

Chapter 6: Activities for the Inheritance of a Food Culture

1 Volunteers' activities

- Volunteers, esteeming local dishes and traditional food culture, have been working on the inheritance of food culture to hand down to the next generation.

2 Activities for school lunch, events and symposiums

- Using the school lunch menu to pass on food culture with roots in the local area, such as local cuisine and food associated with special events, is an effective way of providing children with a deeper understanding of the nature, culture, and industry of their local area. School lunches that incorporate local cuisine and food associated with special events are provided in each region.
- The 30th National Cultural Festival, Kagoshima 2015, which was held in Kagoshima Prefecture between October 31 and November 15, 2015, featured various food-related events at locations throughout the prefecture, including events focusing on local food culture.

3 Activities by expert chefs

- All Japan Chefs Association makes efforts to promote Shokuiku through cooking workshops for children and parents at nursery schools, kindergartens, and elementary schools, as well as for other events. It also promotes Shokuiku in a variety of other ways, such as co-organizing courses in partnership with groups seeking to promote Japanese cuisine.
- Nihon Chourishikai (another national association of Japanese chefs) held “The 6th Bento-with-love for Children National Contest” to develop children's palates by means of home-made bento that use local produce. It also seeks to pass on time-honored traditional Japanese dishes to the next generation and propagate the concept of “local production for local consumption” among a wider audience.



A cookery demonstration

4 Dissemination of information

- In addition to holding the Japan National Children's Regional Cuisine Summit, MAFF prepared and distributed guidebooks that explain Japanese dietary culture to promote understanding of Japanese food culture.
- The “Food Action Nippon Awards,” which honor outstanding efforts made for the purpose of increasing consumption of domestically produced agricultural, forestry, and fisheries produce, recognized efforts to protect and continue regional dietary cultural traditions and promote regional development through food culture.

Case Study

Initiatives by Dietary Life Improvement Promoters to Pass on Food Culture to the Next Generation

Nihon Shokuseikatsu Kyokai (Japanese Dietary Life Promotion Society)

(1) Local Cuisine Cooking Classes (Shizuoka Prefecture Branch)

These classes gave pre-school children and their parents/guardians, and elementary and junior high school students a hands-on lesson in how to make dashi (the basic stock used in Japanese cuisine) and the differences between the various types of dashi. The classes helped to promote awareness among a wider audience of the fact that making dashi properly from scratch helps to reduce salt intake, leading to a healthier diet.



Local cuisine cooking class

(2) High School On-demand Local Cuisine Workshop (Gifu Prefecture Mizunami City Branch)

Every year, at the request of the home economics teacher at the city's prefectural high school, a Dietary Life Improvement Promoter goes to teach the students about local cuisine. This year, the students tried their hand at making *hakozushi* (box-pressed sushi) and a Japanese sweet called "Karasumi," ensuring that local cuisine was passed on to the next generation.

As salt intake is high in the area, Mizunami City is seeking to limit the salt content of local cuisine and is working with high school students to consider measures in this area, to ensure that these efforts continue into the future.



Learning to make a Japanese sweet called "Karasumi"

(3) Toyama Prefecture: Full of Great Food (Toyama Prefecture Branch)

Toyama Prefecture is surrounded by mountains and sea in all four directions, so it is blessed with a lot of tasty food from both land and sea. In this initiative, family members spanning three generations gather at the local community center for an introduction to meals for prolonging life expectancy and other healthy meals, as well as participating in practical exercises that promote communication.



Local cuisine from Toyama Prefecture

(4) Hand-filleting Sardines at a Parent- and-Child Shokuiku Class (Aichi Prefecture Branch)

In this practical exercise at a Shokuiku class for parents and children, participants used local ingredients to make simple and tasty dishes that go well with both rice- and bread-based meals. The children tried hand-filleting sardines. While some of the children said, "Yuck!" as they gingerly picked up the fish, the sardines were a big hit once the children actually ate them. One child commented, "The bones are crunchy, so it's really tasty."



Hand-filleting sardines

Spotlight**Promoting Japan's Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery Industries and Food Culture to a Global Audience at the 2015 Milan Universal Exposition**

The 184-day-long 2015 Milan Universal Exposition (Expo 2015), which opened on May 1, 2015, marked the first time that food had been a theme at a universal exposition. Japan participated in Expo 2015, seeing it as a key opportunity to promote our nation's agriculture, forestry and fishery industries and food culture to a global audience.

In the Japan Pavilion, the latest technology was used to provide visitors with an enjoyable experience of Japanese agriculture, food and food culture, and traditional culture, thereby deepening their understanding of Japan's agriculture, forestry and fishery industries and food culture.

