or lime juice
⅓ cup (85 ml) Japanese soy sauce
2 tablespoons *mirin*
1½ tablespoons *tamari* or dark soy sauce
2 tablespoons Basic Dashi Stock (page 23) or ¼ teaspoon *dashi* stock granules dissolved in 2 tablespoons hot water

Heat the dried kelp over a gas flame or under a broiler (grill) until crisp and fragrant, then put in a bowl or jar with all the other ingredients. Cover and refrigerate for 3 days, then strain. Can be stored for up to a year.

Bottled *yuzu* juice and ready-made *ponzu* sauce can be purchased in Japanese stores.

Yields 1 cup Preparation time: 5 mins

Sukiyaki Sauce

6 tablespoons Japanese soy sauce
5 tablespoons *mirin*
5 tablespoons sake
5–6 tablespoons sugar
1½ cups (375 ml) chicken stock or 1½ cups (375 ml) Basic Dashi Stock (page 23) or ¾ teaspoon *dashi* stock granules dissolved in 1½ cups (375 ml) hot water

Combine all the ingredients in a pan and bring to a boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Once the sugar is dissolved, remove from the heat and pour the sauce into a bowl.

Yields 2½ cups
Preparation time: 5 mins
Cooking time: 5 mins

Sesame Dipping Sauce
Goma Tare

5 tablespoons white sesame seeds
1 tablespoon miso
2 tablespoons *mirin*
1 tablespoon *tamari* or dark soy sauce
1 tablespoon Japanese soy sauce
1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice or rice vinegar
½ tablespoon sugar
½ teaspoon grated young ginger
¼ teaspoon ground red pepper
¼ cup (85 ml) water

Dry-roast the white sesame seeds in a skillet until light golden brown. Do not burn the seeds or it will taste bitter. Place the warm toasted seeds and all the other ingredients in a blender. Sesame Dipping Sauce is best prepared a day ahead for the flavors to blend. Keeps refrigerated for 2 to 3 days.

Yields ½ cup Preparation time: 5 mins

Tosa Vinegar Tosa-zu

½ cup (125 ml) water
1 strip dried kelp (*konbu*), (about 2 in/ 5 cm long), wiped with a damp cloth
⅓ cup (85 ml) rice vinegar
2 teaspoons Japanese soy sauce
1 tablespoon *mirin*
1½ tablespoons sugar
¼ teaspoon salt
½ tablespoon dried bonito flakes

Pour the water with the dried kelp, vinegar, soy sauce and *mirin* into a saucepan and heat. Just before the mixture boils, remove the kelp and add the sugar and salt. Stir well to dissolve and bring to a simmer. Remove from the heat and add the bonito flakes. Set aside to cool, then strain and discard solids. Keeps refrigerated for up to a week.

Yields ¾ cup Preparation time: 10 mins
Cooking time: 7 mins

Sweet Vinegar Amazu

1 cup (250 ml) water
½ cup (125 ml) rice vinegar
⅓ cup (60 g) sugar
1 teaspoon salt

Bring the water and vinegar to a boil in a saucepan, then add the remaining ingredients and stir to dissolve the sugar and salt. Remove from the heat and set aside to cool. Use for dipping and pickling vegetables. Keeps refrigerated for up to 10 days.

Yields ½ cup Preparation time: 4 mins

Chicken Yakitori Glaze
Tori Tare

½ cup (125 ml) chicken stock or ½ teaspoon chicken stock powder dissolved in ½ cup (125 ml) water
⅓ cup (85 ml) sake
½ cup (125 ml) *mirin*
½ cup (125 ml) Japanese soy sauce
2 tablespoons sugar

Place all the ingredients into a small saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes, or until the sauce is reduced to half the original volume. The sauce keeps refrigerated for up to 1 month. Use this sauce for brushing when grilling chicken yakitori.

Yields ¾ cup Preparation time: 5 mins
Cooking time: 25 mins

Teriyaki Sauce

1 cup (250 ml) Japanese soy sauce
1 cup (250 ml) sake
1½ cups (375 ml) *mirin*
5–6 tablespoons sugar

Combine all the ingredients in a saucepan and bring to a boil over medium heat. Simmer on medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until the sauce is reduced to less than half the original volume. Keeps refrigerated for 6 months.

Yields 1¼ cups Cooking time: 30 mins

Japanese Mayonnaise

Tamago-no-moto

2 egg yolks
½ teaspoon lemon juice
½ cup (125 ml) salad oil
1 tablespoon white miso
Pinch of salt and white pepper
Pinch of grated *yuzu*, lime or lemon peel (optional)

Beat the egg yolks and lemon juice in a bowl using a wooden spoon. Continue beating, adding the salad oil a few drops at a time until the mixture begins to emulsify. Continue until all the oil is used up, then stir in the miso and season with salt, pepper and grated peel, if using.

