

# Japanese cuisine essay sample



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Japanese cuisine has historically been influenced by the Chinese culture, and often filtered through Korea. It has a strong connection to the sea and fishing cultures as well, yet maintains its own cultural and aesthetic identity. Japan as a nation was virtually closed off to the rest of the world until the mid nineteenth century. There are many culinary influences that helped to create the Japanese cuisine we see today. It has been transformed for centuries.

Some of the influences on Japan's cuisine

Vegetarian Buddhist monks had significant influence on the Japanese cuisine, as did Imperial court cooking that centered around Kyoto's old capital.

Kaiseki cuisine developed from ritualized tea ceremonies which showcases elaborate bite sized items. Sixteenth century Portuguese brought techniques like tempura, which is wheat flour dredged and deep fried items. Europeans may have had some of the influence of the beef we see in Japanese cuisine, which is relatively new to them. Japanese noodles have been influenced by the Chinese as a general rule. The Japanese during their fifty year occupation turned Taiwan into a major food supplier to Japan as well as off-loading a considerable amount of their own foodstuffs and eating habits onto Taiwan.

Japanese Influence While Japanese cuisine has had a big influence in Taiwan, Taiwanese cuisine clearly belongs to the Chinese food tradition.

Some Japanese influences, such as popularity of sashimi and sushi are obvious, others blend in and are more difficult to recognize. Japanese restaurants, both "authentic" and Taiwan-style are very common. Cooking wine – Few dishes are cooked without rice wine and it is here that Japanese influence is very pervasive. Unlike the mainland, Taiwanese cooks rarely use yellow wine (shaoxing-style wine). The standard cooking wine in Taiwan is a

clear light rice wine, very similar to mirin, the Japanese cooking wine, though less salty. Taiwan rice wine is much less distinctive in taste than yellow wine and has the effect of lightening the flavor of the food in comparison. Sashimi commonly served in Japanese and in Chinese restaurants. Sushi As above.

Miso / Miso soup As above.

Seaweed Coastal Chinese eat seaweed but it is the Japanese who take it to the level of an art form, and this seems to have carried over somewhat to Taiwan. Teppanyaki grills are common, though usually highly localized, most obviously by adding lashings of minced garlic and chili to most dishes.

Taiwanese tempura (tian bu la) this seems to be inspired by the Japanese cooking style tempura, though with major Taiwanese characteristics, the most obvious being, that not all of the foods are battered. I call it Taiwan fish and chips. It is sold by roadside deep fry stands which offer up a whole range of foods with fresh basil leaves, then powder the whole lot with a salt and pepper mixture and chili powder if you want. Items include: chicken pieces, dried tofu, string beans, sweet potato chips, potato chips, pig's blood/rice cake, squid, fish balls, Curry – An insipidly mild curry that always includes potato, often chicken, seems to have come via Japan. Japanese-style chopsticks Japanese chopsticks are shorter and have pointed ends. They function better than Chinese chopsticks which seem clunky in comparison.

Pillars of Japanese Cuisine

The Power of Five

the number five is considered important in Japanese culture, and this extends to its food traditions as well. They form the basis of concepts that have been in place for centuries. I believe that following the guidelines of the

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“ Power of Five” listed below can do more for improving your health and cooking skills than following recipes or diets. Even though many young Japanese don’t know the origin of these rules, nor can even recite them, the habit is ingrained in the culture to such an extent that it just comes naturally. If a set meal is ordered at a restaurant and something is missing, for instance, people often fill in the gaps by ordering the missing link. And if you watch a group of kids shout out orders at a casual izakaya, drinking and partying all evening, you’ll find the meal will somehow, in its winding way, follow the guidelines as well. Five Senses

Food should be enjoyed with all five of the senses: taste and smell are obvious, but sight figures predominately in Japanese cuisine. In fact, it can be considered just as important as taste. The artful arrangement of food on appropriate and beautiful tableware adds so much to the enjoyment of the meal that it cannot be stressed enough. No matter how delicious your perfectly simmered halibut may be, the result can be ruined with a white round dish (wrong shape) that shows the drippings (wrong color.) Touch is also important, not only for the texture of the food itself, which should be varied, but also for tableware, as it is customary to hold vessels and utensils in one’s hands. Freshly cut bamboo chopsticks feel wonderfully cool to the touch, while smooth lacquer ware feels warm. A rustic and sturdy stoneware serving dish might not be moved by the diner, but the suggestion of touch is still present.

