



# *Japan: Food*

食家  
祭芸

## *TEACHER'S GUIDE*

Asian Educational Media Service, Center for East Asian  
and Pacific Studies, University of Illinois

Social Science Education Consortium

2000



# **JAPAN: FOOD**

## **Teacher's Guide**

by Lynn Parisi

The Asia Video Reports series was created and compiled at the Asian Educational Media Service in the Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies at the Urbana-Champaign campus on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois.

Asian Educational Media Service  
Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies  
University of Illinois

Social Science Education Consortium

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Project Designer: Sharon Wheaton

Video Segment Production: International Motion Picture Co. Tokyo, Ian Mutsu, President

Title Animation: Tim Harrah, Lincoln, Nebraska

Title Music: Christopher Yohmei Blasdel, Tokyo

Post Production: Behlen Video Productions, Lincoln, Nebraska

*Asia Video Reports* are produced with a grant from The Freeman Foundation and developed in loving memory of Jackson H. Bailey, founder and director of the Center for Educational Media (currently the Asian Educational Media Service).

## ORDERING INFORMATION

This publication is available from:

Social Science Education Consortium, Inc.  
P.O. Box 21270  
Boulder, CO 80308-4270

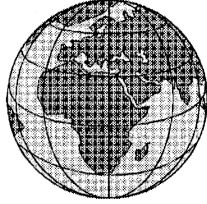
ISBN 0-89994-398-5

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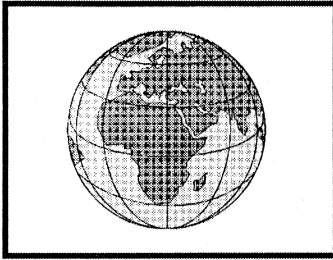
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# CONTENTS

Japanese Pronunciation Tips . . . . .	iv
<b>1. Food: Reflections of Japanese Culture . . . . .</b>	<b>1</b>
Introduction . . . . .	1
Module Objective . . . . .	1
Module Themes . . . . .	1
Module Components . . . . .	2
Japanese Food: A Mirror of History, by Linda Wojtan . . . . .	3
A Taste of Japan, by Donald Richie . . . . .	6
<b>2. Video Stories . . . . .</b>	<b>11</b>
Video Viewing Guide and Discussion Questions . . . . .	11
Sweets to Suit the Seasons . . . . .	14
Fantastic Fake Foods . . . . .	15
Edible Art . . . . .	16
The Soba Express . . . . .	16
Oodles of Noodles . . . . .	17
<b>3. Learning Activities . . . . .</b>	<b>19</b>
You Are What You Eat: Food, Environment, and Culture, by Jacquelyn Johnson . . . . .	20
Fast Food: A Global Connection . . . . .	35
Extension and Enrichment . . . . .	42
<b>4. World Wide Web Resources . . . . .</b>	<b>43</b>
Sites Related to Japanese Food . . . . .	43
Sites with General Information About Japan . . . . .	43



## JAPANESE PRONUNCIATION TIPS

by Mary Hammond Bernson and Evon Tanabe

**Vowels:** There are only five vowel sounds in Japanese. Here they are in Japanese order:

a sounds like the a in father. Example: *san*

i sounds like the i in machine or pizza. Example: *kimono*

u sounds like the u in flu or food, but is of shorter duration. Example: *mura*

e sounds like the e in pet but is shorter. Example: *sake*

o sounds like the o in comb or most. Example: *obi*

Japanese syllables are “open syllables” and almost always end in a vowel. There is very little stress on different syllables, so try to give equal stress and duration to each syllable. Some vowels, however, are long vowels in the sense of being held longer. The rhythm changes, but the pronunciation does not change as in English long vowels. When romanizing Japanese (writing it in the alphabet we use), long vowels are generally indicated by a double vowel or a line over a vowel, if noted at all. For example, *ojisan* means uncle and *ojiisan* (or *ojisan*) means grandfather.

The vowels u and i are sometimes not voiced at all when they appear at the end of a word or between such letters as f, h, k, p, s, t, ch, and sha. For example, *desu ka?* (is it?) is pronounced *deska*, and *sukiyaki* sounds like *skiyaki*.

Japanese also has some combined sounds.

ai sounds like the ai in kaiser. Example: *samurai*

ei sounds like the ei in rein. Example: *geisha*

**Consonants:** Most Japanese consonants sound very much like their English equivalents. The most notable differences are:

r sounds somewhat like a cross between r and l, as in the Spanish language

f sounds like a cross between f and h

g is always hard, as in go

n is more nasal than in the English language

ch sounds like the ch in cherry

ts sounds like the final ts in bits

z is a hard sound, as in adds

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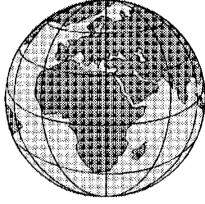
Reprinted with permission from *Teaching About Japan: Lessons and Resources*, edited by Mary Hammond Bernson and Linda S. Wojtan (Bloomington, IN: ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education, 1996), p. 108.

Double consonants are both pronounced, so for example, *ss* sounds like the two sounds in the words *chess set*.

Sometimes a consonant is followed by a *y*. This does not start a new syllable. *Kyushu*, for example, is a two-syllable word sounding like *sue-shoe*. The “*kyo*” in *Tokyo* and other words is one syllable.

Practice dividing the words in these lessons. *Fukuwarai* is *fu-ku-wa-ra-i*. *Haiku* is *ha-i-ku*. *Daruma* is *da-ru-ma*. Now try pronouncing two frequently mispronounced words: *i-ke-ba-na* (flower arranging) and *bon-sa-i* (miniature plants).





## SECTION 1 FOOD: REFLECTIONS OF JAPANESE CULTURE

### Introduction

In the exploration of culture, food is a perennially popular topic with teachers and students alike. The study of food allows for hands-on experience with culture; as such, it is engaging for students. But the study of food within a unit of culture study can go beyond trying sample foods. Food can be seen as the tip of a cultural iceberg—a key to a country's history, geography, environment, cultural evolution and change, cultural values, religion, and aesthetics. The study of food also permits the exploration of global systems and connections in a way that even young students can understand.

This learning module uses the topic of food as the vehicle for exploring deeper aspects of Japanese culture—including history, geography, and aesthetics—as well as cultural transmission and global connections.

Taken singly or together, the video stories in this learning module illustrate the many deeper aspects of culture reflected in Japanese foods—for example, the Japanese people's traditional respect for nature and natural elements and respect for time-honored traditions that emphasize skill, craftsmanship, beauty, and design. At the same time, the video stories give a glimpse into Japan's fast-paced urban scene and the technological aspects of industry. Students will be amazed by how much they can learn from a seemingly simple exploration of food and cuisine!

**Module Objectives:** Students will be able to:

- Identify several types of traditional and contemporary Japanese cuisine.
- Explain how different types of Japanese cuisine reflect aspects of Japan's history, geography, cultural values, and international influence.
- Analyze two types of fast food—pizza and instant ramen (noodles)—as examples of cultural transmission and global connections.

### Module Themes

- Tradition and change.
- Food as a reflection of cultural values.
- Cultural transmission, borrowing, and adaptation.
- Global systems and connections.



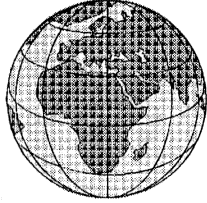
## Module Components

**Section 1. Food: Reflections of Japanese Culture.** This introductory section ends with two short readings that provide teachers with important background information on Japanese food and cuisine useful in conducting discussion and classroom activities with students. “Japanese Food: A Mirror of History,” by Linda S. Wojtan, gives a brief overview of food tastes and preparation in Japan and provides data on importing and exporting of food styles and cuisines between Japan and the rest of the world. In an excerpt from *A Taste of Japan*, Donald Richie, a noted Japanologist, comments on the unique customs and values reflected in traditional Japanese food preparation. While designed for teachers, the readings are also suitable for older students and are directly relevant to the two learning activities provided in the module.

**Section 2. Video Stories.** The learning module contains five short video stories, each of which looks at an aspect of contemporary taste and custom regarding food in Japan. Through the video stories, which may be used together or selectively, students are introduced to several types of Japanese food, aspects of the food industry, and contemporary Japanese tastes. The video section of the teacher’s guide contains (1) a brief overview of each video, (2) an activity to introduce and guide student viewing of the videos, (3) follow-up discussion questions focusing on significant themes that shed light on broader and deeper aspects of Japanese culture, and (4) transcripts of the video stories.

**Section 3. Learning Activities.** Two print lessons are provided in the module. These lessons focus on specific themes emerging from the videos and extend learning on particular topics introduced in the videos. Each lesson uses the topic of food to enable the class to explore and analyze aspects of Japanese culture in more depth. Extension/enrichment activities are also suggested.

**Section 4. World Wide Web Resources.** The final component of the module is a listing of relevant online resources.



## Japanese Food: A Mirror of History

by Linda S. Wojtan

The traditional Japanese diet was based mainly on rice, fish, and vegetables. Little beef was eaten, and this is sometimes attributed to the influence of Buddhism. Although Buddhist teachings may have had a slight influence, far more important is the fact that over 80% of Japan is mountainous and the small amount of land left over for agriculture made it necessary to concentrate on the necessary cereal production, leaving little land for animal pasturage.

In the preparation of food in Japan, the idea from ancient times has been to avoid waste. For instance, there is an expression concerning the use of fish that says, in effect, to use the flesh for *sashimi* (sliced raw) or to grill it, to boil the lean parts of the flesh, and to use the other parts for soup. Also, preserved foods have been used since long ago to anticipate shortages in lean years. Preservation methods include pickling for vegetables and salting or drying for fish and meat.

Food is eaten using chopsticks (*hashi*), which are nearly always made of wood. Breakfast is rather plain and simple, and lunch is fairly light, the main emphasis being on the evening meal.

### Food Preparation

Japanese cuisine is unique to the Japanese archipelago where it originated and developed over the centuries. The majority of Japanese dishes are prepared so as to accent the natural flavors of fresh fish and shellfish, and almost all are made to go well with rice and *sake*. The season of the year is a prime factor in the selection of ingredients and the choice of how to prepare them. Utmost care is used in arranging the foods on dishes of various colors, shapes, and materials. In addition to rice, soup, and pickles, there are hors d'oeuvres, *sashimi* (slices of raw fish), grilled fish, deep-fried and boiled foods, vegetables and fish in various dressings, and vinegared dishes.

Special efforts are made to enhance the natural flavor of the ingredients using seasoning. Typical seasonings are soy sauce, *sake*, vinegar, and sugar, but seasoning is never so heavy as to make the dish strong or cloying. In making broths for soups and boiled foods and sauces for fried foods, stocks prepared from such materials as dried bonito, *shiitake* mushrooms, and tangle (an edible seaweed) are used to bring out flavor. One common technique in Japanese cooking is the use of a "hidden seasoning," which is not perceptible to the people enjoying the dish but which accents some natural flavor of the ingredients. For instance, a small

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amount of salt is added as a “hidden seasoning” to bring out the natural sweetness of a dish. The use of refined sugar goes back only about 100 years, and today sugar is used only sparingly in the best Japanese cooking.

Among the Japanese foods liked best by foreign visitors are *sushi*, *tempura*, and *sukiyaki*. *Sushi* is slightly-vinegared rice covered or mixed with raw fish, shellfish, *laver* (seaweed), or vegetables. The method of preparation, shape, and taste differ somewhat depending on the locality. The *nigirizushi* of Tokyo is a simple variety of *sushi* consisting of small, oblong balls of vinegared rice topped with a thin slice of fresh raw fish or shellfish. It is usually eaten in *sushi* shops, where it is prepared before the customer’s eyes by cooks who go about their work in a smart and lively manner that gives these establishments a special atmosphere. Today, *nigirizushi* is popular throughout the country.

*Tempura* is a fritter-like dish of fish, shellfish, and vegetables dipped in a flour-and-water batter and deep-fried in vegetable oil. Although not a traditional Japanese dish, *sukiyaki* has been quite popular from about the late 19th century. Slices of beef are braised together with vegetables in a small amount of liquid seasoned mainly with soy sauce and sugar.

