

sourness, bitterness. Today, seasonings that allow the use of an umami component easily are widely used such as umami seasonings and soy sauce seasoning with *dashi*. They are popular also abroad, and used daily in Japan.

Other than *dashi*, what essential for the taste of washoku is seasonings such as salt, sugar, miso, soy sauce, vinegar, sake, *mirin* (sweet rice wine) and fish sauce. Ingredients like wasabi, mustard, ginger, Japanese pepper, chili pepper and *yuzu* citrus are also used as relishes. With these relishes, the flavors of ingredients are brought out while allowing one to enjoy seasonal feelings at the same time, which is the wisdom of WASHOKU.

In Japan, where the climate is hot and humid in summer, fermented foods developed just like in other countries in Asia. Therefore, fermented seasonings, such as miso and soy sauce vinegar, are frequently used for washoku. Most of them are made by fermenting salted soy bean and grains. In the course of preparation, the protein contained in the ingredients is degraded into amino acid, and changes into seasonings containing abundant umami components.

Fermented foods and seasonings

Fermented foods



Narezushi, which is made by maturing salted fish and cooked rice for a few days to ferment with lactic acid, is wisdom to preserve fish. Those made with *funa* of Lake Biwa in Shiga Prefecture, with mackerel in Wakayama and Toyama Prefectures, and with *ayu* in Gifu Prefecture are well-known. The photo above shows the preparation of mackerel *narezushi* made for a festival at the beginning of the year in Kohoku Region, Shiga Prefecture.

Shiokara

Shiokara is made by salting fish meat and guts and fermenting. It is one of the traditional preserved foods in Japan. Ingredients vary by region, so there are various types of *shiokara* including squid, shrimp, *ami* (mysidacea) and octopus.



Natto

Natto is a fermented food developed in Japan. It is a food made by fermenting soy bean with hay bacillus, and is sometimes referred to as "*itohiki-natto* (stringy *natto*)" in order to distinguish it from *tera-natto* (below). It is not only eaten as-is, but also is used as ingredients for soup or dressing.



Tera-natto

This is a fermented food made by adding *koji* molds to boiled soy bean for fermentation and maturing while being dried. Unlike stringy *itohiki-natto*, *tera-natto* is dry and salty. It is said that the food arrived from the continent together with the propagation of the Zen school, and is called *tera* (temple)-*natto* because it was often made in temples.



Pickles

Pickles are made by pickling food materials in salt, vinegar, *sake* lees, soy sauce, etc. and maturing. It was invented as a way to preserve vegetables for a long time, such as *takuan* pickles (pickled daikon radish), pickled *ume* (Japanese plum) and *nozawana* (a leafy vegetable)-pickles. It is also characteristic that there is wide variety of original pickles in every region of Japan.



Fermented seasoning

Miso

Miso is one of the representative seasonings of Japan, made by fermenting and maturing steamed or boiled soy bean by adding *koji* and salt. It is often used for miso soup and stewed dishes. It is also characteristic that the type of miso varies largely among regions.



Soy sauce

Soy sauce is made by fermenting, maturing and pressing "*moromi*," which is *koji* made with soy bean and wheat diluted with salt water. It is used for a wide variety of dishes including sashimi, grilled fish, stewed dishes and pan-fried dishes. Soy sauce is divided into five groups: *koikuchi* (dark), *usukuchi* (light), *tamari* (rich), *sai-shikomi* (twice-brewed) and *shiro* (white).



Vinegar

Vinegar is a seasoning to add sourness in washoku dishes like sushi and *namasu*. It is made by adding acetic acid bacteria to sake brewed from rice. The preserving property of food is improved by dipping into vinegar.



Sake

Sake is also one of the essential seasonings for washoku. The major effects of *sake* as seasonings include killing the smell of ingredients, bringing out the umami of foodstuff and improving the flavor, and adding sweetness.



Mirin (Sweet rice wine)

Mirin is a fermented seasoning made with steamed glutinous rice and rice malt, and by maturing for 40 to 60 days. Compared to sugar, its sweetness is softer, and it also has the effect of killing the smell of foodstuff. It is also used to make the surface of food glossy for dishes such as fish *teriyaki*.



Fish sauce

Fish sauce, having a unique odor and strong umami, is made by fermenting salted fish. *Shottsuru* of Akita, made with *Saifin* sandfish, and *ishiru* (or *ishiri*) of Noto Peninsula, made with squid and sardine, are well-known.



Seasonings

Salt

Salt has been used widely as a seasoning from ancient times in Japan, which is surrounded by the sea. Not only for seasoning dishes like grilled dishes and sashimi, it is also utilized for preserving foods, such as pickles and dried fish.



Sugar

Sugar is one of the essential seasonings for modern washoku, which includes many dishes focusing on sweetness compared to the cuisines of other parts of the world. However, it is rarely used solely, but by combining with soy sauce, salt and miso in various dishes including stewed dish.



WASHOKU is the ideal model of nutritional balance



Comprised of vegetables, fish, meat and rice, WASHOKU is also well-known for its excellent nutritional balance.

Recently, in some regions, school lunch is served with cooked rice menus for all five school days of the week instead of traditional post-war bread menus.

Let's find out the secret of the nutrition of washoku, one of its distinct characteristics.

