Using a variety of processes to produce a range of delicious teas

Spring, summer, autumn, winter - Japan has four distinct seasons that give tea a variety of different characteristics. The taste of tea is also affected by the region and grade of tea as well as differences in cultivation and processing methods, resulting in a variety of delicious teas for your enjoyment.

Characteristics of signature Japanese green teas

**Sencha**
The most commonly enjoyed variety of Japanese green tea is sencha. The freshly-picked tea leaves are steamed and then dried as they are rolled. After the leaves have been shaped, they are blended to achieve the best flavor for the consumer. In general, sencha is green tinged with yellow and has a well-balanced combination of aroma, umami and bitterness, providing you with a feeling of luxury that increases with the grade of green tea.

**Gyokuro**
The finest grade of Japanese green tea, gyokuro is steeped with a unique and mildly astringent aroma and mellow umami. The tea leaves are cultivated using the osakibicha method, which involves shading the young tea leaves from direct sunlight for about 20 days prior to harvesting. This distinctive process inhibits astringency, producing tea leaves with large amounts of “firewater,” an amino acid that enhances umami.

**Matcha**
Matcha is a fine powdered green tea commonly used in sadō (the tea ceremony). The young tea leaves are steamed and then dried in the same way as for gyokuro, but turned into long green-leafed tea by drying without rolling, and finally ground in a stone mill. Its elegant aroma and concentrated sweetness make matcha a pleasant drink, and its frothy quality is distinct from that of hot tea. Matcha is perfect for drawing out the flavors of Japanese confectionery and cuisine.

**Bancha**
This fragrant and refreshing Japanese green tea is made by roasting sencha or bancha over a high flame. The roasting process diminishes the tannin and caffeine content of the leaves to suppress astringency and bitterness and draw out fragrance. Hojicha is a warm brown color, and since it has a somewhat milk-like flavor, it is popular with children and the elderly. Laid in coffee or houjicha is also the green tea of choice for infants in Japan.

**Genmaicha**
Green tea with roasted rice

Genmaicha is a richly-flavored Japanese green tea made by mixing roasted rice with sencha or bancha. Before being blended with the tea, the rice is steamed in water and steamed then roasted at a high temperature, and the popped rice stands out white amongst the tea leaves. Genmaicha allows you to enjoy the special savory fragrance of the roasted rice together with the refreshing taste of sencha or bancha. Because of its low caffeine content, genmaicha is recommended for all ages, from children to the elderly.

Japanese green tea is delicious with both sweet and savory foods.

In Japan, green tea is used in a variety of foods including tea-buttered noodles, green tea flavored dumplings, green tea sponge cake and green tea-flavored chocolate. In addition to tasting delicious, these foods are healthy as they contain the nutrients of green tea in whole form. Japanese green tea is also delicious used like a hot or cold food, such as bread and cakes. Try adding Japanese green tea to your cooking.

**Suggestion:** When eating Japanese green tea, focus on the taste rather than the aroma. There are no particular rules for drinking green tea, so enjoy it according to your own taste. The best way to savor Japanese green tea is to enjoy it while considering its various nuances and flavors.