The Japanese celebrate particularly happy occasions with red rice (*sekihan*) and sea bream (*tai*), a sunfish prepared with head and tail intact. *Sekihan* is made by teaming glutinous rice (an especially sticky variety) together with red beans, which turns the rice red. The Japanese have long considered red to be a lucky color because of its association with the color of fire and the sun. The Japanese word for sea bream, *tai*, sounds similar to the word “*mede-tai*” or “felicity” and, what is more, the *tai* is auspiciously red in color. On festive occasions, the *tai* is served broiled completely whole from head to tail: the wish for good luck is thought to be better conveyed through the full and perfect shape.

## Cuisine Importing and Exporting

Increasing contact with other countries from the Meiji Restoration onwards has brought about changes in diet patterns, particularly since the end of World War II, with economic prosperity and higher living standards. Rapid increases in the consumption of dairy products and meat, as well as of bread, noodles, and other wheat products, have been accompanied by a progressive decline in consumption of the traditional staple, rice.

The overall differences between urban and rural diet patterns are disappearing with improvements in distribution systems. In the cities, numerous restaurants specialize in the cuisine of other countries, and some of them are quite within a moderate price range. This tendency is also spreading to provincial areas to some extent. Many standard dishes eaten in Japan today are Japanized versions of other nations’ foods. Some examples are *sukiyaki*—a mixture of meat, vegetables, and other ingredients simmered in a liquid flavored with sweetened rice wine, soy sauce, and other flavoring; *tonkatsu*—a way of cooking pork cutlets, etc.; and “curry-rice.”

The so-called westernization of the Japanese diet has been charted by the government for over a quarter century. Quick preparation and precooked foods now characterize many Japanese diets. There has also been a decline of vegetable consumption; much of this due to the popularization of salads over cooked vegetables. Since there is far less volume weight in raw salad vegetables than in their cooked form, that means people are eating less vegetables. The

westernization of the Japanese diet is also seen in the steady climb in calorie consumption from an average of 2,490 in 1977 to 2,898 in the mid-1990s.

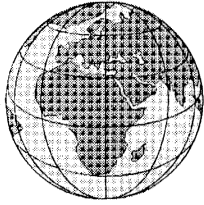
For several years now, Japanese food has been gaining in popularity in the United States and Europe. Japanese restaurants have opened in many of the world's major cities. In New York alone, over 400 Japanese restaurants large and small, including many sushi shops, are doing business. Many supermarkets in major American cities now have Japanese sections where Japanese-style rice, soy sauce, and other Japanese foods are available. Cookbooks for dishes using tofu (bean curd) are said to be in great demand.

Recently, the National Rice Distribution Association of Japan released the results of a survey showing the increased popularity of Japanese food in America. More than 90% thought that Japanese food was nutritious, nonfattening, and thus healthful. The more frequently eaten foods selected by Americans in the poll were:

- **sushi** (rice spiced with sweet vinegar, compressed into 5-cm slabs, topped with slices of raw fish or shellfish, and dipped lightly in soy sauce)—67%
- **sashimi** (raw fish slices taken from the choice boneless parts of fish and eaten with strong soy sauce)—64%
- **tofu** (bean curd made from liquid extracted from crushed soybeans, then solidified through a special process; tofu itself is unseasoned and can be eaten in many ways)—60%
- **udon** and **soba** (Japanese noodles eaten in a variety of ways)—43%
- **yakitori** (chicken broiled over charcoal after immersion in soy sauce)—43%
- **nori** (edible seaweed dried into crisp, thin square sheets)—39%

Japan's culinary borrowing began in the 6th century when she had contact with China, and the continued cultural influence of China in the 7th and 8th centuries resulted in the introduction of soybeans and tea. The cultural origins of many other foods are reflected in the variety of terms found in the Japanese language. The term for bread, for example, is *pan*—the Latin term, thus reflecting the early Portuguese influence.

Increased contact with the West, especially the United States following World War II, has resulted in a number of transliterated, adopted foreign items, usually written in the *katakana* script. Examples of these "dietary" loan words include *aisukuriimu* (ice cream) and *hotto doggu* (hot dog).



## A Taste of Japan

by Donald Richie

The cuisine of Japan is in many ways different from those of other countries. Different kinds of food, different ways of cooking, of serving—different ways too of thinking about food, eating, meals.

Where to begin among all the differences? Well, most cuisines emphasize the large—big portions, healthy helpings; only in Japan, and in Japanese-inspired styles such as *la nouvelle cuisine*, is the small considered satisfying. Small but lots, however; a traditional meal is made up of a variety of little portions. Not then the mighty American steak, the French stew, or the Chinese fish, but something much smaller.

And something usually already cut up in some way made instantly edible as, say, the sizzling steak is not. In the West, indeed, a part of culinary pleasure comes from the ritual dismembering of the roast or the standing crown of ribs. In China as well, the moment of the crumbling of the charcoal-broiled carp, the opening of the clay-baked fowl, are part of the gustatory experience.

Not so in Japan. Here the portions arrive already cut up into bite-sized pieces or are small enough to be easily broken at the table. One of the reasons given for this is that the Japanese use chopsticks, instruments not ideal for cutting and slicing. But then, so do the Chinese and many another Asian countries as well, and these cuisines do not insist on small portions being cut into bite-sized pieces before being served.

The reason is not chopsticks. It is, I think, a great concern for the presentation of the food, its appearance. To be sure, food everywhere must be presentable. Things must look, in the Western phrase, “good enough to eat.” But there the matter usually ends. Not, however, in Japan. It is enough, in America and Europe, that a steak look like a steak, a chicken like a chicken. In Japan, while fish should look like fish, the fish dish ought also to look like something more. It ought to reflect within its composition another concern, one the West considers aesthetic. The effect should be as pleasing to the eye as the taste is to the tongue. At the same time, there is a canon of presentation, a system of culinary aesthetics to be satisfied.

This, then, is one of the reasons for small portions and plate preparation in the kitchen. The food is to be looked at as well as eaten. The admiration to be elicited is more, or other, than gustatory. This appeal has its own satisfactions, and it may be truly said that in Japan

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the eyes are at least as large as the stomachs. Certainly the number of rules involving modes and methods of presentation indicate the importance of eye appeal.

The colors, for example, must be artfully opposite. The pink of the tuna *sashimi* ought to be contrasted with the light green of the grated *wasabi* (horseradish) and the darker green of the *shiso* leaf upon which the slices rest. And the slices themselves, despite their casual appearance, carefully arranged.

There are five types of arrangement (*moritsuke*) of food on dishes. The most common is *yamamori*, a mountain-like mounded arrangement. There is also *sugimori*, a standing or slanting arrangement, like the cedar (*sugi*) that gives the style its name. Then there is a *hiramori*, a flat arrangement used for foods such as *sashimi*. And there are *ayamori* (woven arrangements) and *yosemori* (gathered arrangements) as well.

Asymmetrical aesthetics also apply in the way in which food is placed in relation to the surface area of the dish itself. Let us say something roundish—a fillet or *teriyaki*-style fish—is to be served. It will appear on a long, narrow flat dish. Resting against the fish and extending the length of the dish will be a single stalk of pickled ginger. An asymmetrical balance has been created in which the negative space (the empty part of the dish) serves as balance to the positive (fish-filled) and is accentuated by the single line (pickled ginger), which intensifies the emptiness and, of course, by so doing also intensifies the succulence of the fish.

That such aesthetic considerations should extend to food surprises the West. One is used to Japanese concepts of negative space in such arts as *sumi-e* (black ink painting) or *ikebana* (flower arranging), but to see such ideas in the kitchen strikes us as odd—as though Poussin's ideas on the golden rectangle should be made apparent in the way a quiche is sliced.

But this just goes to show how very different Japanese ideas on food are. And there are many more aesthetic considerations common in Japanese cuisine as well. For instance, there is a general law of opposites, which has nothing in common with food presentation elsewhere. Foods that are roundish in shape (small dumplings, ginkgo nuts, small fillets) are served, as we have seen, in dishes having straight lines, while foods which are straight (square-sliced vegetables, blocks of tofu) are always served in round dishes.

At the same time, the dishes themselves are rotated during the year, because each of the four seasons calls for special ware—glass dishes, for example, are associated with summer, and bowls considered appropriate for spring could not be used in the autumn. This is particularly true for the natural containers of which Japanese cuisine is fond—seasonal leaves serving as a base on the plate, actual clam shells for seafood, and so on.

Such rotation reflects, or mirrors, the larger seasonal concern in the food itself. The West observes season only insofar as availability and safety (no oysters in “r”-less months) is concerned. In Japan, however, the season must be reflected in all food. Even in these days of year-round-fresh hothouse produce, the seasonal aspect of Japanese cuisine is kept strong. Eggplant is best savored in summer, while spinach and other greens are considered winter fare. The only time to find and eat the *matsutake* mushroom is early autumn; trout is a spring and the trout-like *ayu* an early summer fish; and no *nabemono* (one-pot-meal) is edible in the summer. The diet itself is controlled by the seasons and the garnishes are seasonal as well. In spring, for example, a single fiddlehead may be nibbled at; in the fall, a scattering

of baby maple leaves (inedible) may be found on the appropriate plate beside the appropriate food.

Whoever said Japanese cuisine was all presentation and no food was, of course, quite wrong, but one can at the same time understand how such a statement came to be made, particularly if one comes from a country where it is simply enough that food looks decent and tastes all right.

Actually, the presentational ethos so much a part of the Japanese cuisine continues right into the mouth. Is there any other cuisine, I wonder, which makes so much of texture, as divorced from taste? The West, of course, likes texture, but only when it is appropriate and never when it is tasteless. Consequently, the feel of the steak in the mouth, the touch of the clam on the tongue are part of the Western eating experience, but they are not enjoyed for their own sakes. Rather these sensations are enjoyed as harbingers of taste.

Japan is, again, quite different. There are, in fact, not a few foods that are used for texture alone. *Konnyaku* (devil's tongue jelly) has no taste to speak of though it has an unforgettable texture. *Tororo* (grated mountain yam) again has more feel than flavor. *Udo* looks and feels much like celery but it tastes of almost nothing at all. *Fuu*, a form of wheat gluten, has no taste, except the flavor of whatever surrounds it. Yet all are prized Japanese foods.

The reason is that the Japanese appreciate texture almost as much as they appreciate taste. The feel of the food, like its appearance, is of prime importance. The West, on the other hand, does not like extreme textures. Those few Westerners who do not like *sushi* or *sashimi* never say that it does not taste good. Rather, it is the texture they cannot stand—the very feel of the food.

Not only do the Japanese like textures, they have turned their consideration into one more aesthetic system governing the cuisine. Textures, runs the unwritten rule, ought to be opposite, complementary. The hard and the soft, the crisp and the mealy, the resilient and the pliable. These all make good and interesting combinations and these, too, have their place within this presentational cuisine.

There are other aesthetic considerations as well but this is a good place to stop and take stock of what we have so far observed. For review let us take a very simple dish, a kind of elemental snack, something to eat while drinking, a Japanese canapé. Let us see how it contrives to satisfy the aesthetic demands of Japanese cuisine.

The dish is *morokyu*, baby cucumber with *miso* (bean paste), usually consumed with *sake*, more often nowadays with beer. Let us look at its qualities. First, the colors are right; fresh green and darkish red is considered a proper combination. Second, the portions are small enough so that their patterns can be appreciated—the dish consists of just one small cucumber cut up into sticks and a small mound of *miso*. Third, the arrangement and plate complement each other. The round mound of *miso* (*yamamori*) is considered operative, so the dish is served on a long, flat narrow plate, thus emphasizing the very roundness of the bean paste. The length of the cucumber—and it is always cut along its length, never its width—stretches away from the *miso* and emphasizes the emptiness and again, by contrast, the fullness of the food. Fourth, the dish should be redolent of summer, since *morokyu* is mainly eaten in warm weather. So the dish should be untextured, unornamented, of a light

color—white, pale blue, or a faint celadon green—thus emphasizing the seasonal nature of *morokyu* itself. Fifth, the textures are found to blend. The cool crispness of the cucumber complements perfectly the mealy, soft, and pungent *miso*.

