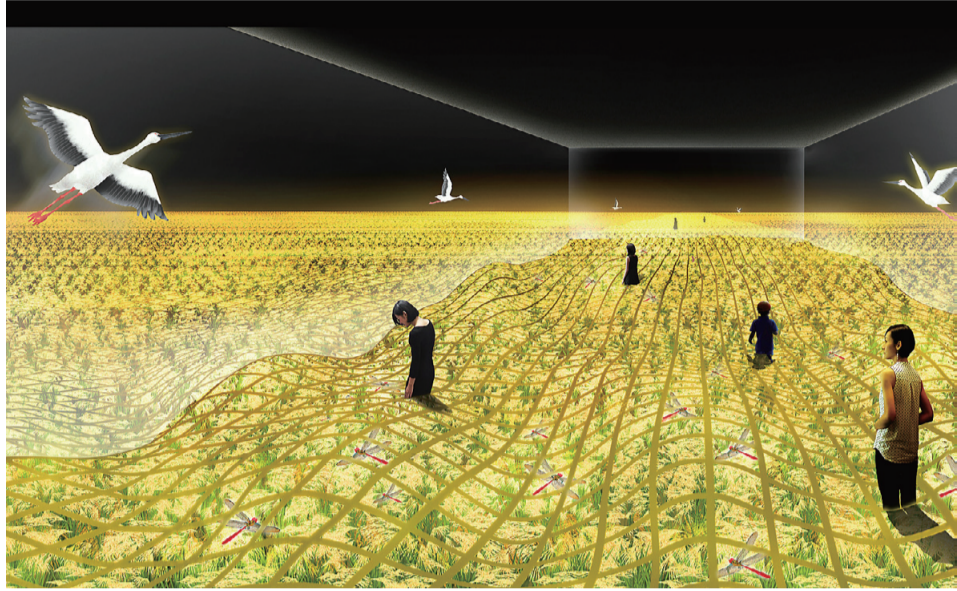


The Japan Times

Expo Milano 2015

Friday, May 1, 2015



Counterclockwise from above; Aerial photo of Expo Milano 2015, which will run from May 1 to Oct. 31, under the theme of "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life," and see participation by 145 countries; The Scene I exhibition space in the Japan Pavilion creates scenes of Japan's rural rice fields throughout the four seasons using projection mapping technology (related story on page 3); Vegetable factories may enable efficient food production in urban areas (more information on page 4); Kyary Pamyu Pamyu, a globally renowned *kawaii* (cute) icon, is a Japan Pavilion supporter (see story on page 6). BIE, JAPAN PAVILION PR, CHIBA UNIVERSITY, ASOBI SYSTEM

Japan embraces global cuisines in 'washoku' culture

Makiko Ito
SPECIAL TO THE JAPAN TIMES

Japanese cuisine has never been as popular around the world as it is now. Sushi is available in the most unexpected places, and dishes like tempura, sashimi and teriyaki can be readily found, too. Japan itself is recognized as a mecca for great cuisine from all parts of the world, with the Michelin Red Guide awarding Tokyo more stars than any other city it surveys. The dedicated and enthusiastic diners of Japan's capital have attracted major

international food franchises and famed chefs, who have opened branches of their establishments there at an ever-increasing rate in recent years.

Japan's pavilion at Expo Milano 2015 will feature a variety of Japanese food as a model of a sustainable, balanced and healthy diet aimed at alleviating food shortages and addressing ecology concerns. The pavilion will also allow visitors to sample some of the delicious and flavorful tastes that Japan offers.

Washoku, or traditional Japanese cuisine, which was given UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage designation in 2013,

is what is often considered the only "authentic" Japanese cuisine. However, for most Japanese people the national diet also encompasses *yoshoku*, or Western dishes adapted to Japanese tastes, and *chuuka*, dishes of Chinese origin that have been similarly adapted. While *washoku*, *yoshoku* and *chuuka* may seem to differ from each other, there are common threads running through them all. First, is the importance placed on bringing out the best in the base ingredients and secondly, establishing a balance of flavors and textures. Finally, but perhaps most importantly, it is critical to

pack each bite with umami. These common threads can be seen in three of the most popular Japanese dishes: soba, sushi and ramen.

Soba: Delicious sauce, noodles

Umami, a Japanese word (derived from *umai*, or delicious) that is now used in many languages, means the savory, meaty flavor that is present in meat, fish, cheese, vegetables and even grains — the fifth flavor besides salty, sweet, sour and bitter. Kikunae Ikeda first identified glutamic acid, one of the amino acids that are the source of umami in food, in 1908 from *konbu*, kelp that's a foundation ingredient in Japanese cooking. It's not surprising that a Japanese chemistry professor was the first to "discover" umami, since Japanese cooks have been extracting umami from various ingredients for many years.

The importance of umami is easy to see in soba, which consists of noodles served with a savory dipping sauce or in soup. The word soba also means buckwheat, the main grain used to make the noodles. Soba as we know it today became widespread in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, during the late Edo Period. The sauce or soup used for soba is made with dashi, the clear, amber-colored stock that's the base of many Japanese dishes. Dashi (which is just the Japanese word for stock) is usually made by combining *konbu*, the super-source of glutamic acid, and dried fish, which are high in inosinic acid, another source of umami. The most popular dried fish ingredient is *katsuo-bushi*, skipjack tuna that is fermented, aged and dried to concentrate the umami components, then shaved thinly in order to extract the umami as efficiently as possible.

Soy sauce is another component of soba sauce, and it too is packed with umami — as is miso, a closely related fermented product. These ingredients are used to add even more umami as well as saltiness. Sweetness and even more umami are added via sake and *mirin* (a fortified liquor), along with sugar and salt if needed. A good soba sauce is a perfect balance of saltiness, sweetness and umami that enhances the slippery, chewy texture of the soba noodles. With

the *yakumi* (garnishes) such as finely chopped green onion, green *shiso* (perilla) leaves and grated wasabi adding notes of bitterness and spice, it becomes perfectly flavor-balanced.

The freshness of the soba flour used to make the noodles is also important. Japan may be one of the few societies where the seasonality of grain products such as *shinmai*, newly harvested rice, is so highly prized. The season for *shin-soba*, or new-harvest soba flour, is eagerly anticipated every fall.

Sushi: A balancing act

The role umami plays in sushi is not as obvious, but it's equally as important. *Nigiri-zushi*, also known as *Edo-mae* sushi, the rice topped with fish variety that has spread worldwide, came into existence in the early to mid 19th century, when it was sold as fast food at stand-up food stalls to workers at the fish market. Sushi may seem like a simple dish — a ball or bed of rice topped with raw or cooked fish, seafood and other ingredients, but sushi is actually a complicated dish. The rice, which must be polished and pure in flavor, is cooked in dashi or with a large piece of *konbu* added to the cooking water, to give the rice plenty of umami. The cooked rice is then seasoned with a mixture of salt, sugar and vinegar. The umami and balance of seasonings in the rice enhances the flavor of whatever is put on top. As a matter of fact, the word *sushi* doesn't mean raw fish — it refers any dish, with or without fish, that uses *shari*, this flavor-packed rice.

While the rice is supremely important, the toppings (called *gu*) are the colorful stars of the show. They're not just fish filets sliced up at random; a skilled sushi chef selects each type of fish carefully, and serves it when it is at its best — raw, seared, stewed or boiled; allowed to age and become tender, or served while it's still alive (such as with shellfish). The peak seasons for each type of fish and seafood is taken into consideration too, which is why you can get the best experience at a good sushi restaurant by going for the *omakase*, or chef's choice. Some of the top sushi chefs also add the sauces, flavors, and garnishes that are perfectly

matched to each morsel of sushi, instead of leaving it up to the customer to simply dunk them in soy sauce.

Ramen is comfort food

Ramen, a hearty bowl of noodles in hot soup with various toppings, is the most recent addition to the Japanese table of the three discussed here. It most likely originated with noodle soup dishes introduced by Chinese immigrants in the late 19th century, after the country's borders were opened after about 250 years of isolation. However, the popularity of ramen didn't really take off until after World War II. In the 1950s, ramen stalls popped up all over the country; cheap, fast and filling, ramen fit the hectic pace of life during the economic boom period of the 1960s to 1980s perfectly. (Instant ramen was invented by Momofuku Ando, the founder of Nissin Foods, in 1953.) Today, ramen is one of the most popular foods in Japan, regarded by many as comfort food — inexpensive, delicious and deeply satisfying.

While the noodles and toppings are important, the heart and soul of ramen is the soup. Just as with soba, the foundation of ramen soup is an umami-packed dashi. As with traditional dashi, ramen soup dashi is made with a mixture of umami ingredients such as *konbu*, *katsuo-bushi* or other dried fish, chicken carcasses, pork bones, leeks, garlic and more. Each ramen restaurant guards their formula jealously. Regional versions of ramen, from the miso-flavored soup of Sapporo in Hokkaido to the milky pork bone (*tonkotsu*) based soup from Hakata in Kyushu, are hotly debated for their relative merits and keep ramen fans busy trying one or the other. *Gotchi*, or regional ramen, is even used in regional tourism marketing campaigns.

These days it's possible to get very good Japanese food in cities around the world and, while the best versions may be found in Japan, some truly great Japanese food can be had at the Japan Pavilion at Expo Milano 2015. If you're looking to sample some Japanese cuisine without having to travel to Japan, this is an excellent chance to try some of the Land of the Rising Sun's finest.



Clockwise from left; A little girl tucks into *zaru soba*, cold soba noodles dipped in sauce; *Temarizushi*, small ball-shaped sushi, in an *ekiben* — a lunchbox sold at train stations; A hearty bowl of ramen satisfies both the body and soul. MAKIKO ITO

Expo Milano 2015

Wide variety of events welcome Milan visitors



Domenico Giorgi
AMBASSADOR OF ITALY TO JAPAN

From May 1 through Oct. 31, Italy will host the Expo Milano 2015, a global event bringing together 145 countries, three international organizations, 13 nongovernmental organizations, many corporations and citizens to address issues related to the global food challenges, nutrition, the culture of food and food waste. Japan will participate in the event with one of the biggest pavilions, with an exhibition area of 4,170 sq. meters. Expectations and curiosity about what Japan will present at the site are high.

The hosting city, Milan, in the northern part of Italy, is a primary industrial, commercial and financial center. It is the Italian capital of fashion and design, hosting world-renowned events such as Fashion Week and the Milan Furniture Fair.

Milan is also one of the major art cities in Italy, with its historical heritage that dates back to the Roman Empire; Milan is home to the world-renowned masterpieces, "The Last Supper" by da Vinci and the "La Pietra Rondanini" by Michelangelo.

