



BEST-EVER RECIPES **JAPANESE & SUSHI**

THE AUTHENTIC TASTE OF JAPAN: 100 TIMELESS CLASSIC AND REGIONAL
RECIPES SHOWN IN OVER 300 STUNNING PHOTOGRAPHS



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This edition is published by Southwater, an imprint of Anness Publishing Ltd, Blaby Road, Wigston, Leicestershire LE18 4SE
Email: info@anness.com
Web: www.hermeshouse.com;
www.annesspublishing.com

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Design: The Bridgewater Book Company Ltd

The publisher would like to thank the following picture libraries for the use of their pictures in the book. Every effort has been made to acknowledge the pictures properly, however we apologize if there are any unintentional omissions, which will be corrected in future editions.

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A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Many of the recipes in this book previously appeared in *Japanese Cooking* by Emi Kazuko and Yasuko Fukuoka

NOTES

For all recipes, quantities are given in both metric and imperial measures and, where appropriate, in standard cups and spoons. Follow one set of measures, but not a mixture, because they are not interchangeable.

Standard spoon and cup measures are level. 1 tsp = 5ml, 1 tbsp = 15ml, 1 cup = 250ml/8fl oz.

Australian standard tablespoons are 20ml.

Australian readers should use 3 tsp in place of 1 tbsp for measuring small quantities.

American pints are 16fl oz/2 cups. American readers should use 20fl oz/2.5 cups in place of 1 pint when measuring liquids.

Electric oven temperatures in this book are for conventional ovens. When using a fan oven, the temperature will probably need to be reduced by about 10–20°C/20–40°F. Since ovens vary, you should check with your manufacturer's instruction book for guidance.

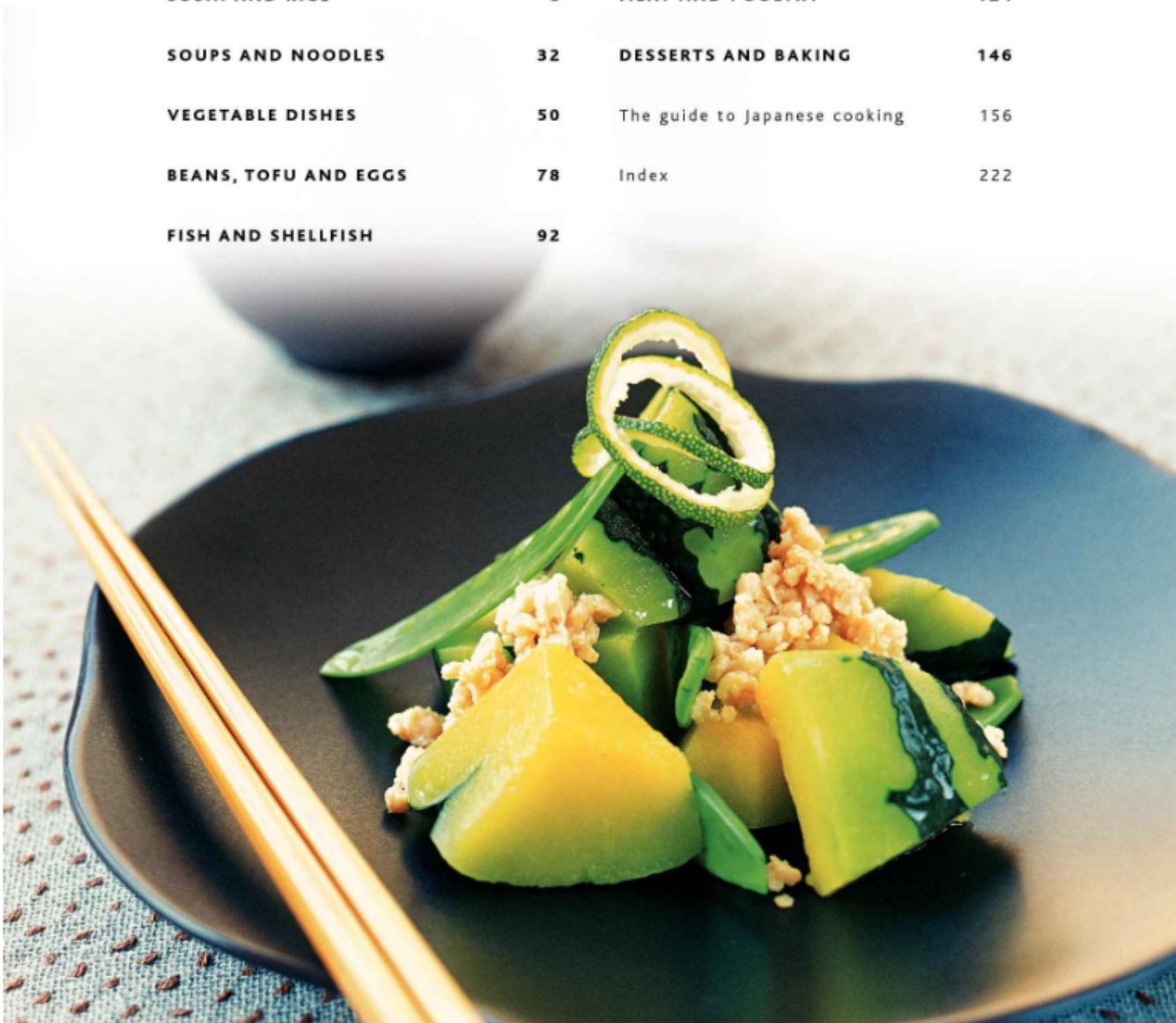
The nutritional analysis given for each recipe is calculated per portion (i.e. serving or item), unless otherwise stated. If the recipe gives a range, such as Serves 4–6, then the nutritional analysis will be for the smaller portion size, i.e. 6 servings. Measurements for sodium do not include salt added to taste.

