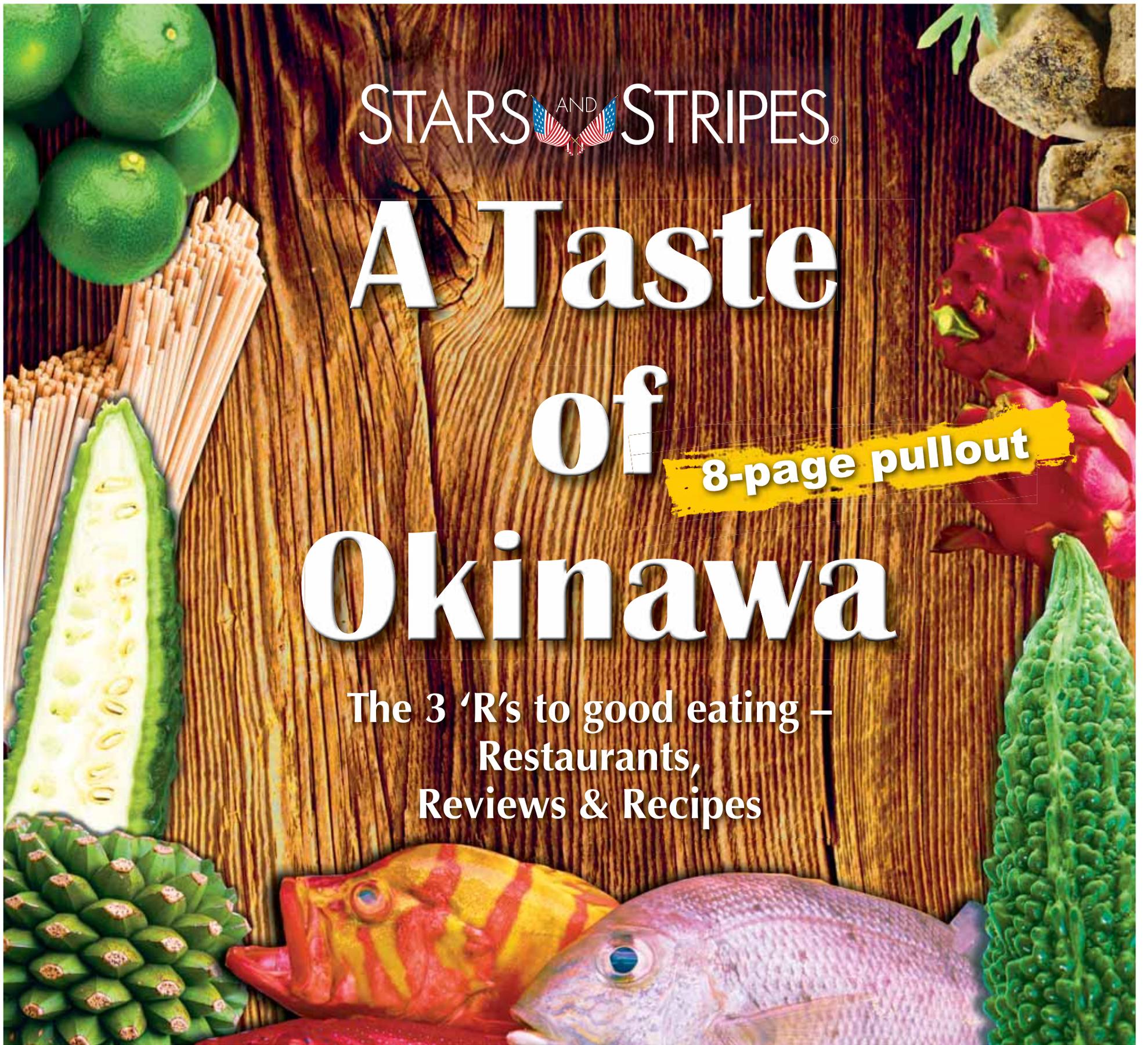


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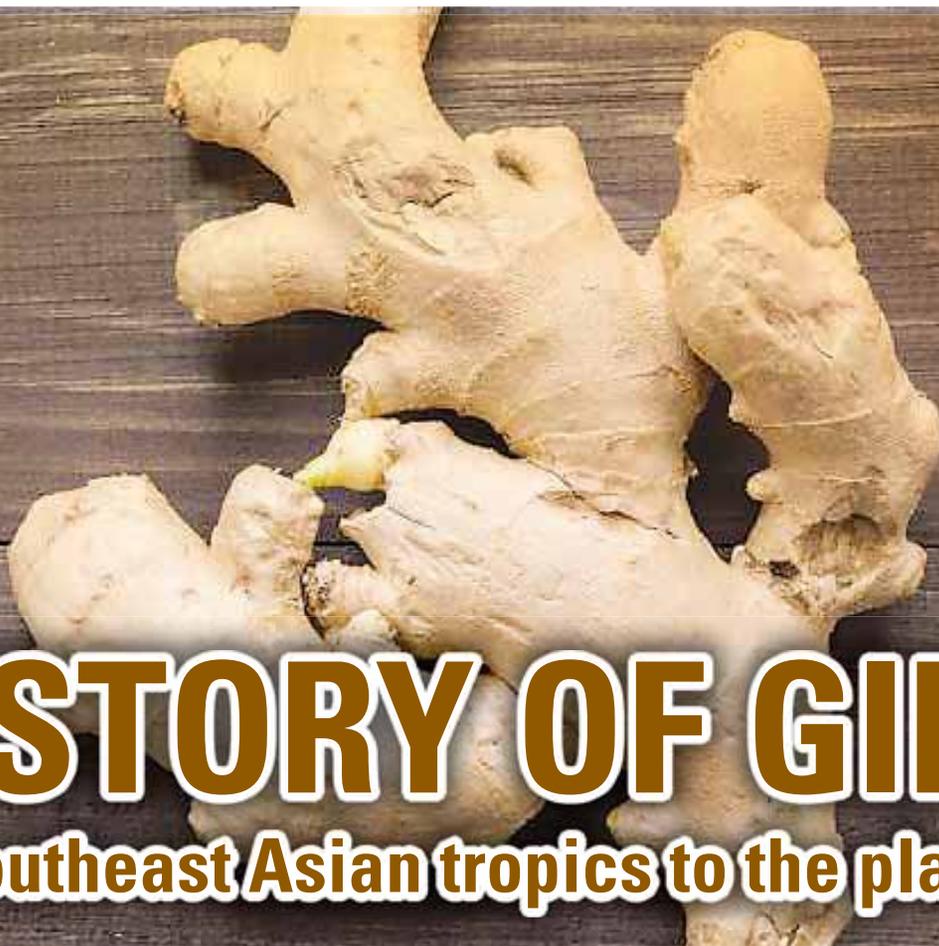
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Sam's Anchor Inn celebrates its 50th

Sam's Anchor Inn celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. The restaurant interior represents a sailing ship during the Age of Discovery. Customers can enjoy the finest steak and fresh seafood in a Teppanyaki style. Many well-known figures like Neil Armstrong, Sting, Mark Spitz, Tex Ritter, Four-Star Generals, Congressmen, Sister Hazel have visited here. All Sam's Restaurant Group stores offer 50th anniversary special deals from Jan. 16-Mar. 31. There will be a campaign also with wonderful prizes of a hotel voucher and a lobster.

RESTAURANT INFO



THE STORY OF GINGER

From the Southeast Asian tropics to the plates of Japan

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
LIISA WIHMAN,
METROPOLIS MAGAZINE

A soft pink hill of pickled ginger, often nestled beside a green plastic leaf, is as signature to traditional Japanese cuisine as are the small seafood-topped pillows of rice it accompanies—sushi.

Both the mature, brown-skinned ginger root shoga and the tender, pink-skinned young root shin-shoga are common in Japanese cuisine, chopped and grated into a wide variety of marinades and dishes from pork shogayaki to chicken meatballs. Ginger is also an important ingredient in many types of tsukemono (Japanese pickles), from the pink, vinegar-pickled ginger gari eaten to cleanse the palate between different types of sushi, to beni shoga, a bright red ginger pickle that often sits on top of everyday dishes like yakisoba, okonomiyaki and curry rice.

Not many would guess that this knobbly, aromatic root had to cross continents and take help from monks to become such an indispensable part of the Japanese food landscape.

