



## An elixir from the cookbooks of Japan



COURTESY PHOTO/ FLICKR: YOSHIHIRO TAGUCHI

Macrobiotic chef Natsuko Yamawaki will lead a workshop on how to make a traditional Japanese drink, amazake.

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by Josey Bartlett, qboro Editor

The traditional Japanese drink, amazake, is usually drunk during the winter. The B-vitamin-packed beverage that can double as a salad dressing or flavoring gives consumers an extra boost of energy during gray, cold days.

“It’s an old-timey, make you feel good, grandmother’s drink,” said Guillermo Briceno from Resobox Gallery.

On Friday macrobiotic chef Natsuko Yamawaki will show workshop goers at Resobox how to make their own fermented, but without alcohol, batch of their own.

Amazake is a fermented drink somewhat like kombucha, but instead of being clear and acidic, amazake has a smooth yogurt-like texture that coats the drinker's stomach. The drink soothes the stomach and detoxes the body at the same time, Briceno said. Additionally, unlike kombucha, amazake has a sweet taste.

The drink is part of a macrobiotic diet. Individuals who follow this Japanese way of eating subsist on mostly grains and seasonal vegetables, staying away from animal products. The seasonal and regional aspects make up a main component of macrobiotic thinking. Followers say during the winter someone needs the vitamins and nutrients present in food during that season and the benefits of a summer vegetable, for example, are less needed.

It's the same with eating from a home region. Macrobiotic followers say the food grown in the place where a person is eating it protects people from the germs and diseases that they will face while there.

Macrobiotic followers also make a point to chew their food thoroughly — about 50 chews a mouthful. They also vary the amount something is cooked depending on the season, for example eating more raw foods in the summer.

Energetics of food play a role as well. By not cutting into a vegetable extra roughly the chef does not disrupt the electrons

and protons of a food that could go toward positive affects in a body.

“Macrobiotics are getting very popular; restaurants like Nobu in the city are using the techniques,” Resobox manager Takashi Ikezawa said. “Amazake is very traditional, but kind of new in New York. We want to continue to have more workshops like this to bring Japanese foods here.”

## Discover Amazake! Japanese health food workshop

**When:** Saturday, March 9, 7 to 9 p.m.

**Where:** Resobox Gallery, 41-26 27 St., LIC

**Tickets:** \$15, (718) 784-3680

[resobox.com](http://resobox.com)