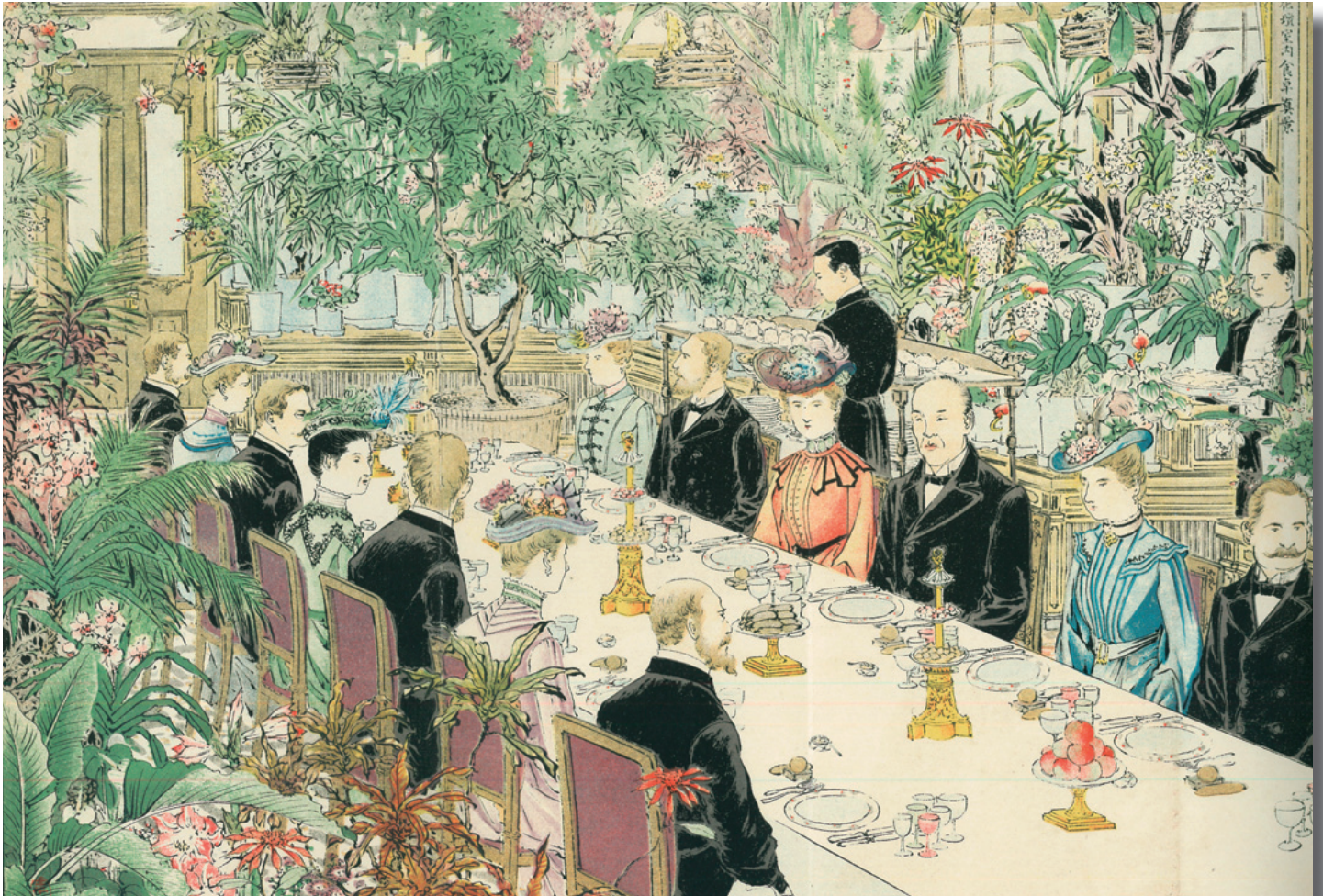


Kikkoman's quarterly intercultural forum for the exchange of ideas on food



THE JAPANESE TABLE

Global Fare in Contemporary Japan

French Cuisine

by Yoshiki Tsuji

Japan's eclectic dining scene has been informed by foods from around the world. Our new Feature series explores the history of how various international cuisines took root in Japan and evolved, starting with the impact and enduring appeal of French cuisine.

