

Food in Japan

Food is and has always been an extremely important part of Japanese culture. So much so to the point where it was added to the UNESCO Intangible Heritage List in 2013. Also, as of 2018 Japan officially has the most 3 Michelin starred restaurants in the entire world, beating out France.

Traditional Japanese food

One of the major staples of traditional Japanese food is *ichijū-sansai*, which roughly translates to one soup three sides. As the name suggests, this style of dish usually involves some type of soup accompanied by around 3 small sides. These sides can include a wide variety of items, but included among them is usually some form of rice that is served by itself so as not to soil it.



Other traditional foods in Japan include various teas, which are very important in many ceremonies. Many of the four legged animals were taboo to eat for a while during and some time before the edo period, so seafood and fish are the main meat eaten in Japan. Since spices were a rarity in Japan for a while, many traditional dishes focus on a simple, yet meticulous, preparation of food over complex combinations of spices.

Modern Japanese Food

As is the case with many countries, modern Japanese cuisine has taken a lot of inspiration from foreign countries, while still keeping its own unique style. The central style of a lot of Japanese food is

centered around the aesthetic known as *Wabi-sabi*, which finds beauty in simplicity, minimalism, and the natural imperfectness of nature. Many dishes use relatively few ingredients and are centered around a careful preparation of the given ingredients. One such dish which is quite popular is yakitori, which is a grilled meat skewer usually with chicken, but sometimes with other meats and vegetables



Alongside the main dishes, there are also many desserts and sweets unique to Japan. Two ingredients commonly found throughout Japanese sweets are mochi and red bean paste. Mochi is a blob of glutinous rice that can be flavored and molded in many different ways. Red bean paste is lesser known outside of Japan than mochi, but still very popular for its sweet and rich flavor even outside of Japan. One of the main parts of Japanese cuisine which is inspired by foreign nations is their alcohol. While known for their rice and starch based alcohols like sake and shochu. Japan is also known for high quality whiskeys, which they have adapted from Scotland, winning many international awards for its quality. Many variations of noodles and noodle soups have been popular for quite some time as well. One of the most popular and well known being of course, ramen. Another similar dish is dipping noodles, which can be served cold or warm, with a thicker soup that is better for dipping the noodles than ramen,