The World Tourism Organization, a United Nations specialized agency, is the leading international organization with the decisive and central role in promoting the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. It serves as a global forum for tourism policy issues and a practical source of tourism know-how. Its membership includes 158 countries, 6 territories, 2 permanent observers and over 500 Affiliate Members.

UNWTO Affiliate Members bring together over 500 companies, educational and research institutions, destinations and NGOs whose activities are related to tourism and which contribute to UNWTO their knowledge and expertise to promote the development of tourism that’s responsible, sustainable and accessible for everyone. Over 80 countries are represented among the Affiliate Members, the world’s premier forum for exchanging tourism knowledge.

For questions or to join the UNWTO Gastronomy Network please contact us at unwtoam@unwto.org. Participation is open to UNWTO Member States, Associate Members and Affiliate Members.

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Summary

Defining features of gastronomy tourism in Japan

The present study has uncovered that while gastronomy tourism is a little-known term in Japan, activities in line with the term of gastronomy tourism are being undertaken across the nation. Japan’s gastronomy tourism features a high frequency of public-private collaboration when compared to other nations.

For the preparation of this publication a survey within Japanese prefectures and municipalities was conducted. The aim of the survey was to uncover examples of gastronomy tourism activities and to gain an understanding of the current state of gastronomy tourism in the country. It revealed that while only 18% of respondents were aware of the term gastronomy tourism, 42% conduct activities in their region that can be defined as related to gastronomy tourism. In addition, 66% of respondents are implementing their gastronomy tourism activities through public-private collaboration.

The following trends provide the backdrop for the current state of gastronomy tourism in Japan:

- Government officials involved in promoting tourism are shifting their focus solely from the simple increase in economic impact for industry members to sustainable regional development;
- Policies are being implemented for both the agricultural industry and for regional development; and
- Gastronomy tourism has begun to receive attention as a means to achieve these policies and as a form of convergence of these distinct policies.

4. Case studies with unique human resource development

Case 11:
Developing Human Resources Capable of Sharing Nara with the World (Nara Prefecture): Government-lead long-term development of human resources capable of contributing to regional development, bridging the deep-rooted foods and the local agricultural industry.

Case 12:
Regional branding and a restaurant run by high school students (Ohka High School; Taki Town): building a brand and pride through education.

Case 13:
Yufuin Cooking Research Society (Yufu City): developing a more attractive destination by raising the level of cuisine offered at local ryokans.

5. National level case studies that facilitate and support gastronomy tourism

Case 14:
Taste of Japan (All Nippon Airways (ANA), all of Japan): the nation’s largest airline shares the region gastronomic discoveries from throughout the country.

Case 15:
Energizing Tohoku with Gastronomy Tourism: Keys to Post-Disaster Rebuilding – Railways and Food (JR East, eastern Japan): with an extensive network of railway lines, JR East makes it possible for visitors to discover and experience regional gastronomy offerings.

Case 16:
A pillar for re-energizing regions – sharing Japan’s culinary culture with the world (Gurunavi; all of Japan): supporting gastronomy tourism in Japan at all points on the value chain.

6. Case study working to spread gastronomy tourism throughout Japan

Case 17:
ONSEN and Gastronomy Tourism Association (all of Japan): A private-sector lead organization that supports the spread of gastronomy tourism throughout Japan via the country’s hot-spring resources.
Gastronomy tourism case studies

Of the 17 case studies introduced in this report, 13 are examples of local-level gastronomy tourism while 3 case studies feature private-sector businesses operating services on a national level. One case study outlines the activities of a private-sector lead organization for the promotion of gastronomy tourism itself.

The case studies are introduced according to the following types:

1. Cases studies that achieve high-quality tourism

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**Case 8:**
Isumi – a gastronomy city and the “San Sebastián Plan” (Isumi City): a major food producing region aims to become a gastronomy destination through the creation of culinary culture.

An additional feature of gastronomy tourism in Japan is the frequent collaboration of local governments with private-sector businesses that provide services on a national level (see cases 8, 9, 14 and 16).

In addition to the activities of regional and national governments, the prevalence across Japan of public-private collaboration and the strengthening of services by food-related businesses has contributed to the construction of Japanese gastronomy tourism.

