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Japan's Most Coveted Cakes Are Inspired By High Fashion

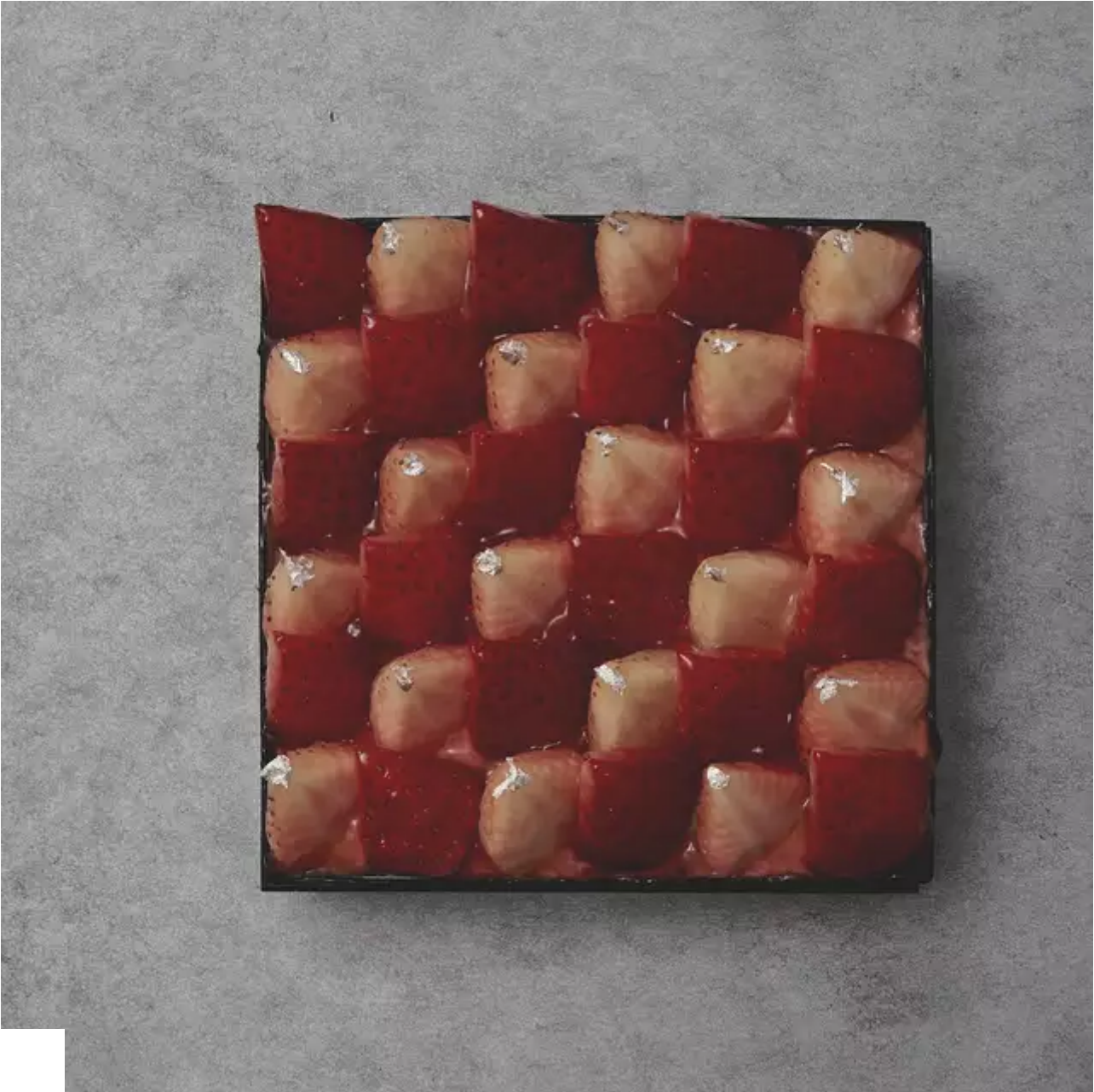
Japan's Natsuko Shoji creates elegant cakes inspired by famous fashion designers—and they might be harder to get than a Chanel bag.

By Katie Lockhart

|

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What's better than a couture dress straight off the runway? How about a couture cake straight from the oven.

One of Japan's most coveted creations comes from the mind of chef Natsuko Shoji, who was awarded the title of Asia's Best Pastry Chef this year. "I hope to translate the world of haute couture to cakes," Shoji says.

Inspired by the designs of legendary fashion icons like Coco Chanel, she has been using fruit to create beautiful, decadent works of edible art since 2014. "I remember as a young girl going through my mother's collections of fashion magazines and getting addicted to it," she says. "Fashion has become an important part of my journey." As an ode to her mother's affinity for Chanel, Shoji created a peach cake inspired by the designer's iconic Matelassé bags.





One of the reasons chef Shoji's Instagrammable cakes are so unique is the fruit used to make them. She uses only the best quality, ripest Japanese fruit for each cake. The fruit changes with the seasons, from peaches to grapes to the Miyazaki mango she uses in her signature mango cake called Fleurs d'été. "I want to show the significance and beauty of the Japanese fruits to the world," Shoji says.

Beneath the beautiful, glossy fruit is a combination of fresh custard cream and buttery sable cookies. The Fleurs d'été is made to look like blooming roses and garnished with a delicate sugar butterfly, Ibaraki white strawberries and Hokkaido raspberries topped with a gold leaf. The standout Chanel-inspired peach cake is cut in perfect geometric shapes to satisfy the eye and palette.





Shoji's latest design is called Ombré, made using Kyoto and Kumamoto chestnuts, which are beloved for their unique texture and rich flavor. This cake was influenced by the textile Glen plaid or Glenurquhart checks used by famous designers like Comme des Garçons.

The cakes aren't the only thing inspired by high fashion: Their presentation is, too. Each one of Shoji's handmade cakes comes in a black box and bag influenced by the Celiné luggage collection. "The transparent plastic bag is inspired by Virgil Abloh's Off White collaboration with Rimowa," Shoji says.

These prized cakes might be even more difficult to get than the latest Chanel bag they're modeled off. Chef Shoji makes just over 200 per month. "I wish I could make more so that I can cater to every request, but the high-quality ingredients are limited, and each cake is made by hand, hence it's a very limited quantity," Shoji says.





When she's not making her intricate cakes, Shoji's busy at été, her French-Japanese restaurant where a reservation can be just as elusive as her fruity creations. "I actually don't just love making cakes; I love cooking as well," Shoji says. "At my restaurant, the tasting menu consists of only one dessert. The rest are savory dishes. My dream has always been to become a chef, not just a pastry chef." She serves just twelve people per day for lunch and dinner, and reservation requests are required via ete.inquiries@gmail.com.

So, before you even book your plane tickets to Tokyo, try to secure your custom-made dessert. Each cake starts at just over \$131, with some as expensive as \$2,000, depending on the size and fruits available. Click here for your chance to win the [culinary lottery](#).





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