



## Hiroo Oda

Country/Region: Paraguay (Asuncion)

Age: 69

Current Occupation: Owner, Restaurant Hiroshima

### ● **Parent, Child and Grandchild: Promoting Japanese Cuisine Over Three Generations**

- Mr. Hiroo has been contributing to the promotion of Japanese food over three generations since 1969.
- He developed his own channel to procure fresh fish in Paraguay in order to offer sushi and sashimi using a variety of fresh seafood; he also offers other Japanese cuisine using local ingredients, contributing to the popularization of Japanese food.
- He is proactively promoting Japanese food; his activities include introduction of real Japanese cuisine to the people in Paraguay in collaboration with local major newspapers for their feature articles about Japanese food.

For more than 30 years, Mr. Hiroo has been promoting Japanese food, offering authentic Japanese cuisine in his restaurant in Asuncion, the capital of Paraguay, with Japanese-descent and local staff. He strives for genuine Japanese flavor using sake and seasonings from Japan, such as soy sauce for sashimi, which cannot be produced in Paraguay. When he started, Japanese food was totally unfamiliar to locals. Amid a Japanese-food boom these days, he established a new style of sushi, etc., while keeping the basics and tradition in mind, which was readily accepted by non-Japanese customers. Mr. Hiroo is now operating three restaurants: a family restaurant, a Japanese-style pub and a shopping center food court. Currently, 90% of the customers are locals, which shows how popular his cuisine is in the region.

In 1997, he started to show people how to cook Japanese dishes when he was asked to, and in 2011, he started to give Japanese cooking classes twice a year or so on an irregular base. Also, to commemorate the anniversary of the opening of Restaurant Hiroshima in Encarnacion every year, he makes it a rule to offer his original dishes to about 400 people – both locals and those who are interested in Japanese food – for free, a custom which he has been continuing for nearly 20 years since the opening. These activities clearly show his devotion to the promotion of Japanese food and culture.

Mr. Hiroo prepared sushi at a reception to celebrate the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan, which is hosted by the Japanese Embassy in Asunción, Paraguay every year. The guests included the President, the Vice-President, the mayor, the government officials and company executives, as well as ambassadors from other countries that had diplomatic relations with Japan. He is also committed to Japanese food PR events, dispatching instructors to cooking classes and sending assistants or using his premises for the events.