

Compelling Conversations



*Questions & Quotations for
High-Intermediate Japanese English Language Learners*

Chapter Four: Eating and Drinking



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EATING AND DRINKING



VOCABULARY WARM-UP

Which words do you already know? Underline them, and circle the words you are unsure about. Then review your answers with a partner.

chef	culinary	decaffeinated	edible	famine
fast	feast	gluttony	savor	vegetarian

ACTIVITY 1: SHARING EXPERIENCES

Everybody eats. Food is both a necessity and a pleasure. It is also a safe and interesting way to learn more about people. Discuss your eating and drinking experiences with a partner.

1. Do you consider eating an activity that you look forward to, or just a necessity?
When do you think it is a pleasure? When is it a chore?
2. What did you eat yesterday for breakfast, lunch, and dinner? Was it a typical day?

3. Do you drink juice, tea, or coffee in the morning? Do you prefer regular or decaf* tea or coffee?
4. Do you eat at the same time every day? Or do you eat when it fits your schedule?
5. Do you prefer salty snacks or sweet snacks? Do you have a sweet tooth?
6. How much do you care about what you eat?
7. What drinks do you enjoy with your evening meal?
8. Which kind of food do you like: Beef? Pork? Poultry? Or do you not like meat?
9. What is your favorite vegetable? Are you a vegetarian? Vegan? Do you know any vegetarians?
10. What is your favorite fruit? Which fruits do you find delicious?
11. Can you name two non-Japanese dishes that you really savor?
12. Which Japanese dishes would you recommend to a tourist? Why?
13. Can you think of some junk food? When do you eat junk food?
14. Do you think Japanese food is healthier than Western food? Why or why not?
15. Do you ever buy food from a convenience store? Why or why not?

*Most people say “decaf” as an abbreviated version of decaffeinated.

ACTIVITY 2: EXPANDING VOCABULARY

Look at the definitions and example sentences below. Do the definitions match what you and your partner expected in the vocabulary warm-up list? If not, what is different?

chef, *noun*: a professional cook; the head cook in a restaurant.

✦ *Our chef is a professional who prepares and cooks delicious meals on a budget.*

culinary, *adjective*: having to do with cooking and food; concerning superior preparation of food.

✦ *Study the culinary arts if you want to become a chef.*

decaffeinated, *adjective*: containing no caffeine; a drink with the caffeine removed.

✦ *Sue drank decaffeinated coffee because regular coffee made her hyperactive.*

edible, *adjective*: something that can be eaten.

- ♦ *Some people find all parts of a fish to be edible.*

famine, *noun*: excitement; a passion for someone or something.

- ♦ *The terrible famine caused thousands of deaths.*

fast, *adjective*: moving with speed, advancing or progressing rapidly.

- ♦ *Junko is a very fast runner. She ran a 10K marathon in under 35 minutes.*

fast, *noun*: a period of time without eating; verb: to go without eating.

- ♦ *Michi went on a fast for three days.*

feast, *noun*: a large, excellent meal; an abundance of well-prepared food.

- ♦ *My mother prepared a delicious feast to celebrate my graduation.*

gluttony, *noun*: an excess of eating or drinking; greedy or excessive indulgence.

- ♦ *Gluttony can be a dangerous habit for overweight people with diabetes.*

savor, *verb*: to really enjoy; to experience satisfaction and pleasure in taste or smell.

- ♦ *I eat very slowly in order to savor my favorite food.*

vegetarian, *noun*: one who eats no meat; a meatless diet.

- ♦ *As a vegetarian, Kazuko doesn't eat meat.*

ACTIVITY 3: ASK MORE QUESTIONS

- A. Select five vocabulary words from the list above and write a question for each word. Remember to start your question with a question word (Who, What, Where, When, Why, How, Is, Are, Do, Did, Does, etc.). You will also want to end each question with a question mark (?). Underline each vocabulary word.



Example: Who is the chef in the new Italian restaurant?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

B. Take turns asking and answering questions with your partner.

ACTIVITY 4: PHOTOGRAPHS TO START CONVERSATIONS

Photographs capture moments, inform viewers, and start conversations. In small groups, examine the photograph and discuss the questions that follow.



Japanese tourists are often surprised at the huge portions served in the United States. The Sidewalk Café, a famous beachside American restaurant in Venice Beach, California, serves many international tourists.

1. What is happening in this picture?
2. What kind of food do you like to eat when you travel?
3. How much food is too much food for you?
4. Can you think of some fast food restaurants that change their menu to adjust to local tastes?

- 5. What foods do you think show up in Japanese fast food restaurants that appeal to tourists?
- 6. With your partner, can you list the last five fast food restaurants you ate in?

