



# EAT! MEET! JAPAN

DEEP DINING EXPERIENCES  
FROM ACROSS JAPAN



**MAFF**

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries



# WHAT IS EAT! MEET! JAPAN?

EAT! MEET! JAPAN is a project that recognizes and promotes the best Japanese food experiences nationwide. Commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (MAFF), the project aims to encourage repeat visits to Japan, providing an environment where foreign tourists can continue to have unique Japanese food experiences even after multiple visits to Japan.

These ten EAT! MEET! JAPAN winners for 2022 represent nine prefectures of Japan. The judges selected a diverse range of experiences, but they all have one thing in common: bringing people together through food and providing a window into the culture of the area represented. During these award-winning experiences, Japanese food is a gateway into topics like history, sustainability, local agriculture, and craftsmanship.

# EAT! MEET! JAPAN 2022 CONTEST

During the contest application period, from May to July 2022, there were a total of 101 entries. Of these, ten experiences were awarded prizes. The winners received professionally produced promotional videos, social media marketing, exposure on the byFood booking platform, and mentoring from commercialization experts.



## GOLD PRIZE



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Harvesting Fresh Wasabi in the Beautiful Fields of Shizuoka  
PREFECTURE: SHIZUOKA



## SILVER PRIZE



2



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Revitalizing Minamisanriku: Fresh Oysters and Local Wine Tour  
PREFECTURE: MIYAGI

3



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Soy Sauce Making and Factory Tour in Kawagoe  
PREFECTURE: SAITAMA

4



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Vegan Cooking Class: Temari Sushi with Local Sustainable Vegetables  
PREFECTURE: TOKYO

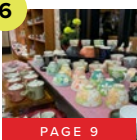
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Century-Old Fermentation Storehouse Tour and Miso Sampling  
PREFECTURE: NAGANO

6



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From Leaf to Brew: The Secrets of Japanese Tea Production  
PREFECTURE: SHIZUOKA

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Make Your Own Pet Food From Scratch! Fishing and Grilling in Mie  
PREFECTURE: MIE

8



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Takashima, the City of Fermentation: Miso, Soy Sauce, and the Original Sushi  
PREFECTURE: SHIGA

## BRONZE PRIZE



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Hinagashi Traditional Japanese Sweet Making in Tsuruoka  
PREFECTURE: YAMAGATA

10



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Pick Mikan and Make Marmalade with a Local Farmer in Ehime  
PREFECTURE: EHIME





#### PREFECTURE:

Shizuoka

#### ORGANIZER:

Satoyama no  
Kominka  
Shirakabe



#### ACCESS INFORMATION

From Shuzenji Station: Drive 20 minutes or take the bus to Yugashima Onsen Exit (29 minutes) and walk for 8 minutes.

#### PRICE

18,700 yen



book on  
**byFood**

## Harvesting Fresh Wasabi in the Beautiful Fields of Shizuoka

*In the birthplace of wasabi farming, stay at a renovated kominka (folk house), pick your own authentic Japanese wasabi, and enjoy it freshly grated with a special kaiseki meal.*

Hon-wasabi, or “true wasabi,” is rarely found outside of Japan. Even within Japan, a lot of wasabi (like the type served at conveyor belt sushi restaurants) is not made from the wasabi plant, but with less expensive horseradish. The reason for hon-wasabi’s rarity? The plant is notoriously difficult to grow. Requiring specific environmental conditions, wasabi thrives in areas that have mountain river valleys where they can flourish amid the clear-flowing stream beds.

To experience true wasabi in its birthplace, come to Shizuoka. Japan’s top producer of wasabi, Shizuoka has the perfect conditions for this extraordinary and scarce crop. A temperate climate, abundance of rainfall, and clean, flowing water make for happy wasabi paddies.

Just an hour and a half from Tokyo, stay at a beautifully renovated kominka (Japanese folk house) that resembles a Japanese temple, and experience a day in the wasabi fields. The kominka hotel features luxury rotenburo (outdoor baths) and has been updated with modern furniture and amenities, while preserving the building’s historic architecture.

At the wasabi farm, you’ll learn about the process of cultivating wasabi. Don rubber boots and traverse the rows of lush green wasabi, hearing the bubbling of clear water trickling underfoot. Follow along as your guide demonstrates how to harvest wasabi, and get hands-on in the field.

Back at the hotel, you’ll clean and use your wasabi harvest for nabe (Japanese hot pot). Enjoy a colorful kaiseki meal, complete with sashimi, wagyu beef, and many small, traditional Japanese side dishes. Grate your incredibly fresh wasabi to enjoy with your meal. A rare delicacy, you can even take home extra wasabi and enjoy its sharp, herbal flavor for days to come; its taste evoking the lush wasabi paddies of Shizuoka.



#### PREFECTURE:

Miyagi

#### ORGANIZER:

Minamisanriku  
Winery Co., Ltd.



#### ACCESS INFORMATION

From Sendai Station West Exit: At bus stop #40, board the Miyagi Kotsu Highway Bus and get off at Shizugawa Station a.k.a. “Michinoeki Sansan Minamisanriku” (1 hour 40 minutes).

#### PRICE

10,000 yen



book on  
**byFood**

## Revitalizing Minamisanriku: Fresh Oysters and Local Wine Tour

*Meet the producers of fresh seafood and local wine who are revitalizing Minamisanriku and fostering community in the wake of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami.*

A decade after the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011, the town of Minamisanriku in Miyagi prefecture is still on the road to recovery, bolstered by nation-wide support and the local community’s spirit of perseverance. Reconstruction efforts have included long-term projects and the creation of new industries, like “reconstruction tourism,” which allows visitors to participate in the revitalization efforts through educational trips.