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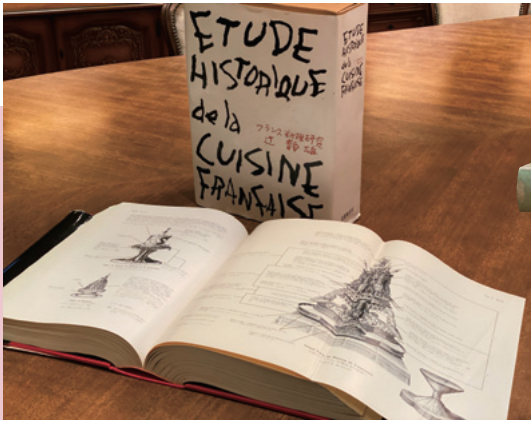
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Global Fare in Contemporary Japan

French Cuisine



Etude Historique de la Cuisine Française (Historical study of French cuisine; 1977) and other publications on French cuisine authored by Shizuo Tsuji, pictured at left.

The true measure of the significance of French cuisine in Japan is best reflected in the high rankings it regularly receives in the country's Michelin Guide. Let me briefly relate how French food attained such recognition in Japan, starting with its introduction here in the late nineteenth century.

Diplomatic Cuisine

Perhaps the first official banquet in Japan to serve French cuisine was held in 1867 at Osaka Castle, when the last shogun, Tokugawa Yoshinobu (1837-1913), entertained the consuls of Britain, France, the Netherlands and the United States. But the definitive introduction of French gastronomy here begins with official government banquets and those served in the court of the emperor during the Meiji era (1868-1912). Banquet menus of this time reveal that, while there was some substitution of those ingredients which could not be obtained in Japan, the dishes presented were nearly identical to those served at French tables in the late nineteenth century.

The Meiji government aimed to modernize the country, and Japan's government and business leaders clearly recognized the diplomatic significance of food, particularly French cuisine. Through their initiative, the Tokyo Tsukiji Hotel, the Tsukiji Seiyoken restaurant and the Rokumeikan banqueting house

were purpose-built to entertain prominent guests from Japan and overseas—and each served authentic French cuisine. The Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, established in 1890, also functioned as the state guest house of the Meiji government. The Imperial Hotel paved the way for French cuisine in Japan from the late 1920s, as its own chefs were sent to train at the Hotel Ritz in Paris.

Because of these top-down efforts by Meiji government and business sectors to introduce French cuisine, public perception here has historically regarded French food as formal and somewhat unapproachable. Yet in retrospect, Japan's robust embrace of French cuisine in the late nineteenth century was significant in establishing its fundamental infrastructure here, which in turn produced an

environment that was highly receptive to its further development.

Seeking Authenticity

Before and after the Second World War, the advancement of French cuisine in Japan came to a standstill, leading to considerable variance with the authentic cuisine. Two historical milestones helped to close this gap: the opening of the French restaurant Maxim's de Paris in 1966 in Ginza, Tokyo; and Japan's World Expo in Osaka in 1970. Expo '70 happened to coincide with the emergence of France's enormously influential *nouvelle cuisine*. Not only did the France Pavilion introduce many of the Expo's 64 million visitors to French food, countless young Japanese chefs working in the Pavilion's kitchens also encountered true French cuisine for the first time. These chefs set forth *en masse* to France on their own initiative to master the skills of French cuisine with passion and commitment. Without a doubt, these intrepid Japanese chefs laid the foundations for French cuisine in late twentieth-century Japan.

Around this time, my father Shizuo Tsuji, founder of the Tsujicho Group, became involved in deepening Japan's adoption of French cuisine. He invited numerous French chefs to Japan for professional culinary arts exchanges; and through his historical



French menu for a dinner served at the Ministry of Public Works, March 25, 1878. Courtesy of Ajinomoto Foundation for Dietary Culture



Chef Hajime Yoneda's vegetable dish "Chikyū (planet earth)" embraces the aesthetic of order with the harmony of nature, earth and space.

research on French cooking, he made it possible for Japanese chefs to focus on advancing their own techniques and the profession as a whole. He published essays and books on the cultural role of food in French society, and these played a part in creating a broader Japanese appreciation for French food and for the rich culture that nurtured it.

A Global Shift

As both cooks and consumers became more sophisticated during the period of Japan's rapid economic growth in the late twentieth century, the country's French cuisine entered its golden age. Yet no matter how skillfully chefs here mastered its arts, as long as they continued to pursue the "authentic" cuisine of France itself, they were faced with an insurmountable wall. Although innovations in transport and distribution made it possible to utilize the same ingredients as those available

in France, it was only natural that nuances, however subtle, would exist.