ACTIVITY 5: PARAPHRASING PROVERBS

A. We have many expressions about food. Read the following expressions, and discuss them with your partner. What do they mean? Circle your favorites. Explain your choices.

- 1. Eggs and promises are easily broken. —Japanese

Meaning:
.....

- 2. Laughter is brightest where the food is best. —Irish

Meaning:
.....

- 3. Eat less, live longer. —German

Meaning:
.....

- 4. One must eat to live, not live to eat. —Spanish

Meaning:
.....

- 5. A bath refreshes the body; tea refreshes the mind. —Japanese

Meaning:
.....

B. Can you add another proverb about food, drinks, and meals?

- 1.

Culture Corner:
Fun with Puns

Puns are word jokes. English has many puns. Understanding the puns can be difficult for many language learners because words can have multiple meanings and some sounds have different meanings. Understanding puns can be like solving a puzzle. Here are a few puns about food.

1. I'm on a seafood diet. I see food and I eat it.
2. Are you nuts for peanuts?
3. A hungry clock will go back four seconds.

Can you find another pun about food in Japanese or English?

.....
.....

ACTIVITY 6: PRONUNCIATION PRACTICE

You can speak English with a distinctly Japanese accent and still be clearly understood. However, reducing confusing sounds can greatly improve your communication with English speakers and help to eliminate confusion and misunderstanding in your English conversations.

“W” AND “U”

While Japanese has the sound “wa,” there are no other vowel combinations that go with the “w” sound. However, in English, there are many “w + vowel” combinations. To make up for this, the Japanese often try to replace the “w” sound with the “u” sound in order to make an approximate match. Unfortunately, this is very confusing for many native speakers.

Some words create no problems: Wine, for example, is very easy because the pronunciation matches the Japanese “wa-in.” Wood, however, cannot be understood when pronounced as “uddo.”

To make the “w” sound, begin as you would with pronouncing “wa” and change the shape of your mouth as you leave the sound.

WORD / NOT A WORD

Take turns reading the words from your lists below. The first words in the shaded boxes are NOT real words. They have been written in “*Katakana English*.” The word in (parentheses) is the real word. After you read each word, have your partner guess if you are saying a real word or not.

Partner A		Partner B
wood	Use your hand to cover your partner's list.	wolf
uuru (wool)		welcome
wink		uddo (wood)
wave		wafer
urufu (wolf)		ueebu (wave)
ueedo (wade)		ueeru (well)
west		uinku (wink)
uefaa (wafer)		wool
uerukomu (welcome)		wade
well		uesuto (west)

Note: This activity contained many words that do not exist, but that Japanese speakers might say. Be careful with “w” words as they can cause confusion.

ACTIVITY 7: THE CONVERSATION CONTINUES

Let's continue to explore eating and drinking with one or two classmates. Use complete sentences to respond.

1. What is your favorite restaurant? Do you go there more than twice a month?

2. How often do you eat at a fast food restaurant? Which is your favorite?
3. Are American fast food chains popular in Japan? What do Japanese like about American fast food?
4. Do all members of your family eat dinner together? Who cooks? Who serves the food?
5. In Japan, what special foods or drinks are associated with weddings?
6. Do you prefer coffee or green tea?
7. What happens to your eyes or nose when you eat too much wasabi?
8. Have you ever fasted? Why? Were you very hungry after skipping two meals?
9. Do you eat hamburgers and pizza with a knife and fork? Or do you use your hands?
10. Do you have your own cup and your own chopsticks that you use at your family's house?
11. Have you ever tried to go on a diet to lose weight? What did you do?
12. Do you eat local cuisine (Kobe beef in Kobe) when you travel?
13. Do you think that restaurants should ban smoking? What about bars? Why?
14. Do you usually read food labels? Why?
15. Does your family share recipes? Which recipe would you like to share?

ACTIVITY 8: DISCUSSING QUOTATIONS

Take turns reading these quotations out loud and discuss them with your partner. Do you agree with the quotation? Disagree? Why? Afterwards, pick a favorite quotation by circling the number and explain your choice. Remember to give a reason or example.

1. "The eating of meat extinguishes the seed of great compassion."
—*Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama (563 BCE–483 BCE), philosopher*
☐ Agree ☐ Disagree
Why?
2. "Tea ... is a religion of the art of life."
—*Okakura Kakuzo (1862–1913), Japanese scholar*
☐ Agree ☐ Disagree
Why?