Let's see, is there anything else? Oh, yes, almost forgot—the taste. Well, *morokyu* tastes very good indeed, the firm salty *miso* sitting and complementing the blank and watery flavor of the cucumber. But it is perhaps telling that, with so much going on in this most presentational of cuisines, it is the taste that one considers last. Perhaps it is also fitting. The taste of this cuisine lingers.

Naturally, one cannot compare the taste of a few slices of fresh fish and almost raw vegetables with, let us say, one of the great machines of the French cuisine, all sauces and flavors. And yet, because it is made of so little, because there is so little on the plate, because what there is is so distinctly itself, Japanese cuisine makes an impression that is just as distinct as that of the French.

This is because the taste is so fresh, because the taste is that of the food itself and not the taste of what has been done to it. The sudden freshness of Japanese cuisine captures attention as does a whisper in the midst of shouts. One detects in presentation and in flavor, authenticity. Things are introduced and eaten in varying degrees of rawness, nothing is overcooked; one feels near the food in its natural state. Indeed, one is often very near it because so much Japanese food (cut bite-sized in the kitchen and arranged on plates before being brought out) is cooked or otherwise prepared at the table right in front of you.

Japanese cuisine is, finally, unique in its *attitude* toward food. This ritual, presentational cuisine, which so insists upon freshness and naturalness, rests upon a set of assumptions concerning food and its place in life. Eventually, the cuisine itself depends upon the Japanese attitude toward the environment, toward nature itself.

These assumptions are many. First, one will have noticed that the insistence upon naturalness implies a somewhat greater respect for the food than is common in other cuisines. At the same time, however, it is also apparent that respect consists of doing something to present naturalness. In other words, in food as in landscape gardens and flower arrangements, the emphasis is on a presentation of the natural rather than the natural itself. It is not what nature has wrought that excites admiration but what man has wrought with what nature has wrought.

Thus, Japanese cuisine is as anthropomorphic as most cuisines are, but it is anthropomorphic in a different way. Man in Japan includes the natural more than does man in other countries perhaps because the Japanese sees himself as an adapter, an ameliorator, a partner. He does not see himself so completely lord of the universe that he could design a formal Italian garden or prepare *tripes à la mode de Caen*, a dish featuring four or more kinds of tripe simmered with a cow's foot and various vegetables in the dry cider of Normandy for fourteen hours.

Certainly nothing, food included, gets into the Japanese world without becoming Japanese. This is true of other cuisines as well. Most Western food is eaten by most Japanese—eaten every day as a matter of fact—but it is changed, sometimes subtly, sometimes not—to the satisfaction of the native palate.



The Western breakfast, for example, is now very popular, particularly in the cities, but it is understood that the eggs always be sunny-side-up and served cold and that a small salad (often using cabbage) is necessary if the meal is to be authentic.

Or, there are some dishes which we foreigners think of as being completely Japanese since they occur nowhere else, for example, chicken rice, curry rice, and *hayashi* rice. Yet all are adaptations which have suffered a great change in Japan. Chicken rice is a ketchup-flavored cross between pilaf and fried rice; curry rice was obviously once Indian; *hayashi* rice was, despite its native name, perhaps once North American—*hayashi* is how the Japanese originally understood “hashed.”

The Japanese, of course, think of such food as being originally imported, though it has now become in an honorary sense Japanese. Though they are omnivorous as far as cuisines go, a great distinction is thus made between the Japanese and all the others. (And not only in food. The rigid division between things Japanese and things otherwise is to be observed in all fields of human endeavor in Japan.)

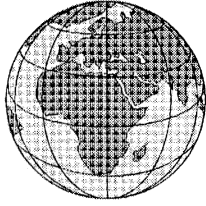
Restaurants serving Japanese food, for example, serve only Japanese food and those serving Western food serve only Western food. It is only in the lowly *shokudoo* (something like the Western station buffet) that the categories are mixed. (In those and in the smart avant-garde eateries among which nouvelle cuisine got its start, where there are such miscegenous dishes as raw tuna over avocado and pasta with sea urchin roe.) One of the reasons (there are many more) is that Japanese food Japanese-style has for the Japanese a special character, more so than does, for example, American-style American food for the American.

Though Japanese-style food is usually eaten at least once a day by all Japanese (so great are the inroads of Western-style food and now the fast and/or junk foods), it is never taken for granted the way that a Big Mac (or Chateaubriand, for that matter) could be taken for granted.

Rice was the food of the gods and even now the Japanese meal, centered as it is around rice, retains something of a sacerdotal character. Certainly, to be served such food (Japanese home-cooking) in someone's house is an honor. Visiting foreigners are often steered to authentically Japanese food. (And the Japanese feel that even such lauded cuisines as, say, *tonkatsu* are not Japanese enough for such presentation.) *Real* Japanese food remains both something very homelike and something at the same time very special.

If nowadays the home table tends to be a bit mixed (*sashimi* and salad, something sticky and sweet at the end), it is not perhaps that Japan has become so Westernized as that things Western in Japan have been so Japanified.

At the same time there exists a concern for the purity of the Japanese cuisine as it has evolved, and Japan remains one of the countries (France is another) where food represents a lineage, going back into history. Where, indeed, the cuisine is rightly viewed as one of the cultural adjuncts of the country itself. Thus, an understanding and appreciation of Japanese cuisine implies a certain understanding and appreciation of the Japanese themselves.



## SECTION 2 VIDEO STORIES

### Video Viewing Guide and Discussion Questions

This video has five segments:

**Segment 1. Sweets to Suit the Seasons** (4 minutes 40 seconds). A man in Tokyo has been making *wagashi*, bean paste sweets, for more than 30 years. Their shapes and colors reflect the importance of nature and the seasons to the Japanese.

**Segment 2. Fantastic Fake Foods** (2 minutes 9 seconds). Plastic food samples are a specialty of Japan. Creating the food samples is an art in itself.

**Segment 3. Edible Art** (3 minutes 24 seconds). To the Japanese, food must please the eye as well as the taste buds. One chef, Shingo Fukunaga, has taken the visual art of Japanese food to new heights.

**Segment 4. The Soba Express** (2 minutes). The owner of a small noodle shop delivers noodle lunches via bicycle, reflecting an unusual dimension of fast-food delivery.

**Segment 5. Oodles of Noodles** (2 minutes 10 seconds). A traditionally popular food in Japan, ramen noodles, has taken on a new dimension as an instant food treat.

Transcripts for the five story segments follow this viewing guide.

Set the stage for this learning module and video viewing by asking students to consider the relationship between food and culture. Bring in a McDonald's menu, a children's meal, or a sample of an ethnic or regional food popular in your community. Ask students how the displayed food represents American culture or the culture(s) of your particular community or region.

Alternatively, you may ask students to think about foods they eat everyday or foods eaten at certain holidays. Ask students to talk about what these foods tell about the United States or your community, its history, its geography, and so on. Record student responses on the board.

With fast foods, students should be able to comment on the interest in convenience in modern America; the preference for easy, fast, and inexpensive foods by busy families; American preferences for traditional foods like beef and potatoes in a fast form, etc. With ethnic foods or holiday foods, students should be able to comment on specific customs, values, and traditions reflected in these foods, as well as possible geographic influences.

Explain that over the next several lessons, the class will be exploring Japanese food to determine how the foods of that country reflect important things about its history, geography, and society.

Next, ask students to volunteer any information they have about foods popular in Japan. Record responses on the board. Most students will be able to volunteer information about *sushi*, fish, rice, and perhaps rice crackers, noodles, and tofu.

Explain that, as a class, you will be viewing five short video stories about food preferences and customs in Japan. Provide students with Handout 1, a cultural web, and go over the culture categories with students. Explain that students should record all that they can find out about the different categories of culture on the web as they watch the video. As an alternate method, divide the class into small groups, with each group responsible for looking for examples of one “web” category during video viewing.

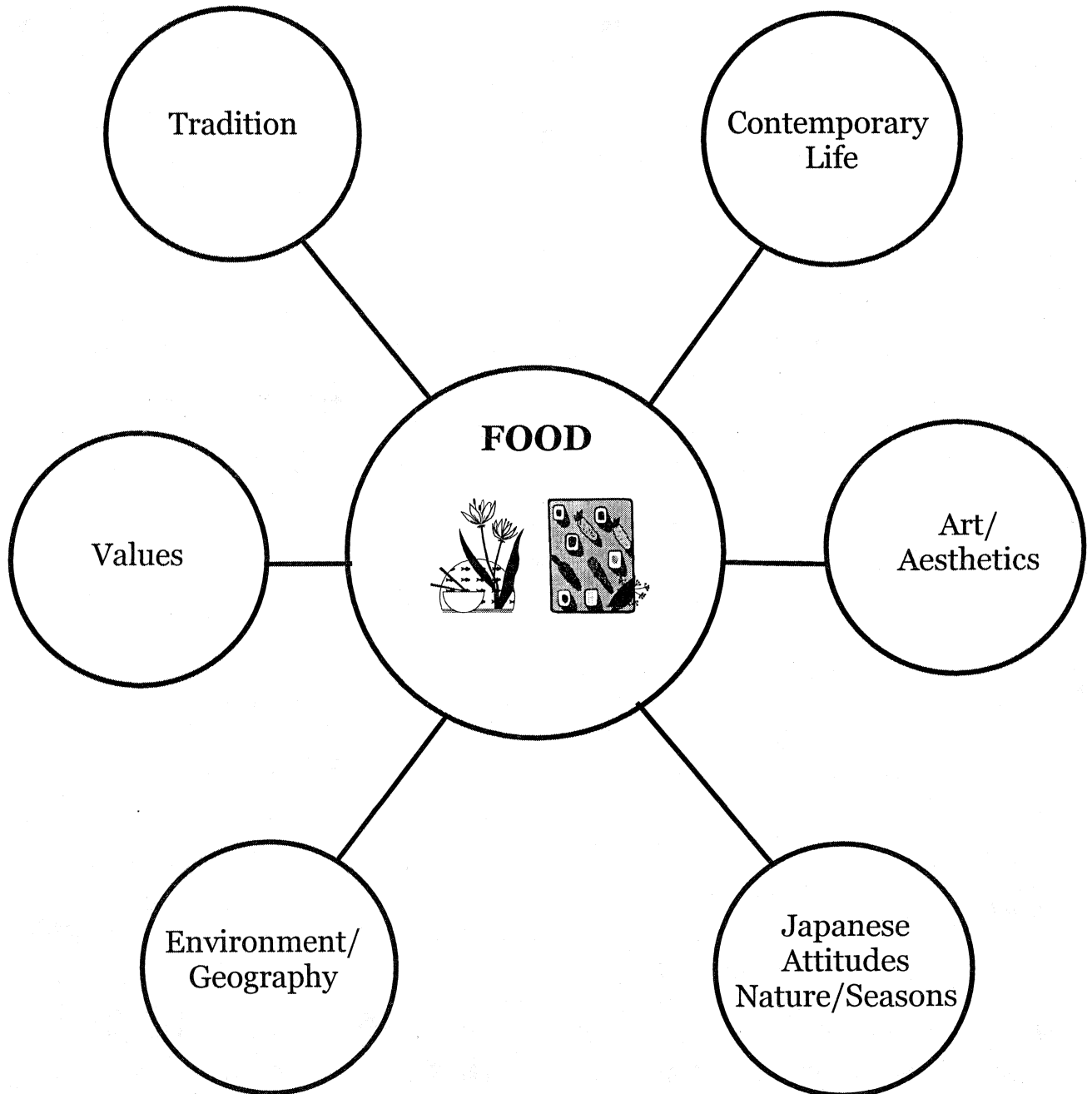
After each video segment, or after showing the entire video, review webs with students. Specifically, ask students how food reflects important information about each of the web categories; that is, how does food reflect Japan’s geography? How does food reflect Japanese attitudes about nature and seasons? Have students provide specific examples from the video stories. Ask students to volunteer their ideas about why one can learn about contemporary life in Japan from the way Japanese people prepare food and what they like to eat.