During the expo, Milan and the neighboring towns will offer many cultural opportunities, including art and

sport, theater and music, fashion, cinema and design. There will be the largest retrospective ever organized on da Vinci in the Palazzo Reale; and an exhibition, "Food in Art: Masterpieces from the Great Masters from the 17th Century to Warhol," with paintings by Bellini, Caravaggio, De Chirico, Fontana and others will take place in Palazzo Martinengo in Brescia. For the first time in history, the "La Scala" Opera House will be open continuously from May 1 until Oct. 31, with an exceptional program of the world's most-renowned operas and ballets. Traditional locations for shopping, like via Montenapoleone; and Porta Ticinese for the happy hours are ready to receive millions of guests from all over the world.

The theme of the expo — "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life" — aims to stimulate the participating countries to find concrete answers to the crucial question of how to guarantee healthy, safe and sufficient food for all while

respecting the planet.

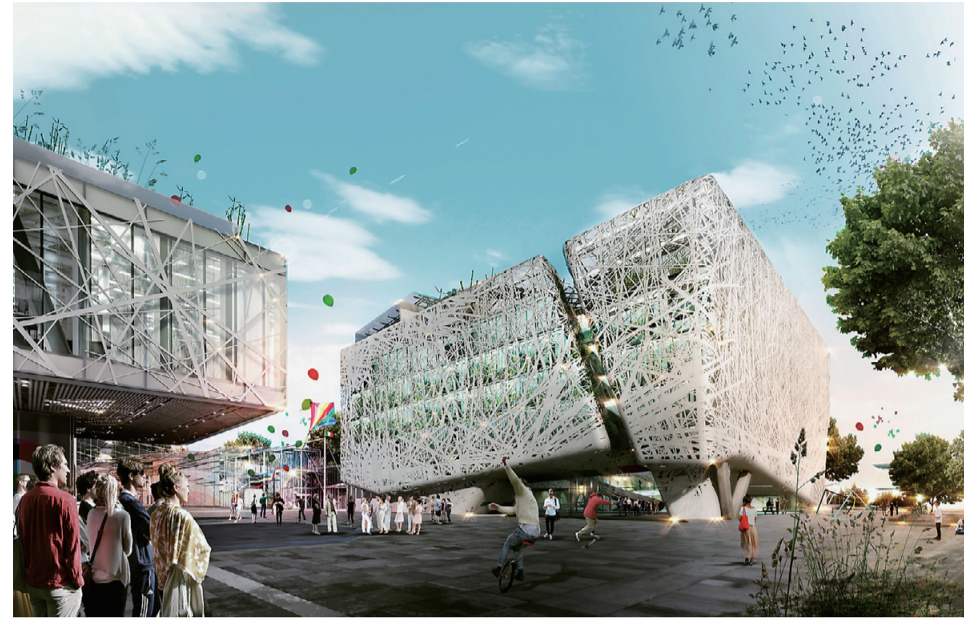
This theme is perfectly matched with the attention that Italy has always paid to agriculture and food, something clearly shown by the presence in Rome of the family of U.N. agencies dealing with food and agriculture: FAO, IFAD, the World Food Programme and by the establishment in Parma of EFSA, the European Agency in charge of food standards.

The expo will be a platform for international dialogue on the world's most important challenges. Approximately 870 million people are suffering from hunger and malnutrition, while 1.5 billion people are overweight or suffering from diseases related to obesity and the amount of food waste in developed countries is incredibly high. The international community should exchange ideas and find solutions to this contradiction, improving the quality of life for people all over the world through innovative technology and sustainable practices.

Within the expo framework, many institutional events will take place. There will be an important "Women for Expo" project, placing women's culture at the center of a universal exposition for the very first time. It will be dealing with women's crucial roles in nutrition, responsible consumption and education of future generations.

An important document, the "Charter of Milan," will sum up the results of the debates involving the scientific community, civil organizations and various institutions in order to identify the crucial solutions for the sustainable use of our planet's resources. This charter, which should be the cultural legacy of the expo, can be signed by individuals, associations and companies, becoming an innovative instrument of "global citizenship" on the theme of sustainable nutrition and the access to food as a universal right.

The universal exposition will also be a great opportunity for each country to



The Italian Pavilion takes on an appearance of an urban forest of branches. BIE

share the best of their food traditions and promote their products on a global scale.

Both Italy and Japan share average life expectancies that are among the highest in the world. This, according to many scientific studies, is mainly due to their diet, one of the most important contributors to longevity and healthy living.

It is not a coincidence that the Italian "Mediterranean diet" and Japanese "Washoku" (traditional Japanese cuisine) have been recognized by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritages, in 2010 and 2013 respectively.

Both our food cultures are in fact based on a great diversity of regional dishes, a wide variety of fresh and seasonal ingredients, along with historical heritage combined with the most modern nutritional techniques. Both countries share a lifestyle that combines the pleasure of good food with the benefits of a healthy body.

The universal exposition will therefore be a unique opportunity for presenting our lifestyles to the world.

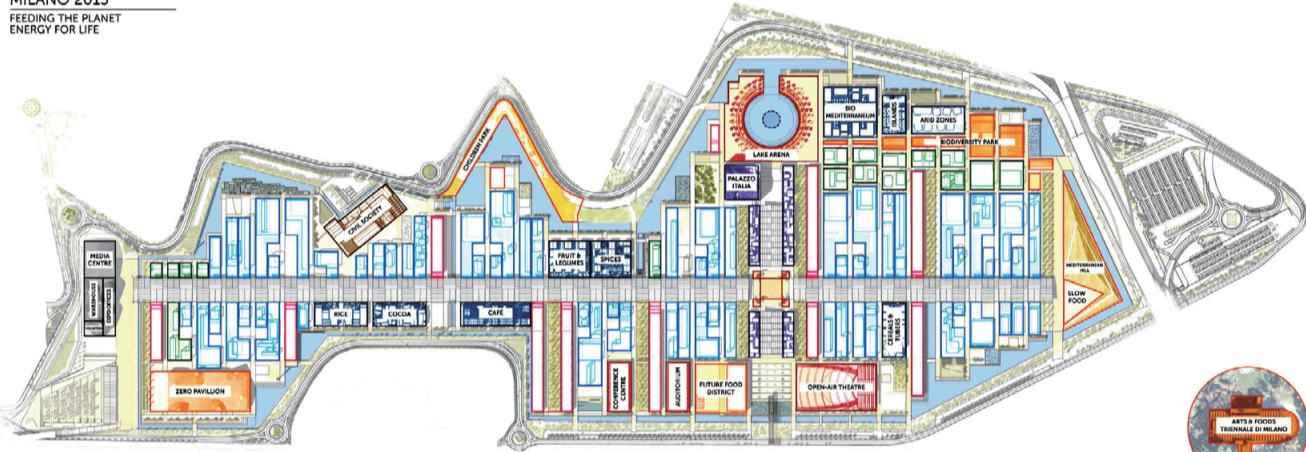
Many prestigious Japanese entrepreneurs will take the opportunity to open restaurant of the highest quality in Milan.

The expo will further strengthen the already strong relations between Italy and Japan, the 150th anniversary of which we are going to celebrate next year.

Japan's Minister of Agriculture Yoshimasa Hayashi will visit the expo in May and many governors, mayors, senior managers of Japanese companies and celebrities from all sectors of society are also planning to visit Milan throughout the event.

We are looking forward to welcoming Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and other Cabinet members on the occasion of the expo's Japan Day, July 11.

All Japanese will be welcome. Milano ni zehi mina sama irashite kudasai!



LEGENDA: ■ THEMATIC AREAS ■ EVENT AREAS ■ SERVICE AREAS ■ OFFICIAL PARTICIPANTS BUILDINGS ■ OFFICIAL PARTICIPANTS MULTIFUNCTIONAL ■ CORPORATE ■ PAVILIONS/ITALIA ■ CIVIL SOCIETY BIE

Possible role for 'washoku' culture in healthy global diet

Yoshimasa Hayashi
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES

Expo Milano 2015, which is the first expo focusing on food, opens today.

Given that the world population is expected to exceed 9 billion by 2050, we are facing global issues such as how to stably feed those people, how to deal with the situation where hundreds of millions suffer from hunger and depletion at the same time, how to cope with climate change and how to sustain local family farming alongside the progress of urbanization.

The objective of Expo Milano 2015 is to deepen the understanding of these issues. In this respect, "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life" is an appropriate theme for the expo held in Italy, a country known for its food and culture.

At Expo Milano 2015, Japan looks to demonstrate the potential of Japanese agriculture and food culture under the theme of "Harmonious Diversity" as follows:



Japan's agriculture, forestry and fisheries could serve as models for the rest of the world, in view of the sustainability of the global food supply in the future, as they are operated in harmony with nature and maintain the ecosystem while nurturing biodiversity.

Washoku (the traditional dietary cul-

ture of Japan) could be a prototype for dietary practices, in that it could contribute to the health of people all over the world through its inherent traditional wisdom such as fermented foods and a balanced diet.

The cutting-edge technology of Japan's food and agriculture industry has the potential to contribute to the solution of challenges we face in the world today such as hunger and climate change.

Japan's dietary culture could play a role in strengthening ties among people, as it encourages people to express gratitude for the blessing of nature and for all who engaged in food production, represented by a phrase *itadakimasu* (a feeling of appreciation for eating products provided by nature).

Japan also intends to communicate the excellence of Japanese dietary cultures to the rest of the world by taking advantage of the registration of washoku as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2013, the Expo Milano 2015 and the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games as a hop, step and jump for Japa-

nese cuisine. These events will provide opportunities for people all over the world to enjoy healthy and delicious Japanese food.

In order to ensure the expo stimulates the local economy in Japan, including through an increase in the number of inbound tourists, it is important for the government of Japan to hold a series of exhibitions in close collaboration with local governments. Therefore, the national government of Japan is striving to encourage active participation by local governments and organizations through the "event square" set up at our expo site, where participants can make presentations of their activities related to food.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is also making every effort to ensure that the expo plays a key role in establishing the popularity of Japanese food all over the world.

I truly hope Expo Milano 2015 will inspire greater interest in Japanese food among many people and further enthusiasm for our cuisine around the world.

Yoichi Miyazawa
MINISTER OF ECONOMY, TRADE AND INDUSTRY

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) has played a leading role in Japan's participation in World Expositions since Expo Osaka in 1970. This year, METI is acting as organizer together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) for the Japan Pavilion in Expo Milano 2015, which will be held under the theme of "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life."

With "Harmonious Diversity" as our own motto in keeping with the expo's theme, the Japan Pavilion will seek to convey how the wisdom and technology cultivated through the development of Japanese food, and food culture, including fermenting methods and preservation technology, can contribute to solving issues common to all humankind such as food shortage.

