



Design of the Umami Café

“The design for the new café is inspired by its specific place at the crest of the hill. As with the pilgrimages to such renowned mountainside temples as Kiyomizu-dera in Kyoto, this structure hovers above and greets those on the approaching path. For those arriving, it is a shelter to catch one's breath and anticipate the gardens ahead. For those finishing their journey, it is an opportunity to reflect with all senses.”

– Kengo Kuma, Architect



Umami Café

BY AJINOMOTO CO.



The Tea Experience

For centuries, green tea has been treasured throughout Asia for its healthful, restorative qualities. In Japan, Zen priests drank green tea to keep them awake through long hours of meditation. In the 16th century, a man named Sen no Rikyū, influenced by the study of Zen, envisioned a path to enlightenment through the simple act of sharing a bowl of tea among friends in the spirit of peace and harmony—a practice he called *wabi-cha*. For Rikyū, making tea while mindfully engaging all the senses was to have a complete Zen experience. We are pleased to have you share a moment of quiet joy with us and experience the spirit of Japanese culture through a simple bowl of tea.

Our Teas



Matcha

Powdered Green Tea

Matcha has been the highlight of Japanese tea ceremonies for centuries. Shade grown leaves are harvested, dried, and ground into a fine powder, giving it a bright jade color and a savory, grassy flavor.



Organic Sencha

Classic Green Tea

Sencha has a light, mildly sweet flavor and a fragrance of young spring leaves. It is by far the most popular tea in Japan.



Organic Genmaicha

Green Tea with Roasted Brown Rice

Our Genmaicha is made with Sencha, roasted rice, and a hint of Matcha, giving it a nutty, earthy flavor and aroma. This is a great choice for those new to tea drinking.



Organic Hojicha

Roasted Green Tea

Roasting at high temperatures provides Hojicha with an aromatic sweetness. It is lower in caffeine and tannins than other green teas, making it gentle on the stomach.

Tea Sets



Matcha with Spring Shibori Set \$14

A bowl of hand whisked, jade green matcha, paired with a traditional Japanese sweet of red and white bean paste. This classic pairing is served at tea gatherings throughout Japan. Like the Garden itself, the shibori designs will change with the season.

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Other Beverages

- Matcha Iced Tea \$5
- Mango Juice \$4

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Matcha with Mochi Ice Cream Set \$12

A bowl of our hand whisked matcha is paired with premium chocolate ice cream balls wrapped in sweet rice dough.

We've paired traditional teas with Japanese sweets. A great place to start.



Sencha with Castella Set \$12

The light, mild sweetness of the Sencha is enhanced by this popular Japanese sponge cake. Brought to Japan by Portuguese merchants in the 16th century, this light and honeyed cake is now a specialty of the Nagasaki region.



Genmaicha with Manju Set \$11

Genmaicha, with its roasted rice and earthy flavor, is a perfect partner to our homemade manju confection. The sweetness from the manju's bean paste enhances the nuttiness and complexity of the tea.



Hojicha with Anpan Set \$11

Anpan are Japanese pastries filled with flavorful red bean paste. This confection highlights the aromatic sweetness of Hojicha and is a great choice for those new to Japanese flavors.

Japanese Sweets



Daifuku Mochi \$8

One of the most traditional Japanese tea accompaniments, this confection of sweet red bean paste is wrapped in a layer of soft, sticky mochi, rice paste.

GF V



Matcha Brownie \$8

A contemporary take on a western classic, this brownie is made with matcha, walnuts, and vanilla.



Matcha Roll \$10

Sweet red bean paste is artistically rolled inside a light matcha sponge cake.



Chikara Cake \$8

This popular cake is packed with a variety of nuts and dried fruit and gets its name from the Japanese word for strength. With its protein, fiber, and healthy fats, this dense, sweet cake is the perfect complement to a cup of tea.

