

Chopstick Guidebook

Manners
&
Cultural Memories

A Little Guide for Your Trip to Japan

Hello, I'm Daisuke from Chopstickers.

I engrave names on chopsticks in Tokyo every day.
Chopsticks are a big part of my life, and of Japanese food.

I made this little guidebook for travelers like you.
Save it on your phone and take it with you!
It covers the cultural background of chopsticks in Japan, along with a quick review of how to use them.

Please enjoy Japanese food with confidence during your trip.

Have a wonderful time in Japan!



The Power of Chopsticks

In Japan, chopsticks are more than just tools.

They connect life, spirit, and yourself.



Life (Inochi)

From a baby's first meal to the final bone ritual, chopsticks mark every stage of life.



Divinity (Kami)

The word "Hashi" connects to the sacred.
Eating is receiving life's blessing.



Self (Bunshin)

Personal chopsticks are like an extension of oneself.
We rarely share them.

The Heart of Thanks



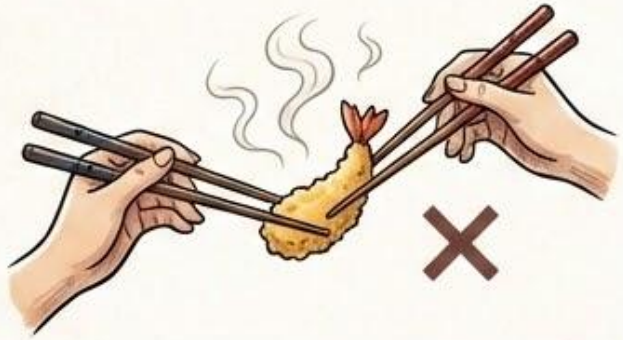
"Itadakimasu" (Ee-tah-dah-kee-mas)

Said before eating. It means "I receive this life." We put our hands together to thank nature for the plants and animals that gave their lives for us.

"Gochisousama" (Go-chee-so-sa-ma)

Said after eating. It honors the hard work of everyone who prepared the meal. Adding "deshita" at the end makes it more polite, but "Gochisousama" is perfect! Try saying this to the chef and staff when leaving a restaurant.

Taboo Gallery: Part 1



Hashi-watashi

Passing Food

Never pass food directly.
It resembles a funeral ritual for bones.



Tate-bashi

Standing Sticks

Do not stick them vertically in rice.
This is an offering for the dead.



Tataki-bashi

Drumming

Tableware is not a musical instrument.
Let's respect the tools.

Taboo Gallery: Part 2



Sashi-bashi

Pointing
Pointing at people or food with chopsticks is considered very rude.



Tsuki-bashi

Stabbing
Don't stab food like a fork.
(Though we might forgive beginners!)



Watashi-bashi

Bridging
Resting chopsticks across the bowl means "I'm finished." Be careful!

Quick Guide : The Foundation

Step 1: The Pencil Grip

Take one chopstick.