Yields ¾ cup Preparation time: 25 mins

Sashimi Soy Dip

Tosa Shoyu

3 tablespoons sake
½ cup (125 ml) Japanese soy sauce
2 tablespoons *tamari* soy sauce or *mirin*
1 strip dried kelp (*konbu*), (about 2 in/5 cm long), wiped with a damp cloth
½ cup (5 g) dried bonito flakes

Place all the ingredients in a small saucepan and simmer on medium-low heat for 5 minutes. Allow to cool, then strain and discard solids. The sauce can be stored for up to a year if kept refrigerated in a jar. Use as a dipping sauce for sashimi.

Yields ¾ cup Preparation time: 5 mins
Cooking time: 5 mins

Tempura Batter

Tempura Ko

1 egg yolk
1 cup (250 ml) ice water
1 cup (150 g) cornstarch, sifted

Put the egg yolks in a bowl and mix in the water gradually. Add the cornstarch all at once and stir briefly (preferably with a pair of chopsticks). Tempura batter should be thin and lumpy. It is best made just before cooking, however the batter can be refrigerated until required.

Yields 2 cups Preparation time: 5 mins

Sushi Rice Sushi-Meshi

1 cup (200 g) uncooked Japanese rice (yields 2 cups of cooked rice)
1¼ cups (310 ml) water
1 strip dried kelp (*konbu*), (4 in/10 cm long), wiped with a damp cloth and quartered

Dressing
2 tablespoons rice vinegar
1 tablespoon sake
2 teaspoons sugar
1 teaspoon salt

Rinse the rice gently and drain or see packet instructions. Cook the rice, water and kelp in a saucepan and bring almost to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat, discard the kelp, and simmer, covered, for 15 minutes until the rice is cooked. Turn the heat off, remove the lid and cover the pan with a towel to absorb condensation. Set aside for 20 minutes. Stir the Dressing ingredients in a non-reactive bowl to dissolve the sugar. Set aside. Put the cooked rice in a wide wooden tub or large bowl. Add the Dressing and stir gently in a circular motion with a rice paddle or wooden spoon. Ideally, the rice mixture should be fanned to help cool it. Cover the rice with a damp cloth until ready to use. Do not refrigerate. Keep at room temperature and use within 4 hours.

Yields 2 cups
Preparation time: 10 mins (+ 1 hour for draining rice)
Cooking time: 40 mins

Pickles

Pickled Eggplant
Nasu No Shiomomi

8 oz (250 g) Japanese eggplants, washed, halved lengthwise and cut into ½ in (1 cm) slices
2 teaspoons salt
Toasted sesame seeds, crushed, to garnish (optional)

Sprinkle the eggplants with the salt and set aside for 10 minutes. Squeeze gently in a muslin cloth to remove moisture. Serve garnished with the sesame seeds.

Yields 1 cup
Preparation time: 15 mins

Pickled Ginger Gari

8 oz (250 g) young ginger, peeled and thinly sliced diagonally
⅓ cup (85 ml) rice vinegar
2 tablespoons *mirin*
2 tablespoons sake
5 teaspoons sugar

RInse the ginger slices thoroughly and blanch in boiling water and set aside to drain. Add the rest of the ingredients into a saucepan and bring to a boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Set aside to cool. Place the ginger in a sterilized jar and pour the vinegar mixture over it. Cover and keep for 3–4 days before using. The ginger keeps well refrigerated for 1 month—it may develop a pale pink color as it ages. Serve with sushi and other Japanese dishes.

Yields 1 cup
Preparation time: 20 mins
Cooking time: 5 mins

Pickled Cabbage, Carrot and Cucumber

1 small Japanese cucumber
1 small carrot, washed and peeled
2 cabbage leaves, washed and drained, cut into small pieces
1½ teaspoons salt
Toasted sesame seeds, to garnish (optional)

Rub ½ teaspoon of the salt onto the cucumber skin. Rinse and pat dry. Then, halve the cucumber lengthwise and slice into matchsticks, slice the carrots the same way. Add the remaining salt to all the ingredients and mix gently. Transfer to a covered container and leave overnight. Garnish with the sesame seeds before serving.

Yields 2 cups
Preparation time: 20 mins

Daikon Pickled in Miso
Kabu No Misozuke

14 oz (400 g) daikon radish (about 6 in/15 cm), washed, peeled, halved lengthwise
1 teaspoon salt
½ cup (100 g) *inaka* miso
2 tablespoons sake
4 teaspoons sugar

Sprinkle the daikon with the salt and set aside for 2–3 hours. Squeeze gently in a muslin cloth to remove moisture. Mix the miso, sake and sugar until the sugar dissolves. Coat the daikon with the miso mixture and set aside to marinate for 3 hours. Remove the daikon from the marinate and slice into thick wedges.