A feather-light hand-thrown porcelain rice bowl might cost ten times as much as a similar-looking factory-made one, but the enjoyment of touch adds so much that professional chefs and serious home cooks always opt for the

pricier option. Hearing, while being a bit more esoteric, also figures into the experience. My only comment would be that generally speaking, the more expensive a restaurant, the quieter. A boisterous izakaya has a much different feel than a quietly serious sushi establishment or a famous ryotei. This might strike a Western visitor as odd, as if the diners are not having fun. However, to properly appreciate the experience and give due respect to the chef, a quiet atmosphere is appreciated, so that you really appreciate the marvelous experience, and perhaps can even hear the water of the garden stream, the buzz of cicadas, or the wind in the neighboring pines. Five Colors

the prevalence of the five colors – white, black, red, green and yellow – has been a tradition since Buddhism arrived from China in the 6th century. It can be seen in temple architecture, pottery and artwork. The Japanese believe that it is best to include the five colors in every meal. While I don't always do this, I find that following the five colors rule boosts the nutritional value, as well as the visual enjoyment of the meal. Today's bento, for instance, includes white rice with black sesame seeds, a red umeboshi, a slice of sweet yellow omelette, and green beans with black sesame sauce. Being mindful of this practice will help you serve balanced meals with the proper vitamins and minerals. My aunt used to say that you should eat 20 different kinds of food a day. I've also read that this practice also helps the Japanese stay slim. Whenever I make a monochrome meal, I find it strange and somehow lacking. One of my favorite dishes is genmai rice with tororo, with miso soup on the side; basically, different shades of white and brown. Adding shredded nori to the rice, yellow pickles and a green salad with cherry

tomatoes would improve the meal greatly, but I have to admit that I don't always do so. The Fifth Taste

Salty, sweet, sour, bitter, and... umami. Recently, much fuss has been made over umami, touted as the fifth taste. In fact, I liked the concept so much that, when starting this website, it was my first choice for a domain name. Umami comes from the Japanese word *umai*, meaning delicious, and can be described as savory (hence, the name I chose: Savory Japan). It can be accomplished by adding a little butter to a soy sauce based dish, or sprinkling a little parmesan cheese into a miso sauce. Umami is imparted by amino acids called glutamates, found in meat, fish, dairy and vegetables (in forms such as olive oil). Dashi, that all-important konbu and katsu stock that serves as a basis for so much of Japanese cuisine, is loaded with glutamates, and infuses everything it touches with a savory deliciousness. Discovered fairly recently, in the early part of the 20th century, umami is now a worldwide phenomenon, inspiring chefs the world over. In fact, there are even cookbooks celebrating umami, as well as an Umami society. Five Ways

The preparation of the dishes is also important, and here, there are also five methods: raw, simmered, fried, steamed and roasted or grilled. Kaiseki cuisine makes use of these various ways of preparation, which add up to a complete experience. Kaiseki meals usually start with the most delicate and subtle of flavors and textures, such as a few slices of raw sashimi. This is followed by soup or simmered vegetables in broth. The flavors and textures then get progressively more substantial; perhaps some crispy tempura, followed by grilled fish or meat. The meal then winds down with rice, soup