Examples of school lunch menus in Sanjo City, Niigata Prefecture

These are the examples of lunch menus served at elementary and junior high schools in Sanjo City. The Koshihikari breed grown within Sanjo City is used for cooked rice. Some people say that "because rice is digested slowly, children are satisfied even without much dessert." Chinese or Western style dishes are selected to go well with cooked rice. The menu always includes some kind of soup.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Cooked rice Seasoned and deep-fried squid (two pieces) Dish dressed with <i>natto</i> Mushroom soup Liquid yogurt (Elementary school: 619 kcal/ Junior high-school: 731 kcal)	Cooked rice with green soy bean (<i>edamame</i>) Cheese-fried salmon Pan-fried and seasoned <i>kuki-wakame</i> Egg soup Milk (Elementary school: 687 kcal/ Junior high-school: 823 kcal)	Cooked rice Spicy chicken Dressed squid and cucumber Ginger <i>miso</i> soup Milk (Elementary school: 639 kcal/ Junior high-school: 752 kcal)	Cooked rice Saury cooked with <i>ume</i> flavor Dish dressed with <i>takuan</i> pickles <i>Nikujaga</i> (Stewed potatoes and beef) Milk <i>Nashi</i> pear (Elementary school: 688 kcal/ Junior high-school: 814 kcal)	Cooked rice Curry-flavored seasoning for cooked rice Spinach omelet French-style salad Pumpkin soup Milk (Elementary school: 708 kcal/ Junior high-school: 833 kcal)

Washoku, combining the main dish of cooked rice (also including barley and other grains) with seafood, meat, vegetables, fermented seasoning and *dashi*, is a well-balanced meal also from a nutritional perspective.

From a historical point of view, it used to be a diet strongly balanced towards grain, with heavy consumption as the main dish in everyday meals.

However, there are many things we can learn from the traditional diet, such as efficiently taking amino acids in cooked rice by eating tofu, *natto* and miso soup together, or enjoy eating seafood on special occasions such as annual functions.

Especially, the basic structure of washoku that has been handed down for centuries is excellent.

Dishes including abundant protein such as fish, meat and tofu are served as the primary plate of side dishes. And then, other dishes including vegetables and potatoes are prepared. Soup is prepared so that it goes well with the primary plate. Grilled fish, stewed vegetable, leafy vegetable *ohitashi* and miso soup represents a favorable nutritional balance.

The basic style of washoku was preserved in each household until about the 1980s. The amount of main dish decreased slightly, and side dishes increased, particularly showing the growth of the ratio of milk and dairy foods and meat. The PFC balance, which is one of the indexes to measure nutritional balance, showed the ideal ratio around that time (refer to the next page).

However, thereafter, occasions for eating out increased and the Westernization of home cooking progressed, and rice consumption decreased sharply and the problem of lifestyle-related diseases due to excessive fat intake arouse. In such context, movement to review people's dietary habit

started in various regions in Japan. One example is the effort made with school lunch.

The fully-supplied school lunch with the style of bread, milk and side dishes started in 1950, in the midst of post-war food shortages. School lunch with bread that continued until 1976, when rice was introduced into school lunch, also had an impact on the basic style of washoku.

The ratio of school lunch with cooked rice gradually increased, and in 2010, more than 90% of elementary and junior high schools serve school lunch with cooked rice more than three times a week. However, the ratio of schools serving rice all five days of the week is still low at around 7%.

Let us take a look at the case example of Sanjo City, Niigata Prefecture, which switched to serving rice school lunch all five days of the week in 2008.

The city decided to introduce school lunch serving rice all five days of the week with an aim to build healthy bodies, and to acquire ideal dietary habits and live healthy for a lifetime by having a balanced diet while growing up.

For the main dish, the *Koshihikari* breed rice grown within the City by reducing the amount of pesticides used, and polished with rice bran slightly remaining. The menu is based on this main dish and side dishes include a primary plate and other side dishes, and soup. The primary plate is not limited to traditional washoku dishes, such as fried salmon, spicy chicken and saury cooked with *ume* (Japanese plum) flavor, but is considered to be naturally incorporated within the basic style of washoku.

Although bread goes well with fat and sugar and can easily lead to obesity, rice with bran remaining is digested slowly, which not only resulted in a decrease in the number of children who eat snacks, but also resulted in a



Some people point out that food preferences among children changed after switching to rice menus. When children are asked their favorite side dishes, they raise washoku dishes such as "grilled fish" and "natto" other than standard dishes such as "Hamburg steak" and "curry and rice."



"Itadaki-masu" and "Gochisou-sama" are said out loud by all students at lunchtime to show their appreciation. Dietary education is also prioritized, and the connotation of these phrases is taught at school.

decreasing trend in the number of children with obesity. It is considered that the rhythm of their dietary life improved.

Side dishes that go well with cooked rice can use locally-grown vegetables easily. Therefore, menus with a wide variety can be prepared for each season. As a result of the education on the concept of "one soup and three dishes," the number of children who leave foods uneaten decreased.

By adding new ideas to side dishes within the basic eating pattern, it is possible to enjoy a wide variety of meals. It also allows for learning about seasonal foodstuff, and to acquire knowledge on annual functions.

It is also crucially important that children experience the basic style of washoku through school lunch every day. The habit may not be acquired just by experiencing it occasionally, but may become a standard and take root by repeating it every day. It is expected that children will gradually think about the combination on their own. It is considered that school lunch should play an important role in the future.

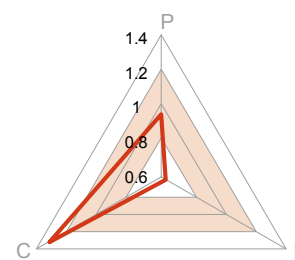


Children who finished the first served lunch rushed and made a queue to have another serving of cooked rice. There were no leftovers this day.