METI will proactively convey the allure of Japan by showcasing traditional tableware and other craftwork, which are indispensable to Japanese cuisine, under the Cool Japan initiative. Crafts and the techniques of the



master artisans who make them are regional resources dotted throughout Japan, and we are pleased to be able to introduce them to the world. I hope this will be an opportunity for visitors to see and feel Japan, leaving them with fruitful memories and a desire to discover more.

The Japan Pavilion is now ready to welcome you. The chance to experience and share the wonders of Cool Japan awaits all visitors.



This tuna has a diploma to show that it's a Kinkai University "graduate"



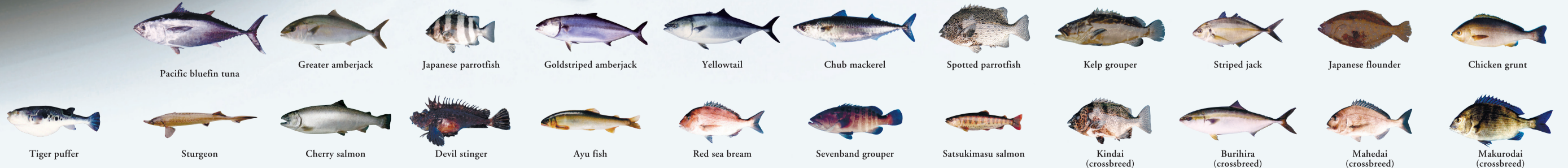
Pioneering Aquaculture for Healthy Eating, Healthy Seas

Along with rice and seasonal vegetables, fish is at the heart of the famously healthy Japanese diet. Sustainably raising high-quality fish — from eggs to adults — has been the mission of Kinki University's full-cycle aquaculture program since 1948. This cutting-edge research program has successfully bred 18 different species,* including our signature Kindai tuna.

Our delicious farm-raised fish is served at two popular restaurants that the university runs in Osaka and Tokyo. As we expand the frontiers of aquaculture research, we aim to provide the world with a healthy and renewable food source while reducing pressure on the oceans' wild fish stocks.

Feeding Japan, Feeding the World

Visit the Japan Pavilion at Expo Milano 2015 to learn more about Kinki University's full-cycle aquaculture program for Pacific bluefin tuna.



*Along with these 18 world-first farm-bred species, Kinki University has bred a number of other fish species, some of which are depicted above.

Expo Milano 2015

Showcasing innovation, food culture

Kazuaki Nagata
STAFF WRITER

Sushi, tempura and teriyaki are probably some of the first things that come to mind when Japanese food comes up among foreigners.

But visitors to the Japan Pavilion at the Expo Milano 2015 that has kicked off in the northern Italian city on May 1, under the central theme of "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life" will get a chance to see deeper into the Japanese gastronomic culture. With displays ranging from cutting-edge, digital interactive exhibitions, traditional handicraft tableware to a food court serving authentic Japanese food, people are sure to gain a better understanding of Japan's culinary history.

The two-story Japan Pavilion, which is one of the biggest among about 140 participating countries, has its own theme of "Harmonious Diversity" to promote the various aspects of Japanese food culture and how they are effectively combined together.

Japan is also making proposals to deal with challenges the world currently faces, as well as future potential challenges such as food crises possibly triggered by a rapidly increasing population and unequal food supply distribution.

"The Japanese agriculture, forestry and fisheries industries have a diverse nature. I mean, there is uniqueness depending on the seasons and regions, such as rice paddies, terraced rice fields and grasslands," said Tatsuya Kato, commissioner general of the Japanese Section of the expo, in a recent interview with The Japan Times.

"It may not be widely known, but Japanese food has such a rich background in



Tatsuya Kato, commissioner general of the Japanese Section of the Expo Milano 2015 YOSHIKI MIURA

nature ... we want to promote a deeper part of the Japanese food culture," said Kato, who works for the Tokyo-based semi-public Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO).

And while different regions have a variety of their own traditional foods, Japanese people have adopted and changed food originally from overseas to meet the country's own taste, including such dishes as pasta and curry, highlighting a harmonious and diverse aspect of the Japanese food culture, said Kato.

To convey these messages, the Japanese pavilion has interesting and interac-

tive digital exhibits for visitors to learn about the culture in a casual way while having fun.

"It's important that visitors can be immersed in the exhibitions. If we just write and explain that Japanese food is this and that, visitors would not really feel motivated to engage in them," said Kato.

"In that sense, we've made efforts to set up spatial presentations for people to naturally and organically understand our message," he said.

For instance, the Scene I exhibition, which is the first part of the pavilion, recreates scenes of Japan's rural rice fields throughout all four seasons through projection mapping technology.

"(Visitors) will be able to feel as if they were standing in a rice field, a grassland or on a shoreline. Through this kind of spatial presentation, we want visitors to feel the environment of Japan's agriculture and the changing seasons rather than simply explaining them," said Kato.

The Scene II exhibition features a digitally projected waterfall called the "Diversity Waterfall" on which many square information panels on Japanese food culture are floating. When visitors touch a square with their smartphones, the information will transfer to their handsets through a special app.

Moreover, the Scene V Live Performance Theatre, the concept of which is a future-style of restaurant that welcomes visitors with media tables. The tables contain touch screens for customers to choose menu items using chopsticks like touch pens.

The space also has huge screens on its walls, and a stage is set up in the middle of the restaurant.

Firms known for their digital arts skill such as rhizomatiks Co. and Team Lab produced the interactive exhibitions.

Promoting the diverse Japanese food culture is a major mission of the Japan Pavilion, but it also plans to make proposals to solve global issues in relation to food.

"The theme of the expo is 'Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life,' which means examining how we can maintain a sustainable food supply. This is not just a challenge for advanced countries, but also for developing nations," said Kato.

Japan has taken up four issues — possible food shortages due to a drastically increasing global population; uneven food supply distribution; challenges with agriculture due to climate change; and nutritional imbalances.

The pavilion showcases some possible solutions, which have been proposed and examined by various experts, to these issues. These solutions include promoting a diet richer in soybeans and aquaculture to grow tuna and eel to address food shortages, breed improvements to adjust to climate change and technology to store food longer to reduce uneven food supply distribution.

And being interactive is also a key here, as the pavilion includes globe-shaped interactive displays addressing each issue in the Scene III area.

While cutting-edge art technology is expected to get users engaged in the exhibition experience, the concept of the Scene IV exhibition is a decidedly low-tech affair.

The simple space is occupied by a long dining table displaying traditional Japanese tableware, such as Imari and Arita porcelains, Edo Kiriko glass crafts and Wakasa-nuri chopsticks.

"People might have a very formal image about traditional crafts, but tableware, including lacquered items, pottery, porcelain and cooking tools add color to



The two-story Japan Pavilion welcomes visitors to the Expo Milano 2015. JAPAN PAVILION PR

dining spaces," said Kato.

According to Kato, it will take about 30 to 40 minutes to fully enjoy all the exhibits the Japan Pavilion has to offer.

Once visitors finish touring the pavilion and learning more about Japanese food culture, there is a good chance they will be hungry and ready to try some Japanese food.

Fortunately, the pavilion has a food court serving various types of food such as curry from CoCo Ichibanya, a Japanese-style curry chain, hamburgers from Mos Burger and sukiyaki bento lunch boxes from Kakiyasu, which operates meat shops and restaurants nationwide.

Soba-chain operator Sagami also provides soba and tempura, and Minokichi, which runs Kyoto-style traditional Japanese restaurants, has its own small restaurant with counter seating.

In addition, the pavilion has an event space where 49 participants, including local municipalities, prefectural govern-

ments and NPOs will be promoting their specialties. Participants will have two to five days to introduce their products or promotions in the event space.

At the expo, each country has been allocated its own day to celebrate their participation, with Japan Day scheduled on July 11.

Japan will have an official ceremony featuring live performances by popular J-pop singer Kyary Pamyu Pamyu; Kazufumi Hosho, a traditional noh performer; calligrapher Shishu; the shamisen duo Yoshida Brothers; and Dadadadan Tenko, a Japanese drum group.

Overall, Japanese food has become increasingly popular overseas in recent years, having won UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage status in 2013, so people who like Japanese food will have an opportunity to learn more about it.

"In addition, we hope that the pavilion will not only entertain visitors at the expo, but also make them want to come to Japan," Kato said.

He added that the Japan Pavilion will also welcome Japanese visitors.

It is true that the global community shares issues in relation to food, but "on the other hand, when you look at Japan, our own agriculture, forestry and fisheries industries have issues, too, including how farms can be successfully passed on to younger generations and improving our low food self-sufficiency," he said.

By touring the Japan Pavilion, as well as other countries' pavilions, Kato said that Japanese people would have the chance to be more aware of the challenges the domestic agriculture, forestry and fisheries industries are facing.

These expositions, the first of which was held in 1851 in London take place every five years and have long provided a forum for countries to share their technologies and innovation.

Expo Milano 2015 will be held from May 1 to Oct. 31 and is estimated to attract more than 20 million visitors.



From left; The Japan Pavilion has an event area where 49 participants, including local municipalities, prefectural governments and NPOs, will be promoting their specialties; The exhibition of the pavilion includes the Scene III Innovation that has interactive globe-shaped devices that will provide possible solutions to global issues in relation to food; and the Scene II Diversity area features a digitally projected waterfall where about 1,000 square panels on Japanese food culture are floating; visitors can touch their smartphones to the squares to download more information through a special app. JAPAN PAVILION PR



Expo Milano 2015 open to the global community

Expo Milano 2015 is a universal exhibition that will be held from May 1 to Oct. 31 in the northern Italian city of Milan. More than 140 countries will participate in the expo, which is a global showcase of their technology offering a concrete answer to a vital need; being able to guarantee healthy, safe and sufficient food for everyone, while respecting the planet and the balance of nature.

More than 20 million visitors are expected to visit the expo, which will have an exhibition area of 1.1 million sq. meters.

The central theme is "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life." A platform for the exchange of ideas and shared solutions on the theme of food, stimulating each country's creativity and promoting innovation for a sustainable future, the expo will give people the opportunity to learn about and taste the world's best dishes. It is also a chance to discover the best of the agricultural and gastronomic traditions of each of the exhibiting countries.

The expo has pavilions represented by countries, international organizations, civil organizations and corporations, as well as pavilions in "Clusters," arranged by food groups



Lake Arena, a pond situated around an open space of 28,000 sq. meters BIE

rather than geographic areas, and "Thematic Areas," including parks for relaxation.

There are 145 countries participating in the expo, representing 94 per-

cent of the world's population, including Japan, which is showcasing a variety of things about Japanese food such as food culture, tradition and technology. The EU, the U.N. and the Caribbean Community are the three international organizations participating in the expo.