At the Event Plaza, 58 local governments and various other bodies showcased food culture and local specialties from each area. Students from Mie Prefectural Ohka High School gave a demonstration of how to clean and dress fish and make dashi. In addition, the city of Obama in Fukui Prefecture set up a "Kids' Kitchen," where Italian children could try their hand at making miso soup and rice balls, which helped to promote Japan's Shokuiku initiatives to a global audience.



There was always a long line outside the Japan Pavilion



Students from Mie Prefectural Ohka High School demonstrate how to make *nigirizushi* (hand-pressed sushi)



Obama City's Kids' Kitchen

Special Feature Event to Mark *Washoku* Day (November 24)

In December 2013, "*Washoku*, traditional dietary cultures of the Japanese" was inscribed on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list, so it is vital to foster a national movement aimed at passing on Japanese dietary culture to the next generation.

As such, November 24 has been selected as "*Washoku* Day," with a variety of events taking place to mark the occasion. The choice of date was inspired by (1) the desire to provide an opportunity to highlight anew the importance of Japanese dietary culture during autumn, when so many delicious foods are in season, and (2) the fact that the numerical version of the date is, in Japanese, homophonous with the phrase "good Japanese food." On November 24, 2015, *Washoku* Japan, an organization that strives to protect and propagate Japanese food culture, held "Savoring Japanese Cuisine through Dashi." In this event, in which around 2,000 elementary schools nationwide took part, children were provided with a school lunch showcasing Japanese cuisine, with an emphasis on dashi stock, which is a key element in a multitude of Japanese dishes. Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Hiroshi Moriyama visited Chuo Municipal Taimei Elementary School in Tokyo, where he ate school lunch with the children and talked to them about the importance of Japanese food culture.



The Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and schoolchildren say "*Itadakimasu* (Let's eat)"

Chapter 7: Provision of Information on Food Safety and other matters

1 Improvement of risk communication

- As one of the efforts on risk communication concerning food safety, etc., the Consumer Affairs Agency, Food Safety Commission of Japan, MHLW, and MAFF held public meetings with consumers and other stakeholders.
- In FY2015, public meetings were held in partnership with relevant ministries and agencies and local governments, etc. Focusing on such themes as “Radioactive Material in Food,” “Pesticides,” “Preventing Food Poisoning,” and “Health Foods,” the aim of these meetings was to ensure that consumers were equipped with a proper understanding of the issues and could act accordingly.

2 Information provision on food safety

- Information about food safety is provided in the form of easy-to-understand explanations on the websites of relevant ministries and agencies, as well as in quarterly magazines and e-mail newsletters, and on social media. In addition, the “Comprehensive Information System for Food Safety” website publishes national and international data concerning food safety.

3 Promoting proper food labelling

- A new food labelling system based on the Food Labelling Act (Act No. 70 of 2013) took effect on April 1, 2015. Efforts have been made to promote the knowledge of the new food labelling system among both consumers and business operators.
- In addition, deliberations are progressing regarding matters positioned as issues for consideration in the Basic Plan for Consumers (approved by the Cabinet on March 24, 2015), taking into account developments as they arise, and expert committees are currently examining individual issues, such as the labelling of food sold online and the labelling of place of origin of ingredients in processed foods.

Chapter 8: Research and Study, and the Promotion of Other Policies

1 Conduct of research and study

- The “Dietary Reference Intakes for Japanese” are revised every five years. In the “Dietary Reference Intakes for Japanese (2015),” the dietary reference intakes for sodium (salt equivalent) for both males and females have been set lower than in the 2010 edition, with the object of combating lifestyle-related diseases by preventing high blood pressure.
- The “Standard Tables of Food Composition in Japan -2015- (Seventh Revised Version)” were published in December 2015. As well as augmenting the range of foods listed for the first time in 15 years, a new table was created for carbohydrate components.

2 Situation of overseas Shokuiku and the promotion of international exchange

- The National Institute of Biomedical Innovation, Health and Nutrition invited young researchers from Asian countries to conduct joint research, especially with foreign researchers, who are highly interested in Shokuiku, and who have been performing joint research and publishing their techniques and achievements.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs distributes “niponica,” a magazine introducing modern Japan to the entire world through Japanese diplomatic missions overseas. “Japan Video Topics,” a film introducing Japanese topics including food culture, is also shown or lent out at Japanese diplomatic missions and broadcast from foreign TV stations.
- To promote public-private initiatives aimed at rolling out nutritional improvements overseas, the Study Team on International Deployment of Nutrition Improvement Programs was established under the Headquarters for Healthcare Policy in March 2015. In addition, to facilitate the establishment of the Nutrition Japan Public Private Platform, the Nutrition Japan Public Private Support Platform Preparatory Group was established in October 2015.