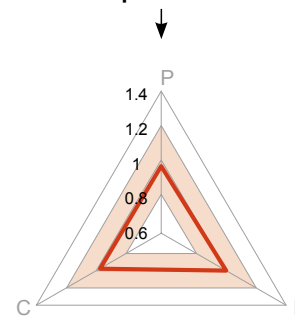
What is PFC balance

PFC stands for **protein, fat and carbohydrates**, which are the three major nutrients especially essential for humans. PFC balance is the calorific ratio of protein, fat and carbohydrates of every meal. The ideal PFC balance for healthy life is protein: 15%, fat: 25%, and carbohydrates: 60%.

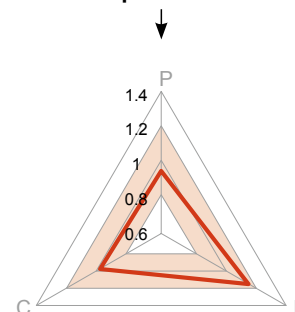
Changes of PFC balance in Japan



Japan: 1965



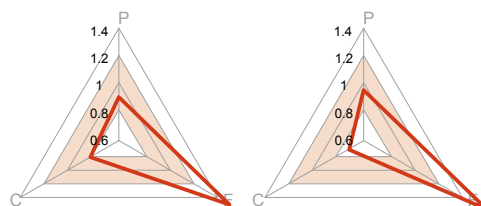
Japan: 1980



Japan: 2010

The PFC balance of Japanese people was weighted toward carbohydrates in 1965, but was excellently balanced in 1980. However, the dietary life of Japanese people thereafter tended to have too much meat and fat, with a decreased amount of rice, and it has been coming closer to a Western type of diet in 2010.

PFC balance in the U.S. and France



U.S.
(2005-2007)

France
(2005-2007)

Source: FAO Statistics Yearbook (Food Balance Sheet for the data of Japan); The ideal balance of protein: 10-20%, fat: 20-30% and carbohydrates: 50-70% has been made into an index with a range of 0.8 to 1.2.



Before welcoming guests, water is sprinkled at the front of the restaurant. It shows that the place is purified with water and is well prepared. Selecting hanging scrolls for the alcove to match the entire concept is also one of the basics of hospitality. Flowers decorated are hand-grown and arranged in the vase of the alcove by the host. About 150 varieties of plants and flowers are grown in the garden in preparation for the arrangement. The guests are welcomed by the warm hospitality of the madam or the hostess.

Characteristics of WASHOKU (6) Arrangement

Mindset and formality of welcoming people

Hospitality is not a unilateral style offered to a guest.
It is a comfort generated from the mind of caring for one another.

The well-groomed garden is swept over and sprinkled with water. The alcove is decorated with hanging scrolls and arrangements of seasonal flowers. The *fusuma* panel of the room is replaced with a screen window in summertime to make the space feel cooler, while keeping warm in winter. These are all preparations for welcoming guests. That is what we call *shitsurai*, the arrangement of the space. For washoku, and especially for *kaiseki* for tea ceremony, *shitsurai* is a critical element together with foodstuff and types of dishes.

Even in households, those who prepare meals imagine the faces of those who eat them. Those who eat imagine the feeling of those who prepared the meal for them. The joy of hospitality arises from this exchange of imagination.

Hospitality in *ryotei* restaurants is the ultimately-sophisticated form of such culture of hospitality. Let us hear from Mr. Eiichi Takahashi, who is the 14th manager of the long-established *ryotei* restaurant in Kyoto, "Hyoutei," and was designated Holder of Intangible Cultural Techniques of Kyoto Prefecture as the first chef, about the spirit of such hospitality.

"It can be said that *ryotei* is where Japanese culture is concentrated. Even the pathway leading from the entrance to the room gives the atmosphere of the season. A scroll of the season or the event is hung in the room, and the room is decorated with flowers especially selected for it. We prepare the room so that the atmosphere is naturally accepted by the seasonal sense that Japanese people have naturally acquired, and welcome the guests. Although *ryotei* is a special place that is different from people's daily life, we try to offer natural *shitsurai* and hospitality that are not excessive but lack nothing."

Flowers decorated in the rooms of "Hyoutei" are hand-grown by the manager in the garden, and are also arranged by the manager himself. "I am always reminded of Sen no Rikyu's words, 'flowers should be as growing wild in the field,' at the root of hospitality. That may sound easy but is very difficult." Even at the well-established restaurant, the host devotes himself every day to improving the decoration to welcome guests in a natural style.

Expressing the four seasons

In "Hyoutei," a *mukozuke* dish of sea bream from the particular region is served throughout the year. However, the four seasons are expressed by changing the plates and decorations.

Spring

The plate with a cherry blossom pattern adds floridness as if a flower bloomed on the table. Sashimi is garnished with vinegared parsnip root and wild-grown *nori* seaweed.



Summer

Ice is filled inside a slightly deep glass bowl. You can feel the coolness both with eyes and tongue. Sashimi is garnished with *shiso* (Japanese basil) buds and Malva nut.



Autumn

The plate is the shape of a chrysanthemum, the flower of autumn, and combined with the deep color, provides an atmosphere that goes well with autumn. Sashimi is garnished with *iwatake* mushroom and chrysanthemum petals.



Winter

The crane is a lucky charm and motif that is also used for the New Year table. Sashimi is garnished with *Suizenji nori* and purple *shiso* shoot.



Characteristics of WASHOKU (7) Chopsticks and bowls

Chopsticks and bowls that support WASHOKU

Japan is the only country where only chopsticks are used for meals.

WASHOKU takes pride also in a unique culture of utensils, together with plates and bowls that give seasonal feelings.

Japanese people use plates and bowls in everyday meals casually, by putting cooked rice in a rice bowl, miso soup in a wooden bowl, and grilled fish on a flat plate. The types, shapes and materials used for these plates and bowls vary widely. There is no country, either among nearby countries or in the West, where such a wide variety of plates and bowls are used. That is not irrelevant to the fact that the country has distinct seasons.

