



Japanese Food and Restaurants

Japanese food is delicious and well-prepared. Japanese people eat out a lot, especially when socialising. Japanese restaurants tend to specialise in one type or style of food. Restaurants are often quite small and private, meaning you cannot peer in from the outside, which can be a little intimidating and makes life difficult for tourists trying to work out what's being served and whether they want to go in. Some restaurants have plastic mock ups of their food outside, which is quite normal and can help you find the type of restaurant you want. Be brave and step inside, you will usually receive a warm welcome once you venture inside, and help with ordering from staff or fellow diners.

Tempura

Tempura is battered and deep fried vegetables or seafood, not greasy but light and delicious. High quality tempura restaurants can be very expensive. 'Tendon' restaurants are cheaper and serve tempura on rice.

Tonkatsu

Tonkatsu is high quality pork, breaded and fried, which is not greasy in spite of being deep fried. You can usually choose between lean pork or fattier pork. It is usually served with finely sliced cabbage, rice, miso soup and various sauces.

Okonomiyaki

Okonomiyaki is a speciality of Hiroshima. Often called Japanese pizza, but in reality it has very little in common with pizza apart from its shape! It is often cooked on a hot plate in front of you and usually made with a base of noodles and cabbage with lots of options for adding other ingredients, flavours and sauces.

Sushi

Sushi is raw fish served on rice, sashimi is raw fish served alone, dipped in soy sauce before being eaten. You often sit at a counter behind which the sushi chef is working.

Conveyorbelt sushi (*kaitensushi*) restaurants are easy, fun and less expensive than standard sushi restaurants. The price is determined by the colour of the plate you pick. At the end of the meal the price is determined by the number and colour of the plates you have chosen.

Ramen

Ramen are wheat noodles served in a soup. The soup (or broth) is what defines the ramen. There can be light miso or soy broths, or heavy 'tonkotsu' broths made by boiling pork bones for days on end! Different cities specialise in different styles of broth. Ramen dishes are often topped with thin slices of pork and various other condiments. Don't be afraid to take a giant bib if it is offered to you, as eating noodles in broth can be a messy business. Slurping noisily signifies appreciation!

Soba

Soba are buckwheat noodles. Usually served with a hot broth, or sometimes cold with a dipping sauce. You can often order some tempura alongside your noodles.

Udon

Udon are thick wheat noodles with a nice bite. They may be served with a soup.

Teppanyaki

Teppanyaki restaurants are often found in tourist hotels. Meat and vegetables are prepared by a chef on a hot plate in front of you. Often quite expensive, but a good place to try high quality Japanese beef (wagyu) such as Kobe wagyu.

Sukiyaki

Sukiyaki restaurants serve delicious thinly sliced beef which is cooked at the table and served with various side dishes.

Shabu-shabu

Shabu Shabu restaurants serve fine quality beef which is cooked in a hotpot at the table. Reminiscent of a fondue and very tasty.

Yakitori

Yakitori restaurants serve only grilled meat skewers – usually chicken.

Izakaya

Izakayas are casual eating and drinking places, a bit like pubs, but the food is often varied and good.

Kaiseki

Traditional Japanese dining, multi-coursed meals with an emphasis on presentation. Small dishes akin to Spanish Tapas or Chinese Dim Sum.

Not forgetting **Japanese curry** which is very different to English/Indian curries but tasty and worth trying. It is always deep brown in colour and served on rice.

Department stores are a great place to eat, and serve an enormous selection of different types of food. Try the food courts where they serve cooked food to eat immediately at shared tables, or the food halls where the food may be hot or cold, but is usually packaged with the expectation that you will take it away, although of course you can eat it immediately if you want to.

Don't forget your chopsticks etiquette!!

