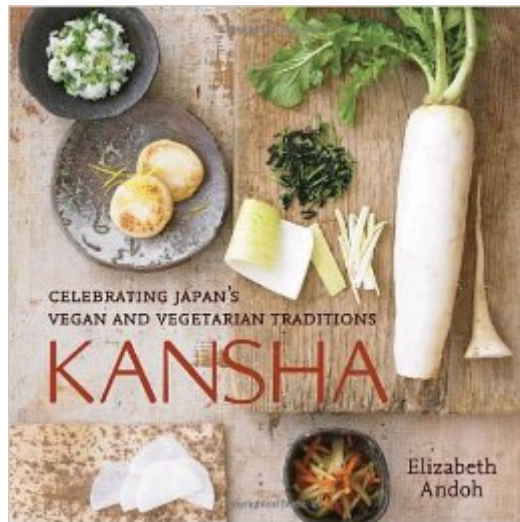


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Kansha: Celebrating Japan's Vegan And Vegetarian Traditions



Synopsis

The celebration of Japan's vegan and vegetarian traditions begins with kansha "appreciation" an expression of gratitude for nature's gifts and the efforts and ingenuity of those who transform nature's bounty into marvelous food. The spirit of kansha, deeply rooted in Buddhist philosophy and practice, encourages all cooks to prepare nutritionally sound and aesthetically satisfying meals that avoid waste, conserve energy, and preserve our natural resources. In these pages, with kansha as credo, Japan culinary authority Elizabeth Andoh offers more than 100 carefully crafted vegan recipes. She has culled classics from shōjin ryōri, or Buddhist temple cuisine (Creamy Sesame Pudding, Glazed Eel Look-Alike); gathered essentials of macrobiotic cooking (Toasted Hand-Pressed Brown Rice with Hijiki, Robust Miso); selected dishes rooted in history (Skillet-Scrambled Tofu with Leafy Greens, Pungent Pickles); and included inventive modern fare (Eggplant Sushi, Tofu-Tofu Burgers). Andoh invites you to practice kansha in your own cooking, and she delights in demonstrating how nothing goes to waste in the kansha kitchen. In one especially satisfying example, she transforms each part of a single daikon "from the tapered tip to the tuft of greens, including the peels that most cooks would simply compost" into an array of wholesome, flavorful dishes. Decades of living immersed in Japanese culture and years of culinary training have given Andoh a unique platform from which to teach. She shares her deep knowledge of the cuisine in the two-part A Guide to the Kansha Kitchen. In the first section, she explains basic cutting techniques, cooking methods, and equipment that will help you enhance flavor, eliminate waste, and speed meal preparation. In the second, Andoh demystifies ingredients that are staples in Japanese pantries, but may be new to you; they will boost your kitchen repertoire "vegan or omnivore" to new heights. Stunning images by award-winning photographer Leigh Beisch complete Kansha, a pioneering volume sure to inspire as it instructs.

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Customer Reviews

I was stationed in Japan for six months, and while there, I took four Japanese cooking classes. I purchased *Kansha* from Japan in December 2010, and enjoyed leafing through the many intriguing vegan recipes inspired by traditional Japanese Buddhism (because of my living arrangements in Japan, I didn't have a kitchen in which to try out these recipes). Being vegetarian in Japan is more difficult than it sounds; nearly every Japanese dish (with the exception of *shojin ryori*, vegan Buddhist temple cuisine) contains fish in some form, whether in the *dashi* (stock) or shavings of *katsuobushi* (dried bonito flakes). The traditional Japanese diet, which was heavy on fish and fresh and pickled vegetables, is being replaced by deep-fried cutlets and American-style fast food joints like *Mos Burger*. I was lucky enough to attend one of Elizabeth's *Kansha* workshops in Osaka shortly after the March 11 earthquake, and it was a much-needed chance to focus on appreciation (the English translation of "*kansha*") that my Japanese coworkers' and students' friends and families were safe. We made several of the recipes from *Kansha* around a *hanami* (cherry blossom viewing) theme, including Thick Fried Tofu & Broiled Tofu Braised with Root Vegetables, Simmered & Blanched Mountain Vegetables Tossed in Nutty Tofu Sauce. Rice with Salted Cherry Blossoms, Burdock and Wheat Strips in Dark Miso Broth, and Home-Made *Nuka-Zuke*. After the class, we went on a supermarket tour, where Elizabeth pointed out various types of *sansai* (wild mountain vegetables) and gave us a primer on soy sauces and basic pantry staples.

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