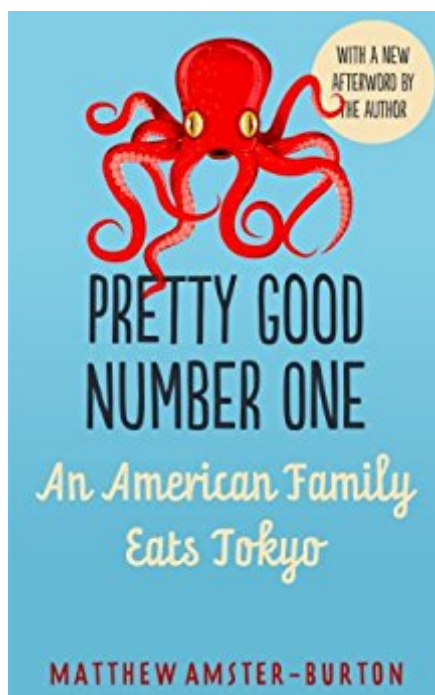


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# Pretty Good Number One: An American Family Eats Tokyo



## Synopsis

Everyone knows how to live the good life in Paris, Provence, or Tuscany. Now, Matthew Amster-Burton makes you fall in love with Tokyo. Experience this exciting and misunderstood city through the eyes of three Americans vacationing in a tiny Tokyo apartment. Follow 8-year-old Iris on a solo errand to the world's greatest supermarket, picnic on the bullet train, and eat a staggering array of great, inexpensive foods, from eel to udon. A humorous travel memoir in the tradition of Peter Mayle and Bill Bryson, *Pretty Good Number One* is the next best thing to a ticket to Tokyo. Now with a new afterword by the author, covering robotic sushi and spending the holidays in Tokyo. The layers of the city, its extraordinary food pleasures, its quirks, emerge as the author and his family spend an intense month living in Tokyo and exploring widely. [Warning: this book will make you hungry. You'll yearn, as I do, to catch the next plane to Tokyo, so you can get eating.] Naomi Duguid, writer and traveler; her most recent book is *BURMA: Rivers of Flavor* (Artisan 2012) This is the book I've been hoping Matthew would write: smart, opinionated, and wickedly funny, crammed with in-the-know tips and observations about visiting Tokyo. From the intricacies of garbage sorting to the chirpy jingle for the local supermarket, the pleasures of pan-fried soup dumplings to the pain of junsai, I laughed, cringed, and got so hungry that I had to eat three bowls of cereal to make it to the end. I love this book. Molly Wizenberg, author of *A Homemade Life* and blogger, Orangette

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## Customer Reviews

Interesting round up of family food experiences and insights on how to really dive in and enjoy a culinary adventure. Loved all the parts about Iris -- thought the gratuitous comments about beautiful Japanese women, especially the cucumber comments took away from the point of the book and came off as juvenile. But overall very enjoyable

Informative, funny, unique, and interesting. All words that describe this book! Amster-Burton tells the reader about his family's experience eating Japanese food while on a vacation, and manages to make it all sound intriguing and funny, while also being informative and giving readers a good idea of how food in Japanese life compares to food in American life. For all people who want a look into Japanese culture, are fascinated by Japanese food, or are wanting to maybe study or live abroad in Japan (all three apply to me), this book is a great look into what it's like being a foreigner trying to get by on food in the Land Of The Rising Sun. Highly recommended!

I loved this book! There were so many things he talked about that I saw on my trip to Japan in 2012 with my family, it was like a return trip. Especially the food things--half the pictures from our trip seem to be of food. I loved how Denny's had CocoPuffs on the ice cream sundae, the plastic food on display at the restaurants and the tea makers in the hotel rooms. His view of Japan's summer weather made me laugh. It IS very hot & humid, but since we're from Maryland, it was actually an improvement for us. Definitely not for a Seattle resident. Very entertaining book that really captures Tokyo for the American tourist. I plan to read it again every time I miss Japan.

Since I'm a huge fan of Matthew and Molly on their podcast Spilled Milk, and I'm headed to Japan next year for the first time, I thought it'd be a good idea to read Matthew's account of his stay there. What a fantastic book! Matthew's sense of humor is on every page and I learned so much reading through all the droolworthy descriptions of the foods. Most of my book is filled with highlighted excerpts. I can't wait to visit Tokyo next year and see everything for myself. This book is a highly recommended read for anyone fairly new to Japanese cuisine and is looking for an accessible,

friendly, and funny account.

The usual good humor and enjoyable writing from Matthew Amster-Burton, this time concentrating on Tokyo. This time, Matthew and Iris manage to get Laurie to come along to Tokyo despite her dislike for Japanese food. The three of them have a great time and even better food in Tokyo, with 8-year-old Iris getting more independence than she can have in the uptight American parenting world. In Tokyo nobody looks askance at a kid in a grocery store alone. Matthew will make you want to go to Tokyo even more than you want to go to Spain or Italy or France, and that's not an easy job. I'm not likely to get to Japan, and if I did I wouldn't have as good a time as I had reading this book. No jet lag, either.

Having grown up in Tokyo, I know what a life in the world's largest city is like. Yes, many famous spots on the guidebook, including high-end sushi spots, would be amazing, but they are not the biggest part of average Tokyoites' daily life. I believe one of the greatest things about culinary culture there is the variety (and affordability) of everyday comfort food, but it's still not very well known outside of the country. This book by Matthew Amster-Burton is a nice attempt to fill that gap. I really felt like I was walking through the narrow street and eating at Hanamaru Udon or an izakaya restaurant. Hands down. Recommended to anyone interested in the city, or food culture in general!

Matthew Amster-Burton is easily one of my favourite food writers. Reading *Pretty Good Number One* feels like I'm sitting having a great chat about food and Japanese culture with a (hilarious) friend. Witty, observant travel writing, Matthew also makes me incredibly hungry. I have a bunch of people I am going to buy this book for - basically any of my friends who like food, travel, Japan or comedy. Surely this covers everyone? Buy the book - it is an insanely under-priced bargain. I am actually only 2/3 of the way through, and trying to read very slowly, so I don't hit the end!

Meanwhile, I'll continue to laugh out loud (at Matthew's description of eating a certain dish with chopsticks as requiring a skill set 'above Ordinary Wizarding Level') and having some fairly hard-core cravings for food I've never eaten, like yaki onigiri, and 7-11 bento boxes.

This is a very charming book with a light-hearted tone. I enjoyed going through that journey with the family as they navigated the streets, trains, and foods around Tokyo. And it all sounds sooooo incredibly delicious and fun that you'll want to visit Tokyo too after reading this book. I even squealed with delight when I found negi at my local Japanese supermarket. Read the book to find

out why negi would elicit such a response and yes, it is just as delicious as he (Matthew Amster-Burton) describes. This book isn't about fine dining or extreme exotic eats in Tokyo. Or about ALL the incredible foods in Tokyo. Indirectly, I like the concept that fast food can be healthy, good quality and inexpensive, which apparently Tokyo (Japan, really) has in spades, even at the 7-Eleven. Nice low e-book price and quick, enjoyable reading that doesn't get too bogged down in detail.

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