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Oishinbo: Japanese Cuisine, Vol. 1: A La Carte



Synopsis

Japanese Cuisine introduces us to the fundamental ingredients--rice, sashimi, green tea, and dashi (cooking stock)--that constitute the soul of the Japanese kitchen. In each story we learn about the proper preparation and presentation of different dishes, as well as their history and cultural significance. The result is a moveable feast of a book, as informative as it is engaging.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This comic actually turned out pretty fun to read. You learn quite a lot about Japanese cuisine and culture while also following the main characters solve dilemmas (food related, of course) and their task of making the "Ultimate Menu" articles for their newspaper. The only detractor I have for this comic is about how it's published. It's not presented in chronological order, so your not reading from the first chapter; instead your reading chapters picked to fit the theme of the published volume. So you end up with chapters where the art style has improved since its from a later edition. This also makes it hard to follow the character's personal story arcs. One character for instance is dating a rice cracker maker and then later in the book she's pregnant. The second volume shows the wedding planning for this character, but since that one focuses on saki it's not included in this volume. Its not hard to follow but it is slightly irksome.

The Oishinbo 'a la carte' collections are an excellent way to get your Japanese food fix while reading manga. All the major elements of Japanese cuisine are represented along with some classic stylistic devices - the feud between the older traditional father and rebellious son, love interests, and plenty of showdown battles. There reaches a point in your development when you're no longer just an otaku young adult, and you can get sick of continuous fantasy battles and power beams and magic etc etc... Oishinbo manages to retain the exciting elements of Manga with more real world content - food, drink, opinion and criticism. It's like a lively debate with your friends over the dinner table on the best food and restaurants. This collection covers the 'basics' of Japanese cuisine, including sashimi, tea and table manners as well as giving some background as to the feud between the protagonist and his father. Each book also contains a recipe or menu item that is featured in one of the stories, and a personal article from the writer, both of which add to the context of the stories and add to your enjoyment. This edition contains two intriguing sashimi styles I can't wait to try. Each story informs and entertains. I'm a devoted collector.

Even the most die-hard of literary 'foodies' will find much delight in this first volume of Tetsu Kariya's comic-book "Oishinbo" series. Forget about the characters and meager, unifying storyline for the time being. The beauty of this series is the sheer amount of detail conveyed in its bite-sized, easily digestible, graphic novel format. Concepts such as what comprises the 'essence' of Japanese cuisine oftentimes gets muddled in erudite and pretentious articulations when presented in text-essay format but here, with simplistic illustration and breezy flow from one panel to another the reader quickly absorbs complex and detailed concepts with very little effort. This book will certainly appeal to foodies first and foremost. Whether you have a detailed understanding of Japanese cuisine or are a neophyte curious to learn more there is much to be gleaned within for both parties. Do not be turned off just because of its comic format, at 276 pages this book is information dense and you may be surprised to discover the efficiency of the medium in presenting its subject matter.

Even though this series is written in the manga style, I learn something new about the history of Japanese cuisine with every volume. There are even 1 or 2 recipes included at the end of each book. Even read in order, the back story of the individual characters is still a bit disjointed and hard to follow. The back stories are not that closely interwoven into the culinary stories, so character development comes in second to food. So, if you are looking for a manga story with food thrown in, try elsewhere. If you want to know more about how the Japanese developed their cuisine and and a

bit of their food culture, this short series may do just fine.

Simply perfect. Important cultural lessons taught in a beautiful culturally significant medium that just happens to be an extraordinarily effective teaching tool. Amazing!

Took me some time to get into the particular rhythm of the narration, but once I was in, I loved the characters and the poetic way of describing every day life.

Reading this makes me want to rush out to a Japanese restaurant. Also makes me want to be a better person - to strive for perfection, give more attention to detail, and master my craft (whatever it is).

I came across this through and have thoroughly enjoyed it. I'm only on the second volume now, Sake, and think I'm hooked. I'm not a huge comic / manga reader - nothing against it, just never got into it. Basically it's a graphic novel about food. If you're into eating and good food check this series out.

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