


## **JAPANESE FOOD IS UNIQUE IN TASTE AND APPEARANCE**

### BACKGROUND:



Japanese cooking is distinctive in taste and appearance, and is unlike the food of any other culture. Since Japan is an island country surrounded by seas full of fish, much of its cooking centers around seafood, vegetables, and rice.

It is the preparation that makes traditional Japanese food unique. The first principle is that the ingredients should retain their natural appearance and taste as much as possible. The second principle is that the main dish should be compatible with rice and sake.

In traditionally prepared dishes, most foods are raw, pickled, boiled, or grilled. When seasonings are used, the main goal is to enhance the natural flavor of the food. Japanese cooking gives great care to the presentation of the food. The foods need to harmonize in shape, size, and color.

Rice is served in a small or medium sized bowl. Rice is served at many meals. It is eaten throughout the meal with pickles or salty foods. Sweets are not served with meals; they are eaten between meals. Since food is eaten with chopsticks, it is prepared in bite-sized pieces. Traditional meals in Japan are served according to formal rules. Each person receives a tray. On the tray are many small bowls and dishes in a wide variety of shapes and sizes, each with only one kind of food in it. The Japanese people like to admire the color, texture, and design of each food as much as they enjoy eating the food.

**This lesson may take 2 days to complete.**

Show children how to use chopsticks. Let them practice eating their Japanese meal with chopsticks. (Have spoons available for those who have difficulty with the chopsticks.)

After children have tasted the Japanese food, give them an opportunity to describe how it tasted and its texture.

Have children share what they liked best about Japanese cooking.



**THE JAPANESE TEA CEREMONY IS A SPECIAL WAY  
THAT THE JAPANESE PEOPLE CELEBRATE  
THEIR TRADITIONS**

**Objective :** Children will participate in a traditional Japanese Tea Ceremony.

**Before the Lesson:** Request that parents send a robe to school that can be worn as a Kimono.

**Materials :**

•Construction paper	•Tea bowl
•Crayons	•Tea
•Flower Arrangement	•Tea cups
•Small paper napkins	

**Motivation :** Discuss the term "tradition." Have children think of their own family or ethnic traditions.

**Development :** Tell children about the tradition of the Japanese Tea Ceremony, also called "Chanoyu" (chah - oh - yuu).

Explain to children that the tea ceremony reminds the Japanese people of the need to appreciate all that is good in the world. The tea ceremony teaches people to behave kindly, to enjoy nature, and to share quiet time enjoying the company of friends.

Prepare children for the Japanese Tea Ceremony.

Have children make small folding fans, decorated with delicate flowers and trees.

Have children dress in robes tied with a sash. These robes will represent the Japanese robe called the Kimono.