"Just using different plates for the season changes the mood even at home," says Mr. Takahashi of "Hyoutei."

For example, try using something with florid colors and shapes for spring, materials like glass and celadon that give a cool feeling for summer, something with harvesting colors for autumn, and thick earthenware or wooden plates and bowls that give a feeling of warmth for winter. It is possible to express the season just by changing colors, materials and shapes. This is the enjoyment that is available only with WASHOKU.

Japanese use chopsticks at every meal without giving it much thought, and they are the representative utensils of food culture in Japan. The tradition of using spoons disappeared since the Nara period, and people started to use only chopsticks, which established the style of holding a bowl in one's hand and sipping the hot soup inside directly from the bowl. At the same time, it became standard that there are exclusive bowls and chopsticks owned by each person. This is different from the food culture in other Southeast Asian countries, where spoons are used and particular bowls and chopsticks are not assigned to an individual. Japan is the only country where people eat only with chopsticks among the cultural zone of chopsticks. In addition, there is also wide variation in chopsticks according to their use, such as for eating, serving or cooking. Even among *shoku-bashi* used for eating, there is a lineup of different shapes, materials, finishing process and length.

How chopsticks work

Chopsticks for Japanese people are an important utensil covering the whole process of cooking, serving and eating. Because *shoku-bashi* for eating are basically owned by individuals, it is characteristic that people can select a pair suitable for them.

Types

There are chopsticks used for eating and chopsticks used for cooking. *Sai-bashi* for cooking, are about 30-50 cm long to protect the hands from heat, and some pairs are tied with a string so that one does not go missing. *Tori-bashi* for serving is also a type of *sai-bashi*. Because *shoku-bashi* are basically owned by individuals, you can select a pair with a suitable length for you. Many of them are decorated with lacquer or *raden* (mother-of-pearl work) decoration.

Shape

Shapes of chopsticks used in households include square type, square type with rounded corners, five-sided, six-sided, seven-sided, eight-sided and carved. You can select the one that fits in your hands. There are also types that are specially processed at the tips. As for individual chopsticks for guests and disposable chopsticks, there are types such as *genroku-bashi*, with an oblong cut surface and slit and chase for splitting, and *rikyu-bashi*, which is wide at the center and narrow at both ends.

Materials

Not only the shape, but also the materials vary. Hard wood like ebony and ironwood are frequently used in recent years. Among trees in Japan, Japanese cedar has a unique fragrance and has been used for chopsticks in *kaiseki* for tea ceremony and disposable chopsticks. *Hinoki* is resistant to water and humidity, has a strong preservative quality, and is light and easy to hold. Bamboo is strong, bows adequately and easy to pick up small objects.



Learn the manners of using chopsticks

[Bad-mannered use of chopsticks]

The basic pattern of *washoku* is to eat cooked rice in between side dishes and soup, i.e., to eat a bite of cooked rice and then have a bite of a side dish, or eat a bite of cooked rice and then have a sip of soup. Please remember that the following uses of chopsticks are regarded as poor manners.



Utsuri-bashi (skipping)

First placing the chopsticks on a dish and then moving to a different dish without picking any food up



Mayoi-bashi (waving)

Moving chopsticks over dishes as if hovering to choose what to pick up



Sashi-bashi (pointing)

Pointing to people or things with chopsticks while eating



Watashi-bashi (bridging)

Placing the chopsticks over a plate or a bowl before finishing the meal



Yose-bashi (pulling)

Pulling plates or bowls to oneself with chopsticks

Characteristics of WASHOKU (8) Sake

Japanese sake that accentuates the appeal of WASHOKU and relaxes your mind

Rice is the staple food for Japanese people, and is also a spiritual cornerstone of the culture. Japanese sake, brewed from rice, is an indispensable element for WASHOKU. It is also the “national liquor” of Japan.

Japanese sake is made mainly with rice, rice malt and water and by fermenting the ingredients. As for ingredients, rice especially bred to have properties favorable for *sake*-brewing is used, which is different from ordinary rice for cooking. Water, which comprises 80% of the components of Japanese *sake*, is also an important element that determines the quality. Good-quality water that does not perish the flavor of *sake* is essential.

The *sake*-brewing process incorporates a wide variety of techniques. For example, there is a technique to polish the rice grain to adjust the taste and fragrance of the finished product. The purpose is to remove protein and fat from the outer side of the grain that may cause bad taste, but in the case of exquisite *daiginjo*, *sake* is made by rice milled to less than half of the original grain size.

Another example is the technique to ferment rice. In the case of *sake* brewing, fermentation means the process of yeast eating sugar and generating alcohol. However, rice does not include sugar, so starch in rice must be first transformed into sugar with the enzyme of *koji* molds, and then fermented by adding yeast. Such a complex process (duplex fermentation) is necessary for brewing sake. *Koji* used for this process is also a unique type used in Japan

called *bara-koji*. It is unique in that it has a strong glycation effect (transforming into sugar), and has a large impact on the fragrance and taste of Japanese *sake*.

In Japan, where culture has developed mainly around rice cultivation, much importance is placed on rice, *mochi* and *sake* made of rice, regardless of region. It was believed that every grain of rice holds a deity in it, and that *sake* can be brewed because of the blessing of the deity. Similarly to foods, *sake* was used as a tool to come closer to deities from ancient days.

At the same time, sake also has an important role to connect ties among families, relatives and regions. For example, *omiki* is sake for deities. At festivals, people drink the *omiki* offered to deities after the rite. The region and the community enhance their unity by drinking the same *sake* with the deities and by sharing it among others.