**The role of the Government in gastronomy tourism in Japan**

The promotion of tourism in Japan has primarily been carried out by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT).

Upon its establishment as an external agency of MLIT in 2008, the Japan Tourism Agency (JTA) made its goal to move beyond a focus on the expansion of economic benefits for a limited number of tourism-related enterprises. Instead, JTA aims to build communities that are both enjoyable to visit and live in. The establishment of the JTA and its mission resulted in a wider understanding of tourism as a means for regional development. Sustainable development of the country’s regions was recognized to be the ultimate goal of the tourism value chain.

Regional development activities were subsequently enacted across the entirety of the Japanese Government in an effort to stave off the long-term effects of the country’s ever declining birthrate and aging population. The building of better communities, people, and employment were identified as essential to the sustainability of these regional development initiatives. Officials strengthened programmes to facilitate “sixth-sector industrialization”, which is the combination of the “primary” production sector, “secondary” processing sector and “tertiary” selling sectors, and to promote primary-sector industries such as agriculture. Following a burst in the establishment of destination marketing/management organizations (DMOs), numerous regions are in the process of improving their food and culinary cultures with the understanding that gastronomy constitutes a major portion of their local offerings.

Centering policy on the goal of regional development has brought gastronomy tourism to the forefront as the overarching product of the government’s previously independent initiatives, spanning industrial, tourism and regional promotion. Such policies exist on both the national and local levels – from the central Government’s clarification of its tourism strategy to the establishment of regional DMOs.

However, different perspectives have been shown from some case studies included in this report. Regional peculiarities contribute to low level of maturity at certain points in the value chain. Such shortcomings are often due to the fact that these cases of gastronomy tourism were not specifically planned from the outset, but are the result of multiple independent activities.
Comparing cases with case charts

Each case introduced in this report has its own case chart. Each case chart includes the following parts:

1. **The value chain phases achieved by the case:** Ingredients, processing and distribution, recipes/menu/list development, providing of cuisine, providing of information, tourism.

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### Survey of local political entities (prefectures and municipalities)

Researchers conducted a survey of Japan’s municipalities by questionnaire. The aim of the survey was to uncover examples of gastronomy tourism activities and to gain an understanding of the current state of gastronomy tourism in the country. From the 1,788 questionnaires distributed 631 responses were received (response rate: 35.3%).

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**Questionnaire items:**

The survey asked questions about “Awareness of gastronomy tourism”, “Local gastronomy-tourism activities”, “Strategy and plan for the activities”, “Current state of the activities”, and “Local resources for gastronomy-tourism promotion”. The questions were structured as shown in the table below.
provided the basis for analysing both the cases and the results of the “Survey of local political entities”. The concept of gastronomy tourism, value chain, and case charts can be used in analysing gastronomy tourism in countries other than Japan.

Value chain and inter-organizational collaboration

The value chain for gastronomy tourism in regional Japan includes the following activities: production of ingredients, distribution, recipes development, providing services and information. The value chain involves a variety of participants across the industry, educational and government fields. For this survey distinct value chains for foods and beverages were defined.

Gastronomy tourism value chains

Foods

Ingredients (manufacturers) → Processing distribution (business) → Recipes/menus (chefs) → Providing cuisine (restaurant)

Beverages

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Two end goals for sustainable regional development by means of gastronomy tourism were defined:

1. Destination development: Developing a destination that not only receives attention domestically and abroad, but is actually visited by tourists; and
2. Culinary-culture preservation: Preserving the traditional culinary culture, environment and way of life of a region that already enjoys a number of visitors.

The degree to which cases meet these goals was examined and their factors of success and remaining challenges analysed. For public-private collaboration, the collaboration of local governments with both regional and national enterprises was analysed.

Collection of survey responses:

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<tr>
<th>LPEs</th>
<th>Prefectures</th>
<th>Municipalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>631</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>584</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

= 35.3% of total number of LPEs

(47 Prefectures = 100%,
584 Municipalities = 33.5%)

Outline of results

1. “Awareness of gastronomy tourism” – low awareness of gastronomy tourism within Japan:
   - 18% of municipalities had encountered the term of gastronomy tourism;
   - 16% of municipalities were aware that gastronomy tourism is gaining attention and being promoted abroad.