Yields 1 cup
Preparation time: 15 mins

Garlic Pickled in Miso
Ninniku Miso-zuke

3 bulbs garlic (5 oz/150 g), cloves peeled and left whole
1 teaspoon salt
5 tablespoons *inaka* miso
4 tablespoons sugar

Sprinkle the garlic with the salt and set aside for 3 hours. Pat dry with paper towels. Mix the miso and sugar until the sugar dissolves. Add the garlic cloves and set aside to marinate for 4 days before serving.

Yields ¾ cup
Preparation time: 15 mins

Shiba-zuke Pickles
Shiba-zuke

1 Japanese cucumber (3 oz/90 g)
1 small eggplant (3 oz/90 g)
2 teaspoons salt
1 *mioga* or torch ginger bud
½ teaspoon Japanese soy sauce

Rub ½ teaspoon of the salt onto the cucumber skin. Rinse and pat dry. Then, halve the cucumber lengthwise and cut into wedges. Sprinkle with ½ teaspoon salt, mix and set aside. Halve the eggplant lengthwise and cut into wedges. Sprinkle with ½ teaspoon salt, mix and set aside. Thinly slice the *mioga* bud diagonally, mix with ½ teaspoon salt and set aside. Place the salted vegetables and soy sauce in a bowl, mix well and cover with a lid and a weight to press. Set aside for half a day. The pickles can be kept refrigerated for 3 days.

Yields 1 cup
Preparation time: 15 mins

Mixed Chicken and Vegetable Yakitori

These skewers of grilled chicken and vegetables are very popular both in Japan and abroad.

10 oz (300 g) boneless chicken thighs, cubed
2 leeks, cut into lengths
4 oz (125 g) chicken livers, halved
8 fresh shiitake mushrooms, stems discarded and caps halved
12 small Japanese green peppers or 2 large bell peppers, deseeded and cut into strips
6 stalks asparagus, cut into lengths
36 bamboo skewers, soaked in water for 1 hour before grilling
Oil, to baste
1 portion Chicken Yakitori Glaze (page 24)

Chicken Meatballs
10 oz (300 g) ground chicken
2 teaspoons sugar
2 teaspoons Japanese soy sauce
1 teaspoon fresh ginger juice
1 egg, lightly beaten
2 teaspoons bread crumbs
2 teaspoons cornstarch
4 cups (1 liter) Basic Dashi Stock (page 23) or 2 teaspoons *dashi* stock granules dissolved in 4 cups (1 liter) hot water
3 tablespoons sake

Condiments
Seven-spice chili powder (*shichimi*)
***Sansho* pepper powder**
1 lemon, cut into wedges

1 Prepare the Chicken Yakitori Glaze following the instructions on page 24.
2 Prepare the Chicken Meatballs by combining the ground chicken with the sugar, soy sauce, ginger juice, egg, bread crumbs and cornstarch, mixing well. Scoop 1 tablespoon of the chicken mixture and shape into small meatballs, ¾ in (2 cm) in diameter. Bring the *dashi* stock and sake to almost a boil. Gently drop the chicken meatballs into the simmering stock, a few at a time, and simmer until the meatballs change color. Thread the meatballs onto the skewers. Reserve the stock.
3 Alternate the pieces of chicken thigh and leek onto skewers and set aside. Thread the chicken livers onto skewers and set aside. Thread all the vegetables onto skewers and brush lightly with oil and set aside.
4 Heat up a charcoal barbecue or grill and cook the prepared skewers. When the skewered chicken, meatballs and livers are half-cooked, brush with the yakitori glaze and return to the grill briefly. Baste the food a couple more times during cooking, but take care not to overcook. Sear the vegetables quickly on the grill until done.
5 Strain the *dashi* stock and serve together with the yakitori, if desired. Serve with the range of Condiments.

Serves 8–10 Preparation time: 30–45 mins Cooking time: 10 mins

Measurements and conversions

Measurements in this book are given in volume as far as possible. Teaspoon, tablespoon and cup measurements should be level, not heaped, unless otherwise indicated. Australian readers please note that the standard Australian measuring spoon is larger than the UK or American spoon by 5 ml, so use ¾ tablespoon instead of a full tablespoon when following the recipes.