3. “Understand, when you eat meat, that something did die. You have an obligation to value it.”
—*Anthony Bourdain (1956–), American chef and TV star*
☐ Agree ☐ Disagree
Why?
4. “Live. Love. Eat.”
—*Wolfgang Puck (1949–), American celebrity chef*
☐ Agree ☐ Disagree
Why?
5. “If it’s beautifully arranged on the plate, you know someone’s fingers have been all over it.”
—*Julia Child (1912–2004), American chef and author*
☐ Agree ☐ Disagree
Why?
6. “More die in the United States of too much food than of too little.”
—*John Kenneth Galbraith (1908–2006), American ambassador and economist*
☐ Agree ☐ Disagree
Why?
7. “Making sushi is an art, and experience is everything.”
—*Nobu Matsuhisa (1949–), Japanese celebrity chef and restaurant owner*
☐ Agree ☐ Disagree
Why?
8. “Every time I look into his eyes I just want to take the ice cream or whatever I’ve got in my hand and rub it into his face. That’s how much I like him.”
—*Banana Yoshimoto (1964–), Japanese author*
☐ Agree ☐ Disagree
Why?
9. “You can’t just eat good food. You’ve got to talk about it too. And you’ve got to talk about it to somebody who understands that kind of food.”
—*Kurt Vonnegut (1922–2007), American author*
☐ Agree ☐ Disagree
Why?

10. “Japanese chefs believe our soul goes into our knives once we start using them. You wouldn’t put your soul in a dishwasher!”

—Masaharu Morimoto (1955–), *Japanese chef*

☐ Agree ☐ Disagree

Why?

My favorite quote was:

Why?

ACTIVITY 9: TELL ME ABOUT JAPAN ... IN ENGLISH

People want to know about Japan and Japanese culture. Next time you travel abroad or meet a foreigner, you can tell them about Japan in English.



FAST FOOD!

What do you eat when you want to eat something tasty yet also filling? In the United States, we often eat hamburgers for a tasty, filling, and affordable meal. You can add fries, a salad, or fruit for a full meal.

In Japan, *donburi* (rice bowl dish) seems as common as hamburgers are in the U.S. Both have many variations from region to region and remain popular with young and old.

Can you list three types of *donburi* you like? Have you ever made your own unique *donburi*? What was it like?

1.
2.
3.

Would you count *donburi* by itself as a whole meal, or does it need other sides? What would you add with *donburi* to make it a complete meal? List three choices.

1.
2.
3.

ROLE PLAY

Night Out at a Fancy Restaurant in Miami

Find online reviews of upscale restaurants in Miami, Florida, for a fun night out with a group of friends. Use the reviews to select a restaurant.

Role Play Preparation: Asking Questions

Eating out can be fun and satisfying, especially if ordering in English. What are three typical questions to ask a waiter at a your selected restaurant?

1.
2.
3.

What are three questions you might ask a friend at dinner?

1.
2.
3.

Role Play: Accidents Happen!

Everybody wants to have a good time when they go out, but sometimes bad things happen to good people—even in nice restaurants!

Let's imagine this situation: It's very busy at a fashionable Miami restaurant on Saturday night. A new waiter, Pedro, has just started. He's very nervous. Two friends arrive for dinner, and they want to talk. At the restaurant, everybody wants to have a good time, but accidents do happen.

What will happen? Who are the friends?
What do they want to talk about?
Which Miami restaurant are they going to?
Who is the waiter?
Why is the restaurant so busy?
What accident will happen?
What will happen next?

**“You can say the service is good
when it isn’t intrusive,
but comes straight away when
required.”**

—Nobu Matsuhisa (1949–),
Japanese celebrity chef

Can you create a fun skit? Answer the questions and act in your own play. Have fun.

SEARCH and SHARE
Choosing a Local Restaurant

____ / 10

Student Name: Date:

Class: Teacher:

Can you recommend a good place for dinner around here? Find and share a positive review for a local restaurant that you like. Pick a favorite local restaurant, do some research, and pick the best review—in Japanese or in English. Use this worksheet to tell us about the review. Remember restaurant reviews should provide examples and details. Tell us about a special restaurant—in English—and help us find a place to eat delicious food.

Restaurant: Location:

Review: Reviewer:

1. Why did you pick this review?
2. How does the reviewer describe the restaurant? What kind of food does it serve?
3. When was the review written?
4. What do you know about the reviewer?
5. What does the reviewer say about the restaurant's atmosphere?
6. How did the reviewer describe the restaurant's service?
7. What did the reviewer eat?
8. What was the best part of the restaurant review?
9. Does the reviewer recommend the restaurant? Why?
10. How often have you been to the restaurant? What makes this restaurant special?

“One man's meat is another man's poison.”

—Latin proverb