



日本食 ● 食文化普及
人材育成支援協議会

日本料理 アカデミー
Japanese Culinary Academy



Japanese Cuisine and Food Culture
Human Resource Development Committee

Overview of 2023 Training Program

[Objectives of the Project]

Under the program, we provide foreign chefs abroad of Japanese cuisine with online training and conduct tests for certification of their culinary skills. Participants who have achieved outstanding performance are invited to Japan for practical training in Japanese restaurants, etc. to improve their knowledge and skills in Japanese cuisine. Through these efforts, the program aims to develop overseas foreign chefs of Japanese cuisine into reliable partners who will support Japan's food-related businesses looking to expand overseas. Our goal is for them to increase the purchase amount or the number of Japan-produced ingredients they use in their restaurants by 30% or more within two years of completing the training.

[2023 Program]

For the 2023 program, we set up two courses: an advanced course with about six months of on-the-job training in Japan, and a basic course with online training. Nine chefs among the participants of the basic course and two regional competition winners from the "Washoku World Challenge the 11th Competition" also participated in the short-term invitation program as special invited participants.

To build a program, we combined e-learning videos, developed on the basis of guidelines for the bronze certification under the "Certification of Cooking Skills for Japanese Cuisine in Foreign Countries" established by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), with a learning kit containing a Japanese kitchen knife and a textbook. We began accepting applications in June and, after screening nearly 200 applications received from around the world, three chefs from the advanced course and 32 chefs from the basic course were selected for the program. The 35 trainees were first introduced to the basics of Japanese cuisine (Japanese kitchen knife techniques, "umami" taste, etc.) and their knowledge and skills were evaluated through an online written exam and 28 practical assignments. Those who passed then took a face-to-face online bronze certification exam. After rigorous assessment by expert judges, 26 chefs received a bronze certificate, each awarded in recognition of their basic knowledge and skills acquired. In addition, three chefs from the advanced course also passed the silver certificate exam after the bronze certificate exam and received a silver certificate from the committee.



Bronze certification exam (*katsura-muki* or thinly slicing into a long strip)

Bronze certification exam (*sanmai-oroshi* or filleting a fish into 3 pieces)



JCDC Program Certificate of Completion



JCDC Certification, Bronze



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In addition to the three advanced-course chefs who came to Japan in August, nine basic-course chefs and two regional competition winners of the "Washoku World Challenge" also came to Japan in February. A total of 14 foreign chefs received basic training in Japanese cuisine at the Kyoto Culinary Art College, followed by training through practical work at restaurants in Tokyo and Kyoto. Through real kitchen experience in authentic Japanese restaurants, the trainees were able to acquire a lot of knowledge and skills that cannot be learned online alone.

They contributed comments, saying, "The people at the restaurant taught me in great detail how to use the kitchen knife, how to fillet fish, how to cook appetizers, how to fry tempura. I want to take this knowledge back to my home country and share it with my staff and further explore Japanese culture and cuisine." (Polish trainee), "The program allowed me to experience firsthand how Japanese culture is expressed through Japanese cuisine. I felt that Japanese culture was beautifully expressed in the food prepared for customers with such attention to detail." (U.S. trainee), "Through this training, I discovered that Japanese cuisine is more than just food on a plate; it is infused with passion, Japanese culture, Japanese spirit, and happiness." (Bangladeshi trainee), "I learned a lot of knowledge and skills that I didn't have, as well as a passion for cooking, from the staff at the restaurant I was assigned to. I was truly impressed by the incredible concentration of all the chefs and their sincere approach to their daily work, without any shortcuts." (Polish trainee), "I was able to experience a variety of seasonal dishes and kaiseki cuisine served in high-end Japanese restaurants. From now on, as an ambassador for Japanese cuisine, I would love to continue learning so that I can promote Japanese cuisine and culture to people in Spanish-speaking countries." (Spanish trainee).

■ Basic training at Kyoto Culinary Art College (February 1 to 5)



■ Scenes of practical training in restaurants: February 6 to 15





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On the final day, there was a presentation meeting in which each participant reported what he/she learned while in Japan to introduce the results of training in this country. A closing ceremony was held later in a Japanese restaurant, where JCDC Chairman Yoshihiro Murata and the representative of each participating restaurant awarded a letter of certification to each trainee.

■ Scenes from report presentation meeting: February 16, 2024 at Kyoto Pastry & Bakery Art College









■ Closing ceremony: February 16, 2024 at Kikunoi



List of Invited Trainees

(★ denotes “Japanese Food and Ingredient Supporter Stores Overseas)