While the history of sushi reaches over a millennium backwards, the cultivation and

use of ginger is even more ancient. As a species, it is thought to originate from the tropics of Southeast Asia, where the lantern-like flowers of its wild relatives brighten up the steamy forests. Botanically, it belongs to the vast family of Zingiberales, to which cardamom, galangal, turmeric and other familiar culinary species also belong. Even bananas and plantains are distant relatives to ginger. Ginger also has a botanical cousin called myoga with mildly ginger-flavored, soft purple flower buds that are used in cooking. The buds can be barbecued on skewers, or sliced thinly and served as a fragrant garnish in foods.

But of all these, the humble ginger may have the longest history in human cultivation. Not only is it unknown in the wild, ginger can also—unlike its relatives—only be cultivated by dividing the root and not by growing it from seeds. Archaeological finds from settlements of the early inhabitants of India and China indicate that they cultivated and used ginger as long as 7,000 years ago.

The first written records of ginger appear in China some two and a half millennia ago. These early texts are said to be written by Shennong, “Divine Farmer”, who is recognized as the father of traditional Chinese

medicine. In order to evaluate herbs and describe their suitability as remedies, he is said to have tasted tens of different herbs daily. He miraculously survived the process to author the legendary Shennong Bencao Jing, the first book about herbal medicine in China. In it, ginger is noted for its healing properties—a strengthening herb that is capable of maintaining health and wellbeing.

One Chinese proverb goes, “food and medicine share the same roots.” Ginger’s medicinal qualities added another advantage to using the spicy and aromatic root. It became a staple in Chinese cuisine, prepared and consumed in a remarkable number of ways: ginger wine and ginger-flavored tea; honeyed ginger, chopped or grated in sauces and marinades; and even as pickled condiment. The great Chinese philosopher and teacher Confucius himself demanded that ginger was never to be removed from the table during his every meal.

Ginger arrived on the shores of Japan from China and Korea during the early first millennium, when cultural contacts between the countries brought knowledge of Chinese traditional medicine and use of herbs for healing. Later, during the Nara Period (710-794 CE), as Buddhism spread throughout the islands, Chinese traditional medicine went hand-in-hand with its teachings. Buddhist monks used herbal medicine to treat locals while teaching them about Buddha—an excellent way to create respect, spread knowledge and gather followers for both fields.

When ginger found its way to Japanese food plates is uncertain, but its connection to medicine prevailed. To this day, herbs and vegetables that are used to garnish Japanese



foods are called yakumi, which means “condiment” but also “medicinal flavor.” The word is thought to have derived from the herb-filled mixtures used since ancient times by practitioners of Chinese medicine. An ideal yakumi garnish is not just pretty to look at but also good for the health, a combination for which ginger may be the poster child.

Nowadays, ginger drinks are common home remedies used year-round. Shogayu is a ginger tea with a soothingly soupy consistency used as a home remedy to treat the common cold, as the spicy root is believed to warm up the body in chilly weather. During the humid summers, a sweet, cold ginger drink called hiyashime is thought to help with tiredness caused by the heat. Another sweet treat is candied ginger, shoga no sato zuke that is sometimes taken against travel and morning sickness—or just as a fast pick-me-up on the road.

With such a significant role to play on the culinary and home remedy scene, it is no surprise that ginger features even in other areas of Japanese culture. Anime fans can follow the long-published Inuyasha manga series by Rumiko Takahashi, where the prickly Shoga

has a side role as an old female insect demon who is engaged to the aptly named Myoga. Shoga chases her unwilling fiancé across the country, trying to make him settle down and marry her.

The spiritually inclined may also be interested in Shoga Matsuri, or Ginger Root Festivals, that are held every September—for example, at the Shiba Daijingu Shrine in central Tokyo, and at Ninomiya Shrine in Akiruno. During the festivals, portable mikoshi shrines are carried around in order to honor Shinto gods, and open-air stalls are filled with fresh ginger roots, with stallholders shouting “protects against evils” or “if you eat ginger, you’ll be free from colds” to festival-goers and potential customers—a perfect combination of religious devotion and herbal medicine merged together.

