

10 foodie facts you

Japanese gourmet cuisine is not just about sushi – there's a wealth of cooking culture to explore with a mouth-watering ancient history. As Japan moves towards recovery following March's devastating earthquake and aftermath, **Heather-Marie Larsen** looks beyond the obvious with our top ten foodie facts



Permission

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Haiku is an ancient form of Japanese poetry which links the dignity of the succinct with the beauty of the seasons, like this foodie poem by Masoaka Shiki which marries the bite of a persimmon to the sound of a bell tolling (*Hōryū-ji*), translated by Burton Watson:

*I eat a persimmon
and a bell starts booming –
Hōryū-ji*



1 Japan is home to more Michelin starred restaurants than any other country on the planet. To put this in perspective, Tokyo alone has more Michelin stars than Paris, Hong Kong, New York, Los Angeles and London combined. One of these, two-starred Ryugin in Roppongi, offers great dishes of grilled fish and simmering seasonal rice dishes.
www.nihonryori-ryugin.com

2 While the true origin of fortune cookies remains lost in the haze of history, most experts agree that the assumption that the desserts come from China is wrong; rather, these wise crackers bear a closer resemblance to fortune-telling sweets that have been made in Kyoto, Japan for centuries.

3 Japanese cooking requires a deft touch and of course utensils are an important component. Korin.com stocks knives and tableware for the beginner and expert alike for prime yakizakana (grilled fish) slicing, not squishing. Try the Korin Shiro-ko Kasumi Yanagi knife set, from around €130. www.korin.com

90 FBW

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53 recipes
20 stylish recipes for seasonal entertaining
LAP-DINING stress free party cooking
20 rosé wines
Our cheesy A-Z guide
3 WHISKEY COCKTAILS

Summer flavours
10 hassle free mid-week meals

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+ LOUISE LENNOX
from The Restaurant shares her recipe secrets