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and pickles. Dessert is sometimes served as well, and is always light; a perfect slice of melon, or perhaps a refreshing cold tofu custard. This progression of flavors and preparation methods is surprisingly similar throughout the world, especially at fine dining establishments. Of course, the home cook rarely goes to so much trouble for daily meals. And on some winter days, one-pot meals really hit the spot. But a typical weekday meal at my house is salad, grilled fish, steamed, boiled or blanched vegetables, miso soup, rice and pickles. So, four out of the five ways are standard at the typical Japanese meal. Five Attitudes

More esoteric are the five attitudes in the partaking of food. These come from the Buddhist faith, and are often posted at restaurants that serve vegetarian temple cuisine. While most modern Japanese cannot recite them, they provide the foundation for the Japanese attitude towards food by cultivating a spirit of gratitude. The following Five Phrases from the book *Good Food from a Japanese Temple* by Soei Yoneda, former Abbess of the Sanko-in Temple, are uttered in Zen temples before the partaking of food:

- I reflect on the work that brings this food before me; let me see whence this food comes. - I reflect on my imperfections, on whether I am deserving of this offering of food. - Let me hold my mind free from preferences and greed.

- I take this food as an effective medicine to keep my body in good health. - I accept this food so that I will fulfill my task of enlightenment.

#### Techniques & Tools for the Japanese Kitchen

A well-equipped Western kitchen has almost everything you need for cooking

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Japanese food. If you find that you like cooking Japanese food regularly, these utensils will make all the difference. They save time, do a better job, and make your life easier. Knife techniques

Throughout the site, you'll find references to knife techniques that may be unfamiliar to you. It's very important to learn Japanese cutting techniques in order to get the right taste and texture. For instance, just as with Italian food, where the specific shapes of pasta are chosen to match various sauces, the shape of a vegetable is very important to the taste, visual enjoyment and texture of a Japanese recipe. Therefore, I've prepared a separate section for Japanese knife techniques.

### Grating

Grated daikon is one of life's marvels. It has a bright, bitter and hot (but not spicy) flavor that lends a kick to grilled and broiled fish, fried tofu, soba dipping sauce, salad dressings, etc. An oroshigane (grater) will work better for this (as well as for ginger) than a Western one, because the resulting texture is fine, but not too fine. Some graters are specially made for certain types of vegetables, such as shark skin graters for fresh wasabi, which grind the hard root into a particularly fine paste. Traditional oroshigane are made of copper clad in tin, with sides that are turned up. Sharp tines are cut into the copper, which are also turned up.

I purchased my treasured oroshigane at Aritsugu, where they embossed my name at the top, and will even reset and sharpen the tines when they get dull. I haven't had to do this yet, because they are still sharp and they work perfectly. Less sharp, and common, are inexpensive aluminum graters. What



is nice about these, other than the fact that they are widely available, is that they have a concave well at the bottom that conveniently catches the oroshi and juices. A traditional grater has no such well and must be grated on top of a plate or shallow bowl. Both types work very well and grate to a much finer consistency than Western graters. Be careful with your fingers when using a grater; it's easy for your hand to slip and there's no protection.

### Grinding

Many recipes call for ground sesame seeds. While you can purchase ground sesame seeds in ready-made packages, the flavor and freshness is vastly superior when the seeds are freshly ground. What's more, it is very easy when you have the right tools. The Japanese suribachi (mortar) is a ceramic bowl that is unglazed and scored with ridges. A surikogi (wooden pestle) is then used to grind the seeds (or nuts) to the desired consistency. The grooves make fast work of this process; no more than a few minutes. You can then add the other ingredients for the dressing or sauce directly in the bowl, as my mother does, or transfer the mixture into a separate bowl. There is also a brush specially made to brush the powder from the grooves of the surbachi, if you so desire.

### Rolling Sushi

With the popularity of sushi, you can now find bamboo rolling mats quite easily at Japanese markets for reasonable prices. Makisu (sushi rolling mat) are made of bamboo slats that are lined up horizontally and tied with heavy cotton string. Once, when we were on vacation in northern Michigan, we wanted to make maki-sushi, but couldn't find a mat. We made one ourselves

by cutting the sharp ends off bamboo skewers and tying them together with string! Maki-sushi is virtually impossible to make without a mat.