Through twenty-first century globalization, state-of-the-art cuisines built upon the French culinary platform have been appearing around the world, and the ways in which people view food and flavor are diversifying. Culinary expressions of *terroir* or local ethos that make active use of scientific knowledge and technologies have become the global trend. This comprehensive shift has been a gift to Japanese chefs, allowing them to distance themselves from "authentic French" and pursue their own unique, equally valid, interpretations. We see this in the sophisticated, meticulous presentation of dishes by chef Hajime Yoneda at HAJIME in Osaka; and in the work of chef Yoshihiro Narisawa at NARISAWA restaurant in Tokyo, who created the new genre of "Innovative

Satoyama Cuisine" as an expression of Japanese *terroir*. The cuisine of chefs such as these, who compete with confidence on the world stage, reflects the polish and refinement they wield. Their art attests to the fact that they have not only elevated the French cuisine they have mastered, they have revolutionized it. The greatest appeal of French cuisine in twenty-first century Japan may be found in its diversity and in the generational breadth of its chefs. Alongside these innovative styles, there are other more orthodox, yet ingenious approaches. There is bistro fare that reflects French country food, and versions that draw upon ingredients grown in Japan's distinctive natural environment. All are firmly grounded in fundamental skill—and this indeed is the rich harvest of more than 150 years of French cuisine in Japan. ●



Signature dish "Satoyama Scenery," by Chef Yoshihiro Narisawa

cover

Illustration of a French-style banquet held in the ornate greenhouse of Count Shigenobu Okuma during the Meiji era, by artist Toshikata Mizuno. This print appeared as the frontispiece in the Winter installment of the serial *Shokudoraku* by Gensai Murai (1904).
Courtesy of Kanagawa Museum of Modern Literature

Author's profile

Yoshiki Tsuji was born in 1964 in Osaka, and educated in the UK and the US. He is chairman and head of the Board of Directors of Tsuji Culinary Institute. His numerous publications encompass the subjects of the modern transitions of gastronomy, and Japanese cuisine. He was awarded France's National Order of Merit in 2018.



CLOSE-UP JAPAN

Traditions and trends
in Japanese food culture



Kakigori topped with strawberry syrup and condensed milk (left); and served with matcha syrup, *shiratama dango* glutinous rice dumplings and sweetened *azuki* red beans.

Kakigori Shaved Ice

Kakigori shaved ice is a cold, refreshing dessert most evocative of hot Japanese summers, but nowadays it is a year-round treat, enjoyed even in the chill of winter. *Kakigori* in Japan is traditionally made using a manual ice-shaving apparatus, but automatic machines are also used. *Kakigori* textures range from coarse to fluffy-soft, depending on the pressure of the blades—but arguably the most sought-after shaved ice is fine and feathery, served in a bowl or cup



Ice-shaving machine

Nowadays *kakigori*
is a year-round treat

and topped with flavored syrups like strawberry, melon or lemon.

As far back as the eighth century, icehouses called *himuro* were used to store ice that was cut in the winter for use in summer; in fact, summer ice was so precious, it was presented to the emperor. An essay written some thousand years ago includes a description of sweet *amazura* syrup, made from Japanese ivy, poured over shaved ice. Ice was a rare commodity in Japan until the late nineteenth century, when ice-making technology became more widespread. Today shaved-ice desserts are not only a common sight at summer festival stalls, they

are found in cafés, restaurants, convenience stores and in *kakigori* specialty shops.

Two kinds of ice are used for *kakigori*: pure and natural. The former is made by freezing water artificially, while the latter is made by drawing high quality mountain or spring water into artificial ponds and allowing it to freeze naturally. Of the two types, natural ice melts more slowly because of its higher density, the result of being frozen slowly and naturally. Natural ice is transparent with a clean, pure taste.

There are several natural ice-makers in Japan today; some of the most famous *kakigori* specialty shops serve only natural ice. In such shops, in addition to serving shaved ice with traditional favorites like matcha syrup and sweetened *azuki* red beans or strawberry syrup with condensed milk, novel syrup flavors like tiramisu, coffee or tomato are also constantly introduced. ●



Japanese Cherries

Cherries are a nutritious fruit, containing minerals like iron, potassium and other vitamins. American cherries have firm flesh and strong sweetness, while Japanese cherries have smaller pits and a greater amount of soft edible flesh, thus are juicier with an excellent balance of sweet and sour. Edible fruit-bearing cherry seedlings were

first introduced to Japan from Europe and the US in the late nineteenth century. Today, various kinds of cherries are grown from central to northern Japan, with Yamagata Prefecture the largest cherry-producer, boasting over 70 percent of total yield. In the early twentieth century, Yamagata farmer Eisuke Sato selectively cultivated the sweet