Liquid Conversions

Imperial	Metric	US cups
½ fl oz	15 ml	1 tablespoon
1 fl oz	30 ml	⅛ cup
2 fl oz	60 ml	¼ cup
3 fl oz	85 ml	⅓ cup
4 fl oz	125 ml	½ cup
5 fl oz	150 ml	⅔ cup
6 fl oz	175 ml	¾ cup
8 fl oz	250 ml	1 cup
12 fl oz	375 ml	1½ cups
16 fl oz	500 ml	2 cups
	1 liter	4 cups

Note:
1 UK pint = 20 fl oz
1 US pint = 16 fl oz

Solid Weight Conversions

Imperial	Metric
½ oz	15 g
1 oz	28 g
1½ oz	45 g
2 oz	60 g
3 oz	85 g
3½ oz	100 g
4 oz (¼ lb)	125 g
5 oz	150 g
6 oz	175 g
7 oz	200 g
8 oz (½ lb)	225 g
9 oz	260 g
10 oz	300 g
16 oz (1 lb)	450 g
32 oz (2 lbs)	1 kg

Oven Temperatures

Heat	Fahrenheit	Centigrade/Celsius	British Gas Mark
Very cool	230	110	¼
Cool or slow	275–300	135–150	1–2
Moderate	350	175	4
Hot	425	220	7
Very hot	450	230	8

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Mail-order/online sources

The ingredients used in this book can all be found in markets featuring the foods of Japan. Many of them can also be found in any well-stocked supermarket. Ingredients not found locally may be available from the mail-order/online resources listed below.

Central Market (Austin North Lamar)
4001 North Lamar Boulevard
Austin, TX 78756, USA
Tel: (512) 206 1000
centralmarket.com

Central Market (Dallas Preston Royal)
10720 Preston Rd.
Dallas, TX 75230, USA
Tel: (972) 860 6500
centralmarket.com

Central Market (Houston)
3815 Westheimer Rd
Houston, TX 77027, USA
Tel: (713) 386 1700
centralmarket.com

Central Market (Southlake)
1425 E. Southlake Blvd.
Southlake, TX 76092, USA
Tel: 817-310-5600
centralmarket.com

Frieda's Inc
4465 Corporate Center Drive
Los Alamitos CA 90720, USA
friedas.com

Fuji Mart Melbourne
34 Elizabeth St, 3141 South Yarra
Victoria, Australia
Tel: (3) 9826 5839
junpacific.com/e/fujimart-vic

House of Spices (India) Inc
127-40 Willets Point Blvd.
Flushing, NY 11368
Telephone: (718) 507-4600
customerservice@houseofspicesindia.com
hosindia.com

Ichiban Kan
22 Peace Plaza #540
East Mall 2nd Floor (Between Post & Laguna)
San Francisco, CA 94115, USA
Tel: (415) 409-0472
ichibankanusa.com

New Kam Man
200 Canal Street
New York, NY 10079, USA
Tel: (212) 571 0330
info@newkamman.com
newkamman.com

Pacific Mercantile Company, Inc
1925 Lawrence St, Denver,
CO 80202, USA
Tel: (303) 295 0293
info@pacificmercantile.com
pacificeastwest.com

The Spice House (Milwaukee, WI)
1031 North Old World 3rd St
Milwaukee WI 53203, USA
Tel: 414-272-0977
thespicehouse.com

The Spice House (Chicago, IL)
1512 North Wells St
Chicago IL 60610, USA
Tel: (312) 274 0378
thespicehouse.com

The Spice House (Evanston, IL)
1941 Central Street
Evanston IL 60201, USA
Tel: (847) 328 3711
thespicehouse.com

Uwajimaya (Seattle)
600 5th Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98104, USA
Tel: (206) 624-6248
SeattleStore@uwajimaya.com
uwajimaya.com

Uwajimaya (Renton)
501 South Grady Way
Renton, WA 98057, USA
Tel: (206) 624-6248
RentonStore@uwajimaya.com
uwajimaya.com

The essence of Japan is captured in this collection of recipes ranging from essential stocks, sauces and pickles, to rustic one-pot dishes, such as soba noodles, and elegant and exotic presentations. This fascinating book of recipes, gathered and photographed in Japan, also explains the correct use of ingredients and the way Japanese meals are traditionally structured and presented.

Prize-winning chef **Takayuki Kosaki**, was born in Ishikawa Prefecture. In 1994 he became Chef de Cuisine at Hyatt Regency Osaka's finest Japanese Restaurant, Irodori.

Walter Wagner, Executive Chef at Hyatt Regency Osaka since its opening in 1994, acquired much of the essential culinary experience in his native land, Switzerland, as well as abroad. He moved to Japan in 1988, and has been drawn to the aesthetics of Japanese cuisine ever since.

Heinz von Holzen was F&B Director at the Grand Hyatt Bali before setting up his own company in Bali, specializing in food photography and food consultancy. He operates a restaurant and cooking school called Bumbu Bali, and is the author of 8 books on Balinese and Indonesian cuisine.

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