- Environment/Geography: Lots of seafood, emphasis on fresh fish, seaweed, rice.
- Tradition: Foods made in same way, by hand, for generations; foods reflect traditional values (e.g., *kintaro* candy, sweets of seasons); chefs since ancient times focused on way food looks as well as how it tastes.
- Nature/Seasons: Sweets change with season, are made in shapes of symbols of season, such as leaves.
- Art/Aesthetics: Many food industries (fake food, sweets of season) emphasize beauty. Food dishes are intricate and food preparation is seen as an art, requiring years of practice. Food dishes have to look good. The vegetable chef has years of skill using his knife to create detailed vegetable “art”—butterflies and flowers.
- Values: Value of beauty, of nature, of fresh foods, of careful preparation and attention to detail, of labor-intensive methods rather than mass production.

Ask students to consider the theme of tradition and change. In what ways do the various video stories illustrate this theme?

- Sweets to Suit the Season: Tradition—candies made by hand, business since 1803; change—family pastimes.
- Fantastic Fake Foods: Combination of tradition and change in the mixture of high-tech production and hand-painting of fake foods; fake foods made for both traditional and Western fast foods.
- Oodles of Noodles: Tradition—noodle broth a traditional food, some noodles still made by hand, delivered by bicycle; change—noodle bowls now available as fast food, come freeze dried.

## Video Viewing Guide: A Cultural Web



- Edible Art: Tradition—ancient art of making food look beautiful by way it is cut, art form takes years of practice.

Complete the video discussion by asking students to reconsider their initial analysis of American foods. What more can they add to their analysis about American food as a reflection of American culture? How does it reflect American history, tradition, changes in society, and environment?

Extend the video viewing lesson with either or both of the print lessons provided in the Learning Activities section of this teacher's guide.

### Sweets to Suit the Seasons (4 minute 40 seconds): Video Transcript

UEMATSU TALKING IN PARK	This man enjoying the greenery is also hard at work.
PAN OF FLOWERS	Fifty-two-year-old Hiroshi Uematsu is a special craftsman, a maker of unusual Japanese sweets, and what he sees in nature inspires his creativity.
UEMATSU IN WHITE HAT	On reaching his workshop, what Mr. Uematsu has seen goes into the making of highly original bean paste sweets or <i>wagashi</i> . He's a master at this trade, having made <i>wagashi</i> for over 30 years.
PINK CANDY FLOWER	<i>Wagashi</i> are known not only for being a delicious treat, but also for incorporating nature's beauty into their design.
FALL LEAVES ON TREES	As the seasons change, so do the <i>wagashi</i> that are sold.
HANDS PUTTING "ANKO" INTO DOUGH	These treats capture that fleeting moment between later summer and early fall. But the shop where Mr. Uematsu works is anything but fleeting. Tsuiruya Yoshinobu has been selling <i>wagashi</i> since 1803.
FINISHED LEAVES IN TRAY	There's little time for rest between creations and Mr. Uematsu is already making a second batch. It's early autumn and everyone is preparing sweets that reflect the current season.
MIXING PURPLE DYE IN BOWL	Mr. Uematsu is also busy preparing a seasonal delight.
POURING BATTER INTO STEAMER	Steaming this brightly colored paste is the first step in making <i>kikyuo</i> or "balloon" flower. Mr. Uematsu says: "It blooms in early fall—a very beautiful, purple flower."
ROLLING OUT DOUGH	His seasoned hands make this look easy but the dough must be perfectly even.
CUTTING DOUGH	Making circles is easier with a cookie cutter.
TRAY OF ANKO BALLS	Sweetened red bean paste comprises the center of the flower.
FORMING THE FLOWER	Bare hands are irreplaceable for the final touches. Here Mr. Uematsu's artistry shows.
SHOP INTERIOR	The workshop supplies several stores with <i>wagashi</i> . According to one worker, now that the weather has become cooler, <i>wagashi</i> with autumn motifs are the top sellers.

- AT HOME, UEMATSU WITH HIS FAMILY His work day over, Mr. Uematsu enjoys another pleasure—dinner with his family. Terutaka, his son, is a college student. Mrs. Uematsu works for an electrical company, and their daughter is a high school student. Dining together provides a pleasant ambiance to discuss the day's events.
- TV Though their daily pursuits are diversified, the Uematsus share a common pleasure—watching baseball. For Mr. Uematsu, time with his family is the only thing sweeter than his *wagashi* creations.

### **Fantastic Fake Foods (2 minutes 9 seconds): Video Transcript**

- CORN ON THE COB This ear of corn turning into soup is a gravity-defying piece of fantasy. What's more, the corn and the soup are absolutely fake. Such plastic food samples are a specialty of Japan. Here are some other fake foods that look deceptively delicious.
- MELTING ICE CREAM Tasty though this may appear, it isn't edible. Yet, in the hands of a craftsman, the material used—a mix of 20% wax and 80% plastic—can even duplicate the texture of ice cream. Unlike the real thing, however, fake ice cream must be baked in a microwave oven to solidify the sample.
- WINDOW When displayed at restaurants, these samples attract customers who then choose from this three-dimensional menu.
- FACTORY WORKER Each step takes delicate skill.
- OMELET The customer must be tempted. Omelettes must look absolutely delicious.
- CAKE Cakes take planning and must look extra elegant, moist enough to melt in your mouth.
- BREAD CRUMBS Real bread crumbs are used on plastic for "fried food."
- CURRY RICE But bits of plastic "onion" embellish this plate of curried rice, a popular dish in Japan.
- MAN HOLDING ICE CREAM CONES Whimsical designs make fake food look better than the real thing.
- ROLL And how about this? A roll that zips things up.

### **Edible Art (3 minutes 24 seconds): Video Transcript**

- CHEF One sharply honed knife cuts across the surface of a *daikon*, a Japanese radish. The skill of a chef is measured by one thing—this skill in using a knife. Many insist on a pleasing look to their dishes. Appearance is a vital part of the cuisine and that is why, from ancient times, Japanese chefs have focused not only on taste but on the artistry of their dishes.

FUKUNAGA WORKING TABLE	Thirty-two-year-old Shingo Fukunaga has refined his skills in culinary art to such a degree that he has created a whole new genre—what he calls vegetable art. He carves delicate layers of vegetables so thin that they seem almost transparent.
BUTTERFLY	In just three minutes he turns a single carrot into a butterfly.
LILY	It takes him just about two minutes to transform a turnip into a delicate lily.
FUKUNAGA STUDIES A ROSE	Fukunaga started fashioning flowers out of vegetables at the age of 12 while helping his parents in the kitchen of the family restaurant. In the next 20 years, he studied flowers tirelessly, striving to capture ever more faithfully their delicate beauty.
INTERVIEW	“I’d like to create a world of flowers in all their delicacy,” Mr. Fukunaga says. “Yet, I still have a long way to go.”
CREATIONS	Mr. Fukunaga has created more than 200 flowers out of vegetables. Yet success doesn’t seem to have spoiled this young artist. He says he will strive to bring out even more of the vernal freshness and vitality of flowers in his future vegetable art.

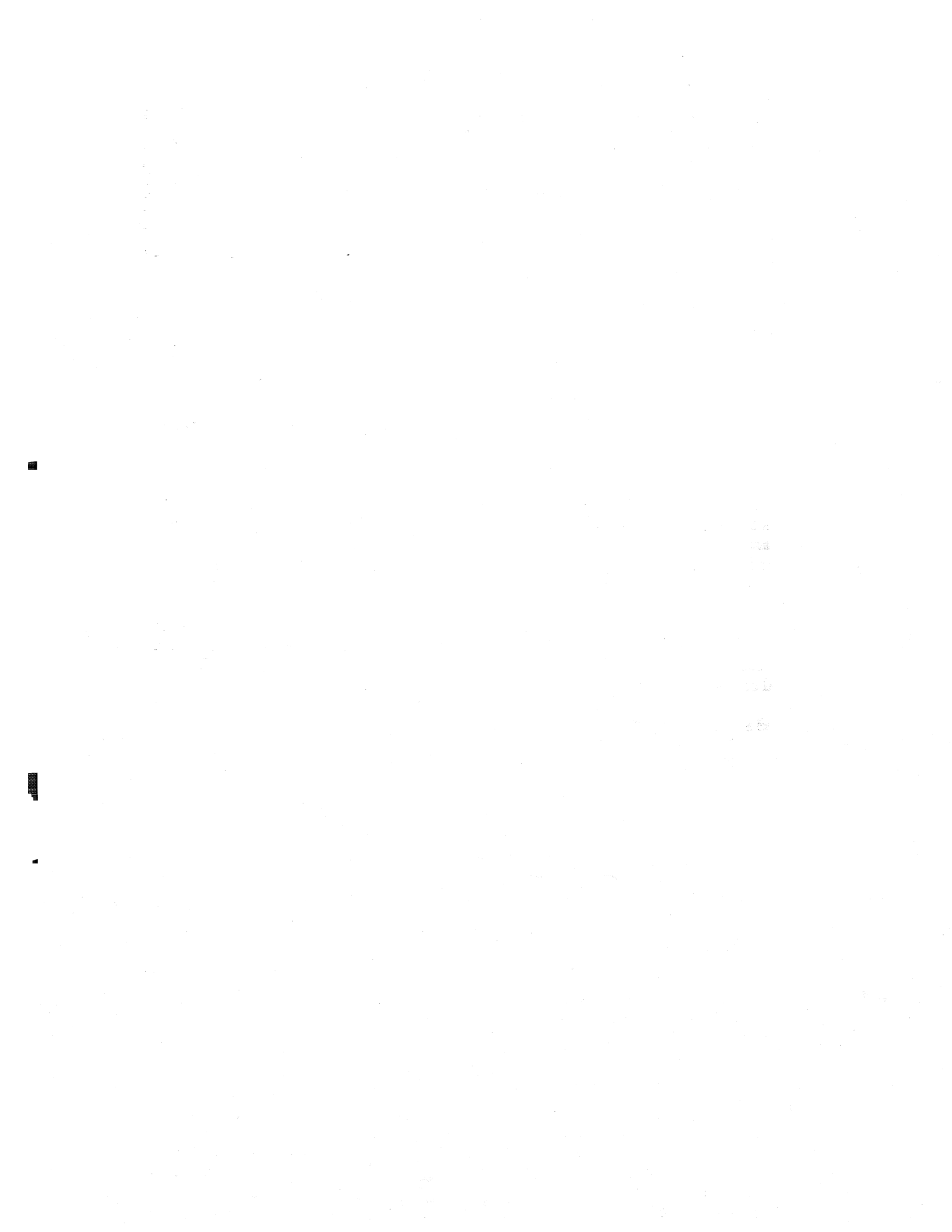
### **The Soba Express (2 minutes): Video Transcript**

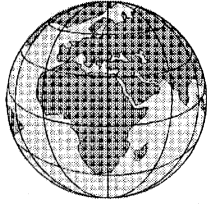
MAN JUMPS ON BIKE	Meet my boss—Mr. Hiroyoshi Sakai, forty-five years young.
DROPS BIKE	And that’s me he’s just left—I’m 23, which is old for a bike. We share a risky life on the streets of Kobe.
CUTS SOBA	Every morning for over 36 years, Mr. Sakai gets up at 4 a.m. to make hand-made noodles, which the Japanese call <i>soba</i> , for the tiny diner that he owns with his wife, Harumi. <i>Soba</i> is a Japanese pasta. It comes in many thicknesses and is usually served in a nourishing broth.
RUSHES OUT OF STORE	Most customers order by phone and my job is to help Mr. Sakai deliver our bowls of <i>soba</i> while they’re still hot. He’s a ‘ <i>kamikaze</i> ’ on wheels, reaching speeds of nearly 50 km per hour. We deliver about 30 orders a day. Japanese noodles are tastiest when hot and customers appreciate quick service. Even the furthest delivery takes us just a few minutes. Sometimes we ignore the red lights.
BIKE CLOSE-UP	All this is hard on my parts. My handles have been repaired many times and my tires wear out every two months.
INTERVIEW WITH MR. SAKAI	“Delivery by bike is the fastest way to get my noodles to my customers.”
SAKAI CLEANS BIKE	My boss appreciates my contribution. That’s why he takes good care of me.