Additionally, 13 nongovernmental organizations, including Save the Children and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and five groups of corporations are participating in the expo.

The Clusters cover nine themes: Rice; Cocoa and Chocolate; Coffee; Fruits and Legumes; Spices; Cereals and Tubers; Bio-Mediterranean; Islands, Sea and Food; and Arid Zones.

Several countries, mainly developing ones, are working together to organize the Clusters. Visitors can learn about agriculture in the countries and the nutritional information of their products, as well as taste and purchase delicacies from the participants.

There are five Thematic Areas:



Top; Children can enjoy themselves at Children's Park. Bottom; The Future Food District is a showcase of how we may feed ourselves in the future. BIE

Pavilion Zero; Future Food District; Children's Park; Biodiversity Park and Arts & Foods. Visitors will be provided fantastic insights through multi-sensory and educational experiences.

In Pavilion Zero, visitors learn about how much humankind has produced, the transformation of the natural landscape and the culture and rituals of food consumption.

The Future Food District's theme is new technologies and the food chain. Visitors can learn how technology and nature coexist now and in the future. They can also experience smart tech-

nologies to use in the kitchen with the help of professional chefs.

Children's Park is an international center for the protection and promotion of children's rights and their potential. Children can enjoy some activities and educational games.

Biodiversity Park includes a theater and two pavilions; one dedicated to organic and natural products, the other housing a biodiversity exhibition.

Arts & Foods looks to document developments and solutions that relate to food, ranging from kitchen utensils to the dining table and pic-

nics. It offers an exploration of the special bond between visual arts and the topic of food and of eating together in a positive light.

Other notable sites at the expo include Lake Arena, a pond surrounded by approximately 3,000 seats that are situated around an open space of 28,000 sq. meters, and the Open-Air Theater, a huge space dedicated to outdoor events.

Information excerpted from www.expo2015.org.



The Pavilion Zero includes exhibitions showing the history of the culture and rituals of food consumption. BIE

Expo Milano 2015

Kinki University leads way in aquaculture evolution

Michiru Mekata
SPECIAL TO THE JAPAN TIMES

Tuna has been popular, especially as sushi, among the Japanese for many centuries. But as the popularity of Japanese food has continued to rise throughout the world, the supply of tuna is now considered to be reaching the point of depletion. This is especially true for northern bluefin tuna, which has been highly praised for its delicate taste and thus has been overfished in recent years.

Alarmed by this situation, the Japanese government started a project to cultivate bluefin tuna in 1970, inviting numerous top-level universities to attempt to offer possible solutions. But as no achievements were made during

the three-year project term, the universities ended their research efforts with the exception of Kinki University.

Kinki University, also known as Kindai, is a forerunner in fish cultivation and was able to continue its research since its Fisheries Laboratory operates on a stand-alone basis. It earned the money for its bluefin tuna research by selling other, more expensive fish such as sea bream and flatfish that it had already successfully raised. And after 32 years of intensive R&D, the laboratory surprised the world in 2002 by succeeding in the complete farming of northern bluefin tuna.

Looking at its history, Kinki University's Fisheries Laboratory was established in 1948 by Koichi Seko, the first president of Kinki University. He also served as the first director of the labora-

tory and had a very strong determination to cultivate the sea. Led by the enthusiasm of Seko and other directors that followed, the laboratory became the world's first institution to succeed in the full cultivation of flatfish in 1965, followed by the cultivation of another 17 species to date. Furthermore, this laboratory invented the epoch-making cage farming method of fish with fry raised in net enclosures in the 1990s. Today, this has become the standard method of raising fish at aquaculture farms around the world.

More recently in 2013, Kinki University's Fisheries Laboratory opened a restaurant in Osaka, in order to upgrade the value and image of cultivated fish. Directly operated by the university, the restaurant serves fish raised in the laboratory, including its bluefin tuna, which is now valued highly as and known as "Kindai tuna." The restaurant is extremely popular for serving fresh, tasty fish that rivals any naturally grown or caught fish.

Kindai tuna has also come to be registered as a sustainable, delicious and safe fish by the Blue Seafood Guide, a guidebook issued by the "Sailors for the Sea," an oceanic nature preservation and education institution. Furthermore, the same institution has registered the Kinki University restaurant as the world's first "Gold Sustainable Partner." This is a worthwhile acknowledgement by a global third party, since it shows that the university's restaurant not only serves tasty and safe cultivated fish, but also grows various fish species, including Kindai tuna that are eco-friendly and sustainable.

Future issues

Due to the rising prices of fish meal, the laboratory today is promoting the research of feed for its Kindai tuna and other cultivated fish that can be produced from vegetable proteins such as soy meal and corn.

Meanwhile, as the global population continues to grow, Kinki University vies



Above: Bluefin tuna swim at Kinki University's Fisheries Laboratory in Kushimoto, Wakayama Prefecture. Right: The laboratory operates a restaurant serving its farm-grown Kindai tuna in Osaka. KINKI UNIVERSITY FISHERIES LABORATORY

to expand the sales and cultivation opportunities for Kindai tuna to overseas countries. Already popular in New York, the university is exploring other sales channels, so as to uplift the overall value and image of cultured fish.

As has so far been introduced, Kinki University and its Fisheries Laboratory seek to contribute to Japan's fish farming industry, while respecting sustainability and preserving the natural resources of the planet as a whole. Their next plan is to increase production of Kindai tuna fry and return the hatchlings to the oceans throughout the world. In this way, the bluefin tuna, a precious marine resource, can be protected, while retaining the sustainability of tuna fishing on a global scale.



Farm-raised eel may be answer to global shortage

A popular antidote to beating the overwhelming heat and humidity of Japanese summers is grilled eel. Rich in vitamins, protein and calcium, the restorative powers of the oily treat is well known. Yet, supplies of the main ingredient are seemingly running out.

Japan consumes 70 percent of the global eel catch, while stocks of Japanese eels have fallen by 90 percent over the last four decades. Quite naturally, eel prices have skyrocketed.

Overfishing has wrought havoc on global eel supplies, prompting the U.S. and Europe to add them to an international endangered species list. Desperate Japanese suppliers have looked to source eels from China, South Korea, the Philippines, Indonesia and even Madagascar.

Contributing to the shortage is the fact that eels spawn only once in a lifetime, and their complex life cycle is still poorly understood. Hence, eel farms around the world have to date been dependent on eelers netted from the wild, with no one exactly sure of how to

raise eels from eggs, driving eel prices ever higher.

To put a stop to this situation and sustain a stable eel supply, Japan has been researching eel cultivation for generations. The first breakthrough came in 2010, when the Fisheries Research Agency, an incorporated administrative agency involved in a wide range of fishery R&D, succeeded in raising artificially hatched fingerlings into mature eels.

With the road paved to cultivating eels from eggs, the agency further restored the path to the stable production of eel by succeeding in breeding glass eels in a 1,000 liter tank in 2013. This was another epoch-making event.

As research activities continue, Japan earnestly hopes that a complete cycle of eel breeding will be established and disseminated throughout the world, so as to sustain the healthy level of the breed and bring the Japanese delicacy back to the dining table at a reasonable price.



Chiba University's plant factory in Kashiwa, Chiba Prefecture, produces lettuce and other vegetables. CHIBA UNIVERSITY

Michiru Mekata
SPECIAL TO THE JAPAN TIMES

Bright green lettuce leaves are ready for picking, while ripe red tomatoes bow their stalks. Natural produce as they seem to be, the lettuce is grown inside an artificially lit plant factory, while the tomatoes are cultivated inside a solar plant factory, both operated by Chiba University.

Chiba University is a pioneer in this area, having over a 30-year history in growing plants hydroponically. Now operating five solar plant factories and two artificial light plant factories, the university stresses the importance of such factories.

One reason is due to the drastic changes in the distribution and consumption systems of Japan, as an increasing number of people are deciding to eat out, coupled with the increasing trend of importing fresh produce and vegetables from other countries regardless of their high prices.

Another serious problem that Japan faces is "a critical shortage of next-generation farmers, together with the sharp increase in the elderly population," says Toru Maruo, a doctor of agriculture and professor at the Graduate School of Horticulture, Chiba University. Maruo is also a

key player in the vegetable plant factory project that is participated in by over 60 corporate entities.

According to government statistics, the average age of farmers in Japan was 66.5 years in 2013, of which 46.8 percent were 70 or over. As Japan's population aged 39 years or younger is below 5 percent, the number of Japanese farmers in 10 years will dwindle to about one-third the figure of today; a drastic reduction never experienced by any nation in history.

"In order to respond quickly and confidently to such conditions, we must establish a way in which large-scale, planned, rational, efficient and pesticide-free farming can be undertaken, while minimizing the risk of product tampering," stresses Maruo.

And since there is no stopping Japan's population decrease and aging, Maruo suggests plant factories should be built and put into practical use in the coming five to ten years.

Especially for fresh agricultural produce such as vegetables in which "freshness" counts, production near the volume-consuming mega cities like Tokyo makes sense and is most suitable.

Technically speaking, a plant factory systematically achieves high-quality, year-round production by installing equipment that maintains the optimal

conditions for vegetable growth. This includes control of temperature, artificial lighting such as fluorescent and LED, moisture, air and CO2 density. Furthermore, the factories use solutions instead of soil to control nutrient delivery while cultivating the produce.

At the artificial light factory, the initial challenge of producing good, consistently high-quality produce had been overcome relatively easily and 80 to 100 grams of leaf lettuce can be harvested ten days after planting. The second challenge was to reduce costs. To this end, Chiba University simplified the workflow and experimented with various lighting and air conditioning methods until its lettuce factories could better the cost of ¥700 per kilogram.

At the solar facilities, meanwhile, tests have been conducted on a high-yield tomato production system. By planting seeds densely and using finely tuned environmental controls, Chiba University's tomato plant factory now achieves 2.5 times the average yield of tomatoes of Chiba Prefecture.

Another eye-catching development in this area is the recent production of nutrient-fortified vegetables. By adjusting the nutrient solutions and through lighting innovations, some vegetables can now be produced at Chiba University's plant fac-

ories to meet the health requirements of certain consumers. For example, low-potassium lettuce can now be produced for kidney disease patients who must control their potassium intake. Such innovation could be defined as a new chapter in plant factories that bring fresh produce production closer to medicine.

Regarding the future, Maruo seeks to establish a system that allows large harvests with a minimal investment of resources and energy.

"We also seek to undertake technological development that keeps the load on the environment to a minimum," he says.