Medium (US large) eggs are used unless otherwise stated.

Front cover shows Deep-Fried and Marinated Small Fish – for recipe, see page 121.

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Introduction

To many people, Japan is an exciting and exotic country, mixing tradition and modernity to striking effect. Its cuisine is no exception, and in many ways reflects Japanese culture. The minimalism in aesthetics, such as poetry and music, is also evident in the presentation of food.

FRESHNESS AND SIMPLICITY

One of the defining features of the Japanese cuisine is the relationship between food and nature. Whenever possible, food is eaten in as natural a state as possible, as this is considered the best, if not the only way to experience the true taste of food. This is at the heart of the Japanese philosophy of eating, so the fish and shellfish caught in the seas of Japan are often eaten raw, or lightly cured with vinegar or salt.

Fresh, seasonal agricultural products are only lightly cooked to preserve their bite and flavour, or they may be slightly salted.

How and what people cook is also highly influenced by the season and by local produce. Many regional dishes exist that have been inspired by food that has been produced locally.

Japanese cooking retains the fresh quality of vegetables and rarely mixes different food types. Sauces are served in separate dishes as dips. This contrasts with other cuisines that use long, slow cooking techniques, often with the addition of sauces and spices.

ARTISTIC PRESENTATION

The Japanese aesthetic regarding food and drink may be described in artistic terms, and Japanese cooking

can be compared to the *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints. The beauty of the *ukiyo-e* style lies in its economy of line and simplicity, and it is this same elegant minimalism that is found in all good Japanese cooking.

The unique approach of Japanese chefs helped to inspire French chefs in the 1970s to develop *nouvelle cuisine*, in which food was artistically arranged on the plate. However, *nouvelle cuisine* became notorious for its overemphasis on presentation rather than the size of the serving, forgetting the essential fact that Japanese meals consist of several, not just a few, small dishes.



ABOVE: How a dish of sashimi is arranged is as important as the freshness of the fish.



ABOVE: Fresh seasonal vegetables are chosen and cooked with care.



ABOVE: A cooking technique called tatakai is used to cook rare steak.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

It is interesting to observe how Japan's food culture has developed differently to those of its neighbours, particularly China's. For instance, while many of the same herbs, spices, flavourings and sauces are used in both Chinese and Japanese cooking, the dishes produced by Japanese styles of cooking are quite different to the Chinese styles of cooking. Buddhism is also present in both countries, but in Japan it has led to the development of the tea ceremony and *cha-kaiseki*, the formal meal that is served with it, and these two elements – the tea ceremony and the formal meal – are unique to the Japanese cuisine.

USING THIS BOOK

As Japanese dishes are often served raw or only lightly cooked, careful selection and preparation of fresh ingredients is one of the most important aspects of Japanese cooking, and is also where a real part of the pleasure resides. No special knowledge is needed to make the recipes, and, apart from a few absolute essentials, such as a pair of chopsticks, most cooks will

easily be able to prepare and cook Japanese recipes with minimal fuss using the kitchen equipment that they already possess.

The recipes in this book offer the best of local and national Japanese cuisine, from simple sushi appetizers and noodle dishes to delicious and filling hotpots and the most popular desserts. As they say in Japan, just heed what nature is offering and enjoy.