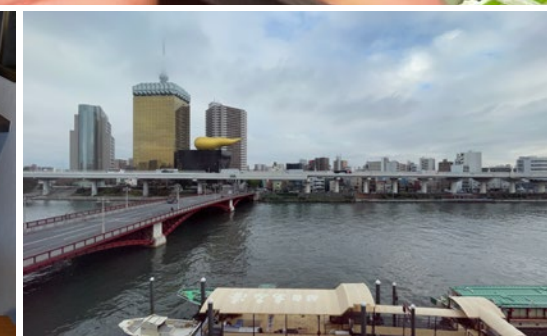
On this regional revitalization tour, experience the local food culture of Minamisanriku while supporting the area’s economy and its dedicated local producers. Sail out on a boat and harvest oysters, taking in the salty sea air and the stunning views of the islands across the water. At the aquafarm, you’ll help the fishermen harvest the oysters, and crack one open right on the boat—it doesn’t get fresher than this!

Once the boat returns to shore, you’ll take your haul to a local winery where you’ll shuck the oysters to prepare for lunch. Then, while your lunch is being cooked, tour the winery and hear stories about how the community has come together to create new industries and revitalize the area.

After the winery tour, enjoy lunch made from your harvested oysters and other local ingredients, like mutton from sheep that are fed a diet of *wakame* seaweed. Complemented by wine from the winery, you can appreciate a variety of local products from Minamisanriku during this meal.







**PREFECTURE:**  
Saitama  
**ORGANIZER:**  
Fueki Soy  
Sauce Co., Ltd.

**ACCESS INFORMATION**  
From Kawagoe Station: Take bus #2 or #3 to Igusa Shōgakkō Mae (20 minutes).  
From Honkawagoe Station: Take bus #2 or #3 to Igusa Shōgakkō Mae (24 minutes).

**PRICE**  
3,000-5,000 yen

## Soy Sauce Making and Factory Tour in Kawagoe

*Learn all about the process of making soy sauce, during a hands-on experience mixing soy in large wooden barrels.*



Tucked away in the charming town of Kawagoe is a soy sauce factory that's been around for centuries. Fueki Syoyu Brewing Co., Ltd. was founded in 1789 and has been in business for more than 230 years. Using carefully selected soybeans, wheat, and salt, they have perfected the art of soy sauce fermentation in large wooden barrels called *kioke*.

The owner Masatsugu Fueki is passionate about soy sauce and eager to share his extensive knowledge with guests. Committed to preserving the traditional method of aging soy sauce in *kioke*, he has spearheaded a project to continue the craft of *kioke* making.

Explore the factory, room by room, and learn all about how soy sauce is made. Then, don the traditional attire of a soy sauce brewer and literally step into the shoes of a local craftsman. Now that you look the part, you'll get to help with *kaiire*, the process of mixing the soy sauce. Using a giant paddle, you'll churn the *moromi* (soy sauce fermentation mash) in the *kioke*, the huge wooden barrels. It's surprisingly strenuous work, but once you get into the rhythm, it'll get your heart rate up!

Experience the full-bodied taste of freshly-pressed soy sauce, then enjoy foods featuring this essential Japanese pantry staple. Choose a meal featuring the soy sauce, like udon that's fittingly served in a mini soy sauce barrel. Or, try the lunchtime classic, an *onigiri* (rice ball) that's seasoned with soy sauce. Soy sauce-flavored desserts feature on the menu as well; try the soy sauce ice cream or soy sauce pudding—the balance of savory and sweet will keep you coming back for bite after bite.



**PREFECTURE:**  
Tokyo  
**ORGANIZER:**  
Smart VEGAN LAB

**ACCESS INFORMATION**  
From Asakusa Station (Tokyo Metro Ginza Line): Walk 1 minute.

**PRICE**  
12,000 yen



book on  
**byFood**

## Vegan Cooking Class: Temari Sushi with Local Sustainable Vegetables

*Good for your body and the environment, this vegan cooking class uses locally produced vegetables for a healthy and delicious meal.*



Veganism as a concept is slowly becoming more understood in Japan, yet still there are few options for vegan versions of classic dishes like sushi, ramen, or *okonomiyaki*. To ensure that vegan travelers in Japan can experience the country's culinary highlights, Wakahara Ayaka created Smart VEGAN LAB, which offers plant-based cooking classes featuring colorful local ingredients. For vegans or anyone with an interest in plant-based cuisine, this temari sushi class allows Japanese cuisine to be enjoyed by all, regardless of dietary restrictions.

Join your host Ayaka in a modern, light-filled restaurant with expansive windows overlooking the Sumida River, offering an iconic view of landmarks like the beer mug-shaped Asahi building and Tokyo Skytree.

After greetings and a brief introduction, the cooking lesson will begin. Using locally grown and harvested produce, you'll prepare a salad with seasonal vegetables like cucumber, tomato, mushrooms, and peppers, along with tofu for protein. Utilizing all-local ingredients, you'll be supporting nearby farmers and environmental sustainability initiatives.

Then, you'll learn how to make temari sushi, cute little ball-shaped sushi that are crowned with delicately-cut vegetables. This type of sushi is beginner-friendly, and with guidance from Ayaka it is easy to learn and recreate at home. Finally, you'll assemble your dishes along with miso soup for a balanced meal.

Enjoy your meal while looking out at the Asakusa-bashi skyline reflected in the water. Even in a metropolis as big and bustling as Tokyo, this cooking class proves that you can still participate in local community projects and support sustainable food production.