Looking at the global scale, the need exists for altered agricultural production methods, as the population of farmers decreases, society ages and more people look to live in cities. Consequently, an increased number of plant factories are planned in urban areas throughout the world in the coming years. Furthermore, since these factories require much less fertile land than standard farms, they are likely to be in densely populated areas, cold weather regions and deserts. "When that happens, I hope Japan can serve as the role model," Maruo says. Already leading the world in this area, Maruo hopes the technological and human infrastructure is concentrated for further, long-term worldwide R&D activities in this field.

Chiba University successfully producing vegetables in factories

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Expo Milano 2015

'Sake on The Table' with Italian food

Expanding the reach of ancient Japanese brew through creative new taste pairings

Yumi Shimomae
SPECIAL TO THE JAPAN TIMES

As a related event to the Expo Milano 2015, "Milano Sake Week" is set to take place in Milan in July. Under the theme, "Arranging Tables Around the World with Japanese Sake," the event will showcase the taste, history and culture of sake and propose new richness to tables of Japan and beyond by adapting sake to the food cultures of different countries. During the event, a private sector project "Sake on The Table," which is aimed at creating lifestyles using sake and promoting the development of Japanese traditional culture, will organize a promotion of Japanese sake.

Sake stylist Makiko Tejima, who serves as the "Sake on The Table" bureau representative, as well as a Japan Pavilion supporter, has run food consultancy Saishokukenbi Co. since 1992 and has put forth ideas for creating a new cuisine environment through table coordination consultation and new ways of enjoying Japanese sake.

Tejima has been internationally active and highly motivated in spreading Japanese food culture, including sake. In 2001, Tejima participated in the Bra and Slow Food Cheese Festival, hosted by Slow Food, an international organization advocating the continued diversity of foodstuffs, small-scale production and organic sustainable agriculture. The biennial festival takes place in the northern Italian city of Bra, the birthplace of

the Slow Food movement.

At the festival, she proposed a new combination of sake and cheese, which was well received, marking the first major introduction of Japanese sake in Italy. The following year, she coordinated the sake booth at the food festival Salone del Gusto in Turin. Based on these experiences, Tejima launched a society to enjoy Italian cuisine with sake in 2010.

"In 2000, I had a chance to interview Carlo Petrini, the founder of the International Slow Food movement. During our talk, he suddenly asked me: 'You Japanese only come to gather information, but you don't bring anything delicious, do you?' I'm sure that you have something more delicious other than sushi and tempura in your country, don't you?' I was surprised and answered that we have *miso* (bean paste), soy sauce and sake," Tejima said. "My spur-of-the-moment answer was all fermented food, and Petrini asked me to bring our specialties to the Cheese Festival."

In Italy at the time, the *washoku* (traditional Japanese cuisine) culture had not yet become widespread except for urban areas.

"Rather than *miso* or soy sauce, I thought it would be better to bring sake, which is brewed like wine, to the small city of Bra where the Slow Food movement originated, so that people may feel closer and understand our food culture," Tejima said.

"There, I was asked 'Which sake should go well with mozzarella cheese?' making me realize that Italians have the



Japanese sake stylist Makiko Tejima poses during a recent interview with The Japan Times in her office in Tokyo. She spoke about localizing Japanese sake to Italy and beyond to contribute to enriching each country's traditional food culture. SATAKO KAWASAKI, SAISHOKUKENBI

mindset to adapt food from abroad to their domestic food," she said, looking back on that time.

Milano Sake Week is a project in collaboration with Peace Kitchen, an organization that aims to communicate to the world the attractiveness of *washoku* under the concept of "Peacebuilding Through Washoku." The project will take place at the community space Cascina Cuccagna, which has been reconstructed

from a 17th-century farmhouse and is about 10 minutes by subway from the Duomo in the center of Milan. Under the theme "Localization of Japanese Sake to Italy," a variety of events will be organized during the period in order to communicate to the world the diversity of Japanese food culture. The scheduled programs include a meeting of the society to enjoy Italian cuisine with sake that Tejima has been engaged in for years; a tasting of 11 Japanese sake brands; a sake bar to enjoy sake pairing; and seminars on sake.

Among the highlights, is the promotion of the "Sabini" sake cocktail, which makes good use of the flavor of *wasabi* (Japanese horseradish). An original recipe of the Sake on The Table project, Sabinis will be made using Hakutsuru Premium Junmai Ginjo as a base that is mixed with grated *hon-wasabi* (real wasabi) in tubes by Kameya Food and peach juice. The cocktail will be presented as an *aperitivo* (aperitif) that is an important part of the Italian lifestyle. Not only suggesting a new way of tasting sake and wasabi, the promotion is aimed at creat-



ing a new era by providing a breath of fresh air on the tables of Italian people.

"In this country, where everybody believes 'mamma's taste' should be the world's best, people are very conservative with regards to accepting cuisines from different countries. However, Italian people's interest in Japanese food culture is high," Tejima pointed out.

What is important for them is how different food cultures could contribute in enriching their own food culture. As part of this, I am thinking about how to pair sake with Italian cuisine, that is to say, how to localize sake to Italy, thus contributing to enriching Italians' tables," Tejima said.

Sake is a fermented beverage brewed similarly to wine and beer. However, rice, its base ingredient, does not contain sugar, so it cannot be directly utilized as source of energy for the yeast needed for fermentation. Therefore, the first step is to convert the starch of the rice into sugar by using *koji* (a kind of mold), and then the saccharified rice (rice *koji*) is fermented by yeast as the second step. These two steps of saccharification and fermentation occur in parallel in the same container.

This brewing process, called multiple-parallel fermentation, is a brewing method unique to sake, different from the fermentation of wine or beer. Synthesized by *koji* and yeast, which are invisible to the naked eye, the rice is fermented through a complex and sophisticated process.

Through her past activities, Tejima is keenly aware of the importance of explaining the process accurately and communicating it in an easy-to-understand manner with international audiences who are eager to understand the essence of the product.

"Localization of sake to Italy is not only about pairing sake and Italian cuisine. Ultimately, the identity of Japanese fermented food, such as sake, soy sauce and *miso*, originates in microorganisms designated as national mold, including Japa-

nese *koji* or *Aspergillus oryzae* that are unique to Japan. I believe that the Japanese *koji* culture created in communication with microorganisms, which were mysterious invisible things for the people in ancient times, has much influence on Japanese spirits," Tejima explained.

"While introducing our table manners of '*sashitsu sasaretsu*' (exchanging cups of sake with each other), which is done with respect and feelings for others, I think we Japanese should acknowledge again the value of Japanese *koji* culture and I would like to pass it along to future generations," Tejima said.

Moreover, the Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association and the National Research Institute of Brewing have released an interim report on their collaborative research about the compatibility between sake and food last November.

According to the report, sake provides more aftertaste of cheese than white wine does. The fact that sake goes well with cheese, which Tejima has explored through her activities for years, has been thus scientifically verified.

The time has come for sake to be more deeply understood for its attractiveness in bringing out the characteristics of food while also conveying its own taste.

Amid the raising expectations for cultural exchanges and industrial development generated from Japan-Italy relations, the project "Sake on The Table" presented during the Expo Milano 2015 will bring the richness of the table with sake to the world and sake on the tables of different countries will add new richness to food cultures. Also, sake will accommodate the richness of different food cultures and these exchanges will contribute to weaving a new future on the traditional food cultures of each other.

It won't be long before people around the world are able to share a sake toast while loudly saying, *kanpai*, salute or cheers.

Additional translation by Chiho Iuchi



The "Sabini" original sake cocktail features the fresh flavor of *wasabi* (horseradish) that is native to Japan. SAKE ON THE TABLE

Milano Sake Week unites sake and Italian food

Period: July 8-July 14

Venue: Cascina Cuccagna community space in Milan

Content:

- Let's enjoy Italian food with Japanese Sake (reservations, payment required)
- Sake Tasting Bar (free of charge)
- Sales of Japanese sake and *wasabi* (horseradish)
- Italian food and Japanese sake at a restaurant (reservations, payment required)
- Seminars on Japanese sake
- Kagami-biraki, a sake barrel opening ceremony

For more information, visit www.sakeonthetable.com.



During "Milan Sake Week," visitors will be able to sample 11 brands of Japanese sake paired with Italian specialties. SAKE ON THE TABLE

Sake helps spread Japanese culture globally

Japanese people have been sake drinkers since ancient times. Throughout the history of rice cultivation, sake production went through a number of trials and errors before evolving into what it is today.

However, the volume of sake produced in 2013 was 446,435 kl, which represents just 31 percent of its peak production in the 1970s.

