

no. 1

# wagyu

---

gastronomy edition / 2020

---



Photocredit: Minami Teppenyaki Restaurant, Osaka

---

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



Photocredit: Monkridge Hill Farm



Photocredit: Holy Grail Steak.Co.

First of all, there is no region called Wagyu. “Wa” means Japanese as Kanji, “Gyu” is a cow, so Wagyu is a “Japanese Cow”.

written by Ahmet I. Aykut

---

On the other hand, every Kobe cattle is Wagyu, but not every Wagyu Kobe. To know the Kobe Cattle, it is necessary to understand Wagyu first. It is believed that the first cattle came to Japan in 500 BC, probably with rice baskets on their backs, through Korea. There are records of efforts to simplify and develop cattle breeds by farmers in Japan in the early 1600s. However, the Japanese did not eat meat and dairy products until the time of Meiji (1867-1912) as under the influence of Buddhism, they used these animals only in agriculture. In this sense, only when Japan's eating and drinking habits have changed and meat and dairy products have started to be consumed as in foreign countries.

As a result, imports of live animals started for the first time, and according to the records, 2,600 cattle were imported between 1868-1878. The Japanese, who do not like confusion, prefer simple, well thought out and patiently labored phenomena, and have similarly identified Wagyu in 1910 and put four kinds of cattle under this definition. In 1919, the Japanese government at that time introduced a system to distinguish these cattle, but each region remained independent in terms of production that is until the year 1944. In 1944, three new cattle breeds, other than the short horn, were registered with a new law, but that law was revised in 1957 and took its current form with the registration of the short horn.



Photocredit: [www.iwastesomuchtime.com](http://www.iwastesomuchtime.com)



In short, when we say Wagyu, we understand 4 types of cattle:

1. Black Japanese Cattle
2. Brown Japanese Cattle
3. Japanese Short-Horned
4. Japanese Hornless

The most liked of these four breeds of Wagyu is Black Japanese Cattle which in turn has 3 different sub-categories:

1. Tajima (Tojima)
2. Fujiyoshi (Shimana)
3. Kedaka (Tottori)

It is really hard to distinguish between these three different breeds of black cattle. It is believed that this breed has not interfered with other breeds since the time of Edo (1603-1868).

Let's go back to Wagyu and now let's look at the price quality balance. Two different criteria emerge here. Firstly, there are three categories as meat- weight ratio A, B, C; A being the highest level.

A: Those who have 72% or more of meat

B: Meat ratio between 69% and 72%

C: Meat ratio of 69% from smaller ones

Another criterion consists of the points given from 1 to 5 with the combination of 4 important facts that should be in the meat

which are as follows:

1. Marble-like texture (1 to 12 in itself)
2. The color and brightness of the meat (1 to 7 in itself)
3. Tightness and texture of the meat (1 to 5 in itself)
4. Color and texture of adipose tissue in meat (1 to 7 in itself)

In this criterion, the highest score is 5 and in order to get this, the marble texture must be 12, the color and brightness must be 7, the texture and firmness of the meat must be 5, and the oil color and texture must be 7, then your meat is in category A, which means the last point to be reached in meat.

# If we then look at the

---

## Kobe Cattle;

---



Photocredit: Hotel Trusty, Abeno Teppenyaki Restaurant

When we say Kobe, we clearly understand:

1. Tajima genus
2. Born and raised in Hyogo Administrative District, capital city of Kobe
3. Two and a half years old unpaired cow or two and a half years old cattle
4. The carcass weight is not more than 499.9
5. A4 or A5

Meat other than those having these criteria cannot be called Kobe. However, not only in Kobe but also in Omi, Yonesawa, Matsusaka, Maesawa regions, black Wagyu are grown and the criteria are the same. It is necessary to be an expert in order to differentiate an A5 Omi meat from a Kobe A5. The prices of a Yanesawa, Omi and Matsusaka are not much different from each other.

So why does anyone other than the Japanese know Kobe meat and think the most beautiful meat is Kobe? Why do people mostly pursue Kobe even though Matsusaka has 3,000 heads whereas Kobe has 5500 heads this year? Why is Kobe still preferred even though the most expensive cattle record ever sold with 50 Million Yen (465,000 USD) is in Matsusaka? This is only related to the historical and geographical location of Kobe. Kobe port is the first port to open to international trade in the time of Meiji. Therefore, the first stop of the Westerners is where they first discover and taste Wagyu.



Photocredit: Minami Teppenyaki Restaurant  
Osaka

“

Let's now look at the effort that produces this quality.

In my opinion, in the A5 category, Wagyu's difference from black truffle and beluga is its human contribution and labor. While Wagyu producers meet these excellent criteria, they are free in the form of breeding cattle. Some of them make the cattle listen to low volume music while others massage each cattle in groups of 7-9 people. They can give them low-alcohol beer, make them drink rice-based liquids. These animals, which drink water in the quality that is hard to reach even by humans and eat the best of the cereals three times a day, are raised independently so that they do not get stressed. I think these and similar practices are marination/seasoning performed while the meat is still alive. The result gives us a flavor that is rich with Omega 3 and 6, as watery as possible, melting in our palate, filled with butter tones, with an intense flavor of umami and an unsaturated fat ratio of 3 times that of a normal meat.

Finally, let me talk a little bit about the Wagyu in other countries and regions of the world. Currently, Wagyu's are not allowed to go out of Japan, but the first export was in 1975 according to the Japanese. According to the Americans (Cattle came out of Japan in the fall of 1975, but reached America in 1976) in Texas, who made a fortune from cattle production, initially imported four Wagyu's; two black and two brown (Americans called the brown ones red). One of the black ones is called Kedaga and the other Tajima. The cattle were immediately sent to the University of Colorado and their sperms were extracted. This export is the foundation of the American Wagyu

Union, which was established in 1990 and headquartered in Post Falls Idaho. Wagyu production has continued since then. Moreover, carcass and meat quality management are very close to the Japanese. However, it is, of course, not possible to mention 100% Wagyu even if the noble blood rate has exceeded 90%. Similar practices apply to the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. They all have a well-monitored quality standard and system. They produce good Wagyu, excellent cattle on the record, but mostly noble blood rates are around 50%. The remaining 50% is mostly Angus.

# As for the meat; what is missing

---

and cannot be found is “umami”.

---



On the other hand, the fatty tissue is not as delicious as Japanese Wagyu.

However, if you see an Australian Wagyu in the menu, you should definitely try it.

Wagyu export as meat from Japan has been continuing since 2012. The first export was made to Macao on this date, and the Japan Wagyu Association lists how many kilos of meat are exported each year. If you encounter A4 or A5 in a menu and want to give at least 250 USD per serving, you can ask for a 10-digit certification number. There are also restaurants that come with a A5 stamp and show you before cooking the meat. Such meats definitely want a good Cabernet Sauvignon with them, so be aware. I strongly recommend you to try them if you can.

Life is short, it is a virus-stricken world!