### Hashi (chopsticks)

There are several kinds of cooking chopsticks that are handy to have in a Japanese kitchen. Cooking chopsticks are twice as long as regular chopsticks to protect one's hands from the heat. They are usually tied at one end so that they can be hung on the wall, but if you find this inconvenient, you can just remove the string. For frying, special metal chopsticks with wooden handles are available, but I don't own them because I seldom fry. For serving and food arranging, I have a beautiful pair of metal chopsticks with pointed ends and bone handles. They allow me to precisely position food and are presentable at the table. We have a wide variety of dining chopsticks in our house, but only a few that we really like, and use daily. In fact, even with frequent trips to Japan, we rarely find chopsticks we like. They should be smooth, but not slick (hence, no lacquer), sturdy, easy to care for with a nice weight and warm feel.

### Nabe

Japanese clay is an amazing thing. Clay donabe can withstand a high degree of direct heat, and thus can be set on a burner and used as a cooking pot for nabe. Care must be taken to avoid introducing the donabe to sudden changes in temperature, and this can be done by filling it with liquid before turning the heat on. Donabe are used for one-pot nabe dishes, soup, oden and even for frying. They are attractive enough to be used on a portable range for cooking right at the table.

## Simmering

For simmering delicate food like fish, an otoshi-buta (wooden drop lid) works like a charm. These are made of thick pieces of wood with a handle across the top, and are available in various diameters so they fit inside different sizes of pots and pans. They keep the content of the pot evenly distributed in the simmering liquid, and the open edges allow heat to escape so that the temperature can be kept at a simmer and not a boil. Otoshi-butashould be soaked in water for a few minutes before each use so that the simmering liquid does not soak into the lid, permanently leaving its scent. If you do not have an otoshi-buta, you can cut a round piece of cooking paper with a vent in the middle. This will somewhat approximate the effect.

## Making Soup

Since miso paste is refrigerated and quite thick, it takes a while to dissolve in dashi when making miso soup. Therefore, you must thin the miso in a large soup ladle full of dashi (while it is still partially immersed in the pot), whisking with chopsticks to a smooth consistency first. If you don't follow this step, it is likely that clumps of miso will remain undissolved. A really handy item is a miso-koshi; a small sieve with a wooden pestle that is made just for this purpose. It works wonderfully and makes quick work of this task, and is a great time saver if you serve miso soup regularly.

Japanese cuisine is the food ingredients, preparation and way of eating of Japan. The traditional food of Japan is based on rice with miso soup and other dishes, each in its own utensil, with an emphasis on seasonal ingredients. The side dishes often consist of fish, pickled vegetables, and vegetables cooked in broth. Fish is common in the traditional cuisine. It is often grilled.

Fish may be served raw as sashimi or in sushi. Seafood and vegetables are also deep-fried in a light batter as tempura. Apart from rice, staples include noodles, such as soba, and udon. Japan has many simmered dishes such as fish products in broth called oden, or beef as sukiyaki and nikujaga. Foreign food, in particular Chinese food in the form of noodles in soup called ramen and fried dumplings, gyoza, and western food such as curry and hamburger steaks are commonly found in Japan. Historically, the Japanese shunned meat, but with the modernization of Japan in the 1860s, meat-based dishes such as tonkatsu became common. Japan has an indigenous form of sweets called wagashi, which include ingredients such as red bean paste, as well as its indigenous rice wine sake. Japanese cuisine, particularly sushi, has now become popular throughout the world.

