



## Reception hosted by Consulate General of Japan at Chicago

### Outline

Location (City): The United States of America (Indianapolis)

Date: Sunday, August 8th to Monday, August 9th, 2010

Name of Event: "The Delectable Bridges to Japan", in association with the Indiana State Fair

Venue: Inside the Japan Pavilion at the Indiana State Fair, Indianapolis, Indiana

Host: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, The Consulate General of Japan at Chicago, JETRO Chicago, Japan-America Society of Indiana

Attendees: Approximately 300 guests (owners and chefs of local American restaurants, cuisine school instructors, state-invited guests, and the general public)

Overview: This event was held to elevate the profile of and promote the use of Japanese food ingredients and products. It was held in conjunction with other events related to Japan and took advantage of the crowd-gathering opportunity presented by the first Japan Pavilion to be exhibited at the Indiana State fair, a high-profile event that takes place in Indianapolis.

Due to fair regulations regarding cooking and cold storage, the items exhibited consisted mainly of easy-to-serve visually appealing beverages and snacks. Specifically, the items exhibited were specific items of interest such as green tea, rice crackers, soft drinks, and *Kamaboko* (fish cake) combined with items suggested by local professionals, such as *Wagashi* (Japanese confectionery) and *Yuzu* (citrus). In particular, an effort to expand post-event business opportunities was made by presenting the availability of food ingredients and products otherwise difficult to obtain from Japan, through local Japanese food wholesalers.

- (1) August 8 (Sunday): Tastings and explanations were offered for Japanese Green Tea, Mandarin orange (*Mikan*) juice, *Ramune* (carbonated soft drink), traditional Japanese sweets (*Sakura Mochi*, *Mitarashi Dango*, *Kusa Mochi*), and *Beika* (*senbei*, baked and fried *okaki*, all various types of rice crackers).
- (2) August 9 (Monday): Mr. Makoto Ito, the residing chef at the Consul General's Official Residence, demonstrated how to prepare *matcha*-flavored bean cakes (*dorayaki*), a gelatinized dessert made from *mikan* (Mandarin oranges) juice, and a *yuzu* sauce-covered *kamaboko* dish. He also explained the characteristics of *matcha* (fine powdered green tea), *kanten* (Japanese jelly), and *yuzu*, and gave a demonstration on how to make *azuki* bean paste.

### Menu

Menu	Foods Used	Supplier	Area of Production
<i>Matcha Dorayaki</i> (red bean-filled cake)	<i>Matcha</i> (green tea)	AIYA America, Inc.	Aichi Prefecture
	Boiled <i>Azuki</i>	Imuraya Confectionery Co., Ltd.	Mie Prefecture
Steeped Green Tea	Green Tea	Homme Asakichi Shoten Co., Ltd.	Shizuoka Prefecture
Juice	100% Pure Mandarin Orange Juice	Ito Farm	Wakayama Prefecture
	<i>Ramune</i>	NISHIMOTO TRADING CO., LTD.	-
<i>Kamaboko</i>	Natural Sea Salt	Okinawa Mineral Lab	Okinawa Prefecture
	<i>Kamaboko</i>	YAMASHO, INC.	-
	<i>Yuzu</i> Seasoning	NISHIMOTO TRADING CO., LTD.	-
<i>Kanten</i> Dessert (Japanese Jelly)	<i>Kanten</i>	YAMASHO, INC.	-
<i>Wagashi</i> (Japanese sweets)	<i>Sasadango</i>	YAMASHO, INC.	-
	<i>Mitarashi Dango</i>	YAMASHO, INC.	-
	<i>Sakura Mochi</i>	YAMASHO, INC.	-
<i>Beika</i> (Japanese rice crackers)	Twice Fried <i>Agemochi</i>	Daiei Trading-Chicago-Co., Inc.	-
	<i>Umai Senbei</i> (Tasty rice crackers)	Daiei Trading-Chicago-Co., Inc.	-
	<i>Mame Ichiban</i>	Daiei Trading-Chicago-Co., Inc.	-





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Promotional Cards

**Matcha**  
Supplier: AIYA America, Inc.  
A fine powdered green tea commonly used in Jado (the tea ceremony), matcha has an elegant aroma and concentrated sweetness that make it a sheer pleasure to drink. Because the powder is dissolved in hot water, all of the tea's beneficial nutrients can be taken in.

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**Sweet boiled red azuki beans**  
Supplier: Imocaya Confectionery Co., Ltd.  
Most of traditional Japanese sweets are made from sweet boiled red azuki beans, which are rich in dietary fiber with low fat.

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**Japanese Green Tea**  
Supplier: Homme Asakichi Shoten  
In Japan, the tea most commonly served alongside Japan's low-calorie cuisine that emphasizes the flavor of ingredients is Japanese green tea. Without the addition of sugar or other sweeteners, the unique taste of Japanese green tea is enjoyed in its pure form, and contains many nutrients reputedly beneficial to health.

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**Orange Juice**  
Supplier: Corporation M&E Solution  
This is made from 100% pure squeezed mandarin oranges. It is all natural with no added sugar and contains 11 to 13 degrees of sugar. It is chilled immediately after squeezing to ensure that vitamins, dietary fiber and other nutrients are not lost, which are good for preventing colds and remedying internal disorders, and keep you looking young.

