

Hello readers! My name is Bella and I have recently started research on Japanese food and drinks. I found lots of great recipes, and I will list them later, but one thing that I took away from all these recipes was that the Japanese eat very healthy. Like, really organic and fresh. I wanted to find out why they ate so healthy, and why a lot of their meals have fish and rice in them. Japan is an island, and that is why they incorporate fish into a lot of their meals, because it is so plentiful there. Fish is also very healthy, and is high in vitamins and can help reduce your risk of heart disease. Japanese cuisine is a very important part of Japanese culture. I was reading an article that explained why Japanese cuisine is so important to their culture. It said that Japanese food is not just food, it is a part of their heritage. They base their meals off of protecting nature for future generations. Each area in Japan has their own signature dish that represents their area. They did this because culinary and food tourism is great to help support the economy and support smaller villages and businesses. I also learned that Japan has seasonal food. This means that they have certain dishes and foods for different seasons. Children in school learn about food to help them have a healthy lifestyle. There are also rules and etiquette to follow while eating. For the religious aspect, the Japanese practice Buddhism and Shinto religion, where both religions value naturalism, purity and they both offer food to shrines. Now, on to the recipes! The first one I chose was matcha cookies. This is because matcha powder is very healthy for you and is shown to relieve anxiety and stress. Here is the recipe below:

Matcha green tea cookies-

- 2 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1 cup butter softened
- 1 1/2 cups white sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 1/2 tsp matcha green tea powder

Here is a picture of the finished product!



As you can see, they look super fluffy and delicious! Matcha is used in many teas and dishes in Japan because of its taste and health benefits (mental and physical). Another recipe I found had to do with seaweed. I think seaweed tastes okay, but it scares me when I accidentally touch it in the ocean, so I was curious to see what kind of recipes had to do with seaweed. I not only discovered a recipe, but also that there are different types of seaweed! I thought there was only one universal type, but I found many. I saw in one article that said there were seven types of seaweed! I found a recipe for a seaweed dish called Sunomono. Here it is:

Recipe for Sunomono-

2 **Persian/Japanese cucumbers**

½ tsp **kosher/sea salt (I use Diamond Crystal; use half for table salt)**

1 Tbsp **dried wakame seaweed** (2 g; it will be 20-30 g after rehydrated)

½ Tbsp **toasted white sesame seeds**

### *Seasoning*

4 Tbsp **rice vinegar**

2 Tbsp **sugar**

½ tsp **kosher/sea salt (I use Diamond Crystal; use half for table salt)**

½ tsp **soy sauce**

I found this off a website that also described seaweed's properties that make it such a healthy dish. Seaweed contains vitamins A, B1, B6, B12 and C6. Seaweed also contributes to a healthy lifestyle that reduces depression and anxiety in adults. Here is a picture of sunomono:



The last thing I wanted to talk about are teas. Tea in Japan is very popular and a staple in households. There are many types of tea but today I want to focus on green tea. There are different types of green tea like Sencha, which is a morning tea, and matcha green tea, which is what I want to focus on. The Japanese people drink so much tea because they believe that tea has healing properties and health benefits. They drink tea when sick, and gargle salted tea when they catch a cold. Japan grows and produces/exports tea. Since Japan is an island, they have tea trees with leaves that they make tea with. I have drank green tea before, and I started drinking it after I started my research more, and I will say I definitely feel more calm after drinking it. It also tastes

really good, so that's a plus! I have a few other teas that I would like to try, such as chamomile and oolong tea, because they also have great benefits.

To wrap up what I've researched and learned, I learned a lot about Japanese culture and their food, how healthy it is and its benefits. I really want to try more teas as well!