



*Photo From: <http://www.food-photography.com.au/blog-images/Japanese-seafood-platter.jpg>*

### **Meals:**

- **Breakfast:** or 朝食 is commonly a small meal in the morning that consists of bread, yogurt, and tea. However, more traditional Japanese breakfasts include grilled fish, miso soup, and rice.
- **Lunch:** or 昼食 is a larger meal, but is eaten quickly. Rice balls, known as onigiri, are very common, as are fish, eggs, vegetables, and noodles. Further, many Japanese enjoy eating more Western dishes for lunch.
- **Dinner:** or 夕食 is eaten in the early to mid evening, usually containing a portion of meat and vegetable served over a bed of rice. Soups, sashimi, fish, and sushi are also common dinner items in Japan.
- **[More information on Japanese Meals](#)**

### **Frequently Used Foods:**

- **Fruits and Vegetables:** pear, apple, persimmon, orange, yuzu, peach, kumquat, plum, cherry, melon, kiwi, fig, cabbage, spinach, radish, turnip, potato, sweet potato, taro root, yam, carrot, onion, bamboo shoot, green onion, tomato, cucumber, seaweed, eggplant, green pepper, corn, okra [More fruits](#) [More vegetables](#)

- **Protein:** chicken, egg, pork, fish, shrimp, clam, tofu
- **Spices:** ginger, cinnamon, pepper, clove, yuzu, soy, basil, chickweed, chili, wasabi, plum paste, sesame, salt, perilla, trefoil [More About Japanese Spices](#)
- **Oils/Misc:** Rice bran oil, canola oil, rice vinegar, rice, mustard

### **Ten Regional Favorite Dishes With Links to Interesting Recipes:**

- **Donburi:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))
- **Onigiri:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))
- **Yakitori:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))
- **Tempura:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))
- **Okonomiyaki:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))
- **Tonkatsu:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))
- **Tofu Udon:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))
- **Chinsuko:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))
- **Shrimp Tempura Roll:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))
- **Miso Soup:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))

**Religion:** Shinto and Buddhism are the two main religions in Japan, but most citizens do not exclusively identify with one of the religions, and instead follow various elements from both religions. [More Information on Japanese Religion](#)

### **National Holidays and Dietary Requirements:**

- Because a large portion of the population is associated with Buddhism, beef products are not widely used throughout the country.
- Because a large part of the population identifies with the Shinto Religion, meat is not part of the daily diet in many parts of the country. [The Shinto Diet](#)
- **Coming of Age Day:** Celebrated on the second Monday of January, Coming of Age Day honors those that have reached the age of maturity (20) within the past year. Many cities throughout the country hold ceremonies for the recently matured.

- **Foundation Day:** This holiday, which is celebrated on February 11<sup>th</sup>, reflects the establishment of the Nation of Japan and is used to illustrate national patriotism.
- **Showa Day:** Established in 2007 and celebrated on April 29<sup>th</sup>, Showa Day honors and recognizes the Showa period. [Showa Day](#)
- **Respect-For-the-Aged-Day:** This holiday celebrates and honors the elderly, and is also a chance to celebrate all events in an individual's life. Held on the third Monday of September, this holiday usually involves the gathering of family and communal celebration.
- **Culture Day:** Culture Day recognizes the announcement of the Japanese Constitution. This holiday also honors all individuals that have bolstered the cultural impact of Japan. [Cultural Day](#)

**Etiquette:** Formal acknowledgement for a meal (please and thank you) is vital in Japanese culture. This shows respect for the host of the meal.

Chopsticks are used for almost every meal in Japan, and chopstick etiquette is very important. First, hold the chopstick toward the end in between the thumb and index finger. Next, Do not point or spear food with your chopsticks. This is an extremely rude and disrespectful way to act during a meal. Finally, when finished with a meal, set the chopsticks in front of you on the table, with the point of the sticks to your left.

When eating, it is polite and expected to eat all you are given, leaving nothing in the dish.

**Food History:** Japanese cuisine has a rich history, and has been incredibly influenced by both China and Korea over the past 3000 years. However, modern Japanese cuisine has truly taken shape over the past four centuries. Religion has also played a major role in Japanese cuisine. For thousands of years, as Shinto dominated the landscape, meat, including fish and chicken, was seldom consumed. Instead, the Japanese diet focused more on rice, vegetables and fruits. The focus of a vegetarian diet stayed dominant in Japanese culture until the late 1600s, when fish and poultry were heavily incorporated into culinary exploits. Today, Japan has transformed their cuisine, with an array of unique and plentiful ingredients. [Japan Food History](#)

**Additional Information and Acknowledgements:**

<http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2005.html>

<http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2062.html>

[http://www.officeholidays.com/countries/japan/showa\\_day.php](http://www.officeholidays.com/countries/japan/showa_day.php)