

Compelling Conversations – Japan

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Questions & Quotations for High Intermediate
Japanese-English Language Learners

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Sample Chapter

Chimayo Press

Chapter 4

Eating and Drinking

Vocabulary Warm-up

Which words do you already know? Underline the words you know. Circle the words you are not sure about. Check with your partners to see what they know.

chef	culinary	decaffeinated	edible	famine
fast	feast	gluttony	savor	vegetarian

Activity 1 Sharing Experiences

Everybody eats. Food is both a necessity and a pleasure. It is also a safe and interesting way to learn more about people. Interview your partner and share your eating and drinking experiences.

- 1) Do you consider eating an activity that you look forward to, or just a necessity? When do you think it is a pleasure? When is it a chore?
- 2) What did you eat yesterday for breakfast, lunch and dinner? Was it a typical day?
- 3) Do you drink juice, tea, or coffee in the morning? Do you prefer regular or decaf tea or coffee? (Most people say “decaf” as an abbreviated version of decaffeinated.)
- 4) Do you eat at the same time every day? Or do you eat when it fits your schedule?
- 5) Do you prefer salty snacks or sweet snacks? Do you have a sweet tooth?
- 6) How much do you care about what you eat?
- 7) What drinks do you enjoy with your evening meal?
- 8) Which kind of food do you like: Beef? Pork? Poultry? Fish? Or do you not like meat?
- 9) What is your favorite vegetable? Are you a vegetarian? Vegan? Do you know any vegetarians?
- 10) What is your favorite fruit? Which fruits do you find delicious?
- 11) Can you name two non-Japanese dishes that you really savor?
- 12) Which Japanese dishes would you recommend to a tourist? Why?

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- 13) Can you think of some “junk food”? When do you eat junk food?
- 14) Do you think Japanese food is healthier than Western food? Why or why not?
- 15) Do you ever buy food from a convenience store? Why or why not?

Activity 2 Expanding Vocabulary

Look at the definitions and example sentences from your warm-up vocabulary list. Do they match the definitions you and your partner decided on? If not, what is different?

1. **chef** noun: a professional cook; the head cook in a restaurant.
 - Our chef is a professional cook who cooks delicious meals on a budget.
2. **culinary** adjective: having to do with cooking and food; concerning superior preparation of food.
 - Study the culinary arts if you want to become a chef.
3. **decaffeinated** adjective: containing no caffeine; a drink with the caffeine removed.
 - Sue drank decaffeinated coffee because regular coffee made her hyperactive.
4. **gluttony** noun: an excess of eating or drinking; greedy or excessive indulgence.
 - Gluttony can be a dangerous habit for overweight people with diabetes.
5. **edible** adjective: something that can be eaten.
 - Some people find all parts of a fish to be edible.
6. **famine** noun: an extreme lack of food across a large area.
 - The terrible famine caused thousands of deaths.
- 7a. **fast** adverb: moving with speed, advancing or progressing rapidly;
 - Junko is a very fast runner. She ran a 10K marathon in under 35 minutes.

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7b. **fast** noun: a period of time without eating; verb: to go without eating.

- Michi went on a fast for three days.

8. **feast** noun: a large, excellent meal; an abundant amount of well-prepared food.

- My mother prepared a delicious feast to celebrate my graduation.

9. **savor** verb: to really enjoy; to experience satisfaction and pleasure in taste or smell.

- I eat very slowly in order to savor my favorite food.

10. **vegetarian** noun: one who eats no meat; a meatless diet.

- As a vegetarian, Kazuko doesn't eat meat.

Activity 3 Ask More Questions

A. Select five vocabulary words in this chapter, and write a question for each word. Remember to start your question with a question word (Who, What, Which, Where, When, Why, How, Is, Are, Do, Did, Does, etc). You also want to end each question with a question mark (?). Underline each vocabulary word.

