

FOOD

Top 10 eats and drinks

Japan offers visitors a variety of culinary offerings

In line with such a trend, Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has been vigorously promoting Japanese food. The MAFF has selected the following "10 Great Tastes of Japan" that convey the rich variety of Japanese cuisine and will enhance your understanding and appreciation of what is available in Japan. Please try some of these dishes during your stay in Japan.

According to a 2009 Japan National Tourism Organization survey, Japanese cuisine came out on top as the thing visitors hoped to enjoy, ahead of other attractions, such as shopping (tops in 2008), hot springs and natural scenery.

Japanese cuisine has been steadily gaining attention overseas for a variety of reasons, including the taste, presentation and reputation for being healthy and safe.

■ Sushi/sashimi

Sushi is usually raw fish but sometimes eggs and vegetables are used and served on bite-size vinegar-seasoned rice shaped by the hands of a sushi chef. Sashimi is thinly sliced raw fish eaten mainly with soy sauce and wasabi.



Sushi is the most famous and popular Japanese food overseas. Sushi restaurants are now seen all over the world.

People usually visit sushi restaurants with counter seating only on special occasions. Meanwhile, the conveyor belt style of eatery serves sushi at reasonable prices in a casual setting. You can buy sushi or sashimi for takeout at supermarkets, too.

■ Tempura

Tempura — seafood and seasonal vegetables coated in a light egg batter and deep-fried in vegetable oil — is usually served with a dipping sauce with grated daikon, but sometimes just with salt.



The style of cooking is said to be originally brought to Japan by the Portuguese.

Special tempura restaurants may be expensive, but you can find it on the menu at most *izakaya* (Japanese-style pubs). *Tendon*, a bowl of fresh tempura over rice, is a popular, quick meal.

■ Noodles

Among the wide variety of Japanese noodles, *soba*, made from buckwheat flour, and *udon*, thicker and made from wheat flour, are popular.

When served hot, *soba* and *udon* are served in a bowl with a broth and garnish. A variety of toppings are usually available, such as tempura, eggs, *wakame* seaweed, *tororo-imo* yam.

Soba and *udon* can also be served cold on a bamboo sieve and dipped in a cold broth, with spices added as you please, such as wasabi, ginger and chili peppers.

Relatively speaking, *soba* is popular in Eastern Japan and *udon* is a favorite of Western Japan.

However, across the nation, the favorite noodle is ramen.

With its origins in Chinese cuisine, ramen is not traditionally considered a Japanese dish, but it has developed into a specialty unique to Japan.

There are many variations in the soup base: soy sauce, miso, salt, pork stock, etc. The most popular shops often have long lines of customers. Ramen is mostly served hot, but recently, a variety known as *tsuke-men* has become popular in Tokyo. The dish consists of cold ramen dipped in a hot, rich soup.



■ Sukiyaki/shabu-shabu/teppanyaki

Sukiyaki is thinly sliced beef and other ingredients that are cooked stir-fry style in a flavorful, thick sauce.

Shabu-shabu is thin slices of meat that are swished around in a boiling broth and then immediately dipped in a sauce.

Sukiyaki and *shabu-shabu* are two types of *nabe* pot dishes. Using many vegetables and tofu, *nabe* cooking is considered healthy, being nutritionally well balanced and low in calories.

Teppanyaki is meat, seafood and vegetables cooked on an iron hot plate that usually runs the length of a counter. With minimum seasoning, *teppanyaki* allows the enjoyment of original flavors.



■ Shojin-ryori/tofu

Shojin-ryori is a form of vegetarian cuisine that originated as a Buddhist meal. *Shojin-ryori* does not use animal products. The featured ingredients are vegetables, such as beans and potatoes.

In order to supplement protein content, tofu is an essential ingredients. Specialty restaurants focusing on using tofu in every course are also available.



艺术性的日本清酒
Japanese Sake

梵 Born

梵·钱 Born-GOLD
梵·纯御 Born-Jensen
梵·无边·生·源·流 Born-Muraka
梵·特别·纯·米·大·吟·醸 Born-Takano
梵·日本·的·真 Born-Mikoto
梵·寒·梅 Born-Kantokaki
梵·梦·是·应·验·的·梦 Born-Yume vs. Masayama
梵·超·吟 Born-Chigin
梵·冰·山 Born-Hyozan
梵·极·纯·造·大·吟·醸 Born-Gokuhito
梵·吉·平 Born-Kichiben
梵·地·球 Born-Hochi
梵·吟·御 Born-Ginsen
梵·魁 Born-Tsuya

KatouKichibee Shouten
www.born.co.jp

这个就是被称为「完美双钻石」，在富士山所出现的珍贵景象。此景象会为大家带来好运。
This is a rare image of Mt. Fuji called Perfect Double Diamond Fuji and it is believed to bring good luck.