Kidama and the slightly tart Napoleon varieties; after nearly fifteen years, he succeeded in producing the Sato Nishiki cherry, which today is the most commonly cultivated variety. Often sent as a gift, it is expensive: each cherry is handled individually, one by one, and arranged in neat rows in boxes. New high-end varieties are also currently being developed. ●



Japanese cherry trees



Sato Nishiki cherries

TASTY TRAVEL



Tottori



Rakkyo before pickling (left) and pickled

Tottori *Rakkyo*

Tottori Prefecture produces more *rakkyo* Chinese scallions than any other region in Japan. Characterized by its dense, crunchy white bulbs, *rakkyo* was originally introduced from China as a medicinal plant around the ninth century. The best-known *rakkyo* are those famously cultured in Tottori's dry, infertile *sakuyu* sand dunes along the Japan Sea, an area known for harsh winds and heavy snows. Seed bulbs are planted in summer, and *rakkyo* are harvested in early summer the following year: it is generally agreed that the more severe the winter, the better the taste. The white bulbs are pickled in sweetened vinegar to be enjoyed year-round as a sweet-sour condiment to accompany curry and rice. ●



SAUTÉED SCALLOPS WITH TOMATO-ORANGE OROSHI SAUCE

In Japan, grilled fish is typically accompanied by grated daikon *oroshi*, which diners sprinkle with soy sauce or ponzu, as preferred. Here, this classic *oroshi* features colorful and flavorful touches of tomato and orange, seasoned with soy sauce and vinegar in a twist on Japanese style.



◆ Scallops

Serves 2 as a first course
366 kcal Protein 12.9 g Fat 6.7 g
(per serving)

Oroshi grated daikon sauce

- Piece of daikon, about 8-10 cm / 3 1/4-4 in. long; 70-80 g / 2.5-3 oz.
- 1 firm ripe tomato, 180-190 g / 6-7 oz.
- 1/4 orange, segmented*
- Hot pepper sauce
- 2 T Kikkoman Soy Sauce
- 3 T grain vinegar
- Preferred salad greens or green leaf lettuce
- A few sprigs each of fresh dill, chervil, Italian parsley
- 10-12 fresh scallops**, total 200-220 g / 1/2 lb.
- 1 T or more pure olive oil
- Salt and black pepper
- 2 T sake (for deglazing); or water if unavailable

1 To prepare the *oroshi* sauce, peel and grate enough daikon to make 2 T after the moisture has been squeezed out. Peel the tomato, cut into bite-size pieces and pulse very briefly in a food processor until coarsely chopped, taking care not to make juice. Cut each orange segment into several pieces.

2 Gently blend the grated daikon and orange pieces with the chopped tomato. Add a few drops of hot pepper sauce to taste. Set aside.

3 Mix the soy sauce and vinegar, set aside; arrange salad greens and herbs on one side of a serving plate.

4 Rinse and pat dry the scallops. In a frying pan, heat olive oil and sauté both sides of the scallops over medium heat, until a skewer can be inserted smoothly. Season lightly with salt and pepper, remove scallops and set aside. To deglaze the pan, add sake and scrape the bottom, then bring to boil until the juice becomes syrupy.

5 Place the sautéed scallops alongside greens on the serving plate. Sprinkle the deglazed liquid over the scallops, then spoon tomato-orange *oroshi* sauce over them.

6 When eating, sprinkle soy sauce-vinegar dressing over the tomato-orange *oroshi* sauce and greens.

* May substitute other citrus such as grapefruit; it is more acidic than oranges, so reduce amount of vinegar and add a little honey for sweetness.

** If using sashimi-quality, sauté both sides only briefly.

1 C (U.S. cup) = approx. 240 ml; 1 T = 15 ml; 1 t = 5 ml

Recipe by Michiko Yamamoto



OYAKODON JAPANESE CHICKEN-EGG RICE BOWL



● Mitsuba

Serves 4

632 kcal Protein 25.2 g Fat 16.4 g
(per serving)

- Deboned chicken thigh*, 300 g / 10 oz.
- 1 T sake
- 1 large onion, 220-250 g / 1/2 lb.
- One or two sprigs of *mitsuba*
Japanese wild parsley or watercress

Simmering liquid

- 240 ml / 1 C dashi stock
- 3 T Kikkoman Soy Sauce
- 2 T granulated sugar
- 3 T sake

- 4 eggs
- 4 bowls of hot cooked rice
- Roasted nori seaweed, torn into small pieces about 2 T

1 Cut the chicken into small pieces about 2 cm / 0.8 in. square. Sprinkle 1 T sake over the meat and set aside.

2 Peel and trim the onion and cut it in half, then cut into thin slices along the fiber. Cut *mitsuba* to separate leaves from stems; cut stems into 2 cm / 0.8 in. lengths.

