

The ~たい Form 1/4

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The ending ~たい is attached to a verb's stem to indicate a desire to [verb].

The stem of a verb is just the ~ます form with ~ます cut off, so the type of verb doesn't matter.



Once you have changed a verb into the ~たい form, it conjugates further like an い adjective.

Polite

たべたいです。

Want to eat.

たべたくないです。

Don't want to eat.

たべたかったです。

Wanted to eat.

たべたくなかったです。

Did not want to eat.

Plain

たべたい。

たべたくない。

たべたかった。

たべたくなかった。

The ~たい Form 2/4

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The ending ~たい is attached to a verbs stem to indicate that you want to do something.

Once a verb is in the ~たい form, the direct object (what you want to eat/drink/wear/buy/etc.) is often marked by が instead of を. Both are fine to use, with minimal difference, but you should be prepared to encounter each.

わたしはりんごをたべます。
I **will** eat an apple.

わたしはりんごをたべたいです。
I **want to** eat an apple.

わたしはりんごがたべたいです。
I **want to** eat an apple.



せいふくをきない。
I **will not** wear a school uniform.

せいふくをきたくない。
I **do not want to** wear a school uniform.

せいふくがきたくない。
I **do not want to** wear a school uniform.

Particles other than を **never** change to が.

かれとあそぶ。

I will play **w/** him.

かれとあそびたい。

I **want to** play **w/** him.

かれにあわない。

I **won't** meet him.

かれにあいたくない。

I **don't want to** meet him.

The ~たい Form 3/4

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The ending ~たい is attached to a verbs stem to indicate that you want to do something.

Unlike the English “want” though, in Japanese there are some restrictions on when you can use ~たい.
The form is acceptable when:



1

Discussing your own desires.

わたしはらいねんにほんにいきたいです。
Next year I **want to** go to Japan.



2

Asking questions about people’s desires (be careful, as this can be rude in any language).

あ、にほんにいくの？ いいね。にほんでなにをやりたい？
Ah, you’re going to Japan? Awesome. What do you **want to** do there?

3

Speaking about general desires not specific to any individual.

じゃ、ビールをのみたいひとはてをあげてください。
Okay, everyone who **wants to** drink beer, raise your hands!



The ~たい Form 4/4

The ending ~たい is attached to a verbs stem to indicate that you want to do something.

In contrast, ~たい is not acceptable for describing other people's desires. You will be understood if you do, in most cases at least, but it is always better to do any of the following things:



1

Change ~たい to the verb ~たがっている. This is best when behaviour indicates desire.

その いぬ は ばんごはん を たべたがっている。
That dog (is behaving as though it) wants to eat dinner.

Since ~たがっている is still a verb, do not change を to が like with ~たい

2

Add そうです・そうだと after ~たい to indicate that you have heard the desire.

あまり やりたくない そうです。
From what I can gather, they don't really want to do it.

If you instead use ~たそうです or ~たくなさそうです this means you observed the (lack of) desire instead.

3

Quote the person as stating their desire, via attaching といっている to ~たい.

かれ は にほんご を べんきょうしたい といっていた。
He was saying that he wants to study Japanese.