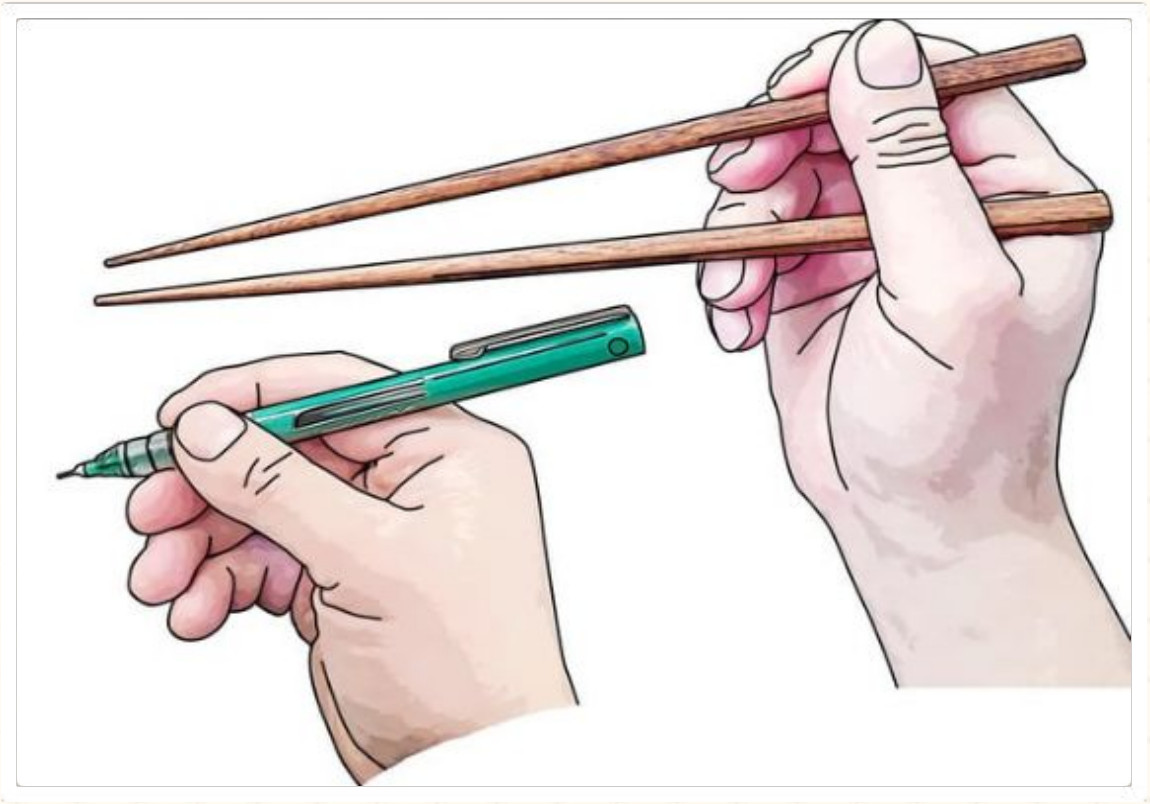
Hold it exactly like a pen.

Grip it firmly with your thumb and index finger.