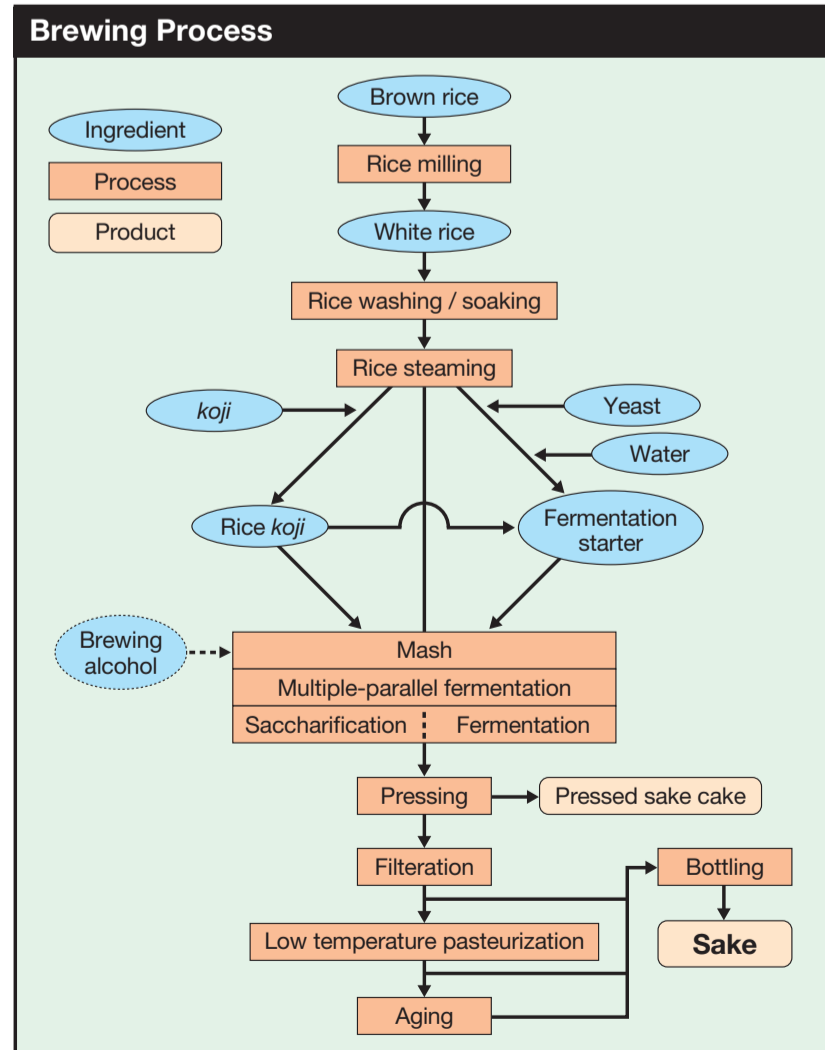
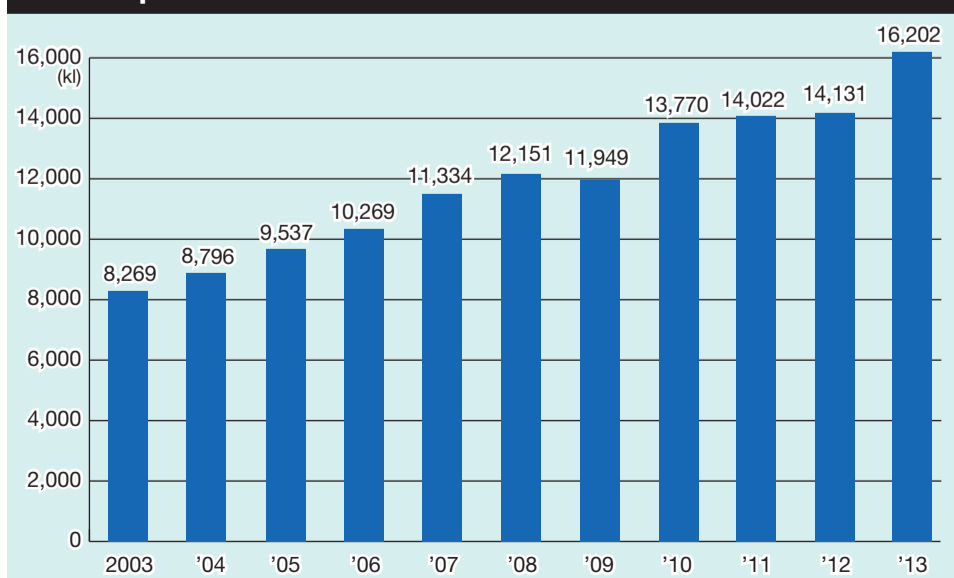
Meanwhile, sake exports are on the increase. According to annual trade statistics by Japan's Ministry of Finance, the export volume of sake has doubled in the past decade, reaching 16,202 kl in 2013. Although it accounts for only 3.6 percent of the total production, it is notable that sake exports are increasing while overall production has remained at approximately the same levels in

recent years.

In monetary terms, exports exceeded ¥10 billion in 2013, which is 2.7 times of the value of 2003 exports, but it is still a much lower level compared to the export value of French wine or Scotch whisky. The three largest export destinations for sake are the U.S., Hong Kong and South Korea, while among European countries, only the U.K. (8th) ranks in the top 10 importers.

As a national beverage that symbolizes Japan, including its nature and climate, as well as people's patience, politeness and delicacy, sake is expected to play a role in the export policies as a local resource and contribute to communicating to the world the attractiveness of Japanese culture.

Sake export



Sake is made by fermentation just like wine and beer, but it involves a more complex brewing process. Wine is naturally fermented by pressing grapes and adding yeast. Sake, however, is not fermented by adding yeast to rice, but through the use of *koji* (a kind of mold), which converts starch in the rice into sugar. The rice begins fermenting once yeast is added to this sugar. Because the saccharification and fermentation processes occur in parallel in the same container, the process is called multiple-parallel fermentation. JAPAN SAKE AND SHOCHU MAKERS ASSOCIATION

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This is a rare image of Mt. Fuji called Perfect Double Diamond Fuji, and it is believed to bring good luck.

Expo Milano 2015

Kyary Pamyu Pamyu brings 'kawaii' in Italian debut

Patrick St. Michel
SPECIAL TO THE JAPAN TIMES

Japanese pop star Kyary Pamyu Pamyu's image of Italy is of a luxurious country, loaded with world-famous clothing brands and other items. Yet, she said when she travels to the country for the first time in July, she's most excited about the chance to eat lots of Italian food.

"There's an Italian restaurant in Japan called Saizeriya I like going to, and they have a dish called Milano-style doria (similar to gratin, but with a rice base), which I really like," she said. "I want to first see if that even exists in Milan, and then try it in the actual city if I can."

Hunting down meals isn't the only activity that will be occupying Kyary Pamyu Pamyu's time when she heads to Milan. The J-pop star is going for Expo Milano 2015, where she will make her Italian debut while also supporting the Japan Pavilion, a government-backed platform to share Japanese culture and ideas.

"My roots are based in Harajuku," she said, referencing the Tokyo neighborhood famous for its fashion. "I'm looking forward to spreading Harajuku fashion and culture while in Milan."

Kyary Pamyu Pamyu's story began when she was a second-year high school student, when she dove into Harajuku's culture for the first time. She started a popular fashion blog, and soon became a model for bright and colorful clothes. "I was millions of times louder with my fashion back then," she said.

She later launched her own line of false eyelashes, and soon transitioned into a pop music career, aided by famous J-pop producer Yasutaka Nakata. The video for her bouncy debut single "PonPonPon" went viral, being viewed millions of times on YouTube.

Kyary's subsequent songs and albums became strong sellers in Japan, and she began attracting attention overseas. This snowballed into performances abroad, including two tours featuring stops in Asia, Europe, Australia and North America. Kyary's globe-



Above; Kyary Pamyu Pamyu poses during a recent interview with The Japan Times in Tokyo. Right; Kyary Pamyu Pamyu performs on her Japan Arena Tour 2014, Colorful Panic Toy Box. YOSHIKAKI MIURA, AKI ISHII

hopping itinerary presented new challenges. "In most countries, I would say my greetings in English. But in other places, like China and France, I tried their languages and it was much harder. I would say the greeting and there would be a second, like, 'did I do that right?'" In

turned her into an ambassador of Japanese pop culture, which is something many in the country are trying to push. Government initiatives such as Cool Japan or websites such as Moshi Moshi Nippon aim to spread the nation's brand of cool worldwide, and Kyary has become a central player in it. She's a

general, she tries to be "super relaxed" before a show, but always makes sure she has the intro down before chilling out.

Kyary's popularity outside Japan has

natural choice to go to Expo Milano 2015.

Set to open on May 1 and run until Oct. 31, Expo Milano 2015's theme is "Feeding The Planet, Energy For Life."



The Japan Pavilion boasts the theme of "Harmonious Diversity." It focuses on food, particularly Japanese food, which is an area Kyary knows well.

"My favorite Japanese food is sushi, and whenever I tour a new country, I try to find a sushi restaurant," she said. "I enjoy interpretations of sushi, like the

California roll. But I eat a lot of other Japanese foods, like udon and ramen." She admits she doesn't keep a tight watch on her eating habits. "I eat what I want to. I even eat dessert," Kyary said.

However, there is one healthy Japanese food she can't live without, and one she's sure to have in tow when she heads off to Italy — umeboshi, or pickled plums.

"It's my source of energy," Kyary said. "When I go on tour, I always bring umeboshi with me." In particular, she packs bags of a candied type called karikari ume with her.

There have been some close calls. "Once, going to the U.S. for a weeklong tour, I had two bags of the karikari ume and one bag of dried umeboshi," she said. "On the flight, I ate a whole bag. I had to stretch out my remaining supply, with the help of my managers."

properties of umeboshi — with the crowd, as well as introduce her music to new listeners and Italian fans who have been waiting for her show. She believes music helps people from different geographical backgrounds connect.

"I always try to speak a little of the language of the country I'm in. But when I speak Japanese, I get the biggest response from the crowd. People will say things like *kawaii* (cute) back to me. It's in those moments when those culture and language barriers come down."

Kyary Pamyu Pamyu will perform at Japan Day special event on July 11 starting at 5:30 p.m. at the Auditorium in the Expo Center. For more information, visit www.expo2015.jp.

JAPAN TRADITIONAL CRAFTS MILANO SQUARE
Pop Up Shop on May 1-Oct. 31, 2015

What are Traditional crafts?

- The articles must be used mainly in everyday life.
- The articles must be primarily manufactured by hand.
- The articles must be manufactured using traditional techniques having a history of at least 100 years.
- The main materials are those which have been used for at least 100 years.
- Production areas should have maintained a certain scale.

The DENSAN association was established in 1975 for the promotion of Traditional Craft Industries in Japan, affiliated with the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and runs a shop in Aoyama, the center of Tokyo. From over 1,000 craft products in Japan, METI has instigated a program to foster traditional crafts, under which 219 items (as of December, 2014) have been designated Traditional Craft Products, called "DENSAN."

All over Japan, there are craft industries, which have been active since ancient times. The techniques to make handcrafted household items have been passed down from one generation to the next, and each type of craft has its own regional characteristics. Created with traditional techniques over a century old, it has innovated from time to time with the changes in our lifestyles, and still remains the part of daily lives. The product can also be said as eco-friendly, for most crafts use natural materials.