3 Place the ingredients for the simmering liquid in a pot. Add the sliced onion and simmer over medium heat until onion is slightly soft. Add the chicken to the pot and simmer until almost cooked.

4 Each of the four servings is then prepared separately. Beat one egg. Pour one-quarter of the onion and chicken mixture with the liquid into a small frying pan, about 18 cm / 7 in. diameter. Bring to a boil over medium heat.

5 Pour beaten egg over the onion and chicken, cover and continue to cook until egg is set to desired firmness. Turn off the heat, add 1/4 amount of *mitsuba* and cover briefly, until *mitsuba* becomes a bit wilted.

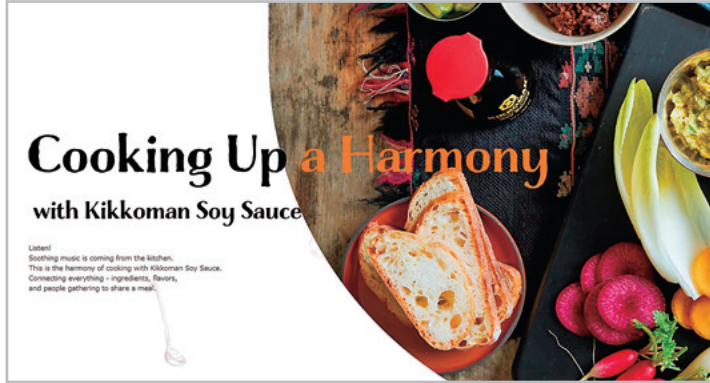
6 Fill an individual bowl with hot cooked rice, making the rice flat on top. Gently transfer the cooked chicken and egg onto the rice to cover it completely, then garnish with 1/2 T nori. Repeat Steps 4 to 6 to make three more individual servings.

* Chicken thigh without skin may be used if preferred.

Recipe by Kikkoman Corporation



Kikkoman's New Recipe Website "Cooking Up a Harmony"



Delicious recipes can be found on *Cooking Up a Harmony*
<https://www.kikkoman.com/en/cookbook/soysauceharmony/index.html>



Kikkoman has recently launched a new website that features original recipes using Kikkoman Soy Sauce. The website name, *Cooking Up a Harmony*, speaks for itself, as it aims to bring harmony into kitchens around the world. The website itself introduces the appeal of Kikkoman Soy Sauce all-purpose seasoning, which goes well with all kinds of ingredients and cuisines. The site presents diverse recipes—all enhanced with Kikkoman Soy Sauce—that highlight the flavor of foods. "Cooking Up a Harmony" recipes are arranged under four categories:

Authentic Japanese

For centuries, soy sauce has been used to enhance the delicious



experience of traditional Japanese cuisine. Since Japan's Edo period (1603-1867), tempura and sushi have been popular, and these, along with other globally loved favorites, are among the many classic recipes featured here.

Simply Soy Sauce

Soy sauce embodies all of the five basic tastes—sweet, sour, salty, bitter and umami—and unites them in absolute harmony, in a single bottle. These recipes share how even a few drops of soy sauce alone can not only season, but also transform, a dish—almost like a magic potion for deliciousness.

Secret Ingredient

Soy sauce also plays an excellent supporting role in recipes by unveiling the flavors of other ingredients. These recipes reveal how pre-seasoning with soy sauce can impart a mild umami, and how it can unify disparate ingredients in stewed dishes. These recipes offer up a harmony of flavor, made possible only with soy sauce.

New Flavors

Add soy sauce to any familiar seasoning, then drizzle it onto vegetables and meat. This concept permeates throughout the recipes here to create endless flavor potential, depending on the seasoning used. All of these recipes present flavors that are utterly transformed, thanks to soy sauce.

Check out our new website for more recipes. When you access the site, please enjoy the home page video to hear the cook humming happily against the background of the sounds of cooking.

As Kikkoman continues to focus on communication through food with our consumers around the world, we also invite you to visit our global Instagram account, where we offer up information on diverse gastronomic cultures, recipes and tasty insights into Kikkoman Soy Sauce. ●

Follow us on Instagram!



@kikkoman_global

