



## Reception hosted by the Embassy of Japan in the Sultanate of Oman

### ■ Outline

- Country (city) : Sultanate of Oman (Muscat)
- Date : Sunday, January 23, 2011, 19:00 to 21:00
- Event : Reception for "WASHOKU - Try Japan's Good Food".
- Venue : The Official Residence of the Ambassador of Japan to the Sultanate of Oman
- Sponsorship : Embassy of Japan in the Sultanate of Oman, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.
- Attendees : Approximately 80 guests (Mohammed bin al Zubair, the Sultan's Advisor for Economic Planning Affairs, Secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs for East Asia, GD of Economic Statistics, other Omani government officials, Oman Japan Friendship Association members, diplomatic corps, hotel professionals, trading company professionals, foodstuff wholesalers, etc.
- Overview : We introduced Japanese food to potential buyers and other industry professionals, including local trading company representatives, general managers of luxury hotels, influential local business owners, and senior government officials.
- Our main concept was to offer mostly items that could be enjoyed unprepared, such as fruits and similar items.
- This approach was taken to raise the image held by Omanis toward Japanese food ingredients, and stimulate their export to Oman.
- Other items were served as dishes prepared to highlight their potential as a food ingredient.

### ■ Menu

Menu	Item	Supplier	Area of produce
Pumpkin au gratin	Pumpkin	Ichiban Co., Ltd.	Kagoshima Prefecture
<i>Suage</i> (deep fried without batter or crumbs)	Miso (red/white)	Hikari Miso Co., Ltd.	Nagano Prefecture
	Burdock Roots	Ichiban Co., Ltd.	Miyazaki Prefecture
<i>Kinpira</i> (fried burdock strings)			
Cut vegetable sticks	Miso (red/white)	Hikari Miso Co., Ltd.	Nagano Prefecture
	Japanese Radishes/ <i>Daikon</i>	Ichiban Co., Ltd.	Nagasaki Prefecture
Beef steak	Citrus Soy Sauce/ <i>Ponzu</i>	Shimaya Co., Ltd.	Osaka Prefecture
Sushi	Soy Sauce	Shimaya Co., Ltd.	Osaka Prefecture
Items served as is	Pickled Radishes/ <i>Takuan</i>	Tokyo Chuo Tsukemono Co., Ltd.	Miyazaki Prefecture, Kagoshima Prefecture
	Sweet Pickled shallots/ <i>Rakkyo</i>	Tokyo Chuo Tsukemono Co., Ltd.	Ibaraki Prefecture
	Melons	Shizuoka Prefecture Greenhouse Farming Cooperative	Shizuoka Prefecture
	Persimmons	Ichiban Co., Ltd.	Fukuoka Prefecture
	Sweet Potatos/ <i>Kansho</i>	Ichiban Co., Ltd.	Tokushima Prefecture



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■ Promotional Cards




**Pumpkins**  
Supplier Ichiban Co., Ltd.

With a delicious sweetness and melting texture, this vegetable commonly features not only in general cooking, but also in sweets. Japanese pumpkins, with their high water content and stickiness, are perfect for light pickling and tempura.

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**Red Miso**  
"Marunashi Inaka Miso (Red, no additives)"  
Supplier HIKARI MISO CO., LTD.

Miso is a traditional Japanese seasoning. Malt and salt are added to boiled soybeans, which is then fermented. Red miso is made from extending the period of fermentation which turns the miso a red colour. It has a high salt content and a strong flavour.

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**White Miso**  
"Marunashi Kouji Miso (White, no additives)"  
Supplier HIKARI MISO CO., LTD.

Miso is a traditional Japanese seasoning. Malt and salt are added to boiled soybeans, which is then fermented. The period of fermentation for white miso is short, and it is called "white miso" because the colouration has not progressed. It is low in salt, and quite sweet.

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**Burdock Roots**  
"Shin Gobo"  
Supplier Ichiban Co., Ltd.

Burdock root has a crisp texture and a sweet taste. However it can have a strong harshness, and it is best to soak it for 5-10 minutes in water prior to use.

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**Japanese Radishes**  
"Daikon"  
Supplier Ichiban Co., Ltd.

Daikons are available in Japan in many varieties, and can be cooked in many ways: boiled, pickled, nabe (simmered pot dishes), used in soups and salads, and served as a condiment or garnish. It is the staple vegetable served daily in Japan.

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**Citrus Soy Sauce/Ponzu**  
"Konbudashi Ponzu"  
Supplier Shimaya Co., Ltd.

This broth-flavoured soy sauce is made by blending seaweed extract and citrus juice. The soft flavour of the seaweed combined with a mild, citric taste complements all kinds of food, including nabe (simmered pot dishes), meat or fish entrees, and salads.