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- To create new assets through Japanese Traditional crafts and international culture, as a part of METI's "Cool Japan policy."
- To pass on Japanese cultural and Traditional crafting to the next generation.
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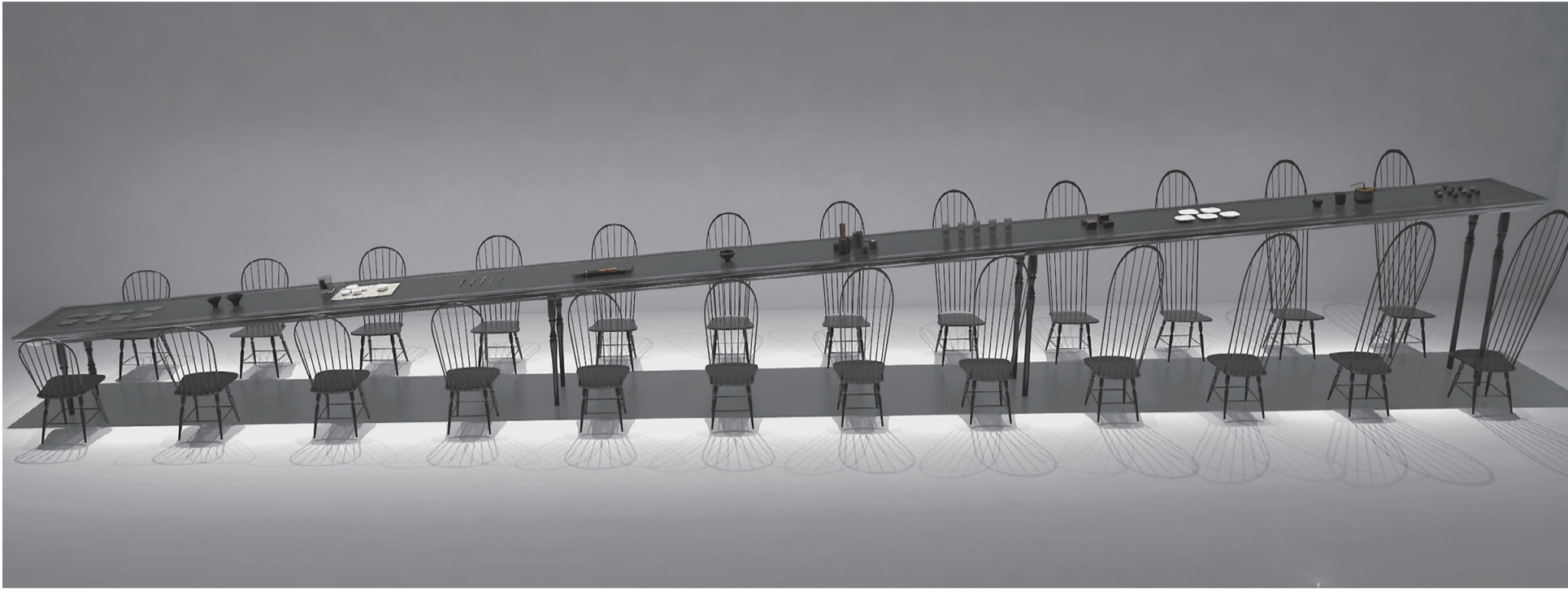
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E-mail: den@kougei.or.jp
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Expo Milano 2015



Above, right; Innovative Japanese *densan*, or traditional handcrafted products, are exhibited at the Cool Japan Design Gallery in the Japan Pavilion. JAPAN PAVILION PR



Rethinking, updating traditional crafts

Mami Maruko
STAFF WRITER

Despite a decline in the handmade craft industry, especially with a lack of young people to pass the baton to in recent years, the Expo Milano 2015 that kicked off May 1 is a big chance for *densan*, or traditional Japanese handcrafted products, to promote their charm and elaborate workmanship to the world.

"The key is innovation. With a touch of innovation, traditional crafts can live on, making products that can appeal to a changing society, both in Japan and abroad," said Masaaki Sakai, managing director of the Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries in Tokyo's Minato Ward.

Techniques to make handcrafted household items have been passed down from one generation to the next for more than 100 years, with each item having its own unique regional characteristics.

However, crafts manufactured using traditional methods and materials are facing hard times due to changing lifestyles and the development of new materials.

To address this, the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry enacted a law in 1974, with the intention of promoting traditional craft industries and continuing the legacy of those crafts designated by the ministry as *densan*.



Masaaki Sakai, managing director of the Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries. YOSHIAKI MIURA

To date, 219 items have been chosen from all over Japan, ranging from different types of textiles, lacquerware, bamboo, woodcraft and metalwork to Buddhist altars, wooden *kokeshi* dolls, and *washi* paper.

At the expo, a variety of *densan* will be on display at the Japan Pavilion, where guests can see firsthand the beauty of raw materials and the skill involved in prod-

ucts from all over Japan.

Visitors can also enjoy shopping at the pop-up shop set up outside the expo venue in Milan.

Sakai says that this is an experimental shop, which he hopes will lead to opening stores in the future in big cities like Paris, New York and Dubai.

He said that three craftsmen in their 30s and 40s — two of whom are women — will be at the expo and will take turns demonstrating their techniques, alongside the product displays. The three are lacquerware, bamboo and metal artisans.

The association, which was founded in 1975, holds several programs throughout the year to promote *densan*, while raising awareness and demand for these products in Japan and abroad.

Crafts designated as *densan* under the law can apply for projects funded by the economy ministry, and seek advice such as what kind of products will sell in today's market.

One of the projects sends designers to production areas to collaborate with craftsmen on new product ideas.

For a craft to be designated *densan*, the association says it must satisfy the following five criteria: The item must be used mainly in everyday life; the parts of the craft that greatly influence its features should be made mostly by hand; the craft must have a manufacturing history of at least 100 years and must be made with

traditional techniques that continue to be used today; the main raw materials must have been used continuously for more than 100 years; and regional enterprises that produce the craft should maintain a certain scale — with at least 10 enterprises or 30 people engaged in manufacturing — and should be established as a local industry.

It's important for craftsmen to get advice, but what's most important, Sakai says, is the willingness of them to create something new.

"Craftsmen must improve their skills even further and create unique products that are made especially for each customer," he added, saying that the younger generation in Japan and customers from abroad, especially Europe, are looking for more stylish and modern versions of the products.

On the other hand, he said, there is still a niche market for the more traditionally made products, such as Buddhist altars that are popular among the Chinese.

He explained that although altars don't sell well in Japan today, as they are expensive and many households are too small to have them, they are popular among Chinese customers, who favor the glittering gold altars made with Japanese lacquerware, wood or metalwork.

He said that craftsmen should challenge themselves and go abroad and find business opportunities there, as globalization is a social phenomenon that cannot be stopped.

"It's important for each artisan to go out and learn what the changing demands of the people are, and expand the market today," he said.

He said that without exception, craftsmen who have succeeded are those that have adapted their skills to create new and innovative products that are slightly different from the originals.

For example, *Nambu Tekki*, or traditional ironware, from Morioka, Iwate Prefecture, is one such craft that has succeeded in creating a completely new series of teapots that have caught on among foreigners.

Japanese iron tea kettles have been painted in bright colors, transforming the traditional kettles into stylish kitchen pieces. The craft, which has a four-century history, has adapted itself successfully and, after seeing popularity in France, has gradually spread throughout Europe.

Takaoka Doki (copperware) from Takaoka, Toyama Prefecture, has also found success abroad, making unique products that can be bent and made into different containers such as vases — an innovation created in collaboration with



Second from top, bottom; Japanese craftsmen from Hokkaido to Okinawa brush up their skills, hoping to hand down their techniques to the next generation. A few craftsmen will demonstrate their techniques at the Expo Milano 2015, alongside displays of their new products that match changes in society. JAPAN PAVILION PR

Andreu Carulla, a renowned young Spanish industrial designer.

"In the five years until the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, there's a chance for *densan* products to expand their market," said Sakai, as the world "will have a favorable eye on Tokyo and Japan as a whole during this period."

"Japan today is full of mass-produced products and everything is homoge-

nized, but I feel that in a global market, there is demand for handmade products for everyday use. In this case, craftsmen can provide those customers a unique product that can never be mass produced," said Sakai.

"These products are not made using the most advanced technology, but are made carefully, with a sincere heart. I feel this is truly special."

Landscape artisans spread beauty of Japanese gardens (Publicity)

Kosugi Zohen Co. Ltd. is a landscaping company in Setagaya, Tokyo, Japan. Starting as family owned farming and nursery business, Kosugi's history goes back more than 300 years. Now focusing on the design, construction and maintenance of gardens for homes, condominiums and commercial properties, Kosugi Zohen has an outstanding customer base of more than 2,000 clients in Tokyo, Yokohama and the surrounding areas.

As a testament to their excellence in landscaping, Kosugi won a Gold medal in the 39th WorldSkills Competition in the landscape gardening sector in 2007. The WorldSkills Competition started in 1950 in Spain, "to showcase and inspire world-class excellence in skills and introduce youth to a variety of skilled careers." In the 2007 competition, 3,452 competitors, judges, delegates and others from 63 countries and regions participated. In the landscape gardening category, two contestants from Kosugi Zohen proudly won the highest award, a first in the sector for competitors from Japan.

Kosugi Zohen is also known for its construction of Japanese gardens abroad. In October 2009, Kosugi completed a 2,650 sq. meter dry rock garden in Heydar Aliyev Park, Ismayilli, Azerbaijan. The stone arrangement design of the garden followed the *shumisen* style, using a large standing piece surrounded by smaller ones. The majority of the plants are from Azerbaijan to allow the vegetation to smoothly adapt to the



Bahrain Japan Friendship Garden KOSUGI ZOHEN CO. LTD.

new garden.

In February 2015, the first traditional Japanese garden designed and constructed by Kosugi Zohen opened in Bahrain. The opening ceremony of the 4,000 sq. meter "Bahrain Japan Friendship Garden," featuring a waterfall, two ponds connected by a winding stream, beautiful wooden bridges, stone lanterns and many more ornamental items shipped from Japan, was attended by H.R.H. Princess Sabeka.

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Japanese Garden Culture to the world



(Photo: Bahrain Japan Friendship Garden, Bahrain)

Kosugi Zohen Co., Ltd.

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Tsuyu no Moto
(Condensed soup base), left

The rich aroma of Tsuyu no Moto is created from naturally brewed soy sauce with soup stock of dried bonito and kelp. It can be used for all sorts of dishes such as udon noodles, rice bowls and so on.

Shiro Dashi (light-colored condensed soup stock), right
Soup Stock, featuring an elegant flavor, is made from three kinds of soup stock and kelp. No preservatives or artificial colors are added.

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Expo Milano 2015

Milan's diverse tourist allure

Opportunities to see fine art, architecture and high fashion abound

Milan, the capital of Lombardy, has captured the interest of the world with its dynamism, creativity and innovation. The world exposition has only been held in Italy once before, back in 1906, and even then the city chosen was Milan. At that time, the theme was transport, which was celebrated by the inauguration of the Milan-Paris railway line. More than a century later, the universal exposition has returned to Italy, once again in the city of Milan. The city, which is the second-most populous in Italy today, is opening its doors to the world. In addition to visiting the expo site, travelers should take advantage of this opportunity to enjoy the historic city, which is a major world fashion and design center and home to beautiful architecture and art masterpieces.

The following are some of major tourist attractions.

The **Duomo di Milano**, or the Milan Cathedral, is a symbol of the city and one of Europe's largest Gothic cathedrals measuring 158 meters long, 93 meters wide and soaring to 108.5 meters at its highest spire. Its construction began in the 14th century and continued until the 19th century. In fact, the people of Milan still speak of tasks that "take as long as the construction of the Duomo." The impressive interior reveals the cathedral's vertical Gothic spirit. It contains numerous works of art such as the tomb of Gian Giacomo Medici by Leone Leoni (1563); a wooden choir; a Holy Nail reputedly from the crucifixion of Christ; a number of 15th and 16th century stained glass windows; and many more.

