

NEWS RELEASE

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今年の一皿

Handing down Japanese food culture to future generations

Tapioca is Japan's Dish of 2019!

■Japan's Dish of the Year website <http://gri.gnavi.co.jp/dishoftheyear/>

Gurunavi Research Institute Inc. (GRI; Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo; Hisao Taki, President), which conducts a variety of surveys and research efforts primarily on food-related themes, has selected tapioca as Japan's Dish of 2019, designating it as the food or drink that serves as a symbol of the times reflecting the year in Japanese society.

Japan's Dish of 2019

Tapioca



Reasons for selection

- Going beyond being a fad to become a social phenomenon

Tapioca took Japan by storm across virtually all regions and age groups. With phrases coined such as "*tapi-ru* (a verb – 'to tapioca')" and "*tapi-katsu* (tapioca activities)", you could say that it went beyond being a fad to become a social phenomenon. In particular, tapioca saw popularity among younger generations, with uptake amplified all the more thanks to their reach through social media.

- Diverse ways of enjoying it

With tapioca becoming available at a host of restaurants and not just at specialty shops, it permeated the marketplace. Meanwhile, consumers found diverse ways to enjoy tapioca, thanks to an expanded range of customizations according to each person's taste—by changing drink combinations, or the level and quality of sweetness, for example.

- Awareness of environmental problems

The problem of garbage came up in some quarters due to bad manners, but this shifted into an opportunity for increased awareness about environmental problems, with younger people taking the lead to voluntarily gather garbage.

- Expectations for the future of Japanese food culture

Because cassava, the raw material of tapioca, doesn't contain gluten, there are expectations for its application as a gluten-free ingredient. It also has the potential to be incorporated into Japanese food culture in various forms other than tapioca pearls.

For media enquiries

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Runner Up

Fermented Food Dishes

Collective term for dishes incorporating fermented ingredients and foods such as miso, soy sauce, *koji* mold, yogurt, and *natto*



Reasons for selection

- Market expansion

The market scale for *natto* (fermented soybeans) reached a record high¹ and the number of restaurants and cafes using fermented ingredients in Japan is on the increase.

- Increased health-consciousness

Fermentation has been essential in Japan's food culture since ancient times. With increased health-consciousness recently, there has been a rediscovery of their value. Fermented foods have until now tended to garner attention as a standalone dish. However, this year's key characteristic was the style in which fermented foods were incorporated into entire meals. Since fermented foods and seasonings have a strong umami flavor and increase nutritional value, we can expect reduced use of salt and other health benefits by skillfully incorporating them into meals.

- Attention from abroad

Japanese food ranks at the top of things that tourists to Japan look forward to² and with recognition from the world, fermented foods became a catalyst for the Japanese to re-examine their traditional food culture.

Source: 1. Japan Natto Cooperative Society Federation's 2019 Survey on Natto. 2. Japan Tourism Agency's Consumer Spending of International Tourists in Japan 2018

Nominee

Cheese Gourmet Dishes

Collective term for dishes and sweets using cheese

Reasons for selection

- The volume of cheese consumption in Japan reached a record high.³ The import volume of cheese is also increasing every year,⁴ and with an EPA coming into effect in February 2019 which lowered cheese tariffs, a further increase in the import volume is expected.

- Producers of small-scale domestic natural cheeses are steadily increasing and the number of cheese factories in Japan, which was 106 in 2006, increased threefold to 319 in 2018.⁵

- Because cheese goes well with various ingredients and cuisines, it is expected to show a further spread in restaurant menus.

Source: 3. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan's 2018 Cheese Supply and Demand Chart. 4. Ministry of Finance's 2018 Trade Statistics. 5. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan's Milk and Dairy Products Division.



Nominee

Spice Curry

Refers to curries that blend several spices and which generally do not use flour

Reasons for selection

- Spice curry stood out in particular in 2019 even within the spice boom of recent years.

- It has become easy to obtain various spices in Japan and people can create rich flavors by blending them. As spices offer a high degree of freedom in cooking, it is easy for restaurants to showcase their creativity and originality. For consumers, the joy of searching for curries with spice blends to their liking has increased. These key factors led to growing support for spice curry.

- Unlike the traditional business category of curry specialty restaurants, with cafes and other restaurants having begun offering spice curries with fancy appearances, spice curry gained favor among women. This is another characteristic of this year.



Selection of Japan's Dish of the Year

Gurunavi Inc. (Gurunavi; Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo; Akio Sugihara, President) has held the annual Japan's Dish of the Year event since 2014 with the aim of preserving the best of Japan's food culture as part of humanity's shared heritage. This year marks the sixth Japan's Dish of the Year event. Possessing big data sets, Gurunavi combined and analyzed primary information from a total of about 500,000 restaurants on the Gurunavi restaurant information website, including 58,951 member restaurants that pay to post detailed information, together with the search and behavior history of 17.96 million Gurunavi members (as of October 1, 2019) and 61 million unique users (as of December 2018).

