

Cooking in Japan!

Seasonality

- Groceries may seem more expensive than you're used to at home, but there's always something at a good price if it's in season.
- Get used to buying and cooking with what's in season. You'll spend less and might have some great food experiences!
- Basics such as tofu, bean sprouts, bread, bananas, and yogurt are fairly cheap year round.

Seasonal Summer Produce	
-Melons	-Plums
-Tomatoes	-Peaches
-Assorted Peppers	-Biwa (Loquats)
-Grapes	-Cucumbers
-Mango	-Corn

Summer Dishes

- Karaage – fried chicken pieces
- Somen – cold noodles with dipping sauce
- Hiyayakko – cold tofu with toppings
- Edamame – soybeans
- Takoyaki – fried balls of octopus (try it at a festival!)
- Unagi
- Kakigoori
- Drink: Mugicha (barley tea)

Seasonal Autumn Produce	
-Persimmons	-Kabocha (pumpkin)
-Apples	-Burdock (gobo)
-Peaches	-Mushrooms

Autumn Dishes

- Shogayaki – ginger pork with shredded cabbage
- Kabocha no nimono (flavored pumpkin)
- Nasu – deep fried eggplant
- Kuri-gohan – chestnut rice
- Sanma – boiled saury (fish)
- Dobinmushi – soup with matsutake mushrooms

Seasonal Winter Produce

-Mikan (mandarin oranges)	-Yuzu and other citrus fruits
-Cabbage	-Cumquats
-Sweet Potato	

Winter Dishes

- Nabe – soup stew for sharing with friends
- Oden – broth-simmered things
- Ankake udon – noodles in thick broth
- Ton jiru – pork miso soup
- Nikujaga – beef and potato stew
- Sukiyaki – a kind of nabe dish with thinly sliced beef and vegetables in amazing sauce
- Curry (curry rice, curry udon, curry everything)
- Drink: oshi ruko (sweet bean/mochi drink), amazake (rice drink)

Seasonal Spring Produce

-Cherries	-Green Tea
-Leafy vegetables	-Lotus root
-Eggplant	-Carrots
-Daikon radish	-Bamboo
-Strawberries	

Spring Dishes

- Chirashizushi – “scattered sushi”
- Ohitashi – boiled spring vegetables
- Chikuzen-ni – braised chicken and vegetables
- Nanohana no Karashiae – greens with mustard dressing
- Takenoko gohan – bamboo-shoot rice

Year-Round Cooking

Many staples are available year round for fairly cheap prices, such as bananas, tofu, bread, bean sprouts, etc. You can also buy some seasonal vegetables out of season for more money.

Survival Grocery Store Kanji

Product	How to say it	Kanji
Sugar	Satou	砂糖
Salt	Shio	塩
Miso	Miso	みそ / 味噌
Soy Sauce	Shouyu	醤油
Milk*	Gyuunyuu/Miruku	牛乳
Cooking Wine	Mirin	みりん
Flour	Komugiko/Furawa	小麦粉
Eggs	Tamago	卵

*Skim milk will say "0%"
or have silver packaging!

Vegetable	Japanese Name	Vegetable	Japanese Name
Cabbage	Kyabetsu	Lotus Root	Renkon
Chinese Cabbage	Hakusai	Burdock Root	Gobo
Spinach	Hourensou	Carrot	Ninjin
Japanese mustard spinach	Komatsuna	Onion	Tamanegi
Spider mustard (thin salad green)	Mizuno	Ginger	Shouga
Perilla Leaf	Shiso	Bamboo root	Takenako
Giant white radish	Daikon	Leek/Chinese green onion	Negi
Turnip	Kabu	Tomato	Tomato
Potato	Jagaimo/imo	Cucumber	Kyuuri
Sweet Potato	Satsuma imo	Aubergine/Eggplant	Nasu
Taro Root	Sataimo	Small green pepper	Piman
Yam	Satsumaimo	Small Japanese green pepper	Shishito
Pumpkin	Kabocha	Corn	Toumorokoshi
Bitter Melon	Goya	Okra	Okura

- For a guide showing all kind of groceries (in English, Japanese, & scientific Latin), use www.ruthablett.com/foods.html