## **Oodles of Noodles (2 minutes 10 seconds): Video Transcript**

PEOPLE WAITING IN LINE	What could be worth this kind of wait?
POURING RAMEN IN A BOWL	For many Japanese, the answer is a good bowl of ramen noodles.
RAMEN	Those who don't have time to wait for this, though, have another choice—instant ramen.
CUP NOODLE	A quick meal you can prepare and serve in the same package. The dried noodle mass is positioned in the center of the cup. When hot water is added, the noodles have space to expand evenly.
VEGETABLES, FREEZE DRYING	Fresh toppings like these are freeze-dried. This process preserves the toppings by removing moisture while retaining the taste.
NOODLES	The noodles themselves are preserved through frying at high temperatures.
STAFF TASTING AND CHECKING NOODLES	Lunch break? No, these researchers spend their whole day devising ways to make a better noodle.
NOODLES IN SUPERMARKET	Apparently they've been busy. There are already some 550 types of instant noodles sold in Japan. Over five billion servings are eaten every year, an average of forty per person.
EXPORT NOODLES	If you think that's oodles of noodles, 25 billion servings are eaten yearly in 80 countries worldwide. A huge variety of flavors are offered to suit local tastes.







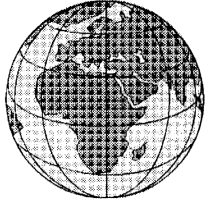
## SECTION 3 LEARNING ACTIVITIES

This section contains two print lessons for deepening student understanding of food as a reflection of Japan's culture, society, and global connections. Both print lessons are tied to the video stories that students have viewed and discussed. Teachers may choose to conduct both lessons or to use only one, depending on time and curricular fit.

***Lesson 1. You Are What You Eat: Food, Environment, and Culture.*** This one- to two-period lesson engages students in small group research and jigsaw presentations on eight popular types of cuisine in Japan. The lesson is designed to help students understand the cultural context and logic of Japanese dishes and ingredients that may seem strange to them. The lesson extends several themes and ideas introduced in the video stories, specifically, food as a reflection of cultural values, food as a reflection of environment, and the importance of art and nature in Japanese food. The lesson also bridges the gap between traditional and contemporary food tastes by exploring popular Japanese and Western fast foods. It is an excellent preparation for a class trip to a Japanese restaurant.

***Lesson 2. Fast Food: A Global Connection.*** This lesson extends student learning by focusing on two types of food introduced in the videos and in Lesson 1—fast food and ramen noodles. Through the lesson, students consider cultural transmission and adaptation through two fast food case studies—pizza in Japan and instant ramen (noodles) in the United States.

Suggested extension/enrichment activities conclude the section.



## Lesson 1. You Are What You Eat: Food, Environment, and Culture

by Jacquelyn Johnson

### Introduction

A country's cuisine—what the people like to eat and how the food is prepared—can be a useful tool for learning about that country. The types and varieties of foods that a country produces reflect geography and environmental factors; they are also an indication of the society's standard of living. Through an analysis of traditional and popular Japanese dishes, students consider how food, environment, and culture are related to Japan.

**Objectives:** Students will be able to:

- Identify characteristics unique to Japanese foods, using data about Japanese specialty restaurants.
- Analyze how food, culture, and environment are related, through consideration of several Japanese foods.

**Teaching Time:** 2 class periods

**Materials:** Copies of Handouts 2 and 3 for all students; enough copies of Handout 4 for each group of four students to have one copy; poster paper, markers; books on Japanese foods and Japanese cookbooks (optional)

### Procedure

1. Begin this activity with a large-group brainstorming session about Japanese foods. Allow the class several minutes to list Japanese foods with which they are familiar. Their list can include ingredients, well known main dishes, beverages, methods of preparation, utensils, Japanese foods that they have themselves eaten, names of Japanese restaurants in their community, and so on. Record students' ideas on poster paper. Post this around the room for reference throughout this activity.

2. Next, ask students to identify the sources of their information or impressions about Japanese foods. Is their information based on direct experience in eating Japanese foods; television, magazine, or newspaper advertising; friends' opinions; previous study of Japan; or other sources?

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Reprinted from *Japan in the Classroom: Elementary and Secondary Activities*, by Lynn S. Parisi and others (Boulder, CO: Social Science Education Consortium, 1993, rev.).

3. Distribute Handout 2, and read the first section, "You Are What You Eat," aloud with students. Before reading the remainder of this handout, allow a few minutes for students to provide examples from the United States that will support the premise that a country's preferences in food reflect both culture and environment. Possible focus questions might include the following:

- What are some of the factors that determine what we in the United States eat and enjoy?
- How does the popularity of many different ethnic foods reflect cultural diversity within our country?
- Are certain holidays and family celebrations associated with specific foods? Are certain sports associated with specific foods?
- How does environment influence the foods people in different parts of the United States eat (e.g., New England seafood, pork and beef in the Midwest, grits in the South, and so on)? Although many of these regional variations may be hard to distinguish today because of improvements in transportation and food distribution systems, evidence of these variations can still be found. Certainly, the variation in prices and availability of certain foods can be used to demonstrate this point.

4. Allow students ample time to finish reading Handout 2. Practice aloud the Japanese expression, *itadakimasu!* Do people in the United States have any comparable customs when beginning a meal?

5. Distribute Handout 3 and read this handout aloud with students. To check for student understanding, ask several students to explain in their own words what does, in fact, make Japanese food special. What important values and attitudes are reflected in the way the Japanese prepare many of their traditional dishes? Students should mention aesthetic or artistic appearance of food; the harmony of food and nature; and the importance of preserving the natural essence of foods. Students who have eaten Japanese foods can also be asked to elaborate on any of these three important characteristics. If books on Japanese foods or Japanese cookbooks are available, pictures of selected foods can be shown.

6. Next, explain that students will learn about eight different types of Japanese foods and the specialty restaurants that serve them. Divide the class into groups of four students each. Distribute Handout 4. Assign a group leader to randomly distribute two descriptions to each student in his/her group. Be sure to explain to students that each member of the group has different information. Group members will have to depend upon one another to obtain information about all eight types of Japanese restaurants.

7. Within groups, each student will be responsible for preparing two brief presentations that include information about ingredients, food preparation, and general atmosphere of the two restaurants described in his/her handout. Explain that students will not be allowed to read from their handouts. Allow students time to read materials and to think of a way to share the information about the two restaurants in a brief presentation for other group members. If students need help getting started, ask them to create a two-minute TV commercial for their restaurant or create a guessing game about the food served at their restaurant. Suggest some of the following sentence stems to use as starters:

“I’ve eaten this kind of Japanese food before...”  
“I’ve heard of this kind of Japanese food before...”  
“It seems to me that the atmosphere in my restaurant makes it...”  
“I’ve never eaten this kind of food before...”

8. Before students begin their presentations, refer to the three characteristics of Japanese food described on Handout 3. Instruct students that, as they listen to each other’s presentations within their groups, they should record examples of Japanese foods that fulfill each of the three characteristics. Specific foods may be cited more than once.

9. To set the stage for intra-group presentations, tell students to begin with the phrase, *itadakimasu!* Allow about 10 minutes for presentations, circulating from group to group as needed. Students should be allowed to ask questions, although given the limited information provided on Handout 4, students may have questions that presenters cannot answer. Japanese cookbooks and other library resources can be used as reference materials to discover more about Japanese foods.

10. As a large group, debrief this part of the lesson, using the notes that students made on Handout 3 for reference. Ask students which foods seem to be prepared to be as pleasing to the eyes and ears as to the mouth? Which foods reflect a harmony with nature? In the preparation of which foods is preserving natural flavors important? The American and Japanese fast-food restaurants can be used as points of contrast to the three characteristics of Japanese foods given on Handout 3.

Possible student responses are listed below:

- Aesthetically pleasing/use of art forms: *sushi, sukiyaki, shabu-shabu, kaiseki, soba.*
- Harmony with nature/colors, textures, and so on: *kaiseki, sushi.*
- Preserving natural flavors: *sushi, sukiyaki, shabu-shabu, tempura, yakitori, okonomiyaki.*

11. As a group, generate a list of items from the presentations that struck students as unusual. Possible responses are listed below:

- Eating raw fish.
- Serving small portions of chopped or sliced meat.
- Diners sitting on the floor.
- Take-out delivered on motorcycles.
- Small size of restaurants.
- Feeding beer to cows.
- Slurping noodles.
- People living behind restaurants.
- Customers cooking own food.
- Beef as a luxury food.
- Gas burners built into tables.

12. Ask students to consider why the items on their list might be unusual to them but not to Japanese people. Refer to the opening paragraph in Handout 2 and ask students to again consider the premise about food and culture. Explain that many of the aspects they found unusual about Japanese foods do, in fact, reflect something about the Japanese culture and environment. Examples are given below:

- Japan is an island nation. Thus, fish is a staple food in the Japanese diet.

- Beef is a luxury food in Japan. Japan is a small, mountainous country. With little usable land, grazing cattle takes up too much space that could be used for more concentrated and productive vegetable cultivation.
- Japanese use small portions of meat, whether beef, pork, fish, or chicken. Cut-up slices of meat make the portions go further. Again, this reflects an economic fact of life in Japan: there is little space for food production in the country. Consequently, food is expensive and is stretched whenever possible.
- Japan is a very densely populated nation, and space is at a premium. Small restaurants, stand-up restaurants, and people living behind their restaurants reflect the careful use of space.

With further thought, students should realize that other findings they originally thought unusual represent more of a cultural continuum than a contrast:

- Home delivery of noodles via motorcycle is similar to pizza delivery.
- Slurping hot noodles and blowing on noodles both involve using air to cool food.
- We do select ingredients to go on our pizzas; it could be even more fun to actually prepare our own pizza.

### **Follow-Up Activities**

1. Students can research major health problems and/or causes of death in Japan and the United States. Which, if any, are diet-related? Students should find that the Japanese suffer more from stroke than do Americans, based largely on greater intake of salt in the diet, dating back to the use of salt as a preservative; Americans suffer more from heart disease because their intake of cholesterol from meat and dairy products is much higher.

2. Using menus collected from Japanese restaurants, students can develop a list of basic ingredients in Japanese cooking. Students should find out where these ingredients come from. Are they grown in Japan or imported from other countries? Students can create a map to illustrate where the foods on which Japan relies come from.

3. Students can visit local supermarkets to check the availability of Japanese foods in their community. They should use cookbooks to develop a list of 20 to 30 typical Japanese foods they can look for during their supermarket visits.

### **Resources**

Haydock, Yukiko and Robert, *Food in a Japanese Mood* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1984).

Nagasawa, Kimiko, and Camy Condon, *Eating Cheap in Japan* (Tokyo: Shufunotomo Co., Ltd., 1972).

Turkovich, Marilyn, and others, *Omiyage* (Wellesley, MA: World Eagle Press, 1990).

## Japanese Foods: Reflections of Culture

### You Are What You Eat

You really cannot know a culture without knowing something about what the people of that culture eat. What you eat is a part of your culture. Popular foods often reflect the geographic environment of a country or region. Foods can also tell something about the spirit and traditions of a country.

The purpose of this lesson is to “unlock” some of the cultural barriers we may have about Japanese food. By looking at food, we can learn about Japanese culture and understand more about the Japanese people.

### Dining out in Japan

One aspect of everyday life common to many people in the United States and Japan is dining out. The Tokyo-Yokohama metropolitan area has a resident population of more than 26 million people. Tokyo alone has more than 45,500 restaurants. In some districts in Japan's largest cities (Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya), it is not unusual to find as many as 10 restaurants on a single block.

How does one select a restaurant given all these choices? One important consideration is the food specialty. Within the general category of Japanese cooking and food preparation are as many as 18 major types of Japanese specialty restaurants. Food preparation and cooking techniques in these restaurants have been refined and perfected. The ingredients used in Japanese foods are also distinctive to particular specialty restaurants. As in the United States, regional variations in ingredients and preparation can also be found throughout the country. Whereas in the United States a particular cuisine may be identified by country or ethnic origin, in Japan each style of preparing foods has a specialty restaurant unto itself.

Different groups of customers dine at certain types of restaurants in Japan; among these groups are businessmen, young people, families, and those who prefer more formal and traditional Japanese meals when dining out. The prices of foods vary considerably.