For Japan's Dish of 2019, 40 keywords were extracted from this big data; they fulfilled certain conditions including search volume and rate of increase. Using such keywords as options, a questionnaire was issued to Gurunavi members and the results used to narrow selection to 30 keywords. Adding the number of votes from media stakeholders* who conducted the judging, four were nominated as the final selection. From among the nominees, upon the Dish of the Year Committee confirming that it fulfilled the three conditions of (1) being a trend or topic that year, (2) being deeply relevant to societal developments and reflecting changes in society that year, and (3) being worthy of being a record of food culture to hand down to posterity, tapioca was approved and decided as Japan's Dish of 2019.

GRI aims to share Japan's outstanding food culture throughout Japan and overseas and contribute to its further development through the announcement of Japan's Dish of the Year. Gurunavi aims to contribute to the development of food culture under its corporate mission to "protect and nurture Japan's food culture."

*See below for details on media stakeholders.

■ Judging Process



■ Japan's Dish of 2019 Overview

Sponsor: Gurunavi Research Institute Inc., Dish of the Year Committee
 Co-sponsor: Gurunavi Inc.
 Endorsement: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; Agency for Cultural Affairs;
 Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism; Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO)



"Japan's Dish of the Year" is certified by the beyond 2020 program.

Judging cooperation: 83 companies, 130 media titles, 173 individuals

The Asahi Shimbun Marketing Headquarters Database Department/Culture and Living News Department, The Asahi Shimbun Shop, The Mainichi Newspapers Olympic and Paralympic Office/ Kumamoto Headquarters, The Yomiuri Shimbun Daily Living Department, The Nihon Keizai Shimbun, Sankei Shimbun City News Department, Fuji Sankei Business i, The Hokkaido Shimbun, Mutsu Sinpou, The Niigata Nippo, The Sanyo Shimbun, The Chugoku Shimbun, The San-in Chuo Shimpou, Minami-Nippon Shimbun, Ryukyu Shimpou, Daily Sports, The Japan News, Kyodo News, Jiji Press, Nippon TV <NTV>, TV Asahi <EX>, Tokyo Broadcasting System Television <TBS> JNN News/ News Department/ Media Business Department, TV Tokyo <TX> News Department, Fuji Television <CX> News Department/Chokugeki LIVE Good Day!/Mezamashi TV, Tokyo Metropolitan Television <MXTV> TOKYO MX NEWS, Shizuoka Asahi Television <SATV> Tobikkiri! Shizuoka, RCC Broadcasting <RCC> Kanmuri/Hinadandan, Ehime Broadcasting <EBC>, Otoko no Kakurega, GOETHE, Zaikai, Diamond Weekly, DIME, Nikkei Trendy, Orange Page, Thank you!, CAFERES, Kindai Shokudo, dancyu, Magazine of the Foodservice Industry, Monthly Shokudo, Gaishoku Restaurants News, The Japan Food Service News, Gourmet Caree, Digital Mainichi, YOMIURI ONLINE, The Sankei News, jijiweb, Yahoo! Life Magazine, Impress Watch, Mynavi News, ananweb, City Living Web, Food Navigation, Nikkan Spa, Joshi Spa, Magazine House, Nikkei Publishing, freelancers, and others

(The Public Relations Society of Japan's PR and mass media handbook (PR Notebook) 2019 was referred to for the order of the media titles)

Logo Mark



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The kanji for "plate" was simplified into a logo. The curve on the top was adopted from the logogram for "plate." The bilaterally symmetrical form indicates trustworthiness and fairness, the form overall is inspired by "awards," such as trophies and podiums. The base color of red expresses "Japan" and "celebration."



Reference Materials

Past Winners

2018: Mackerel



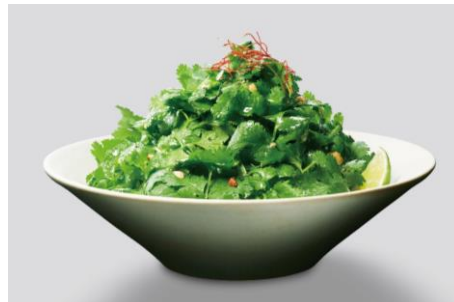
- ✓ Attention focused on canned mackerel reconfirms the merits of seafood culture
- ✓ Improved recognition of branded mackerel and expectations for its increased popularity in restaurants
- ✓ Promotion of sustainable fishing and development of seafood culture

2017: Chicken Breast Dishes



- ✓ Attention on high protein, low fat chicken breast
- ✓ Fatigue-fighting imidazole dipeptide
- ✓ Demand for salads featuring chicken breast

2016: Pakchee (Coriander) Cuisine



- ✓ From condiment to lead role
- ✓ Appearance of *pakuchisuto* (pakchee enthusiasts)
- ✓ Domestic pakchee production

2015: Onigirazu



- ✓ Expanded the potential of rice
- ✓ Brand-name rice

2014: *Gibier* (Wild Game) Cuisine



- ✓ Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare "Guidelines for Hygiene Control Concerning Wild Game and Fowl"
- ✓ Appearance of venison even in convenience store and fast-food dishes