

Stewing

In Japan, dishes are often prepared by stewing various ingredients in a broth of water, *dashi* (stock,) and seasonings, allowing the richness of the broth to be marvelously fused with the ingredients' flavor. The type of broth base—soy sauce, *miso*, or other seasoning—is varied for certain types of fish to create an assortment of taste experiences.

Examples of fish good for stewing


Sardine, flounder, yellowtail, bonito, mackerel





Yellowtail

Typical method of stewing

Yellowtail with Japanese radish

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Scald slices of yellowtail in boiling water. Cut a Japanese radish into round slices and pre-boil them.
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Heat the fish and radish slices in a pot containing shaved ginger, water, *dashi*, *sake*, sugar, and *mirin*. After the pot comes to a boil, add soy sauce and let the mixture stew.
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Turn the stove off after the broth has sufficiently permeated the fish and radish, and serve them in a dish.

Deep-frying

Frying food in a pot of hot oil locks in its savoriness, and gives it a nice crispiness on the outside while keeping the inside tender.

Examples of fish good for deep-frying

Horse mackerel, conger, salmon, flounder



Flounder

Typical method of deep-frying

Fried flounder

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Cut up flounder into pieces, salt them, and let them sit for a moment. Sponge off the moisture and coat them in potato starch.
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Deep-fry them in moderately hot oil.
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Arrange them on a plate and serve with *tsuyu* sauce and salt, or lemon slices.



TAKUMI



Expertise built up from centuries of eating fish

The skills involved in sanitarily handling raw fish, preserving it, and enhancing its flavor represent Japanese expertise that comes from knowing fish inside and out

Ikejime

This is a method of preserving the freshness of fish by draining their blood from holes cut near the gills and tail. Often used by fishermen out at sea, this technique also improves the flesh texture and eliminates fishy odors.



Yubiki

Yubiki

In this technique, boiling water is poured on raw fish, which is then immediately cooled by immersion in cold water. This toughens the surface, sealing in the savoriness and nutrients, and also kills bacteria, making *yubiki* a common procedure for preparing *sashimi*. It is also often used for sea bream and grouper, since their skin is richly flavorful and nutritious.

Arai

Sea bream, flounder, or other white fish sliced as *sashimi* is shaken in ice water to clean and firm the flesh, as well as to remove fat. This technique has been popular for a long time not only for improving texture, but also for creating a cool sensation when *arai*-prepared fish is served on top of ice in summer.



Arai

Shime

Often employed for such fish as sardine, mackerel, small horse mackerel, and spotted shad, this technique involves heavily salting deboned flesh, allowing it to sit for a while, and then rinsing it in water and running it through vinegar water. As a result, the flesh becomes firmer, the flavor is enhanced, and bacteria are destroyed. As a method for accentuating natural flavor, *shime* is indispensable to the preparation of mackerel for use in *sushi*.



Shime

Drinks that complement Japanese cuisine

Japanese green tea

The all-powerful drink that enhances health and beauty

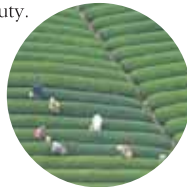


Japanese green tea, which has been a perennial favorite in Japan since the Edo period, is produced by steaming freshly picked tea leaves to prevent their fermentation. It is now being rediscovered as a health food, as its rich balance of vitamins help to fend off colds and lifestyle-related illnesses while also enhancing the complexion. Green tea is not only consumed as a beverage, but is also used in powdered form in sweets and other desserts. An indispensable part of everyday life in Japan, green tea is an all-powerful drink that enhances health and beauty.

A medley of varieties

Sencha

The most popular form of green tea, *sencha* is made by steaming, crumpling, and drying freshly picked tea leaves.



Gyokuro

This is the highest grade of green tea, possessing a distinctive sweetness that comes from shading the growing leaves from the sun.

Matcha

Tea leaves grown out of direct sunlight are steamed and dried without crumpling, and then are ground into powder using a stone mill. *Matcha*, which is mainly used in tea ceremonies, is prepared for drinking in a unique manner—the powder is rapidly mixed with hot water in a bowl, producing a froth.

Making a tasty cup of sencha

The key factors in preparing green tea are water temperature, amount of tea leaves, and steeping time. The optimum water temperature for *sencha* is around 70°C, but the water should first be brought to a boil and then cooled to this temperature.

1. Put the tea leaves in a teapot (approx. 6 g for 3 people).
When making only a couple cups, a larger ratio of leaves produces a tastier result.
2. Pour hot water in the teapot and allow it to sit for about two minutes to allow the leaves to open. The teapot should not be shaken, as this will release bitter flavors from the leaves.
3. Pour the tea into cups, taking care to maintain the same concentration of flavor for each cup.



Tidbits

Tea ceremony

The tea ceremony is a unique tradition of Japan that involves serving *matcha* to guests according to special rules of etiquette. Rather than being simply the consumption of tea, this ritual is a comprehensive art that includes tastefully decorating the tea room for the guests and expressing sincere hospitality to them. As such, it engraves the hearts of participants with a special spirit, and stands as a core element of traditional Japanese culture.



Sake

The best companion for Japanese cuisine

Sake is a rice-based fermented liquor that, like *shōchū*, has been delighting taste buds in Japan since ancient times. It is so loved by Japanese that a party is just not a party without a good supply. Most often consumed with a meal, *sake* is the best companion for Japanese cuisine, creating a synergy that brings out the full flavor of the food. Delicious *sake*, which requires delicious water and rice, is a world-class work of gustatory art that embodies Japanese wisdom and skill. *Sake* has been exported to other countries for some time, and improvements in quality have sparked greater foreign demand recently.



The way to enjoy sake

Sake comes from various regions in many different varieties and brands. The flavor and aroma of each type are best experienced at a certain temperature range—chilled, room temperature, warm, or hot.

Shōchū

A diverse beverage consumed the way you like

This distinctively Japanese beverage is a distilled liquor found in different varieties in each region, including rice liquors, potato liquors, wheat liquors, and *awamori*. *Shōchū* has a long shelf life, and can be stored for decades if kept in a cool, shaded place. Its big appeal is that it can be enjoyed in all sorts of styles, satisfying the individual preferences of any drinker. A *shōchū* craze is now sweeping across Japan, creating many fans among young people in particular.



The way to enjoy shōchū

Shōchū can be enjoyed in many ways, whether it be on the rocks or mixed with such companions as hot water, cold water, tea, soda, or fruit juice. Note that hot water *shōchū* is best prepared by pouring the *shōchū* into the hot water, as this will mix them better and provide a more pleasing bouquet.