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**Ramune**  
Japanese soft drink  
Supplier: NISHIMOTO TRADING CO., LTD.  
Ramune is a popular carbonated lemon-lime beverage that is packaged in a glass bottle and sealed with a glass marble.

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**Natural Sea Salt**  
Supplier: YET, INC.  
Japan has sea salt rock or salt lake resources, so salt has always been made from sea water. Clean sea water is boiled using traditional methods to produce a salt that is rich in minerals. When used for cooking, this salt brings out the best flavors from the ingredients.

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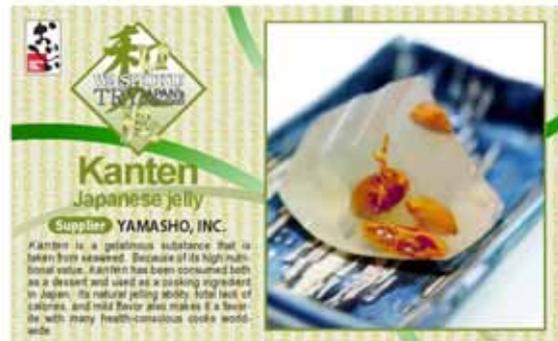


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### Promotional Cards



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### Results

- (1) The demonstration by Mr. Ito, the resident chef, was well received, in spite of the event taking place within a fair. A notable number of participants studiously took notes and asked questions about the characteristics of the different ingredients. Mr. Ito, after his demonstration, responded to several interview requests from local food-industry magazines.
- (2) This event was carried out as a concerted effort between organizations in the US and Japan, co hosted by JETRO Chicago who shared the burden of material preparation; as well as cooperation from the Indiana Restaurant Association who announced the event to its member restaurants. This event was showcased along with other events in the Japan Pavilion, where a recreated Japanese garden and traditional Japanese room served as a backdrop for demonstrating traditional Japanese culture (tea ceremony, candy making, and other traditional crafts), and Japan's latest high tech wonders (robotic demonstrations and high-speed railway displays). The combined exhibit drew more visitors than a typical Japanese food event, resulting in a very effective synergy and high level of exposure.





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Photos of the Event



Tastings and surveys (August 8)



Cooking demonstration (August 9)



The event (August 8 and 9)



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### Impression of the Consulate General of Japan at Chicago

#### 1) Achievement levels

- a) Indiana state is an important home to numerous Japanese businesses including Toyota, Honda, and Subaru. This event materialized when the Consulate received a request from Governor Mitchell Daniels to cooperate with a new theme for the Indiana State Fair, the state's largest public event, to showcase an entire country. Among the Consulate's many initiatives, the event served a major role in promoting exports of Japanese food ingredients and products, and on a larger scale, contributed significantly to strengthening ties between Japan and the state of Indiana, resulting in letters of appreciation by the governor, the state government, the Japan-America Society, and other organizations.
- b) With regards to promoting exports of Japanese food ingredients and products, the event succeeded in reaching out to local restaurant professionals, through the cooperation of the Indiana Restaurant Association, who we were not in contact with before.

In addition to staging PR activities, another significant achievement came by leveraging the tremendous drawing power of this fair, which was attended by more than the venue's capacity, to obtain individual comments and impressions. The responses indicate that the event was highly received.

We provided contact information for the local Japanese wholesalers, as well as the food ingredients and products they carry. We believe this will support their business operations.

#### 2) Points noted

- a) The responses by general visitors and restaurant professionals alike indicate a strong need that still exists raising the awareness of Japanese food and ingredients beyond the level enjoyed by eating sushi. Meanwhile, visitor responses were good, indicating that there is tremendous potential if businesses can select the right products and develop relations with local buyers. Considering the price of orange juice in high-end supermarkets, Mandarin orange juice could be a contender, just like green tea. In fact, *Ramune* is already available at US-based supermarkets in parts of Chicago, indicating the potential for further growth. *Kanten* also presents a great opportunity for health-minded consumers in the US.
- b) These points do not take away from the necessity for promoting Japanese food in already established regions like New York and Los Angeles, but the significant business potential presented by lesser developed regions like Indianapolis -- where a certain level of infrastructure marked by high-end supermarkets exists (not to mention a high Japanese presence and an existing supply chain for Japanese foodstuffs) -- merits a stronger effort to catch up with the established regions.
- c) Additionally, regarding the issue of which food ingredients and products to promote, ordering and introducing special items from Japan that are unavailable locally may be an effective way to develop demand for high-end food ingredients. Nevertheless, the business practices of small to medium size businesses in Japan do present a challenge for US-based businesses to directly contact Japanese food producers and to sustain a business relationship. Therefore, the first step should be to introduce Japanese food ingredients and products that are available locally through Japanese food wholesalers. This would not only support business activities, but it would also make business transactions easier for other buyers, and lead the way to expand demand and develop sustainable business after events, eventually reducing transportation costs and helping businesses control their costs.
- d) Either way, a continued effort toward promoting Japanese food and food ingredients is a prime issue to which the Consulate General of Japan at Chicago is committed to.