Example: Do you know the chef in the new Italian restaurant down the street?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

B. Take turns asking and answering questions with your partner or group members.

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Activity 4 Putting Photos Into Words



These Japanese tourists are surprised at the huge portions served at the Sidewalk Café, a famous beachside American restaurant in Venice Beach, California. Do you think you could eat the whole hamburger?

1. What kind of food do you like to eat when you travel?
2. How much food is too much for you?
3. Can you think of some fast food restaurants that change their menu to adjust to local tastes?
4. What foods do you think show up in Japanese fast food restaurants that appeal to tourists?
5. Do you drink sugary drinks or teas when you go to fast food restaurants?
6. With your partner, can you list the last 5 fast food restaurants you ate in?

Activity 5 Paraphrasing Proverbs

We have many expressions about food. We also have some word jokes that are called puns. Read the following expressions, and discuss them with your partner. What do they mean? Circle your favorites. Explain your choices.

- 1) Eggs and promises are easily broken. -Japanese

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Meaning_____

2) I'm on a seafood diet. I see food and I eat it.–American

Meaning_____.

3) Eat less, live longer. - German

Meaning_____.

4) One must eat to live, not live to eat. - Spanish

Meaning_____.

5) A bath refreshes the body, tea refreshes the mind. - Japanese

Meaning_____.

Can you add two more about food, drinks and meals?

1._____

2._____

Activity 6 Pronunciation Practice

You can speak English with a distinctly Japanese accent and still be clearly understood. However, reducing confusing sounds can greatly improve your communication with English speakers and help to eliminate confusion and misunderstanding in your English conversations.

“W” and “U”

While Japanese has the sound “wa” there are no other vowel combinations that go with the “W” sound. However, in English, there are many “W + vowel” combinations. To make up for this, the Japanese often try to replace the “W” sound with the “U” sound in order to make an approximate match. Unfortunately, this is very confusing for many native speakers.

Some words create no problems: Wine for example, is very easy, because the pronunciation matches the Japanese “Wa-in”. Wood, however, cannot be understood when pronounced as “Uddo.”

To make the “W” sound, begin as you would with pronouncing “Wa” and change the shape of your mouth as you leave the sound.

Word / Not a Word

Take turns reading the words from your lists below. The **first words in the shaded boxes** are NOT real words. They have been written in “Katakana English”. The word in (parentheses) is

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the real word. After you read each word, have your partner guess if you are saying a real word or not.

Partner A		Partner B
Wood	Use your hand to cover your partner's list.	Wolf
Uuru (wool)		Welcome
Wink		Uddo (wood)
Wave		Wafer
Urufu (wolf)		Ueebu (wave)
Ueedo (wade)		Ueeru (well)
West		Uinku (wink)
Uefaa (wafer)		Wool
Uerukomu (welcome)		Wade
Well		Uesuto (west)

Note: This activity contained many words that do not exist, but which Japanese speakers might say. Be careful with “W” words as they can cause confusion.

Activity 7 The Conversation Continues

1. What is your favorite restaurant? Do you go there more than twice a month?
2. How often do you eat at a fast food restaurant? Which is your favorite?
3. Are American fast food chains popular in Japan? What do Japanese like about American fast food?

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4. Do all members of your family eat dinner together? Who cooks? Who serves the food?
5. In Japan, what special foods or drinks are associated with weddings?
6. Do you prefer coffee or green tea?
7. What happens to your eyes or nose when you eat too much wasabi?
8. Have you ever fasted? Why? Were you very hungry after skipping two meals?
9. Do you eat hamburgers and pizza with a knife and fork? Or do you use your hands?
10. Do you have your own cup and your own chopsticks that you use at your family's house?
11. Have you ever tried to go on a diet to lose weight? What did you do?
12. Do you eat local cuisine (Kobe beef in Kobe) when you travel?
13. Do you think that restaurants should ban smoking? What about bars? Why?
14. Do you usually read food labels? Why? Do you have any food allergies?
15. Does your family share recipes? Which recipe would you like to share?