Sake shows stronger presence internationally at IWC 2010

The International Wine Challenge, held annually in London, is the world's largest wine competition, and one of the most prestigious, with more than 10,000 wines assessed by more than 300 experts. Reflecting the growing attention to Japanese sake in the international scene, the IWC established the sake section in 2007. This year, there were 405 sake entries, making IWC 2010 the world's largest competition for sake.

In September, the IWC 2010 unveiled this year's champion wines. In the Japanese sake section, champion sakes were selected from each of five sake categories.

The following are the champions this year in the sake section:

- Junmai – Born: Ginsen 2008, by Katoukichibee Shouten
- Junmai/Ginjo/Daiginjo – Nechi 2008, by General Partnership Watanabe Sake Brewing Store
- Honjozo – Honshu-ichi Muroka Honjozo, by Umeda-Shuzoujyou & Co.
- Gingo/Daiginjo – Sawahime Daiginjo 2009, by Inoue Seikichi Co.
- Koshu – Hanahato Kijoshu Aged For 8 Years 2001, by Enoki Shuzo Co.

*Highlights of the IWC 2010 award ceremony can be seen on YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/winechallenge

Atsuhide Kato, 11th president of Katoukichibee Shouten, is jubilant after receiving the top award in the junmai sake category for the company's Born: Ginsen 2008 at the International Wine Challenge 2010 in London on Sept. 7.

Daishichi SAKE IN A CLASS OF ITS OWN

SINCE 1752
DAISHICHI SAKE BREWERY CO., LTD.

Daishichi makes rich, mellow sakes whose outstanding reputation comes from an insistence on a strictly orthodox brewing tradition: the *kimoto* method. All Daishichi products are superb examples of *kimoto* sake.

<http://english.daishichi.com>

FOOD

Rice

Japan's staple rice variety is characterized by its round, short shape and plump, moist texture with a sweet taste when cooked. Flavored rice, or *takikomi gohan*, cooked variously with stock, vegetables, seafood or meat, is a seasonal treat. For example, chestnuts, ginkgo nuts or *matsutake* mushrooms can be steamed with rice in autumn. *Onigiri* are balled up portions of rice filled with various items. It is a portable and easy-to-eat meal, often made for lunch at the office or for picnics and outdoor activities. They can be found at most convenience stores.



Rice

Miso soup

Miso soup consists of *dashi* soup stock, which can be made from dried bonito flakes, seaweed, kelp, or *niboshi*, a type of small dried fish, with miso. Different regions use different kinds of miso, making for a wide variety of flavors. Together with rice, miso soup will commonly accompany a Japanese set meal or in a course. The well-known marriage proposal "Would you make miso soup for me every morning?" shows how essential it is to daily Japanese life.



Miso soup

Fruits

A variety of fruits are cultivated and enjoyed in Japan. They are highly valued outside Japan, especially in Asia. The high-quality produce are renowned for their sweetness, texture and appearance. People enjoy fruit picking in summer and autumn at groves and farms that often offer all-you-can-eat deals from around ¥1,000. Near Tokyo, Yamanashi Prefecture is famous for fruit production. Fruits in season in autumn include persimmons, pears and apples.



Fruits

Green tea/Japanese sweets

Green tea usually refers to *sencha*, a loose tea made by steaming, rolling and drying tea leaves. *Sencha* is an everyday drink and most beverage makers sell bottled green tea that, unlike usual bottled tea sold in Asia, does not contain sugar. Meanwhile, *matcha* is a powdered tea brewed in hot water and is usually enjoyed at tea ceremonies. Along with the Japanese food boom, green tea is gaining attention around the world for its health benefits. It is said to regulate blood cholesterol and prevent hypertension. Traditionally, green tea is taken with Japanese sweets, or *wagashi*. Most traditional *wagashi* are made from non-animal products, apart from eggs, such as beans and rice flour.



Sencha

Sake/shochu

Sake, with more than 2,000 years of history, is a unique Japanese alcoholic beverage, brewed primarily from rice. From Hokkaido to Okinawa, there are thousands of sake brewers. Sophisticated techniques are required to make sake and the quality of the rice and the water is important. The Nada area of Hyogo Prefecture, which has some of the hardest water in Japan, is known as a quality sake-producing area, as is Niigata Prefecture, which is known for its high-quality rice. When the polishing rate of the rice is high, the sake is called *ginjo* or *daiginjo*, considered premium sakes. When brewing alcohol is not added during the sake-making process, it is called *junmai*, meaning "purely rice." *Shochu* is a type of liquor made from a variety of ingredients, such as rice, barley, sweet potatoes or buckwheat. Most people drink *shochu* on the rocks with hot or cold water.