Shochu, using rice, barley or sweet potatoes as ingredients, is also the national liquor together with Japanese *sake*. Japanese liquor has important roles of relaxing people's minds, enhancing relationships and accentuating the taste of dishes and warming up the table.



There are nearly 1,600 *sake* brewers throughout Japan. Although the number is decreasing every year, a “Japanese *sake* boom” occurs once every few years.



Omiki, an altarage and tribute to deities, holds a very important position so that it is placed at the center of the top tier of the altar.

Characteristics of WASHOKU (9) Japanese sweets and Japanese tea

Wagashi (Japanese sweets) and tea that are close to people's lives

Wagashi expresses appreciation for the blessings of nature and the delicate changes of season.

Japanese tea is not only for quenching thirst, but also for fulfilling your mind and elevating your feelings.

Wagashi made with a wish on special occasions



January

Hanabira-mochi

Sweetened burdock and sweet white miso paste are wrapped inside red or white *mochi* or *gyuhi*. The origin is "*hagatame* (firm teeth)" *mochi* for wishing for longevity in one of the New Year events back in the Heian period (8th-12th century). Due to the combination of *mochi* and miso, it is also referred to as "*tsutsumi* (wrapped) *zohni*."



May

Kashiwamochi

Round and flat shaped *mochi* made of rice flour is folded in half, holding adzuki bean or miso paste inside, and is wrapped with Kashiwa oak leaf. Because the leaves of the Kashiwa oak tree do not fall off until new buds sprout out, they are used with a wish for one's descendants to prosper. It is used as a tribute for the *sekku* of tango on May 5th in the old calendar.



June

Minazuki

Adzuki *tsubuan* (sweet red-bean paste) is spread on the surface of white *uiro* (sticky steamed cake). It is eaten in early summer, reminding one of "*Nagoshi no Harai*," held on *misoka* (30th) of June in the lunar calendar in Kyoto. The adzuki bean has the meaning of expelling evil spirits, and the triangle shape represents ice.



October

Inoko-mochi

October in the lunar calendar is referred to as "I no Tsuki (the wild boar month in the Oriental Zodiac)" and this sweet used to be eaten in an annual event on the "I no Hi (the wild boar day in the Oriental Zodiac)" of I no *Tsuki*. In the old calendar, October is the beginning of winter. On such timing, this sweet was eaten with a wish for one's descendants to prosper, with the healthy and prolific boar (the symbol of I) in mind.

This list is a rough classification of *wagashi* according to its process of manufacturing. There are other ways of classification, such as *namagashi*, *han-namagashi* and *higashi* according to moisture content, or *jo-namagashi*, *namigashi* and *dagashi* according to the class.

*Oka-mono means the combination of already-finished products (example: *kinton* = *ame-dama* + *soboro-an*)

Source: "Exhibition on the History of Wagashi" from the 50th Toraya Archives Exhibition

Classification of wagashi

- *Mochi-mono*: *mochi*, *dango*, *daifuku*, etc.
- *Mushi-mono*: *manju*, *imo-youkan*, *uirou*, *murasame*, etc.
- *Neri-mono*: *nerikiri*, *konashi*, *gyuhi*, *an*, *kuzu-gashi*, etc.
- *Yaki-mono*: *miso-matsukaze*, *senbei*, *momoyama*, *castella*, *dorayaki*, etc.
- *Nagashi-mono*: *nishiki-dama*, *neri-youkan*, *mizu-youkan*, etc.
- *Age-mono*: *age-senbei*, *karinto*, etc.
- *Uchi-mono* (*oshi-mono*): *rakugan*, etc.
- *Oka-mono*: *monaka*, *kinton*, *kanoko*, *suhama*, etc.
- *Keke-mono*: *kompeito*, *gosikimake*, *ishi-goromo*, etc.

Sweets are also a critical part of WASHOKU. They can be divided into *jo-namagashi* for guests, and *manju* and *mochi-gashi* that are eaten daily. There are also various other types of *wagashi*, including *higashi* and *dagashi*. In addition, there is also classification according to the process of manufacturing, such as *mochi-mono* including *dango* and *daifuku*, *neri-mono* including *gyuhi* and *an*, or *nagashi-mono* including *nishiki-dama* and *mizu-youkan*. A wide variety of sweets have been created with ingredients such as rice, barley, adzuki and other beans, sugar and *mizuame* (thick sugar liquid).

There are also sweets for tea ceremony, enjoyed with *matcha* (green powdered tea). Ingredients, colors and design are determined according to the season, to be enjoyed not only with the tongue but also with the eyes.

There are also sweets connected to annual functions. For example, March 3rd in the lunar calendar is "*Hina-Matsuri* (girl's festival)," and people eat *kusamochi*, made of *mochi* seasoned with *yomogi* (*mugwort*), which is a symbol of strong vitality and is believed to have the effect of expelling evil spirits.

Japanese tea is appropriate to enjoy with *wagashi*. Green tea arrived in Japan from China in the 12th century. However, the manufacturing process of green tea has been established as an original style in Japan of steaming raw tea leaves and then kneading before drying. Caffeine included in green tea has an alerting influence, while catechin has an antioxidant effect. It also contains abundant vitamin C and is good for health. The fragrance and umami peculiar to Japanese tea is the essence of Japanese culture.



Hand-kneading, which is the unique process of manufacturing Japanese tea, is done to bring out the umami while squashing the fibers of tea leaves. Hand-kneading avoids the tea leaves being cut into pieces, which preserves the sweetness of tea.

Necessity of dietary education

WASHOKU is now endangered. How can we hand it down to future generations?

Experiencing major transformations in the past 150 years, washoku is now starting to decay. Where is the cause?