So next time, while picking at the tiny pink hill of pickled ginger beside your sushi, spare a thought for the long journey the humble root took, from the steamy tropics of Southeast Asia across the continent, over the sea in the medicine trunks of Buddhist monks, to becoming an indispensable part of both Japanese cuisine and culture.





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RESTAURANT INFO

HISTORY OF TAMAGO-KAKE-GOHAN

Since ancient times the main meat consumed by the Japanese people has been fish, because of the Buddhist commandment against killing animals. Although the consumption of chicken was a little bit higher than the consumption of other land-animals, the egg was not considered to be food for a long time. In Shintoism, the egg is regarded as an offering to the Gods, and people believed that they would be punished if they ate eggs.

During the Edo Period (1603-1868), people began keeping chickens as pets (what is this, Portland, OR?). Shortly after, eggs began to become a regular part of some diets because they quickly came to realize that unfertilized eggs didn't hatch. One result of this new knowledge was that they could stop considering an egg as a creature under heaven. Because of that, people eventually lost the belief that eating an egg was a sin, so the act of doing so was no longer taboo. They then moved on from having chickens as pets to having chickens for the sole purpose of egg production and collection. Because eggs were considered a luxury and were a very expensive food item for a long time, nobody ever dreamed about using eggs for such

a simple dish like tamago-kake-gohan.

The first person to make tamago-kake-gohan is said to be Ginko Kishida (1833-1905), who was considered a pioneer in various things. For example, not only was he Japan's first war reporter, but he was also the creator of line dancing. In addition to this, Ginko was a close friend of James Curtis Hepburn, who made the Hepburn Romanization System. Ginko also helped him to make the Japanese-English dictionary, which, in case you haven't heard of it, is called "Wa-eigo-Rinshuusei". My favorite accomplishment of Ginko's was his invention of tamago-kake-gohan, which he did during the Meiji Era (1868-1912). He was amazed at how tasty it was and recommended it to everyone he knew. His affection for his tamago-kake-gohan did not go unnoticed and it was introduced to the public in a magazine. That issue wrote about how he puts 3-4 eggs on top of cooked rice for breakfast.



BY MAMI TOFUG

When you get like something that most of you have never seen, you feel disgusted just by thinking about Salmonella poisoning. Yet, consisting of only the two ingredients, usually you add a bit of soy sauce and a bit of rice to many Japanese people. Some people refuse to consider tamago-kake-gohan as "cooking". Yet, famous Japanese chef Kurihara introduced this dish to foreigners: "Harumi's Japanese Restaurants" in Japan that actually serves a raw egg over cooked rice dish, and so on. There is even an annual tamago-kake-gohan festival. I know it's pretty hard to see a raw egg-citing to learn about a Japanese dish? Please "chicken" your egg-ucated in this

THE SPECIAL SOY SAUCE ONLY FOR TAMAGO-KAKE-GOHAN

Because of Ginko, tamago-kake-gohan gradually spread among the Japanese populace, but for a long time all it really could become was a popular comfort food eaten in people's homes. It wasn't until a special soy sauce made strictly for tamago-kake-gohan was made (in the early 2000s) that it really became a big hit. It sounds like some guy just got really lucky and made a lot of money because he was struck with an idea for a unique take on soy sauce, but the fact is that it only became a hit after a lot of work and effort on his part.

This special soy sauce was first produced by a group formed out of a public-private partnership, which was a joint venture between local government and private investors from a small mountain village named Yoshida, Iishi-gun, in Shimane Prefecture. Today, this village is now Yoshida Town Unnan City in Shimane prefecture. The town used to be famous and prosperous for its "Tatara Iron Manufacturing" plant, but they started having trouble as the manufacturing of steel blast furnaces came to Japan. Despite this, they

didn't give up and started making firewood, charcoal, and timber from nearby forests. But, due to energy revolutions of the time, jobs had to be cut again. Sadly, more and more people had to leave in order to get a job. The population was around 5,000 in 1955, but it dropped to 2,800 in 1980.

Some people living there were aware of the decreasing population, so they became very determined to increase it. They knew the biggest reason why young people were not settling down in the village was because there weren't enough jobs to go around, so they decided to create job opportunities. They considered how they could improve upon something that was already a part of their community. They knew that they had tasty rice and wonderful vegetables, so at first they tried making pickles and nishime (which includes vegetables such as carrots, taro, konnyaku, etc). In order to achieve their goal, local government and residents had to combine efforts and work together.