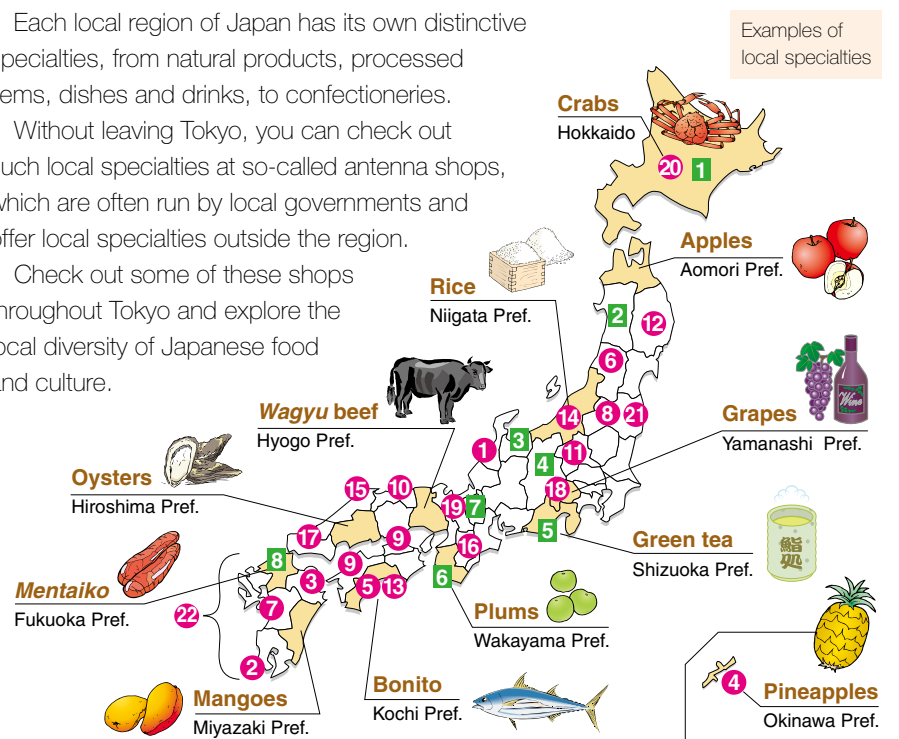


Sake

*Visit www.maff.go.jp/e/ if you would like to know more. The MAFF provides a range of information in English about Japanese cuisine, from ingredients and recipes to history and cultural background.

Take a culinary journey across Japan without leaving Tokyo

Each local region of Japan has its own distinctive specialties, from natural products, processed items, dishes and drinks, to confectioneries. Without leaving Tokyo, you can check out such local specialties at so-called antenna shops, which are often run by local governments and offer local specialties outside the region. Check out some of these shops throughout Tokyo and explore the local diversity of Japanese food and culture.



Among some 50 antenna shops in Tokyo, many are concentrated in the Ginza and Yurakucho area. Moreover, at Ginza Meza Marche, a 14-story building that opened earlier this year, you can take a look at local products from all 47 prefectures. The store also has cafes and restaurants that offer items made from ingredients gathered from all over Japan. The region numbers in the map above correspond to the shops below.



Urakasumi Zen (Junmai Ginjo)

Urakasumi Zen is a flagship product of Urakasumi brand. It has an elegant fragrance, which is the result of the great care we take in the sake-making process. Because of its well-balanced flavor and smooth taste, Urakasumi Zen goes well with a wide range of dishes, especially seafood.

Urakasumi Sake Brewery
SAURA CO., LTD.
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 TEL: 81-22-362-4165 E-mail: info@urakasumi.com
 URL: <http://www.urakasumi.com/>



Urakasumi Sake Gallery

The Urakasumi Sake Gallery, in addition to the products of our company, sells sake cups and decanters made by a young artist who resides in Miyagi Prefecture. Customers who purchase Urakasumi's original refined sake glass will receive a free bottle of our Kiki sake.
Open: 10 a.m. ~ 5 p.m.
Closed: Sundays, year-end and New Year's holidays

花の舞 100% 静岡県産米

EXTRA DRY "KATANA"

By extracting the alcohol in a more prolonged process, we have succeeded in creating sake that is both dry and refreshing.

花の舞酒造株式会社 <http://www.hananomai.co.jp>