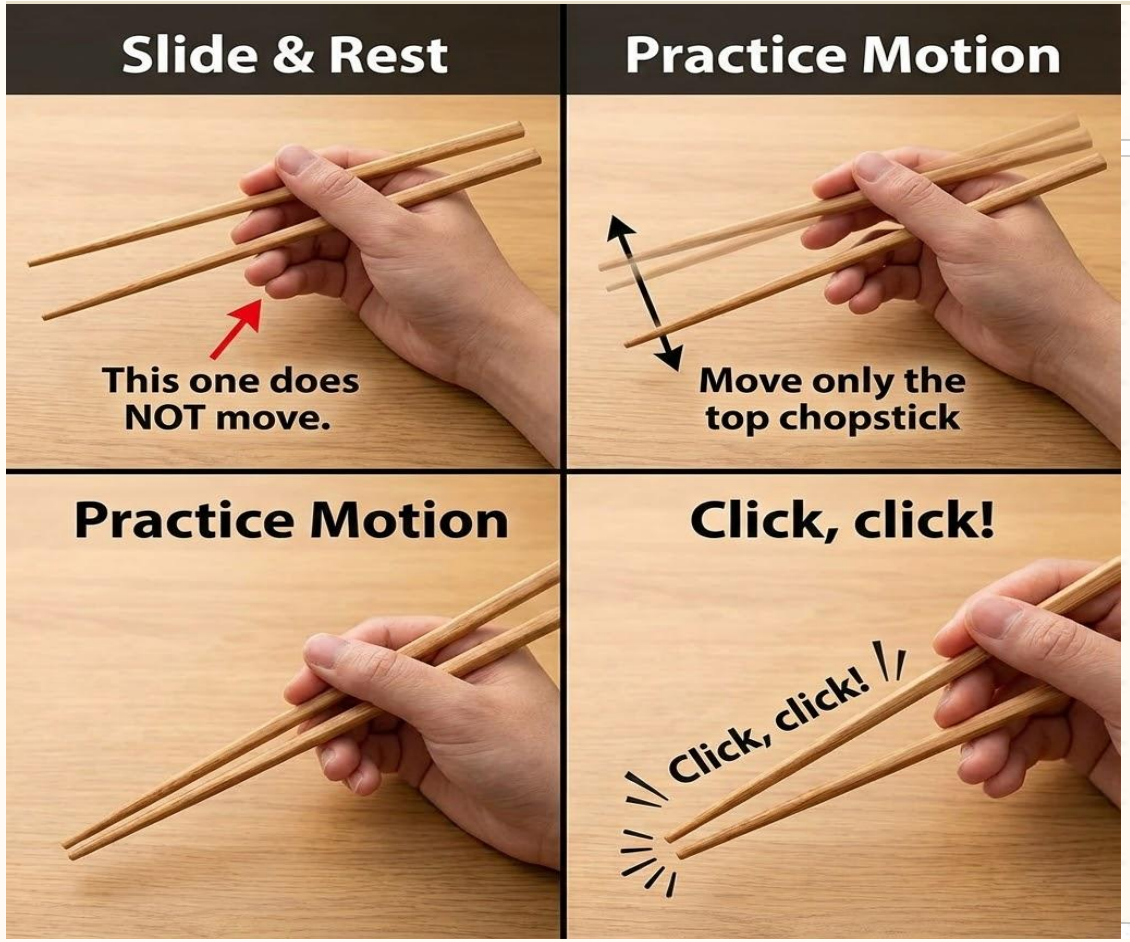
Step 2: Middle Finger

Rest the chopstick on your middle finger.

This stick will be the moving part.



Quick Guide : The Movement



Step 3: The Base

Slide the second chopstick under the first.

Rest it on your ring finger.

This one does NOT move.

Step 4: Practice Motion

Move only the top chopstick up and down.

Try to make the tips click together. *Click, click!*

Chopstick Rest Etiquette

Chopstick rests are for placing the tips of your chopsticks during a meal.

They keep the chopstick tips from touching the table, maintaining hygiene.

Sometimes a substitute rest is made using the chopstick sleeve.

It’s a common ingenious practice seen in casual restaurants.



Substitute Rest

Practical Tips: The Chopstick Rest

When you take a break from eating, place your chopsticks on the rest (Hashi-oki).

No rest? No problem! Here is a cool Japanese "hack":

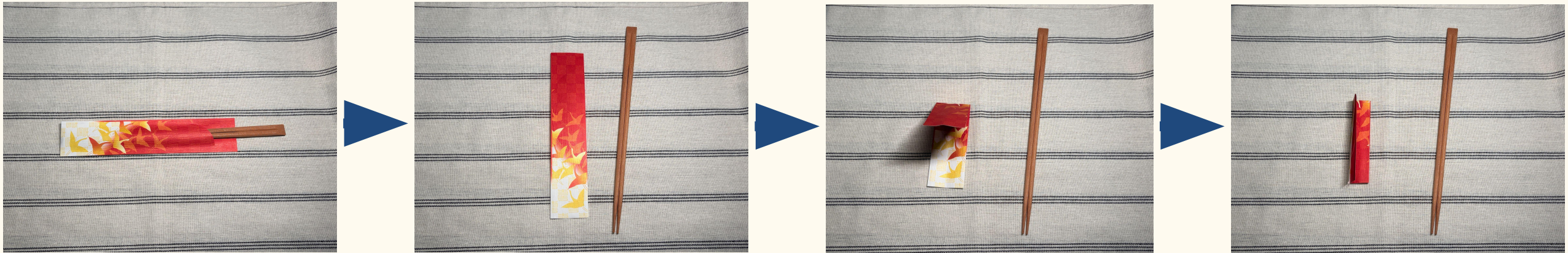
You can fold the paper sleeve (Hashi-bukuro) into a small triangle to create your own rest.

It’s a fun way to show your respect for the meal !

Step 1: Fold the sleeve in half lengthwise.
Step 2: Fold it in half crosswise.

That's it! Place it on the table to keep your chopstick tips clean.
Simple, smart, and shows respect for your meal.
Give it a try at your next dinner!





Practice at Home



Want to master it? You can practice easily at your hotel or back home.



Popcorn:

Great for practice because it's light and has an irregular shape.



Marshmallows:

Soft and easy to grip.
Good for beginners.



Peanuts:

Hard mode!
Only for masters.

Bonus Challenge:
Try picking up "Konpeito" (tiny Japanese sugar stars), sold at many sweet shops in Japan. They are small and hard—can you do it?

A Gift for Your Memories

Did you order chopsticks from us? Thank you!

I hope your personalized chopsticks bring back happy memories of Japan every time you use them.

As a small business owner, your feedback is my greatest motivation. If you enjoyed it, would you mind sharing your story on Google?

Your review helps other travelers find us. Not ordered yet? Get your name engraved in English & Japanese Katakana: chopstickers.jp

Leave a Review

Follow us for more Tokyo food tips!
Instagram: @chopstickers.tokyo

Safe travels and enjoy the rest of your adventure!