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Umami: The Fifth Taste

Served 11am - 2pm

Western chefs have historically focused on four basic taste profiles – sweet, sour, salty and bitter. Yet in many parts of East Asia, an additional flavor has entered the culinary lexicon: *umami*. This fifth taste is savory, complex and wholly distinct. Umami is imparted by glutamate, a type of amino acid which occurs naturally in many foods. Obvious sources include meat, fish, and vegetables, but you will also find umami in less expected foods like dairy products or even tea. As the taste of umami itself is subtle, many people don't recognize umami when they encounter it. However, this fifth taste creates harmony among the other four and plays an important role in making food taste delicious.



Onigiri \$8

These savory balls of sticky rice wrapped in seaweed are a staple snack of Japan.

Ume, Pickled Plum
Onigiri with a filling of *ume*, pickled plum, which adds a tangy sweetness. *(pictured)*
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Seaweed & Shiitake
Onigiri with a filling of shiitake mushrooms and salty hijiki seaweed.
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Yakitori Style Fried Rice \$12

If you've ever traveled through Japan, you've likely encountered either a specialty shop or street vendor selling Yakitori chicken. This savory yakitori is combined with fresh carrots, edamame, peas, and red peppers. This sweet and savory dish evokes the authentic flavors of the traditional street food and bursts with flavors of umami. *(pictured)*

Takikomi Gohan Style Fried Rice \$10

The Takikomi Gohan style, also known simply as 'Japanese Mixed Rice', provides a comforting and delicious meal through a mixture of traditional flavors mixed into a colorful dish of rice and vegetables. Our Takikomi Gohan style of fried rice is savory mix of edamame, tofu, and hijiki seaweed seasoned with soy sauce, one of the most popular seasonings with natural umami.

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From the Garden Gift Shop

Want to take your Umami Café experience home? Several of the teas served at the Umami Café are available for purchase at the Portland Japanese Garden Gift Shop. Ask your server or visit the Gift Shop for details.



Jugetsudo

The Portland Japanese Garden is honored to serve tea from Japanese tea shop Jugetsudo. Over 160 years after its founding, the company's pursuit of the spirit of "Cha-Zen" is as passionate as ever. Through their uncompromising commitment to the highest quality ingredients, Jugetsudo conveys the authentic values and delicate flavors particular to the spirit of Japanese tea.

Jugetsudo teas originate in Kakegawa, Japan. Located in the highlands of Shizuoka near Mount Fuji, several factors make this area excellent for tea production. The temperature variation between day and night, the mountain climate, and the amount of morning dew combine to create the prime conditions for producing Jugetsudo's delicious teas with their unique tastes, aromas, and colors.

Jugetsudo has two tea houses in Japan and one in Paris. The Umami Café at the Portland Japanese Garden is the first to sell Jugetsudo tea in the United States.



Although the flavor of umami has naturally existed for thousands of years, it was first discovered by Dr. Kikunae Ikeda of the Imperial University of Tokyo in 1908. Through experimentation, Dr. Ikeda found that the umami flavor is imparted by glutamate, a type of amino acid which occurs naturally in many foods and provides the distinctive fifth taste. Dr. Ikeda's discovery allowed him to launch the world's first umami seasoning, AJI-NO-MOTO® with businessman Mr. Saburosuke Suzuki II in 1909. In the nearly 110 years since, Ajinomoto has grown into one of Japan's largest and most successful food companies.

The Umami Café was made possible because of an extremely generous donation from Ajinomoto Co., Inc., and Ajinomoto Windsor.

Japanese sweets
locally sourced from:

Gena Renaud
Yume Confections
Portland, OR
yumeconfections.com

Tomoe Horibuchi
Behind the Museum Café
Portland, OR
behindthemuseumcafe.com

Hiro Horie
OYATSUPAN™ Bakers
Beaverton, OR
oyatsupan.com

The Umami Café is a gratuity free establishment. Following the custom in Japan, prices are inclusive of service and the café staff is fully compensated by their wage. Any tips received will be donated to the Portland Japanese Garden, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

Tea and food photos by Aaron Lee.