#### Overview of traditional Japanese cuisine

Breakfast at a ryokan (Japanese inn), featuring grilled mackerel, Kansai styledashimaki egg, tofu in kaminabe (paper pot) Japanese cuisine is based on combining the staple food which is steamed white rice or gohan (ごはん?) with one or several okazu or main dishes and side dishes. This may be accompanied by a clear or miso soup and some tsukemono (pickles). The phrase ichijū-sansai (一汁三菜 “one soup, three sides”?) refers to the makeup of a typical meal served, but has roots in classic kaiseki and honzen cuisine. The term is also used to describe the first course served in standard kaiseki cuisine nowadays.[1] Rice is served in its own small bowl (chawan), and course item is placed on its own small plate (sara) or bowl (hachi) for each individual portion.

This is done even at home. It contrasts with the Western-style dinners at home, where each individual takes helpings from the large tureens and plates of food presented at the middle of the dining table. Japanese style traditionally abhors different flavored dishes touching each other on a single plate, so different dishes are given their own individual plates as mentioned, or are partitioned using leaves, etc. This is why in take-out sushi the tamagoyaki egg vs. fish, or Blue-backed fish vs. white-fleshed fish are carefully separated. Placing okazu on top of rice and “soiling” it is also frowned upon by old-fashioned etiquette.[2] The small rice bowl or chawan (lit. “tea bowl”), which doubles as a word for the large tea bowls in tea ceremonies. Thus in common colloquy the drinking cup is referred to as yunomi-jawan or yunomi for the purpose of distinction.

#### Kaiseki appetizers on a legged tray

In the olden days, among the nobility, each course of a full-course Japanese meal would be brought on serving trays called zen (zen), which were originally platformed trays or small dining tables. In the modern age, foldstool trays or stackup type legged trays may still be seen used in zashiki, i. e. tatami-mat rooms, for large banquets or at a ryokan type inn. Some restaurants might use the suffix -zen (zen) as a classier though dated synonym to the more familiar teishoku (teishoku), since the latter basically is a term for a combo meal served at a taishū-shokudō, akin to a diner.[3] Teishoku means a meal of fixed menu, a dinner à prix fixe[4] served at shokudō (shokudō “dining hall”?) or ryōriten (ryōriten “restaurant”?), which is somewhat vague (shokudō can mean a diner type restaurant or a corporate lunch hall); but e. g. Ishikawa, Hiroyoshi (Ishikawa, Hiroyoshi) (1991) (snippet). Taishū bunka jiten. Kōbundō. p. 516.

defines it as fare served at teishoku-shokudō (テッシュク “teishoku dining hall”), etc., a diner-like establishment. Emphasis is placed on seasonality of food or shun (旬),[5][6] and dishes are designed to herald the arrival of the four seasons or calendar months.

### Traditional ingredients

Further information: History of Japanese cuisine and List of Japanese ingredients A characteristic of traditional Japanese food is the sparing use of meat (mammal meat), oils and fats, and dairy products.[8] Use of soy sauce, miso, and umeboshi makes them high in salt content, though there are low-sodium versions of these available nowadays. [edit]Non-meat practice

As Japan is an island nation surrounded by an ocean its people have always taken advantage of the abundant seafood supply.[9] It is the opinion of some food scholars that the Japanese diet always relied mainly on “grains with vegetables or seaweeds as main, with fowl meat secondary, and mammal meat in slight amounts,” even before the advent of Buddhism which placed an even stronger taboo.[10] The eating of “four-legged creatures” (四脚 yotsuashi?) was spoken of as taboo,[11] unclean, or something to be avoided by personal choice through the Edo Period.[12] But under this definition Whale meat and suppon (terrapin) would not be regarded as taboo four-legged meat. Meat-eating never went completely out of existence in Japan. Eating wild game, as opposed to domesticated livestock, tended to be regarded as acceptable, and slaughtered hare is counted using the measure word wa (ワ), normally used for birds.) Vegetable consumption has dwindled while processed foods have become more prominent in Japanese households due to the rising costs of general foodstuffs.[13] [edit]Food oil