The people had to convince every resident in the village that they had to do something

to save the village and asked them for help. For 50,000 yen, you could get a single share of the company. They understood that was a great deal of money for poor villagers, but they ended up raising more money than they had expected because village groups, companies, and villagers (everyone, young and old alike) were resolute in their desire to make their community stronger and better. Thus, a public-private partnership company, named Yoshida Furusato Mura Co., Ltd., was established in April of 1985.

A very long time passed until they stumbled upon their idea for their tamago-kake-gohan soy sauce. It began when a chicken farmer made the request: "Could you make something that we can sell with our eggs?" Just like that, the soy sauce venture got underway in March, 2001. The initial conception of how this sauce was going to taste was very difficult to come by as they had no other sauces to build off of or compare to. They had numerous meetings, made an infinite amount of samples, and conducted countless taste tests with rice until, finally, the first specialty soy sauce, named (Otamahan) was born a year later in May, 2002.



TOFUG





TAMAGO-KAKE-GOHAN BOOM

Thanks to the unique concept, great taste, cute name, and assurances that only all-natural ingredients and very little fertilizer was used, it built itself a nice reputation. They started selling it with rice out of Yoshida Town and the success became evident soon after sales began. It wasn't long before they had a 4-month back order.

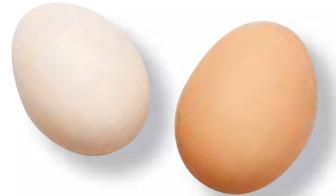
Today, there are more than 50 kinds of Tamago-kake-gohan soy sauces sold in Japan, and there is a vast number of popular restaurants that only serve tamago-kake-gohan. That should help to give you an idea of how popular this dish (and this soy sauce) has become.

The people of the Yoshida Town community were reminded of the importance of tamago-kake-gohan

to the Japanese by witnessing the boom they basically created. So, they made a "Tamago-kake-gohan Symposium Committee." When Yoshida Town held the first "Japanese Tamago-Kake-Gohan Symposium" for three days in October of 2005, around 2,500 people came from all over Japan. That's a lot of people for a village with a population of around 2,300. And, the people attending weren't just ordinary folks like you and me. There were many TV and radio stations attending as well, and the news about the symposium was reported all over Japan, which helped popularize Tamago-kake-gohan even more.



File photos



SAFETY AND NUTRIENTS

Eggs contain many nutrients and a good amount of protein. Though the bio-availability of cooked eggs is 91% (compared to 51% in raw eggs), other nutrients become denatured when exposed to high heat, so raw eggs have some special benefits as well, maximizing what the body can intake and process.

However, raw egg yolks are also known as a medium for Salmonella. Although Japanese egg farmers provide

eggs that have been very well washed, as they expect Japanese people may consume them raw, the number of people getting salmonella poisoning in Japan has increased since the 90s. So be careful, everyone! I wonder if this is just in line with the increased popularity of tamago-kake-gohan or something else?

Salmonella is found in chicken intestines and it sometimes attaches itself to egg shells via chicken poop (there's only

one hole in a chicken, and it all comes out that one hole). Most Japanese eggs get sterilized at GP Center, which is a factory for grading eggs and packing them, but you shouldn't eat an egg raw if it has a crack in its shell. Moreover, even if there is no crack in the egg shell, you shouldn't eat a raw egg that has been left for a long time after cracking it open. If you want to eat raw eggs, please make sure to get fresh ones!

TAMAGO-KAKE-GOHAN PRODUCTS

Following the tamago-kake-gohan boom, various products for tamago-kake-gohan were made. For example, there is a tamago-kake-gohan stirring rod which acts like a whisk to mix raw egg to a smoother consistency and also a tamago-kake-gohan T-shirt to express your love of tamago-kake-gohan.

Although it is such a simple recipe, there is a tamago-kake-gohan recipe book which boasts one recipe for each day of the year. The book has also become an app. Following the release of the book, they also made a catchy 365 day tamago-kake-gohan song that you can listen to on the app or you can buy the CD from 365tkg.com/cd.html, if you like.