The luminous, marble façade and the roof terrace decorated with many statues of saints and a forest of openwork pinnacles and spires, give the cathedral an amazing white lace-like appearance. From the roof terrace, which is open to public and accessible by elevator, visi-



The Duomo di Milano (above) is a symbol of the city. The entire city is participating in numerous events during the Expo Milano 2015 from May 1 to Oct. 31. FOTOTECA ENIT

tors can enjoy a unique panoramic view dominated by the church's 135 pinnacles pointing towards the sky and reigning over the entire city.

To the left of the cathedral is the **Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II**, another of the city's well-known icons. Built by Giuseppe Mengoni in the late 19th century, and named after the first king of the Kingdom of Italy, the gallery is fundamentally two glass-vaulted pedestrian malls, intersecting each other and finished with beautiful mosaic floors. Inside are historic restaurants, bars and fashion boutiques.

When it comes to shopping in Milan, people may primarily think of fashion;

after all, it is the nerve center of the "Made in Italy" industry. The showrooms of many major Italian designers are in the city, and it's where buyers from around the world find the one and only "Italian style." Milanese fashion is about luxury, but it also offers innovative ideas. Outside the fashion district — a must for those who want to buy designer apparel and accessories — almost everything can be found, from large international brands to small boutiques. But shopping in Milan also means exploring the many local open-air markets where all kinds of goods can be purchased, from groceries to clothing. One can also look for furniture, dec-



orative items and works of art among the numerous shops in the **Brera** and **Navigli** areas.

Brera is one of Milan's prettiest districts, colored by numerous restaurants, bars, antique dealers and other quaint shops and attractions. It is here that one finds the **Pinacoteca di Brera** and its collection of some of the most important works of art in the country. Featured artists include Raffaello, Andrea Mantegna, Piero della Francesca and Caravaggio. Another historic district in Milan is **Navigli**, a hub and meeting point for artists and the young. Until the 19th Century the area was a zone of canals, while today it is characterized by

its art and artisan workshops.

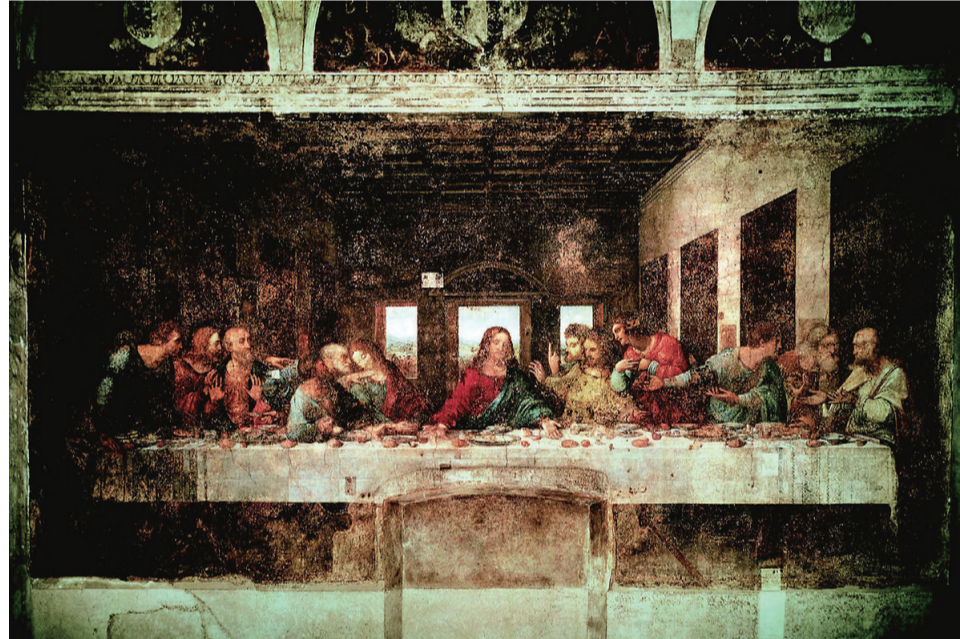
For music lovers, **Piazza della Scala** is the obligatory place to go. Here one will find one of the most important opera houses in the world: **La Scala**. Most of Italy's greatest operatic artists and many of the finest singers from around the world have appeared at La Scala during the past two centuries. La Scala season traditionally opens on Dec. 7 and closes in July. However, the opera house is continuously opening from May 1 through Oct. 31 this year, for the first time in history. The **Museo Teatrale alla Scala** (La Scala Theatre Museum), accessible from the theater's foyer and a part of the opera house, contains a col-

lection of paintings, drafts, statues, costumes, and other documents covering La Scala's and opera history in general.

The **Sforzesco Castle**, which was built for defense in the mid-14th century has been transformed into the city's museum today. It houses art masterpieces of singular value such as the **Rondanini Pieta** by Michelangelo. From the castle's courtyards, pedestrians can venture all the way to **Parco Sempione**, a city park of 47 hectares that are landscaped similarly to an English garden. Historic monuments and structures dot the park, from the **Arco della Pace** (Arch of Peace), an imposing triumphal arch in the neoclassical style that commemorates the Napoleonic victories, to the **Palazzo dell'Arte**, (Palace of Art), in which Milan's La Triennale is installed for the purpose of modern art exhibits and design collections.

The "Capital of the North" also bears a significant religious aspect, with its many historic churches cherished for their particular artistic attributes. Among these are the **Basilica of Sant'Ambrogio**, one of the city's oldest churches; Sant'Ambrogio was built in the 300s and represents the height of the Lombard Romanesque style. Also of great artistic importance is the church of **Santa Maria delle Grazie**, where Leonardo da Vinci painted his breathtaking "The Last Supper" between 1495 and 1497. Finally, the **Basilica of San Lorenzo**, a place of worship for Paleo-Christians situated near the Porta Ticinese. The San Lorenzo area of Milan is known for its Roman ruins. In time it has become the haunt of young Milanese, and is a glitzy stop on the nightlife circuit.

Information on this page excerpted from the websites of The Italian Government Tourist Board (ENIT) and turismo Milano. For more details, visit www.enit.it/en/, www.italia.it, visitaly.jp/, or www.turismo.milano.it/wps/portal/tur/en



Above: "The Last Supper" is a late 15th-century mural by Leonardo da Vinci in the refectory of the Convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan. Due to the methods used and a variety of environmental factors, the masterpiece has undergone numerous restorations over the years. The last restoration took 21 years and the painting was returned to display in 1999. The masterpiece can be viewed as long as reservations are made in advance. Right: Built in the 15th century by the Duke of Milan, Francesco Sforza, Sforzesco Castle was the site of many historical events. Far right: The Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II is one of the world's oldest shopping malls. DE AGOSTINI PICTURE LIBRARY, FOTOTECA ENIT/VITO ARCOMANO



Take advantage of the opportunity to step out of Milan and enjoy all that Italy has to offer

Ancient caves housed people 9,000 years ago

Located in the city of Matera, in the Basilicata region in the south of Italy, the Sassi di Matera (stones of Matera) are ancient cave dwellings that were designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1993. It is the only place in the world where people can brag about still living in the same houses their ancestors lived in 9,000 years ago.

Matera sits on a limestone plateau, featuring a magnificent abnormality: a central 70 to 80 meter deep fissure holds the Gravina river and divides the city.

The Sassi originated from a prehistoric troglodyte settlement that dug houses into the limestone. Many of these dwellings are actually just caves and the streets in some areas of the Sassi are often the roofs of houses. The ancient town grew on one slope of the ravine created by the river that is now a small stream. The changing populations have left an intricate urban system, where the buildings overlap the natural crevices in the stone.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the districts of the Sassi were home to the poorest residents of the city. The current local administration, however, has become more tourism focused and has promoted the regeneration of the area with the assistance of the European Union, the government, UNESCO and Hollywood.

Today, visitors are able to admire the original Sassi and the dwellings carved into the rock experiencing a unique sensation, much like being within a crib. There are also many thriving businesses, pubs and hotels around the site.

The stunning scenario of Matera has been the set for many famous and less-than-famous films, both national and international, including the spectacular "The Passion" by Mel Gibson.



Magical lights of Sassi di Matera APT BASILICATA

The cradle of winemaking in northern Italy

The rolling hills, quaint villages and prized vineyards of the Langhe and Roero districts are the most charming landscapes in northern Italy's Piedmont region. In between the Po River and the Ligurian Apennine mountains, this area, which was named a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2014, contains a vast range of technical and economic processes related to the winegrowing and winemaking that have characterized the region for centuries.

For food and wine lovers, this area is the height of excellence, ideal for relaxing and enjoying the good life amid nature, art and gastronomic traditions of wine and dining.

As in the rest of Italy, the local villages and towns were long-contested divided and reappor-tioned again and again into various medieval communes and feudal estates, thus explaining the numerous castles and defensive structures.

Barolo, known above all for its beauty, embodies the essence of the most noble of Piedmontese wines. Tucked into the hills, Barolo was a medieval town belonging to the Gonzagas and Savoias; it is dominated by the Castello Falletti, seat of the Comune's Enoteca and of the Museum of Peasant Life, a collection of antique objects and instruments.

Another is the castle in Grinzane Cavour, residence of Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour; it is among the oldest in Langhe.

Bra, another Piedmontese town, is surrounded by the wine and cheese area of Roero and nestled amid gently rolling hills dotted with farms and vineyards.



Wine heritage ENTE TURISMO ALBA BRA LANGHE ROERO



A landscape of hills, villages and vineyards ENTE TURISMO ALBA BRA LANGHE ROERO

Beautiful shorelines and breathtaking scenery

Campania, one of the regions of southern Italy, stretches along the Tyrrhenian Sea. The mild climate, the beauty of the coasts, the richness of its art and history and the love for food make Campania the fascinating area that it is.

The journey begins at the sea with its intense colors, its coasts covered with bays, coves and rock faces. The waters here boast the islands in the Gulf of Naples, Capri and Ischia — true natural masterpieces.

This region is made even more charming by the flourishing Mediterranean vegetation that alternates with its small, charming towns that narrate the history and traditions of Campania and make any stay here unforgettable.

Mount Vesuvius, gloomy and mysterious, is loved for its beauty and feared for its power. Naples, famous around the world for the intensity and passion of its music, effortlessly combines high-brow culture with the popular, the sacred with the profane, and the joyful with the melancholic.

Sorrento, a town that spreads over a terrace of tufo, seems to tumble into the sea. Throughout this view, indented and isolated coasts weave their colors with those of small and hidden beaches, creating a unique and enthralling scenery. Here, the work of man is truly monolithic. The roughest areas are now made up of a series of terraces sloping down toward the sea, used for the cultivation of citrus, olive trees and vines. These orchards give off the heady scents of oranges, lemons and orange-blossoms.

Music and entertainment; sun and sea; history and culture can all be found here. Visiting places like Paestum; Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Torre Annunziata; the Chartreuse of Padula; and the Royal Palace of Caserta will all take you back in time and away from the ordinary.



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