Traditional Japanese food, generally speaking, is not prepared using a lot of food oils. An exception is deep fried types of preparation was introduced during the Edo Period due to influence from Western foods (once called nanban-ryōri (南蛮料理?) and Chinese foods,[14]and became commonplace with the availability of oil due to increased productivity.[14] Examples of these such as Tempura, aburaage, satsumaage[14] are now part of established traditional Japanese cuisine. Words such as tempura or hiryōzu (synonymous with ganmodoki) are said to be of Portuguese origin. Also, certain homey or rustic sort of traditional Japanese foods such as kinpira, hijiki, kiriboshi daikon usually involves stir frying in some oil before stewing in soy sauce flavoring. Some standard osōzai or "obanzai"(ja) dishes feature stir fried Japanese greens with ageor chirimen-jako(ja) (dried small fish, young sardines). [edit]Flavoring

See also flavoring list

Traditional Japanese food is typically flavored using a combination of dashi, soy sauce, sake and mirin, vinegar, sugar, and salt. These are typically the only flavorings used when grilling or braising an item. During cooking, a modest number of herbs and spices are used as a hint or accent, or as a means to remove fishy or gamey odor, and include ginger, and takanotsume (唐辛子?) red pepper.[citation needed] This contrasts conceptually with e. g., barbecue or stew where a blend of seasonings is used before and during cooking.[original research?] Only after a main dish has completed its cooking are spice elements as minced ginger, and various pungent herbs are added as a garnish, called tsuma.[citation needed] In some underseasoned dishes, a dollop of wasabi, and grated daikon (daikon-oroshi), or Japanese mustard

are provided as condiment.[citation needed] A sprig of mitsuba, a piece of yuzu rind floated on soups are called ukimi.[citation needed] Minced shiso leaves and myoga often serve as yakumi, or a type of condiment to go with tataki of katsuo or soba.[citation needed] Minced or crumpled nori and flakes of aonori are seaweeds used as an herb of sorts.[citation needed]

## Dishes

Further information: okazu (or sōzai (お惣菜)); List of okazu In the aforementioned stock phrase ichijū-sansai (一汁三菜 “one soup, three sides”), the word sai (菜) has the basic meaning of “vegetable”, but secondarily means any accompanying dish[15] including fish or meat. It figures in the Japanese word for appetizer, zensai (前菜); main dish, shusai (主菜); or sōzai (お惣菜) (formal synonym for okazu – considered somewhat of a housewife’s term[16]).

## Salads

The o-hitashi or hitashi-mono (おひたし [4]) is boiled green-leaf vegetables bunched and cut to size, steeped in dashi broth,[17][18] eaten with dashes of soy sauce. Another item is sunomono (酢物 lit “vinegar item”), which could be made with wakame seaweed,[19] or be something like a kōhaku namasu (紅白なます “red white namasu”)[20] made from thin toothpick slices of daikon and carrot. The so-called vinegar that is blended with the ingredient here is often sanbaizu(ja) (三杯酢 “three cupful/spoonful vinegar”)[19] which is a blend of vinegar, mirin, and soy sauce. A tosazu(ja) (トサ酢 “Tosa vinegar”) adds katsuo dashi to this. Note sparing use of oil, compared with Western salads. An aemono(ja) (アエモノ) is another group of items, describable as a sort of “tossed salad” or “dressed” (though aemono also includes thin



strips of squid or fish sashimi (itozukuri) etc. similarly prepared). One types are goma-ae (ごまあえ?) [21] where usually vegetables such as green beans are tossed with white or black sesame seeds ground in a suribachi mortar bowl, flavored additionally with sugar and soy sauce. shira-ae (しらあえ?) adds tofu (bean curd) in the mix. [21] An aemono is tossed with vinegar-white miso mix and uses wakegi [21] scallion and baka-gai (ばかがい or ばか a trough shell (Macra sinensis?) as standard.

### Cooking techniques

Different cooking techniques are applied to each of the three okazu; they may be raw (sashimi), grilled, simmered (sometimes called boiled), steamed, deep-fried, vinegared, or dressed.

