

A Japanese Afternoon Tea at the Waldorf Astoria



Server A Young Choi with the Japanese dessert wagashi created by Takeshi Inoue who is one of Japan's highest profile chefs specialising in wagashi.

Earlier this afternoon there was a bit of magic taking place in the Pompadour at the Waldorf Astoria. The Japanese wagashi chef and artist, Takeshi Inoue turned some very ordinary looking coloured sugar paste into works of art.

*Japanese sweets [@WaldorfAstoria](#) Absolutely fascinating!
pic.twitter.com/oaEPPmxAnR*

– Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter) [February 6, 2017](#)

Wagashi is a traditional Japanese sweet that has been enjoyed by Japanese people for centuries. It is an important part of Japanese culture and is served on different special occasions such as weddings, enjoyed during a tea break or exchanged as a special gift.

Wagashi chefs are often asked to create sweets for a personal special occasion. It may not always be appropriate to create Wagashi however the history and tradition of this sweet ensures that when requested, a wagashi chef will create these sweets with more passion than any other. This was certainly evident today when we watched Chef Inoue taking the utmost of care to prepare one of the sweets with the tiniest scissors you can imagine.





The acclaimed chef shared with guests the secret of the sweet by exploring its history and enormous variety. He also demonstrated making some wagashi in front of the audience allowing them a unique opportunity to experience the process 'up close'. Some of the colour in the paste was extracted from gardenias, and while Inoue was obviously a master at his craft, he magically transformed the coloured paste into the beautiful and intricate wagashi.

The Japanese Consul-General was in attendance at today's event and he explained that watching all of this today made him feel a little nostalgic about the seasons he is missing in Japan. Daisuke Matsunaga has been Consul-General since May 2016. You may follow tweets from the Consulate [here](#).



Dale MacPhee, General Manager of the five star luxury hotel at Edinburgh's west end, said: 'We are thrilled to be welcoming Takeshi Inoue and the Japanese Consul General to Waldorf

Astoria Edinburgh – The Caledonian. We introduced SocieTEA around two years ago and each has featured something completely different. This one will be quite unique and is a perfect fit with our SocieTEA concept.'

As the UK has a huge tea culture, guests at the event also had the opportunity of trying out some traditional Japanese tea. This tea was a vibrant green as it was made from fresh green tea leaves ground into a powder and then mixed in a bowl to drink from.

Mio Shapley – a Japanese musician living in Edinburgh and who plays at the hotel – demonstrated the Japanese tea ceremony helping to create a truly authentic experience.

Photographer Ian Georgeson, 07921 567360