



Food and Fantasy in Early Modern Japan

Eric Rath

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How did one dine with a shogun? Or make solid gold soup, sculpt with a fish, or turn seaweed into a symbol of happiness? In this fresh look at Japanese culinary history, Eric C. Rath delves into the writings of medieval and early modern Japanese chefs to answer these and other provocative questions, and to trace the development of Japanese cuisine from 1400 to 1868. Rath shows how medieval “fantasy food” rituals—where food was revered as symbol rather than consumed—were continued by early modern writers. The book offers the first extensive introduction to Japanese cookbooks, recipe collections, and gastronomic writings of the period and traces the origins of dishes like tempura, sushi, and sashimi while documenting Japanese cooking styles and dining customs.

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