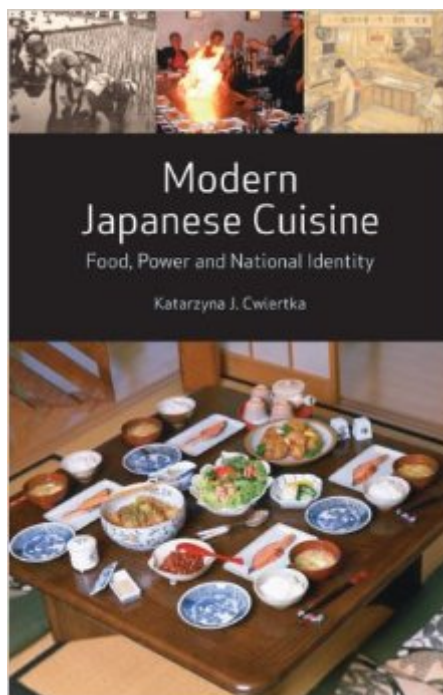


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# Modern Japanese Cuisine: Food, Power And National Identity



## Synopsis

Over the past two decades, the popularity of Japanese food in the West has increased immeasurably—a major contribution to the evolution of Western eating habits. But Japanese cuisine itself has changed significantly since pre-modern times, and the food we eat at trendy Japanese restaurants, from tempura to sashimi, is vastly different from earlier Japanese fare. *Modern Japanese Cuisine* examines the origins of Japanese food from the late nineteenth century to unabashedly adulterated American favorites like today's California roll. Katarzyna J. Cwiertka demonstrates that key shifts in the Japanese diet were, in many cases, a consequence of modern imperialism. Exploring reforms in military catering and home cooking, wartime food management and the rise of urban gastronomy, Cwiertka shows how Japan's numerous regional cuisines were eventually replaced by a set of foods and practices with which the majority of Japanese today ardently identify. The result of over a decade of research, *Modern Japanese Cuisine* is a fascinating look at the historical roots of some of the world's best cooking and will provide appetizing reading for scholars of Japanese culture and foodies alike.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Katarzyna Cwiertka, lecturer in Japanese studies at Leiden University, presents in this book a history of the development of modern Japanese cuisine (i.e. from the Meiji revolution to the present day). She focuses on the social and political factors that affected the eating habits of the Japanese people, arguing that what is regarded as traditional Japanese cuisine is to a great extent a product of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century imperial policies. She also argues that a great deal of

what is regarded as properly Japanese cuisine is in fact of Western (European and American), Chinese, and Korean origin. Of especial interest is her documentation of the extensive role that military catering played in the creation of a homogeneous national cuisine. A postscript looks at the developments Japanese cuisine has undergone outside Japan. The book is clearly written and accessible to non-academics, with a bibliography that provides English-language sources whenever possible. This is an excellent book that should be of interest to anyone interested in Japanese cooking or Japanese culture.

Heavily annotated analysis of the evolution of Japanese cuisine from the Meiji restoration to the present. Broad selection of vintage photographs illustrate how contemporary Japan food styles are the result of the culture's ability to readily embrace foreign influences--from English curry to "hambaaagu" to fast food to sochu and kimchi. Lots of interesting factoids along the way keep this from being a dry, analytical tome, particularly the final chapters on the globalization of Japanese cuisine and its influence on Western cooking and diet trends. Highly recommended for anyone interested in where all that other stuff on the sushi menu came from.

Japan has tried to define itself throughout its history, within its culture and within its country. Everything is given a tradition, a history, glued into the structure of society and rooted in the past. But in fact many things we think of as Japanese are from China or Europe or even America. And while many items, like rice and soy, has been linked to the very idea of Japanese food they have, in fact, only been available to most of the populace for a very short period in modern history. The book traces Japanese cuisine, exploring its roots, how it developed and changed and inserted itself into what we think of as Japan, and how it has returned to the rest of the world, delivered to us as special, as Japanese, and how we have embraced it. Lots of information - knowing general Japanese history is a great help - but worth reading no matter what your interests. Good for lovers of Japan, Japanese food, or world cuisine.

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