



# 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 Rikyu, 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 pursuit of peace and harmony—a practice he called *wabi-cha*. For Rikyu, 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 bowl of tea.





# Tea Sets



**Matcha with Ukishima** \$14

Shade-grown leaves are harvested, dried, and ground into a fine powder, providing matcha’s jade color and savory, grassy flavor. Here, the matcha is paired with a traditional Japanese confection called Ukishima. This steamed cake is moist and sweet, made with red and white adzuki beans.



**Genmaicha with Manju** \$11

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. The sweetness from the manju’s bean paste enhances the complexity of the genmaicha. *Additional tea steepings available upon request.*



**Matcha with Mochi Ice Cream** GF \$12

Matcha has been the highlight of Japanese tea ceremonies for centuries. In this set, a bowl of our hand-whisked matcha is paired with a premium chocolate ice cream ball wrapped in sweet rice dough. A delightful combination of flavors.

**GF** Gluten Free   **V** Vegan

We’ve paired traditional teas with Japanese delights. A great place to start.



**Hojicha with Fried Rice**

The toasty warmth of our hojicha balances nicely with the strong umami flavors of either our yakitori chicken style fried rice (\$14) or our takikomi gohan style vegetable fried rice (\$12) **V**. *Additional tea steepings available upon request.*



**Shiitake Ochazuke** \$12

A traditional comfort food, ochazuke is a simple, satisfying dish. Hojicha tea is poured over multigrain rice, shiitake mushrooms, seaweed, and seasoned with a touch of wasabi and bonito flake. *Enjoy a second steeping of tea as a warming digestif.*



**Sencha with Castella Cake** \$12

Sencha has a subtle umami flavor and a fragrance of young spring leaves. It is by far the most popular tea in Japan. The tea’s mild sweetness is enhanced by this popular Japanese sponge cake. The light and honeyed cake is a specialty of the Nagasaki region. *Additional tea steepings available upon request.*



**Hojicha with Chikara Cake** GF \$11

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. We’ve paired it with our popular chikara cake, which is packed with a variety of nuts and dried fruit. *Additional tea steepings available upon request.*



# Sweets



Matcha and Hojicha Brownies \$8

A contemporary take on a western classic, this pair of brownies each feature a different type of Japanese green tea. Matcha is enhanced with walnuts and hojicha with hazelnuts.



Matcha Senbei \$4.5

This sandwich cookie has a light layer of buttery matcha cream between crunchy zigzag-shaped cookies. *One cookie per serving.*



Hakutuo Mochi GF \$8

Three sweet bean paste treats flavored with white peach wrapped in tender rice dough.



Chocolate Macarons GF \$6

Beauty and simplicity meet in these organic macarons. Airy meringue-based cookies surround a smooth chocolate filling, creating a melt-in-your-mouth confection.

# Umami: The Fifth Taste

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 also find umami in less expected foods like dairy products or even tea. As the taste 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.



Yakitori Style Fried Rice \$10

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.



Takikomi Gohan Style Fried Rice V \$9

The takikomi gohan style, also known simply as 'Japanese Mixed Rice', provides a comforting and delicious meal through the combination of traditional flavors mixed into a colorful dish of rice and vegetables. Our takikomi gohan style of fried rice features edamame, carrots, and hijiki seaweed seasoned with soy sauce, a popular source of natural umami.



# Additional Beverages

**Mecha**    GF V    \$5  
A well-balanced and mild green tea. Mecha is made from new tea leaf buds and a touch of matcha powder. *Served hot or iced.*

**Mugicha**    V    \$4  
Made from roasted barley, this naturally caffeine-free herbal tea is refreshingly aromatic and delicious. It is gentle on the stomach and relaxing. *Served hot or iced.*

**Mango Juice**    GF V    \$4

Sweets locally sourced from:

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

Gena Renaud  
Yume Confections  
Portland, OR  
yumeconfections.com

Mio Asaka  
Mio's Delectables  
Portland, OR  
miosdelectables.com

Hiro Horie  
OYATSUPAN™ Bakers  
Beaverton, OR  
oyatsupan.com

# Tea Tools



Preparing tea in a traditional Japanese fashion requires an array of special tools. Learn more about some of them below:

## 1) Kyusu

This teapot is used for brewing teas such as sencha, hojicha, and genmaicha. The lateral handle allows for ergonomic one-handed pouring. Rest your thumb on the lid to keep it in place as you pour your tea.

## 2) Chawan

Used in the preparation of whisked green tea, the *chawan*, literally “tea bowl”, is admired as a work of art and is a centerpiece of the tea ceremony.

## 3) Chashaku

One of the traditional tea ceremony tools, this delicate piece of bamboo is used to scoop matcha powder into the *chawan* when preparing the tea.

## 4) Hishaku

The bamboo ladle is used to scoop hot water from the *kama* (kettle) and gently pour it over the matcha powder in the *chawan*.

## 5) Matcha

Unlike brewed tea leaves that are discarded after infusion, whole tea leaves are consumed when enjoying a bowl of matcha. This means matcha has more of the leaf’s nutrients, but also more caffeine. The amino acid theanine, also present in the tea leaves, is said to provide a balancing, calming effect.

## 6) Chasen

This tea whisk is carved from a single piece of bamboo. It is used to briskly whip matcha powder and hot water into a froth.

## 7) Yuzamashi

The *yuzamashi* is a cooling cup used to brew certain teas to their ideal temperature, providing pure taste without bitterness. Hot water is poured into the yuzamashi, then over the leaves in the *kyusu*.



# The Ajinomoto Group

Although the umami taste 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 taste 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 110 years since, the Ajinomoto Group 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 Foods North America, Inc.

Eat Well, Live Well.



# Tea by Jugetsudo

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 Portland Japanese Garden is the first to offer Jugetsudo tea in the United States.



## From the Garden Gift Shop

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





## Design of the Umami Café

"The design of the 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



Café photo by Jeremy Bittermann