

Chapter 14



More and More Japanese
Restaurants are Opening in
the World

You may wonder how many Japanese restaurants there are in the world. According to the statistics in 2013 by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery of Japan, there were 55 thousand Japanese food serving restaurants outside Japan (Fig. 14.1). In 2006 there were about 25 thousand Japanese restaurants, therefore they increased surprisingly in eight years. A half of them are in Korea and USA (Fig. 14.2).



Fig. 14.1 Estimated numbers of Japanese restaurants in the world.

(Data from Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan, 2013.)

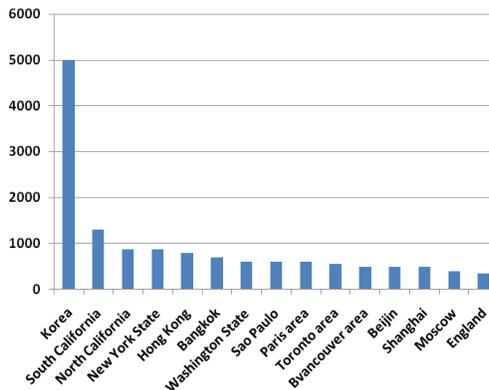


Fig. 14.2 Estimated numbers of Japanese restaurants in the main cities or areas in the world.

(Data from Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan, 2006.)

According to the Table 14.1, which was surveyed by *JETRO*, Japan External Trade Organization, there are more than 14,000 Japanese dishes serving restaurants in the USA. They are as many as one and half times five years before and the number of them seem to be increasing.

Table 14.1 *Increasing numbers of Japanese restaurants in the U.S.A.*

No.	State	1992	1995	2000	2005	2010	2010/2005 ^{*1}	2010/2005 ^{*2}
1	California	1449	1734	2131	2896	3963	1067	1.37
2	New York	349	388	523	838	1439	601	1.72
3	Florida	129	196	369	588	941	353	1.60
4	Washington	82	256	436	600	827	227	1.38
5	New Jersey	81	104	150	284	523	239	1.84
6	Texas	69	101	191	295	494	199	1.67
7	Hawaii	167	213	268	325	438	113	1.35
8	Georgia	57	73	106	210	422	212	2.01
9	North Carolina	29	35	88	214	431	217	2.01
10	Illinois	82	79	139	260	377	117	1.45
11	Arizona	33	98	153	184	311	127	1.69
12	Virginia	34	60	123	194	308	114	1.59
13	Oregon	36	70	131	197	287	90	1.46
14	Pennsylvania	30	45	85	190	287	97	1.51
	Others				1907	3081	1174	1.62
	Total in U.S.A.				9182	14129	4942	1.54

^{*1}, increased number; ^{*2}, increased ratio (*JETRO*, 2011).

14.1 It is good for the health, delicious and safe. This is why Japanese Food is Loved all over the World

Why are Japanese restaurants increasing? I mentioned about scientific bases of the relation between Japanese food and health in the previous chapters. Then, I will tell you about it more in detail.

1. It is very good for our health.
2. You don't gain weight because it is food of low-calorie content.
3. It does not contain much fat and has a good balance of nutrition.
4. It is delicious.
5. It is beautiful and artistic.
6. Foodstuffs and foods are safe and sanitary.
7. We can choose it from many kinds of traditional dishes, from simple dishes to high-class dishes.
8. It fits well with Japanese *sake*, beer and wine.
9. Restaurants are clean and exotic.
10. You can receive Japanese hospitality, *omotenashi*, at restaurants and please and satisfy your guests.

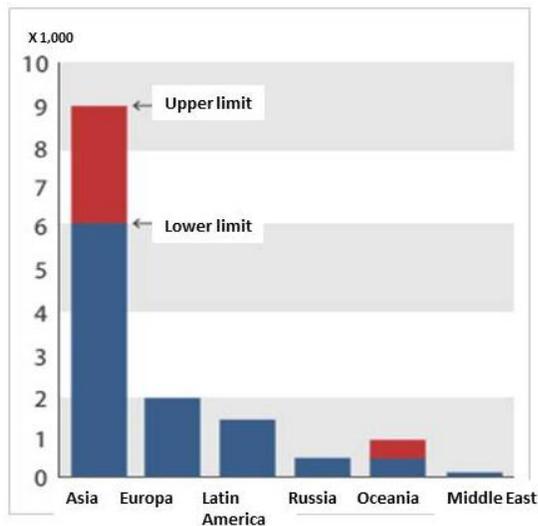


Fig. 14.3 Numbers of Japanese restaurants in developing countries.

(Data from Ministry of Agriculture, Forest and Fisheries of Japan, 2006.)

These will be the reasons why Japanese restaurants are increasing. It seems that the number of the Japanese restaurants is directly proportional to the economic power of each nation. In that point, in BRICS countries, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, Japanese restaurants will increase (Fig. 14-3). For instance, Vladivostok located in south-east of Russia, has as many as 30 Japanese restaurants. I hear that not only Japanese restaurants but also delicious, safe and healthy Japanese foods and beverages are popular there, in spite of their rather high prices.