Using Japanese Ingredients

- Learn at least hiragana and katakana ASAP!!
- You don't have to make Japanese food, but it helps!
- You might have to adapt your cooking to what's available
 - Potato starch is easier to find than cornflour
 - Celery is unpopular, but cucumbers are cheap



- Mizuna is a good substitute for arugula

Japanese Cooking Sites

- Cooking with Dog (my favorite!)
 - www.youtube.com/user/cookingwithdog
- Cookpad (very popular amongst Japanese people; now in English! Over 1,000 recipes!)
 - en.cookpad.com
- Hiroyuki's blog on Japanese cooking
 - hiro-shio.blogspot.com
- Japanese Food
 - japanesefood.about.com
- Just Hungry
 - justhungry.com
- NHK World – Your Japanese Kitchen
 - www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/english/tv/kitchen/index.html



Learn How to Shop

- Mall/Department Store Supermarkets
 - More expensive than local grocery stores
 - Usually have more variety/availability of foreign or unusual products
 - Examples: Entetsu, Pare Marche
- Local Supermarkets
 - Usually cheaper than mall/department store supermarkets
 - Sometimes have limited options
 - Get to know your local supermarkets so that you know which stores have which products!
- Corner Stores
 - “Mom and Pop” stores; prevalent in inaka
 - Can be difficult if you don't know Japanese
 - Sometimes cheaper
 - Best for a few staple items or that store's specialty
- Convenience Stores
 - Convenient but expensive
 - Best to use them only when you need something fast



Foreign Foods

- Try Kaldi! It's in most shopping malls and even Shizuoka Station!
 - Free coffee when you walk in
 - Foreign foods
 - Great coffee beans
- Brazilian Supermarkets, such as Takara and Servitu
 - Great for meat, cheese, beans, and even rotisserie chicken sometimes!
- Online Shopping
 - Flying Pig
 - Foreign Buyers Club
 - Yoyo Market
 - The Meat Guy
 - Pie Mad
 - iherb.com
 - really fast and cheap shipping
 - great for supplements like vitamins, protein powders, etc.

Kitchen Equipment

- Fish Grill
 - You can use it to make potato wedges, chicken wings, tinfoil pocket meals, toast mochi, and even grill fish!
- Toaster oven
 - Obviously, it toasts bread
 - You can also use it for high temperature cooking (even scones or quiche)
 - However, it's not really reliable – it often gets too hot and your food burns in one area and is raw in the other
- Microwave
 - If you want to bake, you can get a hybrid microwave oven (オーブンレンジ)
 - Or, you can just get a regular microwave!
- Rice Cooker
 - Perfect rice every time!
 - They may seem expensive, but they are worth the money
 - You can also make one-pot meals, pudding, cakes, etc.
 - www.food.com/cookbook/rice-cooker-recipes-80457
 - You can also make easy and delicious vegetable rice!
 - Try cutting up a vegetable (such as pumpkin or carrot) and putting it on top of your rice before you cook it. Don't mix it in, just rest it on top of your rice and water and then press cook as usual. You'll have great vegetable rice when it's done!

Get Inventive

- Grow your own vegetables! Pots, seeds, and soil can all be found at the 100 yen store!
- Ask JTEs, Japanese friends, and other ALTs where to shop, or how to cook with local ingredients
- Try new things...it's why you're here!
- Some new foods can be scary, but don't be afraid to try, especially if you're at a work enkai
- The worst case scenario is that you spit it out!

Japanese Kitchen Staples

- Soy sauce
- Mirin
- Sake
- Dashi
- Rice
- Miso
- Sugar
- Salt
- Vinegar



Tips and Advice

- Eggs on the counter at the store are okay! Just put them in the fridge when you get home!
- When you're buying milk, make sure it's not drinkable yogurt, coffee, or something else disguised as milk
- Pre-made bentos at the grocery store are usually quite good, and they're cheap at the end of the day (usually after 5 or 6)
- Bring your electronic dictionary (hopefully you have one in your phone because it's really convenient) every time you go to the grocery store
- If you're a picky eater, time to change. You can't find many things here, so you're going to have to get used to it or suffer.