2. “Local gastronomy-tourism activities” – in Japan, there are quality examples of activities that promote tourism based on regional foods and culinary culture (i.e. gastronomy tourism):
   - 42% of municipalities responded that they have examples of gastronomy-tourism activities;
   - 18% of municipalities responded that they have examples of gastronomy-tourism activities that produce positive results for the community.

3. “Strategy and plan for the activities” – most local governments in Japan do not yet include gastronomy tourism in their policies and enterprises. As such, gastronomy tourism in Japan has potential for further growth:
   - 22% of municipalities and 38% of prefectures include or plan to include gastronomy tourism in their policies/enterprises;
   - For comparison, 47% of respondents to the survey published in the Second Global Report on Gastronomy Tourism (p. 18) have a gastronomy tourism strategy in their respective destination’s Tourism Action Plan.

4. “Current state of the activities” – gastronomy tourism in Japan features a relatively high degree of public-private collaboration:
   - 65% of municipalities responded that they collaborate with local enterprises;
   - 44% of respondents to the survey published in the Second Global Report on Gastronomy Tourism (p. 19) answered that they “develop public-private collaboration”.

5. “Local resources for gastronomy tourism promotion” – results indicate that the creation of government partnerships with travel companies, effective use of DMOs/DMCs, and the building of quality media relations are required for the development of gastronomy tourism in Japan.
   - 17% of municipalities listed “creation of travel products and routes” and 51% listed “increased media coverage” as effects of their gastronomy tourism efforts;
   - For comparison, 60% of respondents to the survey published
in the Second Global Report on Gastronomy Tourism (pp. 18 and 19) listed “tourism product development” and 77% listed “increase in positive media coverage” as effects of their gastronomy tourism efforts.

Overview of survey used for comparison

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Gastronomy tourism in Japan: methodology and case studies

The concept of gastronomy tourism

Gastronomy tourism is a form of tourism through which participants can experience the culinary culture of a given place and enjoy the regional foods created by the climate, ingredients, culture, customs, traditions and history of that locale. It can provide the following benefits:

– Gastronomy tourism enables differentiation and unique positioning among regions;
– Gastronomy tourism has the potential to provide visitors with new values and experiences;
– Gastronomy tourism can be implemented in underdeveloped regions and those lacking in tourism resources (possible even in small villages);
– Gastronomy tourism is easy to introduce and to be developed as story for the promotional and marketing purposes; and
– Gastronomy tourism provides the region with high revenue and imparts in visitors a desire to return.

Evaluation criteria and tool for comparison

A value chain for analysis was defined and a case chart template (with information on collaboration) was created in order to objectively compare gastronomy tourism activities. The value chain and case charts

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#### Sustainable regional development

- Providing information (tourism)
- Tourism
- Destination development

#### Culinary – culture preservation

- Providing information (tourism)
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The role of the Government in gastronomy tourism in Japan

The promotion of tourism in Japan has primarily been carried out by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT).

Upon its establishment as an external agency of MLIT in 2008, the Japan Tourism Agency (JTA) made its goal to move beyond a focus on the expansion of economic benefits for a limited number of tourism-related enterprises. Instead, JTA aims to build communities that are both enjoyable to visit and live in. The establishment of the JTA and its mission resulted in a wider understanding of tourism as a means for regional development. Sustainable development of the country’s regions was recognized to be the ultimate goal of the tourism value chain.

Regional development activities were subsequently enacted across the entirety of the Japanese Government in an effort to stave off the long-term effects of the country’s ever declining birthrate and aging population. The building of better communities, people, and employment were identified as essential to the sustainability of these regional development initiatives. Officials strengthened programmes to facilitate “sixth-sector industrialization”, which is the combination of the “primary” production sector, “secondary” processing sector and “tertiary” selling sectors, and to promote primary-sector industries such as agriculture. Following a burst in the establishment of destination marketing/management organizations (DMOs), numerous regions are in the process of improving their food and culinary cultures with the understanding that gastronomy constitutes a major portion of their local offerings.