### Restaurant Customs

Several items and customs reflect the traditions of restaurant hospitality in Japan. First, many restaurants and snack shops feature a white, painted pottery cat in the window. The cat, with one paw raised in welcome, is called *Maneki-Neko*, or “beckoning cat.” According to tradition, the cat's raised paw welcomes visitors, so it is considered good luck for restaurant owners.

The traditional sign of welcome to a restaurant in Japan is the *noren*, a dark blue split curtain with white Japanese characters, hung in the doorway. If the *noren* is hung out over the doorway, the restaurant is open for business; if tucked inside, the restaurant is closed.

In Japan, chopsticks, or *hashi*, are the standard eating utensils. Chopsticks are well-suited to the bite-sized pieces of meat and vegetable typical of most Japanese dishes. Restau-

rant guests are usually given an *oshibori*, a dampened cloth used to cleanse the hands and face. It is also relaxing and refreshing—a nice way to begin the meal.

Japanese people begin their meal by saying *itadakimasu*. The expression is a very polite and general statement of thanks to all involved in the preparation of the food—from the farmer to the cook. *Itadakimasu* is used to show appreciation for being given food. When finished eating, the Japanese say, *Gochisōsama deshita*. The polite expression of thanks is also directed generally at all those involved in food preparation. It is simply translated as “Thank you; I have eaten well.”



## The Special Character of Japanese Foods

Besides being healthy and nutritious, many Japanese foods have a distinctive character that is different from foods eaten in many other countries. This is particularly true of traditional cooking. The characteristics listed below represent the standards of good Japanese cooking and meal presentation. The master chef of a particular Japanese food has refined and perfected a particular style and is accorded much respect by his patrons. In this way, he is as much an artist as a tea ceremony master, a calligraphy teacher, a *kendō* (martial art) expert, or a *kabuki* (traditional drama) performer.

1. The presentation of Japanese meals should be aesthetically pleasing. Foods are arranged so that color, texture, and shape complement one another. A number of writers have said that Japanese foods are prepared for the eyes and ears as much as for the nose, mouth, and stomach. In serving many foods, even the choice of plates and bowls becomes an important part of the meal.

2. Food preparation and presentation is an art form. Like so many other traditional art forms in Japanese culture, a deliberate effort to represent harmony with nature and the current season is very important.

3. The natural flavor of the foods must be preserved and enhanced. The freshest ingredients are selected and are cooked for only a short period of time (in some cases, not cooked at all). Very few spices are used.

## Japanese Specialty Restaurants

### Description 1: *Sushi* Shops

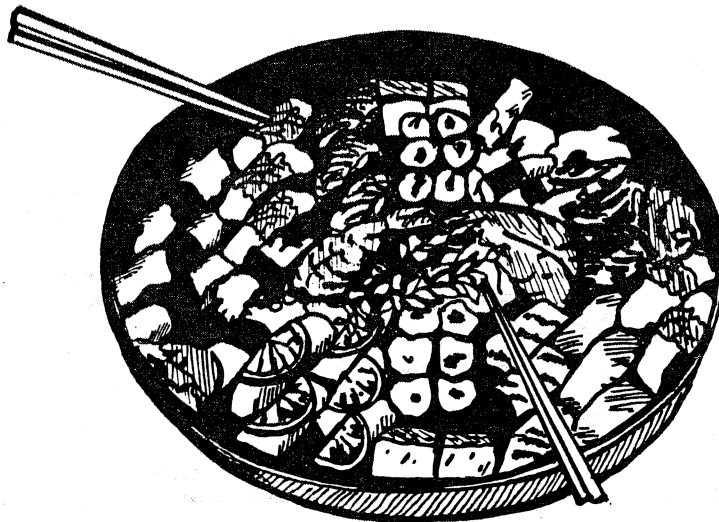
*Sushi* is one of the most popular foods in Japan. In Tokyo alone there are probably 10,000-15,000 sushi shops. *Sushi* is somewhat expensive because it must be made with the very freshest fish possible and takes great skill to create.

*Sushi* is prepared by pressing fresh fish into cold rice mounds that have been seasoned with vinegar and sugar. The Japanese characters for sushi mean “vinegared rice.” The most popular kind of *sushi* in Japan is *nigiri-zushi*, a rather large bite-size mound of rice topped with a slice of fresh fish and a bit of *wasabi* (Japanese horseradish).

A typical *sushi* restaurant or “*sushi-ya*” has a long wooden counter where customers sit and converse with the chef. They select ingredients from a refrigerated glass case where filets of fish and a variety of shellfish and seaweed are displayed.

The expertise of the professional *sushi* chef is much respected by his customers. He knows, for example, the correct season for certain fish. Like fruit, fish must be taken at the right time of year. As an apprentice (a training status that can last as long as six years), he learned how to create rice perfect in texture and taste. He knows that the *wasabi* must be freshly grated and the fish must be at its freshest—ideally the final cuts should be made just before the *sushi* is assembled.

Almost half of a *sushi* shop’s business can be comprised of take-out orders. The customer phones the shop and usually orders a *moriawase* (a pre-determined selection of various *sushi*). In a short time, a person on a bicycle or motorcycle delivers the order in lacquer trays or boxes, which the customer will return later.



## Japanese Specialty Restaurants

### Description 2: *Sukiyaki* and *Shabu-Shabu* Restaurants

These restaurants developed from the Western custom of eating meat. Because beef is expensive in Japan, *sukiyaki* and *shabu-shabu* are luxury dishes.

*Sukiyaki* is cooked at a table equipped with a gas burner. The meal begins with an artistic display of the ingredients: thinly sliced marbled beef and delicately cut vegetables perfectly arranged on a large platter. Typical vegetables used in *sukiyaki* are scallions, mushrooms, tofu, and bamboo shoots. Portions of beef and vegetables are then placed in a shallow pan full of a broth made of soy sauce and *sake* (Japanese rice wine). The items cook and simmer in the pan for several minutes. Each diner is given a raw egg to break into his/her bowl to use as a dressing for the hot meat and vegetables.

Sometimes referred to as a Japanese fondue, *shabu-shabu* is similar to *sukiyaki*. A copper or brass pot with a chimney is placed in the center of the table. A diner uses chopsticks to dunk paper-thin beef and delicately prepared vegetables into the pot for a few seconds. Then the diner dips the beef or vegetables into a sesame sauce just before eating. Flat noodles boiled in the remaining broth or the broth itself (drunk as soup) are usually the last course of a *shabu-shabu* meal.

In finer restaurants where *sukiyaki* and *shabu-shabu* are served, world-famous Kobe beef is prepared. The special beef is produced from cattle that are massaged daily and fed a diet of beer. Through a special procedure, they are even protected from mosquitoes.

The atmosphere at *sukiyaki* and *shabu-shabu* restaurants is quiet and somewhat formal. Yet one can distinguish the sounds and smells of bubbling broths. Indeed, the name *shabu-shabu* reflects the sound of swishing meat in the broth.



## Japanese Specialty Restaurants

### Description 3: *Kaiseki-Ryōri*

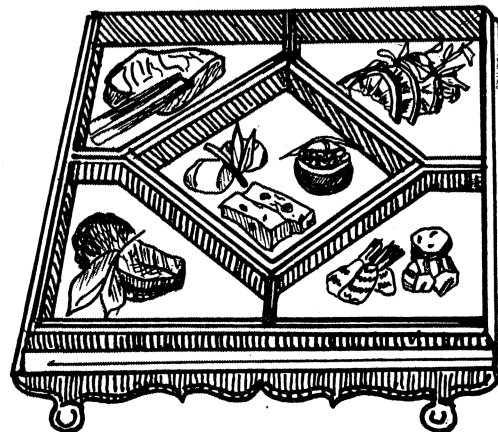
*Kaiseki* restaurants set the artistic standard for Japanese cooking. *Kaiseki* is a traditional cuisine that is very much connected to religion, seasons, and nature.

Centuries ago, a small minimal meal developed from the tea ceremony, emphasizing the theme of gathering together. For the past five centuries, *kaiseki* chefs have passed down their knowledge of these traditional Japanese foods. A meal of *kaiseki-ryōri* includes the season's finest offerings.

A *kaiseki* meal reflects the great importance accorded to harmony and nature in Japanese culture. In many ways, a *kaiseki* meal can be a communion with nature. In appearance, the food served at a full-course meal reflects the shapes found in nature. The art form of cutting, peeling, and "sculpting" foods that *kaiseki* chefs have perfected is called *mukimono*. The contrasting elements of color, flavor, and texture are all reflected in the presentation of foods. All courses are served on handcrafted pottery and ceramics of various shapes and textures, each carefully chosen to represent the spirits of the current season in Japan. Thick, heavy dishes are chosen for winter; light, thin pottery for summer.

When a diner orders a full-course meal, he or she is sure to get the best seasonal food available in Japan. The main service begins with *gohan* (rice), the symbol of life, and clear *miso* (bean paste) soup. *Sashimi* (slices of raw fish) and a clear broth with herb associated with the season usually follow. The main entree, which might be charcoal-broiled fish, is served next. The closing service includes pickled vegetables to cleanse and refresh the mouth, and sweets or fruit to prepare the mouth for the bitter green tea that marks the end of the meal. As in the tea ceremony, green tea (*matcha*), a frothy liquid made from whipping powdered tea and water, is served in a bowl.

The atmosphere is tranquil at a *kaiseki-ryōri*, even if the restaurant is hidden away between Tokyo skyscrapers. In some restaurants, a *koto* (traditional Japanese stringed instrument) is played for guests.



## Japanese Specialty Restaurants

### Description 4: *Tempura* Shops

*Tempura* consists of chunks of fresh fish and vegetables lightly batter-coated and deep fried. Typical *tempura* foods are shrimp, carrots, smelt, mushrooms, eggplant, and eel. To preserve the customer's appetite, the chef serves the smallest item first, gradually working up to the largest item.

Customers at *tempura* shops usually sit at a counter and talk with the chef as he fries each item. Food is ordered item by item from the menu, which is posted on the wall.

The chef deep-fries the items in hot oil. When cooked, each individual item is placed in front of the customer on a sheet of white rice paper. The customer dips each piece of *tempura* in a dressing called *tentsuyu*, a mixture of soup, sweet *sake*, soy sauce, grated radish, and ginger.

The expertise of *tempura* chefs is well known in Japan. It has been said that the best chefs can accurately measure the temperature of the boiling oil by feeling the pressure it exerts on a chopstick. Some can even fry ice cream.

*Tempura* restaurants usually have a slatted sliding door. Many also have a fish pool and a small Japanese garden.



## Japanese Specialty Restaurants

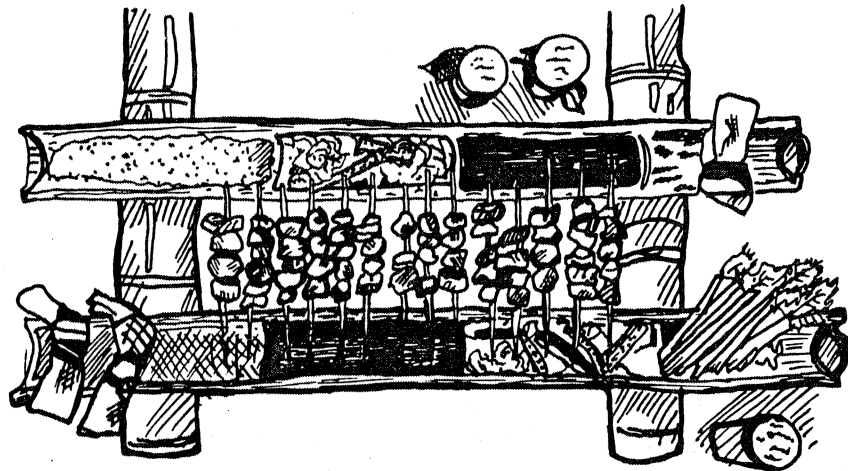
### Description 5: Yakitori Shops

*Yakitori* is one of the most popular and well-known snack foods in Japan. It consists of several chicken cubes, mushroom, leeks, or sweet peppers grilled on a bamboo skewer over charcoal. Good *yakitori* is crisp on the outside and tender on the inside. *Yakitori* reflects the popularity of grilling in Japan. The Japanese believe that such open-flame cooking preserves the natural flavor of foods.

