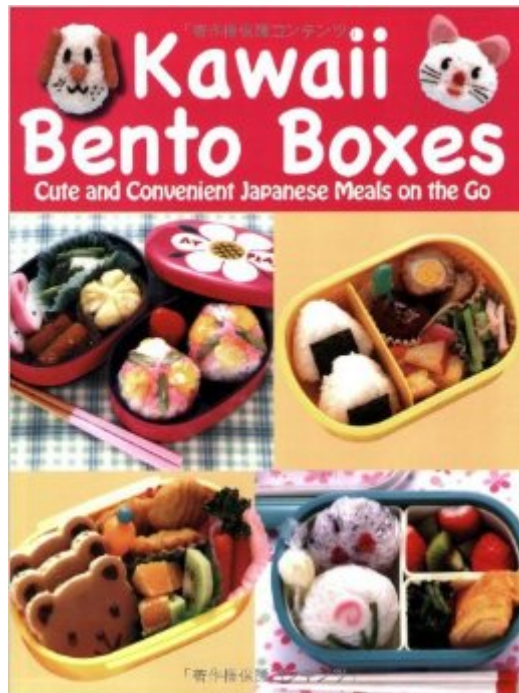


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Kawaii Bento Boxes: Cute And Convenient Japanese Meals On The Go



Synopsis

A bento box meal (single portions of different foods packed in one reusable container) is a Japanese tradition that lends itself well to today's busy lifestyle. Although bento boxes are available to take out from restaurants and food stands, they are most frequently prepared at home, very often by parents wishing to provide their children with delicious, healthy, fun--and environmentally responsible--lunch and snack-time alternatives. Kawaii Bento Boxes offers dozens of recipes and menus. For each box, the authors include detailed instructions for cooking, seasoning, decorating and assembling the components as well as an icon indicating how long it will take to prepare. The meals are not just easy to make, they are tasty, nutritious and economical, with each portion carefully calculated so that there are no leftovers. There are also suggestions for the right container for each meal. Most of the ingredients used are familiar and available to American cooks. Here are whimsical creations like soccer balls and animal faces made from shaped rice, tulips cut from dyed hardboiled eggs, hearts and stars carved out of vegetables, and much more. Perfect for parents looking to liven up their children's school lunches or park snacks, or for busy people who want to fix a quick and cheerful meal to take to work, Kawaii Bento Boxes highlights the Japanese passion for making food a treat for the eyes as well as for the mouth. CONTENTS: ONIGIRI BENTO (16 variations including faces, soccer ball, animals, triangles, spheres) RICE BENTO (11 variations including bear, rabbit, ship, seasoned rice, teriyaki chicken over rice, etc.) SUSHI BENTO (12 variations) BREAD BENTO (12 variations including mini-sandwiches, rolls, etc.) NOODLE BENTO (9 variations including spaghetti, yakisoba noodles, udon) SUMMER AND WINTER BENTO (12 variations including summer dishes that wont spoil in the heat and winter dishes that are better when eaten warm) TRADITIONAL/POPULAR/FAVORITE BENTO (11 variations including favorite dishes like hamburgers, fried shrimp, fried chicken) TIPS ON HOW TO STUFF THE BENTO BOX WHAT TO STUFF IN THE BENTO BOX (including calories, carbohydrates, protein, etc.) CUTTING AND DECORATING MENUS BASED ON COLOR EASY DESSERT RECIPES

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I live in Japan so I can get all the ingredients listed which makes this book extremely convenient for me. My daughter pretty much took onigiri (rice balls) or some form of rice for lunch her entire first year in youchien (preschool). Now she's asking me for stuff she sees her friends bringing to school so I wanted to get a bento cook book in English. I am so happy I got this one! First of all, my two daughters look at this book daily to point out things they want to try or to determine the following day's menu. They've even put tabs of paper in each page that has something they want to eat (which means there is a tab on nearly every page). Granted a lot of this is Japanese style food and may be way to out of the ordinary for the average American. My daughter is an extremely picky eater and has stepped out of her comfort zone and eaten things she wouldn't normally since using this cookbook. A word of caution, each recipe lists how long it will take to make but I find them to be off. It doesn't include time it takes to cook rice and other important steps. Also, if you are a novice like me it takes a lot longer to make some of the details. Second, it uses ingredients that aren't exactly common in America. Quail eggs are at all the stores here, but I can't think of ever seeing them in America. I have included pictures of 5 different bentos I made last week with notes on the pictures. This will give you an idea of some of the recipes in the book. Also, I mix and match recipes based on what I have fresh in the kitchen. If you are thinking about moving away from the standard American lunch then I would definitely look into Kawaii Bento Boxes, everyone in this house loves it!

I have been looking and looking for a good book in English that matches the quality of information in Japanese books about bento lunches and charaben (cute decorated bentos). This one comes the closest. No wonder really, since it is a translation of a popular Japanese bento book! The photos are really clear, and the directions are easy to follow. Anyone can start making their own bentos, decorative or not, from this book. I just took off one star because it does use a number of ingredients that may be unfamiliar to non-Japanese readers, and doesn't really describe them. (That's where bento blogs step in.) It's still practical to use for an American bento enthusiast.

I just received this book and I am very excited about it. I know some other Bento Books have been lacking when it comes to recipes, but this one is loaded with good ones. The recipes are a little quick and are pretty self explanatory. This is a good starter book for ideas, but some people who have never heard of some of the ingredients used will be lost. (That is what google is for) Overall, Its a great book with clear pictures and descriptions. The last few pages are color coded to the color food you want in your bento. If you want more yellow in your lunch, the recipe for curried cauliflower, more red.. shrimp in chili sauce.. etc etc.. Which is a good asset to avoid having a monochromatic bento lunch. I would also buy Hana Sushi for better sushi ideas.

Let me start by saying that I love the format of this book. There are tons of photos and nothing looks too "perfect" (some of the cucumbers looked a little rancid- lol) so you can see what it will really look like if you make it. That being said, I probably won't make anything in it. The reason I pack bento lunches for my children is for their health and the sake of the environment- which I believe is common in the USA as cute bento lunches aren't a cultural norm like they are in other countries. The meals in this book looked cute but a lot of the items in the pictures were frozen, processed foods (like these french fries with faces). Also, there are a lot of really unhealthy meats shown which I would just never use in a bento. I can not see my children eating some of the foods cold in a bento- like the omelets- though they might like them hot. It gets 3 stars because the photos are pretty inspirational and for the section on how to cut some fruits and veggies to make good garnishes. That was cute. Bottom line: If you are looking for inspiration, this is great. If you want recipes, try another book.

I bought this book for recipes and inspiration; and it is full of them. On the first few pages the book shows you an array of boxes and decorating tools, and how to pack a bento. Some of the ingredients are hard to come by (such as 'fishcakes'), but with a little common sense, recipes can easily be tweaked. There were a few complaints of the book calling for fried and processed meats (lunch meats and mini hotdogs). In the books defense; the portions are small, and the fried/fatty foods are always paired with fruit and veggies. Also, in terms of the processed meat; there are low fat and vegan options available in most grocery stores! Like I said, recipes can be tweaked with common sense. This is defiantly a good book to add to your bento book collection. I give it 4/5 stars because the book is a little bit cluttered, which can make it confusing at times.

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