The culture of WASHOKU in Japan has been changing constantly not only due to the natural environment but also from influence from abroad.

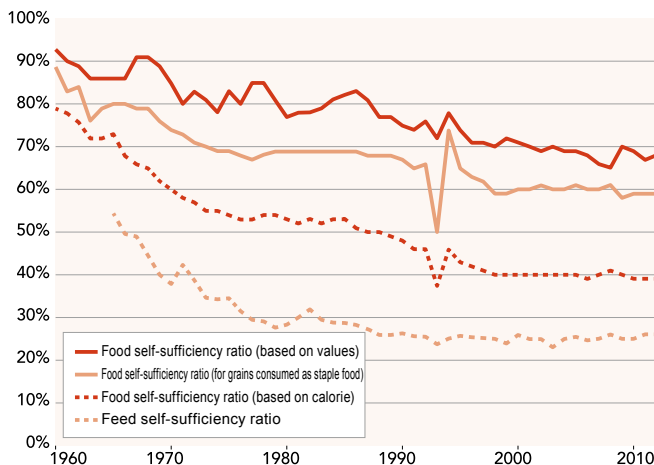
After modernization, new dishes were invented, such as meals combining Western-style dishes with the basic style of washoku (for example, *korokke* and *tonkatsu*), or stewed dishes and dressed dishes containing meat and vegetables. Many of them are inherited while maintaining the element of

WASHOKU, such as the basic style of washoku, use of seasonings such as soy sauce and miso, or dishes that can be eaten with chopsticks.

However, when Japan entered the high-growth period after World War II, people's dietary habits started to change rapidly.

The first fast food and casual dining restaurants opened in the 1970s. Convenience store franchises also developed.

Changes in dietary habit

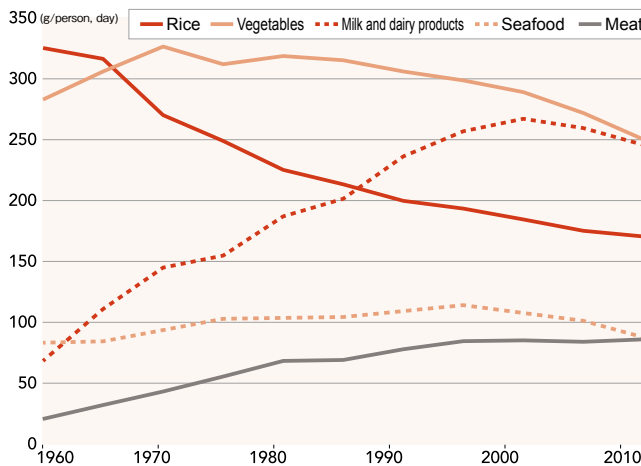


What will become of WASHOKU with less consumption of Japanese products?

The food self-sufficiency ratio of Japan is constantly declining. While it was 73% in 1965 (based on calories), it was 39% in 2012. The major reason for this is a decline in the consumption amount of rice, fish and vegetables that can be provided within Japan, and an increase in the consumption of livestock products grown with grain feeds that are difficult to produce in Japan, frozen/processed foods and wheat that tend to rely on imported ingredients. Is there a future for healthy WASHOKU, which allows for well-balanced intake of carbohydrates, protein and fat?

Changes in the food self-sufficiency ratio of Japan

Prepared from the Food Balance Sheet by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

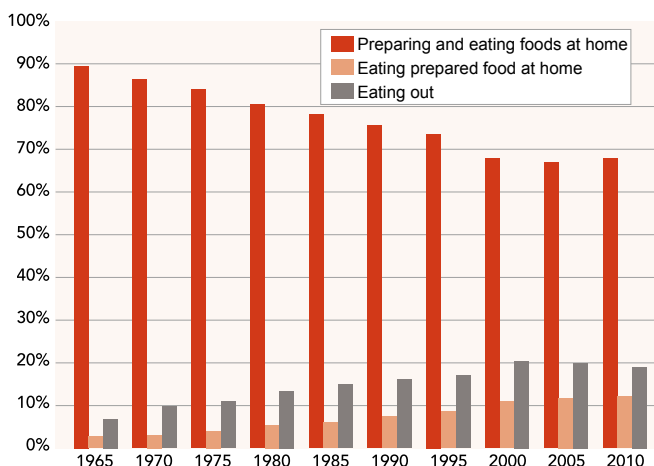


Rice consumption amount halved in 50 years!? What increased instead are meat and dairy products.

What can be found when looking at the food consumption amount per capita by items? It shows that the amount of rice consumed by Japanese people is showing a striking decline. While the consumption of rice per day per person was about 315g in 1960, it almost halved to about 163g in 2010. What increased instead are milk and dairy products (from about 60g to about 240g) and meat (from about 14g to about 80g). It shows changes in the style of WASHOKU, eating cooked rice with side dishes mainly containing vegetables and fish.

Net food supply per capita per day

Prepared from the Food Balance Sheet by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries



Even eating at home, occasions for cooking at home are decreasing!?

In contrast to "eating out," home-made meals are prepared and eaten at home. However, there is another pattern, purchasing ready-to-eat dishes such as bento and prepared foods and eat at home. In fact, this pattern of eating prepared food at home is increasing. While the ratio of eating out is generally unchanged since 2000, the ratio of eating prepared food at home is constantly increasing, while that of preparing and eating foods at home is decreasing. If the number of households where families eat at home but do not prepare meals at home is increasing, wouldn't that mean that occasions to convey the important elements of WASHOKU to children are decreasing?