Activity 8 Discussing Quotations

Take turns reading these quotations out loud, and discuss them with your partner. Do you agree with the quotation? Disagree? Why? Mark your answer.

1. "The eating of meat extinguishes the seed of great compassion."
– Buddha - Siddhartha Gautama, (563 BCE to 483 BCE), philosopher
Agree Disagree
Why? _____.

2. "The satiated man and the hungry one do not see the same thing when they look upon a loaf of bread."
–Rumi (1207–1273), Persian poet and mystic
Agree Disagree
Why? _____.

3. "Understand, when you eat meat, that something did die. You have an obligation to value it."
– Anthony Bourdain (1956-), American chef and TV star
Agree Disagree

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Why? _____.

4. “Live. Love. Eat.”

–Wolfgang Puck (1949–), American celebrity chef

Agree Disagree

Why? _____.

5. “If it’s beautifully arranged on the plate, you know someone’s fingers have been all over it.”

- Julia Child (1912-2004), American chef and author

Agree Disagree

Why? _____.

6. “More die in the United States of too much food than of too little.”

- John Kenneth Galbraith (1908–2006) American ambassador and economist

Agree Disagree

Why? _____.

7. “Making sushi is an art, and experience is everything.”

– Nobu Matsuhisa (1949-), Japanese celebrity chef and restaurant owner

Agree Disagree

Why? _____.

8. “Every time I look into his eyes I just want to take the ice cream or whatever I've got in my hand and rub it into his face. That's how much I like him.”

-Banana Yoshimoto (1964 -) Japanese author

Agree Disagree

Why? _____.

9. “You can't just eat good food. You've got to talk about it too. And you've got to talk about it to somebody who understands that kind of food.”

-Kurt Vonnegut (1922 - 2007) American author

Agree Disagree

Why? _____.

10. “Japanese chefs believe our soul goes into our knives once we start using them. You wouldn't put your soul in a dishwasher!”

Masaharu Morimoto (1955 -) Japanese chef

Agree Disagree

Why? _____.

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Activity 9 Tell me about Japan...in English

People want to know about Japan and Japanese culture. Next time you travel abroad or meet a foreigner, you can tell them about Japan, in English.



Fast food!

What do you eat when you want to eat something tasty yet also filling? In the United States, we often eat burgers for a tasty, filling, and affordable meal. You can add fries, a salad or fruit for a full meal.

In Japan, *donburi* (rice bowl dish) seems as common as hamburgers in the US. Both have many variations from region to region and remain popular with young and old.

Could you list three types of *donburi* you like? Have you ever made your own unique *donburi*? What was it like?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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Would you count a *donburi* by itself as a whole meal or does it need other sides? What would you add with a *donburi* to make it a complete meal? List three.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

ROLE PLAY: Night Out at a Fancy Restaurant in Miami

Find online reviews of upscale restaurants in Miami, Florida for a fun night out with a group of friends. Use the reviews to select a restaurant.

Role Play Preparation: Asking Questions

Eating out can be fun and satisfying, especially if ordering in English.

What are three typical questions to ask a waiter at a your selected restaurant?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What are three questions you might ask a friend at dinner?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Role Play: Accidents Happen!

Everybody wants to have a good time when they go out, but sometimes bad things happen to good people - even in nice restaurants!

Let's imagine this situation: It's very busy at a fashionable Miami restaurant on Saturday night. A new waiter, Pedro, has just started. He's very nervous. Two friends arrive for dinner, and they want to talk. At the restaurant, everybody wants to have a good time, but accidents do happen.

1. What will happen? Who are the friends?
2. What do they want to talk about?
3. Which Miami restaurant are they going to? _____.
4. Who is the waiter? _____.
5. Why is the restaurant so busy? _____.
6. What accident will happen? _____.
7. What will happen next? _____.

Can you create a fun skit? Answer the questions and act in your own play. Have fun.

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“You can say the service is good when it isn’t intrusive, but comes straight away when required.”
Nobu Matsuhisa (1949 -), Japanese celebrity chef

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