Customers order *yakitori* by pointing to a display of all possibilities in front of the charcoal grill. The chef usually dips the skewer of meat and vegetables into a sweet soy sauce three times before serving it to the customer.

Most *yakitori* shops, or *yakitori-ya*, which advertise by hanging a large red paper lantern outside, are quite small. Some only have a counter; others are stand-up or take-out shops. Still others can be as small as cubicles, with seating for five or six people, leaving other customers to sit on crates outside the restaurant.

*Yakitori* shops cater to the after-work crowd. In the evening they fill up with Japanese "salary men" (white-collar workers) stopping off for a snack before going home. A *yakitori* shop is a place where friends gather. *Yakitori* is also popular at baseball games.



## Japanese Specialty Restaurants

### Description 6: *Soba* and *Udon* Shops

*Soba* are long brownish noodles made from buckwheat flour. *Soba* are generally served in two styles: *kake-soba* is served in a bowl of broth and condiments; *mori-soba*, the most popular cold *soba*, is served on a bamboo rack in a lacquered box and then dunked in a cold broth with onions and Japanese horseradish.

*Udon* are thick wheat noodles that are long and wide. *Udon* is usually served in a large bowl of hot broth. Other ingredients—meat slices, shrimp, vegetable pieces—are artistically arranged on top of the noodles and broth. *Soba* and *udon* taste different in every restaurant, since the owners all develop their own special techniques and recipes.

The Japanese slurp their noodles as they eat. With the hot versions of *soba* and *udon*, people cool their noodles with a loud sucking sound as they take in air. It is considered impolite to cool food by blowing on it. The hot soup that remains after the noodles are eaten can then be drunk directly from the bowl.

*Soba-ya* and *Udon-ya* are small restaurants specializing in noodle dishes. Most of these shops have a display of plastic food in the front window showing all the selections available to customers. Food in these shops is inexpensive; hence, they are very popular at lunch time. Many of these shops are family-run businesses that have been continued through several generations. Often, families live behind the noodle shop. Near stations there are many stand-up noodle stalls for people in need of a quick lunch. Most noodle shops also offer take-out food, using delivery bicycles and motorcycles equipped with unique springing hangers that keep the noodles from sloshing around and spilling.



## Japanese Specialty Restaurants

### Description 7: *Okonomiyaki* Restaurants

Sometimes referred to as “do-it-yourself pizza,” *okonomiyaki* resembles a large pancake more than a pizza. A thin griddle cake containing meat and seafood, this dish originated in Osaka after World War II.

The interaction of diners in cooking the *okonomiyaki* makes this kind of meal an enjoyable, social affair. Perhaps that is why *okonomiyaki* restaurants are especially popular among young people. These restaurants usually have a long counter with a gas hot plate or griddle. Individual tables that can seat from four to six people are furnished with gas hot plates, either built into or placed in the middle of the table.

Customers select main ingredients from the menu posted on the wall. Typical main ingredients include: tofu (bean curd), beef, clams, oysters, ham, pork, noodles, shrimp, and squid. If shrimp is chosen, the waitress brings a bowl filled with all the ingredients to prepare an *ebi* (shrimp) *okonomiyaki*: batter, cabbage, onions, ginger, shrimp, and a raw egg. The waitress turns on the gas griddle and prepares the surface with oil.

Next, the diners mix the ingredients in the bowl and pour the contents on the hot griddle to cook. Spatulas are provided to press the batter flat. Large brushes are used to “paint” sauces on the cooking pancake. Just before the *okonomiyaki* is done cooking on one side, fish shavings (*katsuo-boshi*) and seaweed flakes (*aonori*) are sprinkled on the pancake. Then it is ready to be flipped, sometimes with great flair, using two spatulas.

When the *okonomiyaki* is finished cooking, the waitress turns off the gas. The *okonomiyaki* is then cut into sections by the diners. *Okonomiyaki* is also sold by street vendors.





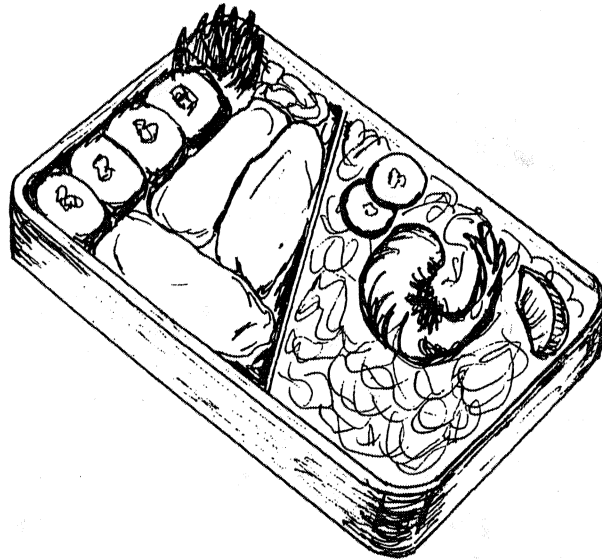
## Japanese Specialty Restaurants

### Description 8: Fast-Food Restaurants: American and Japanese

Years ago, lunch in Japan might have involved walking home for fish and rice or buying a *bentō*, a box lunch consisting of rice wrapped in seaweed, smoked fish, and pickled vegetables. This was before the American fast-food industry was adopted and adapted by Japan.

To promote American fast foods, advertising and marketing campaigns were developed inviting the Japanese people to experience a “cultural adventure” with the West. The campaigns must have worked because today Japanese people are waiting in lines for hamburgers, fried chicken, doughnuts, pizza, hot dogs, and pancakes. Kentucky Fried Chicken came to Japan in 1970 and today has approximately 1,000 outlets throughout the country. In 1971, the first McDonald’s restaurant opened in Tokyo’s famous Ginza district. As of 1999, there were over 2,400 McDonald’s outlets throughout Japan. Subway, Dunkin’ Donuts, and several other American fast-food chains have also come to Japan with much success.

The Japanese have also developed their own fast food industry. First Kitchen, Lotteria, and Love are well-known fast-food restaurants that serve hamburgers and fries, as well as the more traditional rice, fish, and noodles.





## Lesson 2. Fast Food: A Global Connection

### Introduction

Fast-food restaurant chains may be one of the United States' most successful exports. Around the world, people can find the “golden arches” of McDonald's, the “Kentucky colonel” of KFC, and literally scores of other fast-food franchises. Fast-food restaurants, as well as packaged convenience foods, provide useful case studies in how countries adopt ideas and products from each other and how they adapt those ideas and products to reflect their own cultural preferences. As students look at multiple examples of food borrowing and adaptation, they begin to appreciate how food, and with it, trade and industry, create a global system linking the countries and the cultures of the world.

By focusing on ramen (Japanese noodles) as a fast-food export from Japan, this lesson builds on the two video stories on ramen.

**Objectives:** Students will be able to:

- Explain the concept of cultural borrowing and adaptation, citing several examples of fast-food products and types of cuisine in Japan.
- Identify and analyze several examples of American borrowing and adaptation of Japanese food products.
- Demonstrate their understanding of food as one example of a system linking the countries of the world.

**Teaching Time:** 1-2 class periods plus homework time

**Materials:** Copies of Handouts 5 and 6 for all students

### Procedure

1. If students have completed Lesson 1 in this module, they are already familiar with some fast foods in Japan—namely, western hamburger restaurants, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and Japanese fast foods such as noodles delivered by bicycle. Explain to students that American fast-food restaurant chains have become very common and popular in Japan in the past 15 years and that it is easy to find a McDonald's, a KFC, Mister Donut, or Wendy's in Japan.

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Appreciation is expressed to Linda Wojtan for ideas and materials incorporated into this lesson.

Among the most popular Japanese fast foods borrowed from the United States is pizza. Several American chains, as well as Japanese chains, are competing for the Japanese market in pizza.

2. Ask students to note their favorite type of pizza, as well as common ingredients found on pizza in the United States. Students will probably cite cheese, sausage, pepperoni, etc. Ask students to reflect on what they know about traditional Japanese foods. Was meat a very big part of the traditional foods the students read about or saw on the videos? How about cheese or milk products? All these products tend to feature prominently in American pizzas. Do students think Japanese would like the same things on their pizza? Why or why not? Given what students have learned about Japanese cuisine, what ingredients might show up on a Japanese pizza? Students should be able to cite fish and vegetables.

3. Explain to students that most fast foods, including pizza, go through a change as they become popular in Japan—they are adapted to include ingredients that are popular among the Japanese. We can look at this as one example of ways that cultures borrow and adapt from each other. Explain that students will consider cultural borrowing and adaptation as they have taken place with pizza in Japan.

4. Distribute Handout 5 and have students complete the reading in class, making notes on specific ingredients and types of pizza that are popular in Japan.

5. Discuss the reading in class. Which Japanese pizza ingredients were a surprise to them? Which ingredients did they expect to see, given their knowledge of Japanese foods? Ask student volunteers to explain in their own words how Japanese pizza represents a blend of Japanese and American food tastes and styles.

6. Next, distribute Handout 6. This short reading considers the converse of cultural borrowing and adaptation of pizza in Japan—the popularity of instant noodles, a Japanese product, in the United States. The reading complements and extends information in the two video stories on ramen noodles in this learning module. Ask how many students have had “Cup O’ Noodles” or some other noodle cup product. Did students know this product originated in Japan? Based on their background in Japanese foods, what product do students think was the predecessor of noodle cups? Students should be able to cite the noodle shops they learned about in both the videos and Lesson 1.

7. In class or for homework, have students read Handout 6 and answer the study questions provided. If time allows, review the study questions in class. In discussion, focus students’ attention on the many countries and cultures that have adopted the noodle as a mainstay of diet and the ways that Americans have adapted noodle cups to reflect their own tastes. How does this compare to adaptations of the pizza in Japan?

8. As a homework assignment, ask students to work alone or in groups to complete one of the following research assignments:

- Have students visit a supermarket to consider the different varieties of instant noodle cups and noodle meals. These foods are generally found in the soup aisle of the supermarket. Students taking this assignment should create a poster or other visual to show how noodles (ramen) have been adapted to meet American tastes.

- Have students conduct library or Internet research on the origins of the noodle. Students should identify (1) the historical origins of the noodle; (2) countries around the world where noodles have become a mainstay of the diet; and (3) ways that noodles are eaten in these different countries. Students taking this assignment should create a poster or other visual to display their findings.

9. Allow time for students to share their research findings and visuals in class. To culminate the lesson, consider the illustration that accompanies Handout 6—noodles wrapped around a globe. Ask students to explain the meaning of this illustration. Why are the noodles wrapped around the globe? (The noodle has been exported and adapted by many countries around the world in both ancient and modern times—including China, Italy, Japan, the United States.) Have students explain in their own words how the noodle—or food in general—represents a global system and global connections.

## Pizza in Japan Is Adapted to Local Tastes

When Domino's Pizza Inc. opened Japan's first pizza-delivery outlet seven years ago, it had to educate consumers about true American pizza.

"We had to explain that the most popular topping in America was pepperoni, which is a kind of sausage and different from bell pepper," says Ernest Higa, president of Y. Higa Corp., which operates the Domino's chain here under a license.

Now, 16-year-old Yuko Masaki, a Tokyo pizza fan, says she knows very well what pepperoni and jalapeno are. But the high school student says her favorite pizza is curry, topped with bits of squid. So she calls and orders from Pizza Station, a chain managed by Tokyo-based Universal Gourmet Systems Corp.

"What, don't they have curry pizza in America?" asks Ms. Masaki, noting that the nearby Domino's doesn't offer the exotic item. "How about squid? It's so good, I would urge foreigners to try it."

### Mayonnaise Sauce

These days, the streets of Tokyo are abuzz with the sound of pizza-delivery scooters, and the chains, faced with growing demand and competition, are becoming creative. As many as 1,000 local pizza stores offer such oddly Japanized menus as apples or rice on pizza, or German sausage and potato pizza with mayonnaise sauce.

There are no consolidated sales figures for the pizza stores, but industry observers estimate that pizza sales in Japan by delivery chains, restaurants and supermarkets will double in the next few years to about 300 billion yen (\$2.80 billion).