Ratio of those who wouldn't be able to stand not eating cooked rice at least once every day

Prepared from "Fixed-Point of Living 2012" by the Hakuho Institute of Life and Living

Although the balance of a main dish and side dishes struck an ideal balance by around the 1980s (p.26), the consumption of rice declined further thereafter, while the consumption of bread increased. Consumption of meat, fat, milk and dairy products also increased, and the food self-sufficiency ratio declined. Eating out with family became an everyday affair, and meals at home are also Westernized.

With the diffusion of microwave ovens and frozen and instant foods, preparation of meals became highly convenient. On the other hand, this means the occasions for cooking at home decreased.

In such context, how can we convey the advantages of WASHOKU to future generations? In addition to handing down the tradition of meals at home from parents to children, it should be necessary to transmit the message to children and also to their parents through school education. It is also required to learn specifically about WASHOKU from elderly people.

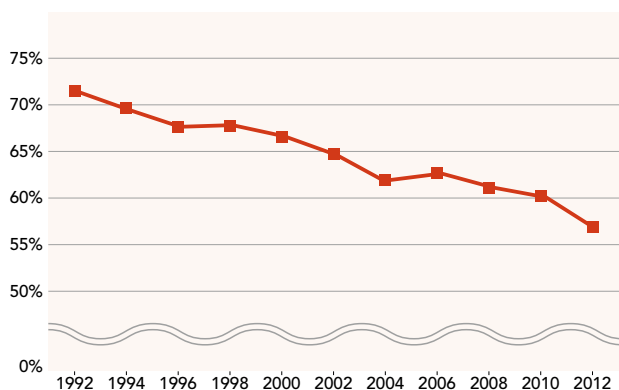
Selection of foods from the weaning period and enriching the eating experiences during infancy are especially important. Dietary habits developed during childhood continue to have a strong influence thereafter.

The concept of WASHOKU can be conveyed through buildup of activities such as experiencing the deliciousness of *dashi* every day or tasting fish and learning how to remove bones with chopsticks in an enjoyable atmosphere.

When people encounter a taste they have never experienced before, they recognize it as a foreign culture. Any cooking method can be difficult for a person who has no experience with it, even if the steps are actually simple. Building up experiences such as observing the process of preparing meals every day, enjoying helping, using beautiful plates and bowls with great care, sharing the same foods with family and friends and eating together at festivals and flower-viewing parties, should not only result in the conveyance of WASHOKU as a culture, but also lead to developing people's power to live.

"I'm okay without rice." Such people are increasing!?

There are data showing that the ratio of those who wouldn't be able to stand not eating cooked rice at least once every day has been decreasing in the recent 20 years. The ratio was 71.4% in 1992, but it decreased to 56.4% in 2012.

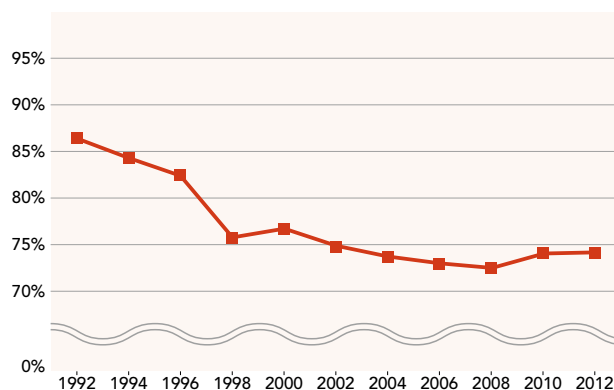


Ratio of those who wouldn't be able to stand not eating cooked rice at least once every day

Prepared from "Fixed-Point of Living 2012" by the Hakuho Institute of Life and Living

The ratio of those who eat osechi-ryori is gradually decreasing every year.

During New Year, families and relatives gather and celebrate being able to start the new year in peace while sharing *osechi-ryori* together. However, the ratio of those who eat *osechi-ryori* is also decreasing every year. While it was 86.6% in 1992, it declined to 74.8% in 2012.



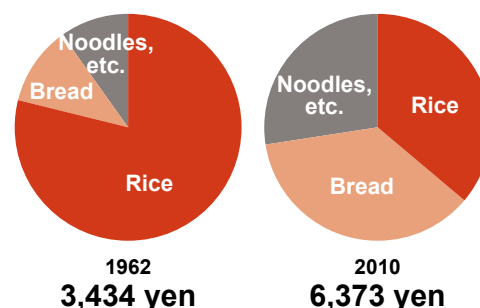
The ratio of those who ate osechi-ryori for New Year.

Prepared from "Fixed-Point of Living 2012" by the Hakuho Institute of Life and Living



Many modern kitchens face the living room instead of a wall. In this household, with the husband and wife both having jobs, the husband also cooks in the kitchen frequently. The important elements of WASHOKU can be handed down to the next generation by preparing meals together with children like above.

Prefer bread and noodles over rice; is the tendency accelerating?