		Name	Age	Nationality (Main base)	place of employment	Place of assignment
■ Advanced course trainees (long-term invited trainees)						
1		Alex L. Vall Clos	30	Spain	El Japonés Escondido	Akasaka Kikunoi
2		Vincent Pham	24	Canada	Zen Japanese Restaurant★	Akasaka Asada
3		Renan Zonta Braga	32	Brazil	Nagoya Sushi School	Sakae-Zushi
■ Basic course invited trainees (Short-term invited trainees)						
		Monika Kasprzak	38	Poland	Nare Sushi restaurant★	Kinobu
4		Odile Davienne De Vassoigne	35	France	Haikara restaurant in Paris	Tatsumiya
6		Samantha Haley Beard	33	U.S.A	Canlis Restaurant	Kinobu
7		Zakir Hossan	27	Bangladesh (Italy)	Krudo sushi fusion Mixology	Uosaburo
8		Desmond Chong	25	Malaysia (Singapore)	Fat Cow★	Takeshigero, Minokichi Main Restaurant
9		Ali Tajik	26	Iran	Almas Restaurant	Takeshigero, Minokichi Main Restaurant
10		Servet Sergin Keyder	38	Türkiye	MSA, Culinary Arts Academy Istanbul	Yamabana Heihachi-chaya
11		Sebastian Wilk	31	Poland	Youmiko Sushi Bar	Tankuma Kitamise
12		Mariusz Melcer	38	Poland	Sushi Soul★	Tankuma Kitamise
■ Winner of the “Washoku World Challenge” Regional Competition Winners (Special invited trainees)						
13		Naumi Carvajal Uemura	46	Spain	Uemura Restaurant★	Kikunoi Honten
14		Nigel Loh Man Hong	40	Singapore	Miyoshi by Fatcow★	Kikunoi Honten

Restaurants that cooperated in the practical training *In no particular order

	Restaurant name	Representative	URL	Number of persons admitted
1	Sakae-Zushi	Masayoshi Kazato	http://sakaezushi01.com/	1
2	Akasaka Asada	Shota Asada	https://www.asadayaihei.co.jp/akasaka/	1
3	Akasaka Kikunoi	Yoshihiro Murata	https://kikunoi.jp/restaurant/akasaka.html	1
4	Tankuma Kitamise	Masahiro Kurisu	https://www.tankumakita.jp/	2
5	Kinobu	Takuji Takahashi	http://www.kinobu.co.jp/	2
6	Takeshigero, Minokichi Main Restaurant	Yoji Satake	https://www.takeshigero.com/	2
7	Uosaburo	Shigeo Araki	https://www.uosaburo.com/	1
8	Yamabana Heihachi-chaya	Shingo Sonobe	https://www.heihachi.co.jp/	1
9	Tatsumiya	Soichiro Hidari	https://uji-tatsumiya.co.jp/	1
10	Kikunoi Honten	Yoshihiro Murata	https://kikunoi.jp/restaurant/	2

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Testimonials from Participants in the 2023 Program

(listed in) no particular order



Alex Vall Clos (Spain)

When I was assigned to the restaurant, I was a little anxious at first, but gradually I got used to the environment and became close to the other staff members. I do believe that such a trusting relationship is cultivated through sincere dedication to one's work on a daily basis. One of the most valuable lessons I learned was that if you work hard and give it your all, you will eventually be rewarded. I am who I am today because of all the experiences I have had on this occasion. I want to make the most of these experiences and make Japanese cuisine even more popular in my country.



Vincent Pham (Canada)

I have learned so much during this training that it is beyond words. Everyone at the restaurant where I was placed interacted with me with passion, and I responded with my passion. And without that shared passion, there would have been no success in this program. I want to continue to have this passion as I continue to work and move forward with my life as a Japanese chef.



Renan Zonta Braga (Brazil)

This program allowed me to see things up close that I had only known about on the Internet and to gain a broad range of new experiences and knowledge. I have come to love not only sushi, but Japanese food in general. My thirst for knowledge that I can share with many more people has been further fueled by my experience in this program.



Sebastian Wilk (Poland)

This program has given me the opportunity to learn not only about Japanese cuisine, but also the spirit of Japanese hospitality and the fundamentals of Japanese ingredients. I learned various skills, such as arranging sashimi on the plate, *sanmai oroshi* (filleting a fish into three pieces), and *katsuramuki* (thinly slicing a vegetable into a long strip). But the most important thing was, of course, to understand the spirit of a Japanese chef. It is a spirit of mutual respect, and I have learned from experience that this is more important than anything else.



Desmond Chong (Singapore)

What is Japanese cuisine? Is it the ingredients, the tableware, the cooking utensils, or the people who cook it? These are the questions I have asked myself repeatedly. I have come to realize that there is no single answer to these questions and what is considered Japanese cuisine differs from person to person. Until we find the answer to these question, I hope that everyone, including myself, will continue to work hard to reach even higher levels of perfection. This is not an end, but just a beginning.



Odile Davienne De Vassoigne (France)

What happened to me this time was so valuable that it could have been a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. My actual visit to Japan gave me the opportunity to experience a lot of ingredients that I had never seen or tasted before. I was so impressed with all the different vegetables, fish, and spices that I was seeing for the first time. I realized that kitchen knife techniques are especially important in Japanese cuisine and that I needed to improve and refine my own kitchen knife techniques.



Servet Sergin Keyder (Türkiye)

For chefs who have a dream to further their career in the world of Japanese cuisine, the JCDC program is a golden opportunity and experience. There's a lot of knowledge out there in the world and on the Internet. But it's extremely important to get the right information and guidance. I believe this program is very well designed to achieve that goal. I hope that this program will continue to be accessible to more and more candidates, and that Japanese culture will continue to be spread through Japanese cuisine.



Ali Tajik (Iran)

While fully immersed in the art of Japanese cuisine, I was able to not only become familiar with a variety of ingredients, but also learn various techniques. The people at the restaurant I was assigned to also shared the philosophy, approach, and culture behind Japanese cuisine. I want to take this experience back to my home country and help to promote and spread Japanese cuisine and culture. For me, this program was more than just a training course in Japanese cuisine. I believe that it gave me something like the bread of life.