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**Soy sauce**  
"Marudaizu Soy Sauce (Japanese soy beans)"  
Supplier DAISHO, Co., Ltd.

Marudaizu soy sauce is a flavourful condiment made using only choice Japanese soy beans and wheat. It can be used to season a variety of cooking styles, such as boiled and roasted dishes, either as a dip or a sauce.

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**Pickled Radishes**  
Supplier Tokyo Chuo Tsukemono Co., Ltd.

Pickled radishes are made by preserving the fresh daikon, local produce of Kyushu, in a lightly salted brine with bran, which is then matured at cool temperatures. The resulting pickle has a crunchily bite with a refreshing sweetness and fresh taste.

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**Sweet Pickled shallots**  
"Ama Rakkyo"  
**Spicy Pickled shallots**  
"Pirikara Rakkyo"

**Supplier** Tokyo Chuo Tsukemono Co., Ltd.

These rakkyo, or shallots, are pickled in refined sugar and fermented vinegar. This gives it a characteristic aroma and spiciness, while leaving it with a crunchy bite and mild sweetness.



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**Melons**  
"Earl's Melons"

**Supplier** MELOX

These melons are grown in glass greenhouse, under strict cultivation management. The palatability and fragrance of this melon are both fully satisfying. Earl's favourite melons are also known as musk melons, taking this name from their musky fragrance, and are of excellent quality. It is best eaten when the bottom becomes soft and elastic.



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**Persimmons**  
"Chilled Fuyu Persimmons"

**Supplier** Ichiban Co., Ltd.

Persimmons are rich in Vitamin C. There are many varieties of persimmon in Japan, including the Fuyu, known for its plump, round shape. All of them are characterised by their crispy texture and gentle, sweet flavours.



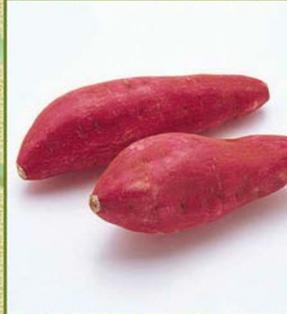
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**Sweet Potatoes**  
"Naruto Kintoki"

**Supplier** Ichiban Co., Ltd.

Naruto Kintoki is a sweet potato grown in a sandy area near Naruto Straits in Tokushima Prefecture. Sweet potatoes are rich in fiber and vitamins and said to be good for health and beauty. Due to their high sweetness content these potatoes provide an excellent ingredient for sweet products (such as Japanese confectionery).



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■ Photos of the Event



Japanese Ambassador Morimoto to the Sultanate of Oman addresses the guests



Venue



Tasting



Literature



Surveys



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### ■ Outlook on further expansion of exports

Omanis are generally said to have conservative tastes so it will not be easy to tie this and the next event into an immediate opportunity for any substantial market growth. Nevertheless, as the world's second largest importer of melons after Hong Kong, it is not impossible for food ingredients, including other fruits and vegetables, to gain a steady foothold within Oman. In that respect, we believe Japanese food can enjoy a wider acceptance by continuing food-buying campaigns targeted at a specific buyer segment.

### ■ Impression of the Embassy of Japan in the Sultanate of Oman

- (1) Out of the fruits offered, many gave praise to the melons for their flavor. Persimmons also received mention for deliciousness.
- (2) Of the vegetables served, we initially had reservations on the response that burdock would receive, but it fared well as a tasty item. The participants liked the explanation about it being a healthy high-fibrous food. As for the pumpkin, the samples provided for this event was rather soggy, failing to differentiate itself over the locally available variety.  
We had no choice but to cook it in a heavily seasoned recipe as opposed to serving them as is. Vegetable sticks did not fare well overall. In particular, the *daikon* seemed to be the least popular.
- (3) *Rakkyo* did so well it ran out. *Takuan* pickles were unexpectedly popular in spite of it being brought to the table midway through the course, partly for fear of its conspicuous aroma.
- (4) Normally, it is necessary to point out the superiority of Japanese food ingredients. In that respect, it is unfortunate that some ingredients, like the pumpkin and persimmons, failed to differentiate from the locally available variety.
- (5) We believe this event was generally a success in helping many of the participants develop a stronger interest in Japanese food ingredients. Many of the participants appeared to have genuinely enjoyed the Japanese food, and were happy with this event. The event was also covered by the local media, making it effective for diplomatic and public relations reasons.

### ■ Media coverage

[Newspaper articles]

- January 20, *Observer* (English, government publication).
- January 25, *Muscat Daily* (English, private publication).
- January 28, *Hi* (English, weekly free magazine)
- January 31, *Muscat Daily* (English, private publication)
- February 2, *The Week* (English, weekly free magazine)
- February 4, *Hi* (English, weekly free magazine)