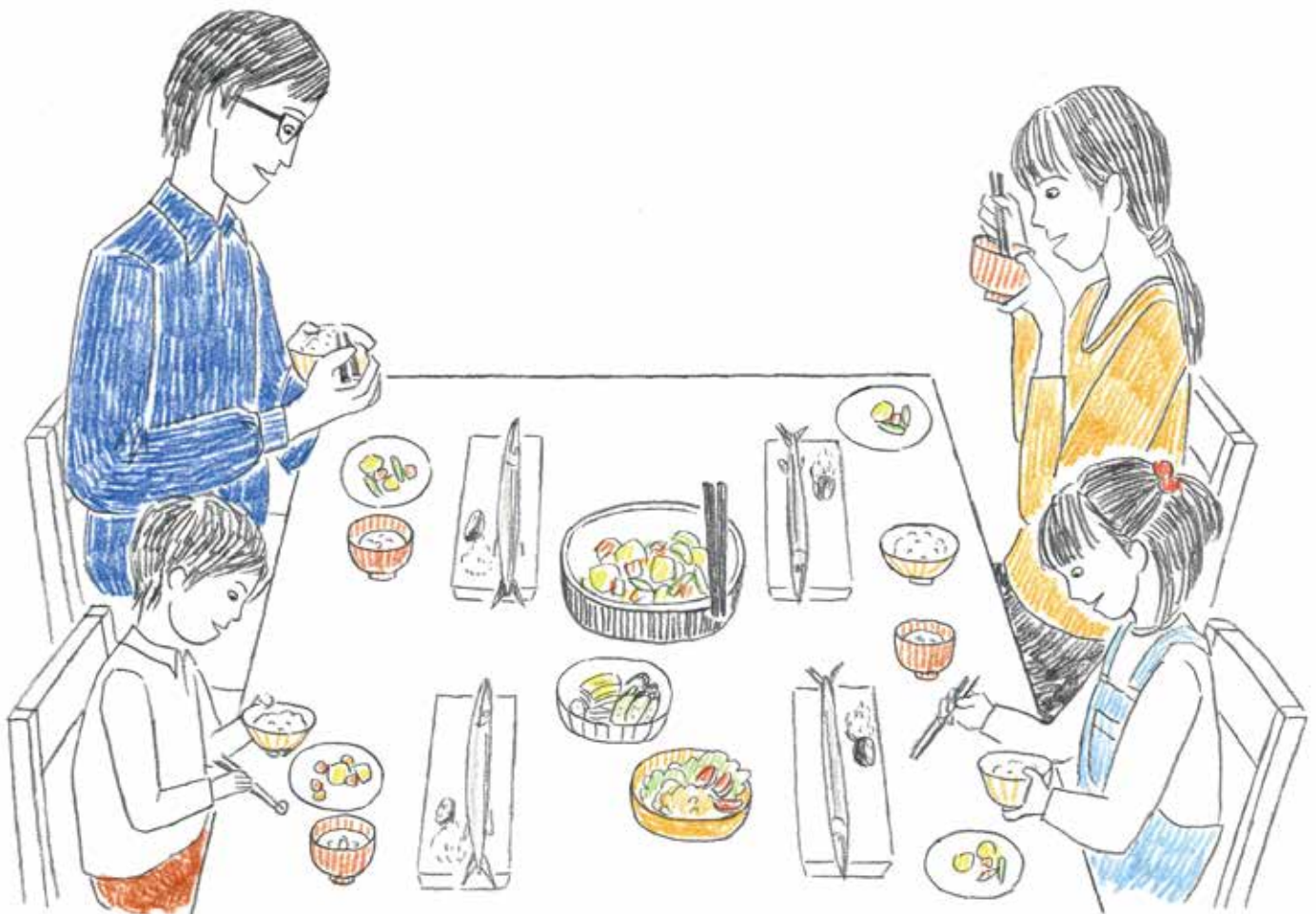
Breakdown of household expenditure on grains per month

Prepared from the Annual Report on the Survey of Household Economy by the Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication

Expenditure on rice, which took up more than 80% in 1962, is largely replaced by bread in 2010. Although the consumption volume of rice is larger than bread, expenditure for eating ready-to-eat breads and noodles at home is increasing compared to that for rice, which must be cooked before eating. This may also indicate that occasions for cooking at home are decreasing.

“Gochisou-sama.

“Itadaki-masu.”



The future of WASHOKU

After entering the 21st century, washoku is becoming a boom in the world. The taste and healthiness is attracting people's attention, and many Japanese food stores and restaurants can be found in every part of the world.

Even though WASHOKU is becoming a focus of attention in the world, its future is at risk in Japan, its place of origin.

As we have seen so far, the history of WASHOKU had been taking in something new quite flexibly. From time immemorial, Japanese people had been incorporating the food culture brought from foreign countries into their own dietary habits, and succeeded in developing the unique food culture of Japan. They have been creating dishes perfectly fit for the environment of each region. Dishes eaten and how to eat them have also been changing in each period and region.

However, there are things that are kept unchanged: improving the cooking method so as to bring out the deliciousness of foodstuff obtained from rich nature and to taste it; decorating the table with the atmosphere of the season and holding eating occasions where the feeling of hospitality can be shared; regarding the combination of "one soup and three dishes" as the basic style of meals and living a healthy dietary life; and eating *osechi-ryori* in New Year and *sekihan* on celebration day together with the members of the family. In other words, meals work as ties bonding the family.

Just like the rich nature, isn't WASHOKU, which allowed Japanese people to live healthy and strengthened ties among them, also an important Japanese culture that we must preserve?

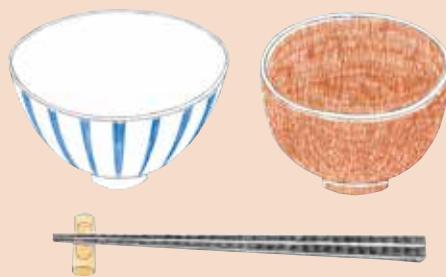
Let's say "*itadaki-masu*" and "*gochisou-sama*" properly. Only this may bring our feelings closer to WASHOKU. It can unite people with warm ties.

All in all, Japanese people favor eating cooked rice. Soup with rich *dashi* flavor will fulfill their minds as well as their stomachs. No one would feel that WASHOKU, a wonderful asset Japanese people have been developing over a long history, should be left to go extinct. It would be a real pleasure if this booklet serves as a starting point for people to feel proud of WASHOKU, being praised as a good food culture in the world, as a Japanese asset, and cherish it and to hand it down to next generations.



WASHOKU

和 食



“Gochisou-sama”