### List of dishes

### List of dishes

| This is a list with no clear inclusion or exclusion criteria. Please help to improve Wikipedia by ensuring that there is consensus on the inclusion and exclusion criteria on the talk page. Please do not remove this message until the section contains only verifiable material. (January 2013) |

Tempura battered and deep fried seafood and vegetables

Yakitori grilled chicken

Below are listed some of the most common:

- \* grilled and pan-fried dishes (yakimono 焼き物),
- \* stewed/simmered/cooked/boiled dishes (nimono 煮物),
- \* stir-fried dishes (itamemono 炒め物),
- \* steamed dishes (mushimono 蒸し物),

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- \* deep-fried dishes (agemono 揚げ物),
- \* sliced raw fish (sashimi 刺し身),
- \* soups (suimono 汁物 and shirumono 白濁),
- \* pickled/salted vegetables (tsukemono 漬物),
- \* dishes dressed with various kinds of sauce (aemono 餛飩),
- \* vinegared dishes (su-no-mono 酢物),
- \* delicacies, food of delicate flavor (chinmi 珍味).[22]

## Classification

### Kaiseki

Kaiseki, closely associated with tea ceremony (chanoyu), is a high form of hospitality through cuisine. The style is minimalist, extolling the aesthetics of wabi-sabi. Like the tea ceremony, appreciation of the diningware and vessels is part of the experience. In the modern standard form, the first course consists of ichijū-sansai (one soup, three dishes), followed by the serving of sake accompanied by dish(es) plated on a square wooden bordered tray of sorts called hassun (ハッ孙?). Sometimes another element called shiizakana(しいざかな?) is served to complement the sake, for guests who are heavier drinkers. The tea ceremony kaiseki is often confounded with another kaiseki-ryōri (懐石料理?), which is an outgrowth of meals served at a gathering for haiku and renga composition, which turned into a term for sumptuous sake-accompanied banquet, or shuen (全?).[1] Vegetarian

Strictly vegetarian food is rare since even vegetable dishes are flavored with the ubiquitous dashi stock, usually made with katsuobushi(dried skipjack tuna flakes), and are therefore pescetarian more often than carnivorous. An exception is shōjin-ryōri (浄土料理), vegetarian dishes developed by Buddhist

monks. However, the advertised shōjin-ryōri at public eating places includes some non-vegetarian elements. In regards to vegetarianism, it is worth mentioning fucha-ryōri(ja) (フチャ料理?), introduced from China by the Ōbaku sect (a sub-sect of Zen Buddhism), and which some sources still regard as part of “ Japanese cuisine”. [5] The sect in Japan was founded by the priest Ingen (d. 1673), and is headquartered in Uji, Kyoto. The Japanese name for the common green bean takes after this priest who allegedly introduced the New World crop via China. An interesting aspect of the fucha-ryōri practiced at the temple is the wealth of modoki-ryōri (模道料理 “ mock foods”?), one example being mock-eel, made from strained tofu, with nori seaweed used expertly to mimic the black skin. [23] The secret ingredient used is grated gobo (burdock) roots. [24][25]

## Rice

Main article: Japanese rice

Rice has been the staple food for the Japanese historically. Its fundamental importance is evident from the fact that the word for cooked rice gohan and meshi, also stands for a “ meal.”. [26] Rice used to be consumed for almost every meal. But there has been a shift in dietary habits, so that a large segment of the population will have bread for breakfast, and have noodles (especially ramen, and even instant cup-o-noodles) for lunch. [citation needed]

## Donburi rice bowl

Japanese rice is short grain and becomes sticky when cooked. Most rice is sold as hakumai (“ white rice”), with the outer portion of the grains (nuka) polished away. Unpolished rice (genmai) is considered less delicious by most

people, but its popularity has been increasing recently because gemmai is more nutritious and healthier than hakumai.