Centering policy on the goal of regional development has brought gastronomy tourism to the forefront as the overarching product of the government’s previously independent initiatives, spanning industrial, tourism and regional promotion. Such policies exist on both the national and local levels – from the central Government’s clarification of its tourism strategy to the establishment of regional DMOs.

However, different perspectives have been shown from some case studies included in this report. Regional peculiarities contribute to low level of maturity at certain points in the value chain. Such shortcomings are often due to the fact that these cases of gastronomy tourism were not specifically planned from the outset, but are the result of multiple independent activities.
Summary

Defining features of gastronomy tourism in Japan

The present study has uncovered that while gastronomy tourism is a little-known term in Japan, activities in line with the term of gastronomy tourism are being undertaken across the nation. Japan’s gastronomy tourism features a high frequency of public-private collaboration when compared to other nations.

For the preparation of this publication a survey within Japanese prefectures and municipalities was conducted. The aim of the survey was to uncover examples of gastronomy tourism activities and to gain an understanding of the current state of gastronomy tourism in the country. It revealed that while only 18% of respondents were aware of the term of gastronomy tourism, 42% conduct activities in their region that can be defined as related to gastronomy tourism. In addition, 66% of respondents are implementing their gastronomy tourism activities through public-private collaboration.

The following trends provide the backdrop for the current state of gastronomy tourism in Japan:
- Government officials involved in promoting tourism are shifting their focus solely from the simple increase in economic impact for industry members to sustainable regional development;
- Policies are being implemented for both the agricultural industry and for regional development; and
- Gastronomy tourism has begun to receive attention as a means to achieve these policies and as a form of convergence of these distinct policies.

4. Case studies with unique human resource development

Case 9:
Unification of activities under the common goal of tourism (Niigata City): Government-lead strategic gastronomy tourism featuring intensive collaboration with private-sector enterprises.

Case 10:
At Harmony with the Sea – in the wake of the earthquake-tsunami disaster (Kesennuma City): everyone from children to economic players working together, and the application of national-level ICT.

Case 11:
Developing Human Resources Capable of Sharing Nara with the World (Nara Prefecture): Government-lead long-term development of human resources capable of contributing to regional development, bridging the deep-rooted foods and the local agricultural industry.

Case 12:
Regional branding and a restaurant run by high school students (Ohka High School; Taki Town): building a brand and pride through education.

Case 13:
Yufuin Cooking Research Society (Yufu City): developing a more attractive destination by raising the level of cuisine offered at local ryokans.

5. National level case studies that facilitate and support gastronomy tourism

Case 14:
Taste of Japan (All Nippon Airways (ANA), all of Japan): the nation’s largest airline shares with the region gastronomic discoveries from throughout the country.

Case 15:
Energizing Tohoku with Gastronomy Tourism: Keys to Post-Disaster Rebuilding – Railways and Food (JR East, eastern Japan): with an extensive network of railway lines, JR East makes it possible for visitors to discover and experience regional gastronomy offerings.

Case 16:
A pillar for re-energizing regions – sharing Japan’s culinary culture with the world (Gurunavi: all of Japan): supporting gastronomy tourism in Japan at all points on the value chain.

6. Case study working to spread gastronomy tourism throughout Japan

Case 17:
ONSEN and Gastronomy Tourism Association (all of Japan): A private-sector lead organization that supports the spread of gastronomy tourism throughout Japan via the country’s hot-spring resources.
The World Tourism Organization, a United Nations specialized agency, is the leading international organization with the decisive and central role in promoting the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. It serves as a global forum for tourism policy issues and a practical source of tourism know-how. Its membership includes 158 countries, 6 territories, 2 permanent observers and over 500 Affiliate Members.

UNWTO Affiliate Members bring together over 500 companies, educational and research institutions, destinations and NGOs whose activities are related to tourism and which contribute to UNWTO their knowledge and expertise to promote the development of tourism that’s responsible, sustainable and accessible for everyone. Over 80 countries are represented among the Affiliate Members, the world’s premier forum for exchanging tourism knowledge.

For questions or to join the UNWTO Gastronomy Network please contact us at unwtoam@unwto.org. Participation is open to UNWTO Member States, Associate Members and Affiliate Members.

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