Not to be left behind, Domino's is promoting Japanese pizzas of its own. Although it advertises that it's "From the U.S.A.," the chain, which has 100 stores in Japan, now offers a 10-inch chicken teriyaki gourmet pizza for \$15, including Japanese-style grilled chicken, spinach, onion and corn—the most common pizza topping here. (Domino's also offers squid and tuna topping, as well as corn salad.)

### More Outlets

"The Japanese need a lot of stimulation," says Mr. Higa. The company recently offered a popular fermented milk drink to go with its pizza, as well as such Oriental toppings as barbecued beef and sauteed burdock root.

Spurring Domino's creative attempts are recent marketing moves by the Pizza Hut unit of PepsiCo Inc. Pizza Hut pitches itself as the "biggest pizza chain in the world," but it has a smaller presence in Japan than Domino's, in part because of earlier management problems and disagreements with Japanese partners. But last year, Pizza Hut joined forces with another PepsiCo unit, Kentucky Fried Chicken Japan Ltd., and vows to open 150 delivery outlets in the next five years, up from its present 43.

"The only company we see as competition is Domino's," says Ichiro Taktsuki, a manager for KFC in Japan. The company recently introduced barbecue chicken pizza, just as Domino's has, as well as burdock root, potato and macaroni salad.

Now, the Oriental pizzas are spreading overseas. Last year, Y. Higa acquired Domino's Hawaiian operation; it hopes to wow Hawaiian pizza fans with a chicken teriyaki pie. Japanese chains also plan stores in Hong Kong and China.

Domino's attempts to go Japanese are a big switch from its all-American early days here, when it struggled to convince consumers that a \$20 pizza delivered in a cardboard box was *trés* American—and thus fashionable. Back then, only noodle shops and sushi restaurants delivered.

### More Exotic

But trend-conscious young Japanese quickly got hooked on the Western dish, and the success of Domino's soon attracted Japanese imitators. The local outlets promptly introduced more exotic recipes and cheaper prices.

Strawberry Cones Co., based in the northern city of Sendai, says older consumers in the countryside like the taste of shrimp in chili sauce on a

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sweetened pizza crust. Shakey's Japan Ltd., a Japanese chain that owns the rights to use the logo of the Shakey's unit of Singapore-based Inno-Pacific Holdings Ltd., says it delivers the ultimate Japanese-style pie: a chicken, seaweed and shredded bonito topping with sauce made from fish stock.

Pizza California Co. claims that its 300 franchise outlets make it the biggest pizza chain in Japan. The company expects to post sales of 24 billion yen (\$223.7 million) this year, a company spokesman says. Domino's insists that its market share is the largest but declines to provide data.

For consumers trying to find their way through the pizza universe in Japan, though, the

chain's size is irrelevant. Masayoshi Yamazaki, a 16-year-old student, says he's just looking for authenticity. "I want the real thing, the pizza that's really from America," he says.

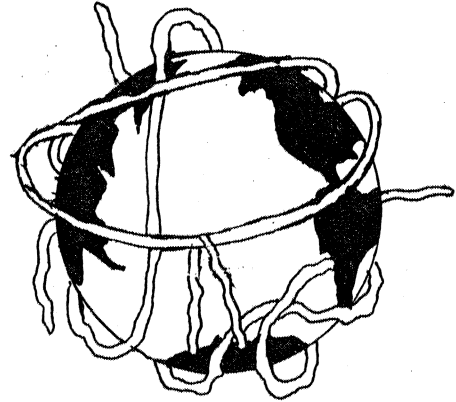
Emiko Kitamura, a 22-year-old nurse who orders out when she has friends over, uses other criteria: which chain offers the best prices, which has more original toppings and which is far away. Distance is important; on a busy day, when roads are clogged, chances are that the delivery scooter won't make the 30-minute delivery that most chains guarantee.

Then, she says, smiling, "I get a discount."

## Using Their Noodle

by Laurie Berman

High above the bustle of Times Square, a giant, steaming cup thrusts itself invitingly toward wide-eyed tourists and blasé New Yorkers. Erected last May to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Nissin Food Products' instant Cup Noodles, the sign adorns the coveted north wall of One Times Square, whence it offers testament to the globalization of food culture and to Japan's growing role in that process.



Over the centuries, few foods have crisscrossed the globe as tirelessly as the humble noodle. While China and Italy have played the most historically prominent roles in the noodle's development and dissemination, Japan has contributed substantially in recent years, to both its mobility and its convenience. Embodying this particular line of evolution is cup-style instant ramen: a styrofoam container of fried wheat noodles, concentrated soup stock, and freeze-dried ingredients that can be transformed into a snack or light meal in minutes with the addition of hot water.

The story of Cup Noodles begins in 1958, when Nissin, led by Momofuku Ando, launched the original instant ramen. These were the miracle years, the dawn of Japan's fabled rapid-growth era. Millions flocked to the cities for work. Time- and labor-saving devices swept the country. In the midst of this lifestyle revolution, Nissin's Chicken Ramen offered words to live by: "Place in bowl, add hot water, wait three minutes, and serve."

Within a year, competitors had jumped on the bandwagon. At the same time, taste considerations led to a proliferation of flavors and the rise of block-type ramen, which call for the noodles to be boiled briefly, then added to the soup.

In 1971, near the end of the rapid-growth era, Nissin introduced cup-style instant ramen. Building on the original Chicken Ramen concept, Nissin used new technology to enhance the taste and texture, while further simplifying preparation and consumption by packaging the soup stock and noodles in their own styrofoam cup, plastic fork included. Chairman Ando attributes this radical departure from bowl-and-chopsticks to a 1966 sales trip to San Francisco, where he watched an American buyer sample his product using a paper cup and fork.

Today, cup-style ramen constitutes slightly more than half of Japan's quick-noodle market—and a very large market it is. In one year the average Japanese consumes about 45 servings, choosing from a mind-boggling 500-600 varieties.

Cup Noodles hit U.S. supermarkets in 1973, a year after their block-style cousins. Here the instant noodle industry established its second largest market, with sales growing 8% an-

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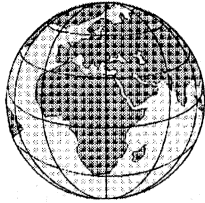
Reprinted with permission from *Japan Update* (November 1996). *Japan Update* is a bi-monthly publication of the Keizai Koho Center available at <http://www.keidanren.or.jp> or in print form.

nually. The average American now consumes an estimated 7 servings a year, and busy young adults in need of quick late-night sustenance—notably computer hackers and law students studying for the bar exam—can be heard comparing notes on the latest flavors (“cajun chicken” is a hot newcomer). Japanese far from home prize the wavy noodle as a cheap and easy comfort food.

Worldwide, some 35 billion servings of instant ramen are consumed in upwards of 80 countries each year. Most recently, Nissin and its chief competitor, Toyo Suisan, have been slugging it out in the lucrative Chinese market, hoping to sell an annual 200 million packages to the country that invented the noodle. In yet another twist, American imitations of cup-style ramen have recently found their way back to Japan, where they can be bought at bargain prices thanks to the favorable yen-dollar rate.

With all this globe-trotting, has the ramen noodle preserved its ethnic identity? That is a tough call, but consider: This year Nissin Foods (U.S.A.) unveiled Ramen Pasta, noodles of indeterminate origin offered with a choice of stroganoff, chicken, parmesan, or butter sauce. And so, the journey continues.



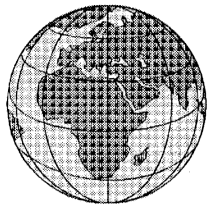


## Extension and Enrichment

1. *The Colonel Comes to Japan* (Northbrook, IL: Learning Corporation of America, 1982) is a 30-minute videotape of a *Frontline* television segment focusing on how one American corporation learned to adapt its marketing, advertising, employee training, and customer relations for the Japanese market. Although filmed some years ago, the video is highly interesting and relevant for exploring several themes in this learning module, including global connections through fast food, cultural borrowing and adaptation through food, and cuisine as a reflection of cultural values. The video is available at many curriculum resource centers, especially those with a focus on Asia or international studies.

2. *Tune in Japan* video and teacher's guide contains a lesson on Japanese adaptation of pizza. The lesson ties the influx of Western fast food to increases in fat intake and health effects in Japan. *Tune in Japan* is produced by The Asia Society and is available through South Carolina Educational Television, 800/553-7752.

3. Have students research Japanese dishes in cookbooks available in the local library. The class can select authentic Japanese dishes that illustrate the connections between culture, geography, environment, and food for preparation in the classroom.



## SECTION 4 WORLD WIDE WEB RESOURCES

The World Wide Web provides an almost inexhaustible supply of background material, additional classroom activities, and research information to meet the needs of students and teachers. The following list is only a sample of what is available. As content and online addresses change frequently, the URLs (uniform resource locators) listed here in print may no longer be valid. If this is the case, use your favorite search engine to locate the sites listed.

### **Sites Related to Japanese Food**

Irasshai (<http://www.peachstar.gatech.edu/irasshai/culwww/homepg.htm>)

This site from Georgia Public Broadcasting provides a “launch pad” to numerous sites with information about Japanese food, including some sites created by students.

Kids Web Japan (<http://www.jinjapan.org/kidsweb>)

Information on several aspects of food in Japan can be found by clicking on Daily Life, Schools, and Economy and Industry.

Kid’s Window Restaurant (<http://www.jwindow.net/OLD/KIDS/REST/>)

A menu with pictures and descriptions of Japanese foods; you can also hear the names of the dishes pronounced in Japanese.

Rice: It’s More than Food in Japan (<http://www.indiana.edu/~japan/digest6.html>)

An essay by Linda Wotjan useful as background information for teachers.

Tokyo Food Page (<http://www.bento.com/tokyofood.html>)

A complete guide to eating and all food-related matters in Japan’s capital city.

### **Sites with General Information About Japan**

Asian Educational Media Service (<http://www.aems.uiuc.edu>)

A national clearinghouse for information about audiovisual materials on Japan and Asia. Database is searchable by country, media type, audience, or subject.

Ask Asia (<http://www.askasia.org/>)

Features resources for the K-12 classroom including lesson plans, readings, bibliography and images for use in teaching and learning about the countries of Asia. There are two activities in the Lesson Plan section that extend food into a global context: *Rice: The Global Crop* is available in the Indonesia classification; *How Much Is There to Eat* is available under India.

Irasshai (<http://www.peachstar.gatech.edu/irasshai>)

This site produced by Georgia Public Broadcasting invites users to voyage to Japan through the World Wide Web. The "Launch Pad" includes a list of 23 major topics with dozens of subcategories linking to relevant sites or materials selected for their appeal to middle and high school students. The site's unique frame-design returns users to Irasshai after sojourns to linked sites, keeping students on task.

Japan Information Network (<http://www.jinjapan.org/>)

Maintained by the Japan Center for Intercultural Communications (JCIC), this site offers statistics, regional information, and links to other sites in Japan.

Japan Window (<http://www.jwindow.net/>)

A collaborative project between Stanford University and NTT Japan, this site offers information about Japanese science and technology, business, economics, education, and government. Also includes information about working, studying, living, and traveling in Japan and daily news headlines. This is the entry point to Kid's Window.

Kids Web Japan (<http://www.jinjapan.org/kidsweb>)

Part of the Japan Information Network and managed by the Japan Center for Intercultural Communications, this colorful site for school kids has many graphics and photographs. The site provides basic information on many aspects of Japan. It includes facts about daily life, history, economy, and other topics, monthly news of interest to kids, links to other sites, games, and an interactive form to ask questions about Japan.

National Clearinghouse for U.S.-Japan Studies (<http://www.indiana.edu/~japan>)

This adjunct clearinghouse of ERIC based at Indiana University offers two searchable databases of information about print resources and lesson plans for teaching and learning about Japan, especially at the K-12 level. Also features a virtual Japan kit of images and information and links to other sites about and in Japan.

NTT Japanese Information (<http://www.ntt.co.jp/japan/>)

Maintained by Nippon Telephone and Telegraph (NTT), this site offers information about the geography, culture, customs, government, sports, and tourist attractions of Japan.