14.2 Japanese treasures which Japanese people don't notice

This is not about food, but I will write about Japanese other valuable objects. When once I guided a Dutch friend in Hiroshima, he asked me in surprise, "What are those lamps turning on and off by the roadside? It isn't Christmas season now." I answered, "They are signs of *Under Construction*." He shouted with admiration, "How marvelous the ideas of Japanese people are!" On the contrary, I was bewildered by his praise. I also remember a scientist from Switzerland who attended the international conference held in Japan. He said to me with rapture listening to a bird song music or nursery rhyme played during green light signals across a crosswalk. "I love this sweet music. I feel like stopping and listening to fascinating music". But as for me, I will be embarrassed if he stops on the crosswalk. I am sure that there are a lot of wonderful Japanese ideas around us that we Japanese people don't notice.

To return to the main subject of food, a guide in Turkey, by whom I was taken care of there, said to me with rapture, "I have experience of studying in Japan and I often remember delicious rolls, small loaves of bread." His remarks

surprised me, because he was brought up in a country where people are eating bread every day instead of rice. His experience reminded me that I also went to a bakery in San Francisco to appreciate bean-jam bun, '*anpan*' that I used to eat in my childhood. It is, even now, a food longed for by my generation. I guess the staple food in each country has a special meaning for people there. A Polish friend of mine told me the same experience, saying to me, "What I missed most in my American life was Polish black rye bread".

I can find a lot of various vegetables around us in Japan, like burdocks, lotus roots, Chinese cabbages, crown daisies, leeks, potherb mustards and scallions and they are indispensable to cooking Japanese dishes, regardless of their original roots. If we export the treasures of agricultural products keeping their freshness, overseas markets will accept them even at high prices.

14.3 In serving dishes in Japan, ceramics are also regarded important

People from abroad often praise Japanese dishes, *washoku* because it is beautiful and artistic. Culinaricians always undergo a special training so that they can come to dish up foods on ceramics as beautifully as possible. French, Italian and Japanese dishes are really marvelous to look at, but it can be said so not only by its cooking technique but also by its beautiful ceramic dishes. There are a lot of traditional ceramic potteries in Japan. Although the origin of Japanese ceramic production is traced to that of China and Korea, it has been improved in the field of designs and kilns in Japan. If you like to see the typical, beautiful *washoku zen*, I recommend that you visit Japanese inns (Fig. 14.4). You will find plentiful, beautiful dishes on your table at the dinner time or even at the breakfast. Before you eat them, you may feel full by just a look at them.



Fig. 14.4 Some typical washoku-zens for dinner in Japanese inns.

14.4 Summary

The reasons for increasing Japanese restaurants in the world are as follows: Japanese foods are very good for our health; they are of low-calorie or low-fat and has a good balance of nutrition; they are delicious; foods on good ceramic dishes look beautiful and artistic; foodstuffs and foods are safe and sanitary; customers can choose their favorite foods from many kinds of traditional dishes, from simple dishes to high-class dishes; they are fit well for Japanese *sake*, beer and wine; Japanese restaurants are clean and exotic; customers can receive Japanese hospitality, *omotenashi*.

Afterword

I have written about the merits of Japanese food, hoping people in the world will recognize it. I think that now is the time when we should export Japanese foods abroad together with Japanese culture like *Omotenashi*, delicately service for customers. It seems that the main stream of the world trades is going ahead to the liberalization or trades by tariff abolishment. Even if we block cheap imported goods now, cheap rice, for instance, will be imported soon. We can process them into rice flour bread, cakes, or functional foods and export them. Even in the case of meat, high-class meat like Japanese bland *wagyu*, will sell at an appropriate price.

On the other hand, if Japanese people, choose the establishment of a state on free market, we should use part of the profit and assist people who are engaged in environmental conservation for the protection of Japanese food and agriculture.

If we continue to serve delicious, safe and traditional Japanese dishes, they will be loved all over the world from now on. Arranged Japanese foods like California rolled *sushi*, which is rooted in the area, will be liked, but if we serve imitated and sham foods, there will be fewer and fewer Japanese restaurants in the near future. The arrangements of Japanese food matching to local people would be accepted by them. However, the easy arrangement of Japanese food will lose the merit of Japanese foods, such as non-fatty, less calories and delicacy. I think it is thoughtless of us to arrange the traditional taste of Japanese foods intentionally for people there. Now there are few Japanese chefs in overseas countries, so young Japanese people who understand strong points of Japanese food, have many chances to take an active part in the world. I would also recommend that

non-Japanese chefs should train themselves to cook various traditional cuisines at Japanese food training schools or at good restaurants in Japan.

In conclusion, I would like to add a few more words. I wish you will enjoy and appreciate genuine Japanese foods and promote your health and longevity.

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Ichiro Saeki was a teacher of English at Hiroshima Prefectural Senior High School. He participated in an English seminar held at Ohio State University in 1988. He wrote several English grammar books and texts for students. After he retired, he has been living a quiet life, enjoying playing the guitar in a mandolin club, mountaineering, fishing and reciting 'youkyoku' of Noh plays.

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