



## Entertaining in Japanese Style

By BERNICE CLAIRE BASSETT

**T**O THOSE who know and have learned to be fond of Japanese food, it is a great regret that the people of other countries have had no opportunity to become acquainted with these delicious dishes. With the exception of the large cities on the Pacific Coast, it is extremely difficult to find a genuine Japanese restaurant in this country. The reason for this is, no doubt, due to the fact that the great majority of Japanese living away from the Pacific Coast are of the student class and are not segregated as in the West.

To a vast number of Americans who have not been in the Orient, the words Japanese and Chinese are synonymous, or at least so confused that the actors in a Japanese play might wear the short coat and trousers of the Chinese without causing comment, or the Chinese refreshments of chop suey, chow mein and tea might be served at a Japanese-style party with complacency. Though many of the same materials are used in both countries, the resulting dishes of the two nations are vastly different. To one who likes the exotic taste of the pungent soy sauce without the rich-in-fat taste that accompanies most Chinese food, the Japanese will be a welcome change.

The Japanese meal itself is not an occasion for mirth or jovial conversation, but is served with marked formality and little or no talking. As soon as the guests are all seated on the floor the lacquer trays are carried in, two for each guest, or a third if the occasion is more elaborate. The food is served in dainty porcelain bowls, some with covers, and no two alike, although the corresponding dishes for each guest are the same. The soup bowl alone is made of a lacquer impervious to heat. The chopsticks are placed at the front of the tray, resting upon a small porcelain holder.

### Oriental Meals are Formal

**W**HEN the hostess says, "Please eat," each guest answers, "I will eat," and then removes the covers from the rice and soup bowls, placing them at the side of the tray. The rice bowl is then held in the left hand and from it one lifts one mouthful of rice with the chopsticks. The bowl is then replaced and the soup bowl lifted; and from it the solid parts are eaten with the chopsticks, then the liquid sipped from the bowl, lifting it with both hands, still holding the chopsticks in one. The order of eating the other foods is optional, but after the soup is finished, the rice is held continuously in the left hand and eaten between bites of the

other foods. It is customary to eat at least two and a half bowls of rice during the meal. One lays down the chopsticks when the bowl is empty, while the maid, who is seated near by, refills it from a wooden-covered bowl.

Tea is as important and necessary a part of the meal as is the rice, and there is as definite a formality in serving and drinking it. It is sipped from cups—without handles—that are held in both hands. Tea is served once before the guests

are seated and again after the other food is eaten. The second time it is poured by the maid into the rice bowls, from which every grain of rice has been eaten. Before drinking it, however, each guest rinses his chopsticks in the tea, then replaces them on their stands as they originally were brought to him. When the meal is over, some one of the group says, "Gochiso sama," or "Thank you for the dinner," and all the other guests bow low.

As for the common food materials used, soy or *shoyu*, which is the sauce made from soy beans, forms the foundation of most dishes and is obtainable at all fancy grocers'. *Mirin* is an unfermented rice wine used in cooking, but since it is difficult to obtain in America it has been omitted from these recipes. *Tofu* is a white-bean curd similar in form and composition to cottage cheese and is frequently used. This and various forms of seaweed products, pickled ginger root and the gelatine-like *kanten* may be obtained from the large cities where there are Japanese or Chinese communities. Bamboo sprouts, however, are in common use as are mushrooms, both of which are obtainable in almost any grocery store. The *ajinomoto* (literal translation—source of taste) of the recipes is a bottled powder, a product of the past ten years in Japan, which is being exported in large amounts and is now marketed here in America. This furnishes seasoning for most Japanese dishes, as does also the dried and grated fish, bonito.

Where the Japanese would use a broth made from fish, meat or chicken broth has been substituted in the recipes as I have given them. Celery leaves have been substituted for the uncommon trefoil and a few other necessary adaptations made.

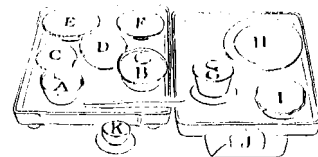
Fish of all kinds, of which the Japanese have an unlimited choice, and an abundance of vegetables, form the principal items of diet. Many vegetables which are not in common use in America are regularly used by them, such as lotus root, calladium root, burdock root, rape, celery cabbage, leeks, *udo* and some twenty varieties of beans, all of which furnish an excellent variety.

### Some Typical Recipes

**T**HERE have been purposely omitted from this discussion any recipes using the delicate and choice raw tuna which is sliced wafer thin and served iced with attractive garnishes. Thinking that eels and rice, octopus, and inevitable sweet breakfast soup made of fermented bean might not sound so entirely delicious as they are in reality no mention is made of them in the recipes.

**JAPANESE RICE.** Wash in a sieve under running water, shaking until the water runs clear. Then put in a heavy lid having a heavy lid that fits tightly and cook without stirring over a low flame for twenty-five minutes, using two and a half cupfuls of cold water to two cupfuls of rice. The grains will stand out alone, tender, light and flaky.

**OTSUYU (SOUP).** To a quart of boiling water, add half a spoonful of *ajinomoto* and three minutes. Remove the from the fire and let it stand covered for three minutes. Strain through a cheesecloth, heat, and add salt to taste, half a tablespoonful of a sauce. This is the foundation of the soup and many different things may be added shortly before serving, such as one tablespoonful of celery leaves which have been wilted in hot water, half a cup of finely chopped mushrooms, a cupful of green string beans, boiled till tender and cut lengthwise into fine strips and two slices of hard-cooked egg. Instead of the egg, small pieces of some fine-grained white slightly steamed, is often used.



- A—Rice in covered bowl.
- B—Otsuyu (Clear Soup).
- C—Shitashi (Spinach).
- D—Sukiyaki or Umami (Meat with vegetables).
- E—Teriyaki (Broiled fish).
- F—O Sunomono (Sour fish and salad vegetables).
- G—Chawanmushi (Steamed custard).
- H—Tempura (Fried shellfish).
- I—Tuna Fish (Raw or smoked).
- J—Rice Cakes.
- K—Tea.

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