END OF A BOOM?

Since the typical food boom usually only lasts for a couple years, some people say that the tamago-kake-gohan boom quickly reached its end, too. However, others point out that it has been a "staple" meal for Japanese people and will continue to be so in the future. I agree with the latter opinion. Regardless of whether it was a boom or not, I like tamago-kake-gohan and I will have it every time I come back to Japan.

In fact, I recently visited a famous tamago-kake-gohan place and wrote about it for Tofugu's Travel Section. I was impressed to see such a long line of people

waiting to eat such a simple meal, especially because the restaurant is located in such an inconvenient place. I was so impressed that I asked to do an interview with the president of the restaurant and he agreed (so we'll post that up tomorrow!). Not to spoil it for you or anything, but he had the idea for tamago-kake-gohan long before the boom started and his road to success is such an interesting one. So, be sure to stay up all night hitting the refresh button on your browser so that you can find out how he took the simplicity of tamago-kake-gohan and made it into his life.



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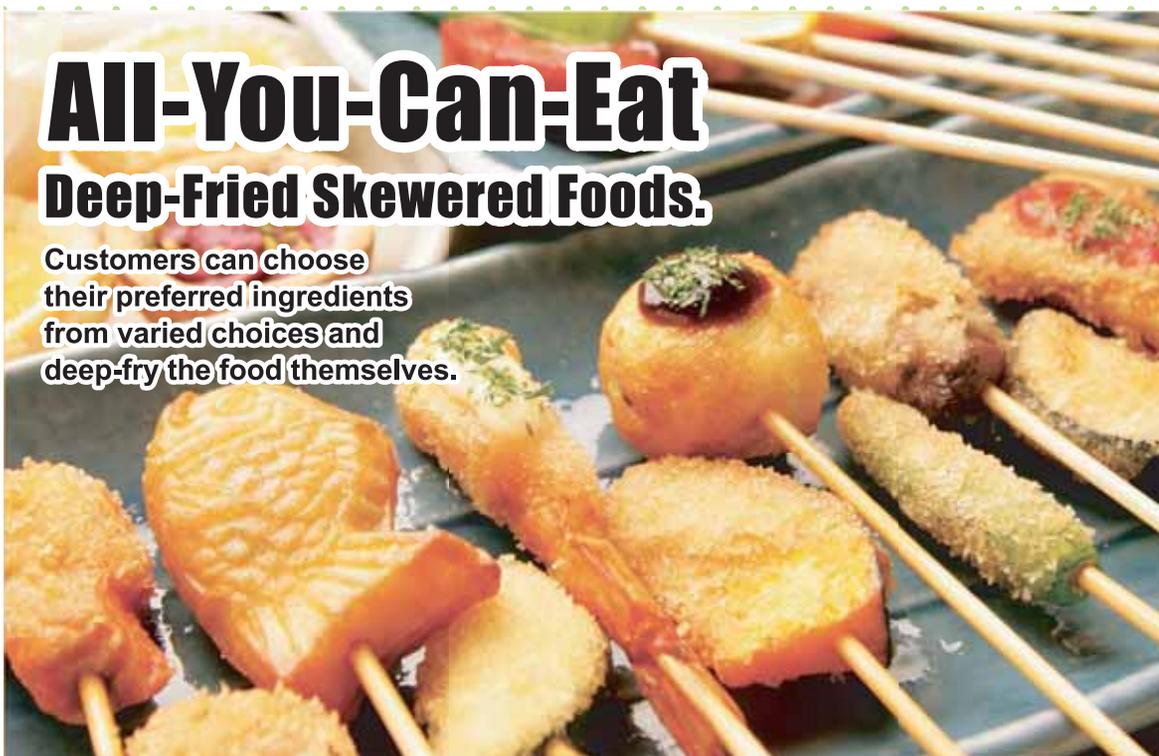
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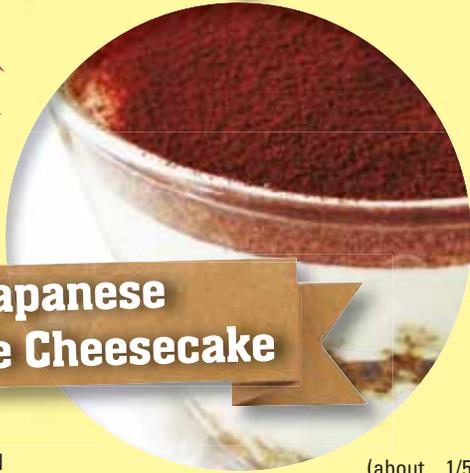
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RESTAURANT INFO

There's always room for dessert!



