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## Japan Cuisines

Sushi is most famous Japanese food and cross your mind as we say Japan. Surrounded by ocean, Japan has so many places to get fresh and delicious sushi together with the variety of seafood options. Japan has made significant contribution to the food culture of other parts of the world including western countries. Japanese cuisine also known for its high nutritional value and enormous benefits have inspired many international chefs to prepare such dishes on their own. Here is a list of few unique and famous Japanese dishes:

- **Sushi:** Shushi is one of the first food that clicks to mind when we think about Japanese cuisine. The word 'sushi' refers to any dish made seasoned with Japanese rice and rice vinegar. Common varieties of sushi include makizushi (sushi rice and fillings rolled up in nori seaweed), nigiri sushi (shaped, bite-size mounds of sushi rice with single slices of raw fish or similar draped over the top) and inarizushi (sushi rice stuffed inside pockets of inari; a type of seasoned, fried tofu).



**Sushi (Nigiri Sushi)**

- **Udon:** Udon noodles are thick, chewy, and traditionally made from wheat flour and brine water. Udon can be served in a number of different ways (mixed into stir fries, added to hot pots, served cold with a tsuyu or tentsuyu soup base on the side for dipping), but are most commonly used in noodle soups, where they are served in a savoury soup broth with different garnishes. Some of the most common udon noodle soup dishes include kitsune udon ('fox udon', topped with aburaage fried tofu), tempura udon (topped with tempura battered seafood and vegetables), and chikara udon ('power udon', topped with grilled mochi rice cakes).



**Udon Noodles**

- **Tofu:** Although tofu is mainly thought of in Western countries as a health food or vegetarian alternative, in Southeast Asian countries like Japan, tofu (particularly silken tofu) is enjoyed by everybody and is a common part of the traditional diet. To answer the question ‘what is tofu?’, it is soy milk that has been coagulated, with the resulting curds being pressed into blocks. These blocks come in differing levels of firmness, and can be eaten uncooked (perhaps with a couple of savoury garnishes), boiled in hot pots, or fried into tasty pieces of aburaage and used as a garnish.



- **Tempura:** If you enjoy crispy fried foods, then you will love tempura. Tempura are pieces or slices of meat, fish, and/or vegetables that have been covered in a special tempura batter and deep fried until they become crunchy and pale gold



in colour. Unlike in the UK, where battered foods tend to be made from meats and fish, tempura tends to be made from



either small shellfish like prawns, or vegetables like green beans, pumpkin, daikon mooli radish, and sweet potato. Tempura can be eaten by itself (perhaps with a little grated daikon and a small dish of tsuyu for dipping), or served on top of rice bowls or noodle soups.

- **Yakitori:** With a name literally meaning ‘barbecued chicken’, Yakitori are small skewers of bite-size chicken pieces seasoned with salt or brushed with a sauce, or tare, of mirin rice wine, soy sauce, sake alcohol, and sugar. There are many different types of Yakitori, but the most common varieties are momo (chicken thigh), negima (chicken and spring onion), and Tsukune (chicken meatballs).
- **Sashimi:** Possibly one of the most controversial dishes in all of Japanese cuisine, Sashimi is raw fish or meat that has been expertly cut into thin slices and typically comes served with daikon radish, wasabi and soy sauce. Sashimi differs from sushi in that all sushi is made with vinegar rice and does not always contain raw fish, while sashimi is almost exclusively raw fish. Sashimi and rice served on separate plates, but sometimes together. The fish used to

make sashimi must be as fresh as possible, both in order to minimise the risk of contamination, and because fresher fish makes for tastier sashimi.

- **Donburi:** This rice bowl dish is almost as popular as ramen in Japan and a common lunchtime choice among busy Japanese businessperson. Donburi is made by preparing (normally by simmering or frying) various meat, fish and vegetables and serving over steamed rice in large bowls (also called 'Donburi'). While donburi can be made using just about any assortment of ingredients, the most common types include Oyakodon (simmered chicken, egg, and green onion), tendon (fried tempura pieces drizzled in tsuyu sauce), and katsudon (breaded and deep-fried meat cutlets, or tonkatsu, simmered in tsuyu with onion and egg).
- **Okonomiyaki:** It is made by mixing together batter, sliced cabbage, and other savoury ingredients; spooning the mixture onto a hot plate; and then pan-frying as you would a pancake. Okonomiyaki originated in Osaka and Hiroshima (where a different, 'layered' style of Okonomiyaki exists) and its popularity spread to the rest of Japan, where specialised Okonomiyaki restaurants are easy to come by. In some of these restaurants you are expected to prepare the Okonomiyaki yourself, which makes for a delightfully fun cooking experience.
- **Curry Rice:** Japanese curry differs from the Indian varieties with which the Asia is more familiar, in that it is generally sweeter in flavour, thicker in texture, and prepared more like a stew (with meat and vegetables being cooked by boiling in water together). Japanese curry is often prepared in Japanese homes with the help of curry roux; blocks of solidified Japanese curry paste that melt into the 'stew' and thicken up to become a flavour some curry sauce.



Additionally, Japan is home to a big cluster of Indian restaurants. One will be surprised to know that there are over 2100 official Indian restaurants spread across Japan. Indian restaurants offering authentic Indian cuisines and special regional Indian cuisines example: South Indian Cuisine and North Indian Cuisine only. It is easier to spot one because of their great numbers, mostly spread, and located in busy areas and near to some tourist place.

**About Japan National Tourism Organization:**

The Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) was founded in 1964 with the mission of enticing foreign travelers to Japan. Affiliated with the Japan Tourism Agency of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism, JNTO has effectively functioned as the Japanese government bureau of tourism. It has 24 tourism-promotion-oriented offices across the world, and a large network of suppliers for tourism and event services in Japan.

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