Japanese Souffle Cheesecake

INGREDIENTS

- 150g cream cheese
- 150 ml milk
- 3 eggs, separated
- 60g sugar
- 20g flour
- 10g corn flour
- 20ml lemon juice
- apricot jam, or serving (optional)

Servings: 1

PREPARATION

1. Preheat oven to 160°C. Grease a 15cm round springform cake tin and line with baking paper. Place cake tin on a sheet of aluminum foil and wrap the edges of the foil up the side of the dish and press to secure — this is to prevent water from the bain-marie entering the dish. Place the tin in a larger baking dish and set aside.
2. Sift together the flour and corn flour and set aside.
3. Combine cream cheese, milk and butter in a saucepan over a medium-low heat. Allow mixture to soften, then whisk to combine into a smooth consistency and remove from the heat. Add egg yolks while continuously whisking, to combine thoroughly and prevent yolks from cooking.
4. Add flour mixture to the cream cheese batter, and whisk to combine.
5. Add egg whites into a large mixing bowl with a pinch of salt. Whisk to form stiff peaks, set aside in refrigerator. Add a little of the egg white

(about 1/5) mixture to the batter and whisk well to combine thoroughly. Add remaining egg whites and fold gently to combine.

6. Once mixture is smooth and well-combined, pour it into the prepared tin. Add hot water to the larger baking dish, to about 2cm up the side of the cake tin.
7. Place dishes into the oven and bake at 160°C for 20 minutes, then reduce heat to 150°C and bake for a further 40 minutes. The top should be slightly browned and the cake still a little wobbly when shaken.
8. Once cake has cooked, open the oven door a little and allow the cake to cool for about 40 minutes.
9. Warm some apricot jam so it's easier to spread, then remove cake from oven and tin, set it on a serving plate, and brush the top with jam.

- Jessica Thompson, Metropolis

INGREDIENTS

- 100g silken (kinu) tofu
- 200g drained fat-free yogurt
- 80g cream cheese
- 4 tbsp sugar (1 tbsp = 15ml)
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1/3 cup (80ml) espresso
- 1 tsp rum (optional) (1 tsp = 5ml)
- 5 hard biscuits
- 1/3 cup fresh okara
- Cacao powder to dust

Servings: 4



Healthy Tiramisu

PREPARATION

1. Leave 450g of fat-free yogurt on a paper towel or coffee filter in a strainer in the fridge overnight. The result will be about 200g of drained yogurt, with whey drained out below. (If you're in a hurry, you can substitute unsweetened Greek yogurt or mascarpone cheese.)
2. In a deep mixing bowl, combine the tofu, drained yogurt, cream cheese, sugar and lemon juice. With a blender or whisk, blend to smoothness. Put the mix in the refrigerator. Briefly microwave the okara to remove excess moisture and allow it to cool. Crush the biscuits and combine them with the cooled okara. Add espresso and rum (optional). Toss to allow the espresso to be absorbed evenly.
3. Fill 4 small cups to about 1/8 with the creamy mix from the fridge. Then fill each cup to halfway with the crushed biscuit mix.
4. Place the rest of the creamy mix in the cups and cover this with the rest of the crushed biscuit mix.
5. Refrigerate for about 1 hour. Dust the top with cacao powder before serving.

- Rieko Suzuki, Metropolis

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RESTAURANT INFO



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RESTAURANT INFO

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STEAK HOUSE

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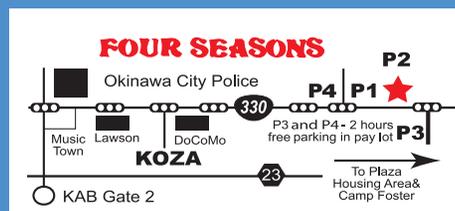
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RESTAURANT INFO