

Hong Kong as a culinary capital opens opportunities for Japanese traders



Tokyo, Jul 1, 2010: Food traders are invited to Hong Kong in August and November, when the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) presents an extraordinary one-stop culinary trading platform. Through a series of related events, food traders can experience new tastes from around the world in Hong Kong, a culinary paradise where Chinese and Western flavours and styles combine.

Hong Kong – best destination for doing business

“Japan, one of the world’s major economic powers, is Hong Kong's third largest trading partner. Total trade value between Hong Kong and Japan in the first five months of 2010 went up 39% to US\$21.4 billion (1.9 trillion yen). As the global economy is picking up, we will step up our promotional efforts to expand bilateral trade volume,” HKTDC’s Director of Japan, Ms Shigemi Furuta told at a media gathering.

“With its prime location in the heart of Asia, Hong Kong is an ideal international trading centre for Japanese traders. Hong Kong’s strategic geographic position, coupled with its free trade policy, world-class infrastructure and free flow of information create a favorable foundation for traders to do international business. Hong Kong's ranking as the world’s freest economy for 16 consecutive years further reinforces its preferential status,” said Ms Furuta.

“Hong Kong is the biggest importer of Japan’s foodstuff products totaled at 81 billion yen in 2009 - 22% of Japan’s total export in the category,” Ms Furuta continued.

HKTDC fairs have proved themselves to be effective trading channels for Japanese businesses. In the past three years, more than 250 exhibitors and 12,000 buyers from Japan have participated in HKTDC events each year. In particular, more and more Japanese exhibitors and buyers are taking part in the HKTDC Food Expo and the HKTDC Hong Kong International Wine & Spirits Fair.

Best one-stop sourcing platform for food and beverages

With enormous support from Japanese food suppliers and exporters, the **Food Expo** (12 to 16 August) returns with its versatile offerings of delicacies from all over the world, bringing together more than 700 exhibitors from around 20 countries and regions. Last year, 607 exhibitors from 24 countries and regions

joined, over 11,000 trade buyers and 350,000 public visitors came. “The Food Expo has attracted the enthusiastic participation of big food brands and is a prominent event for the food trade worldwide. The Japanese pavilion has the largest overseas representation in the Trade Hall, with more than 100 companies participating, up 150% from 2009. Exhibits include rice, noodle, fruit, vegetable, marine product, meat product, sake, beverage and various kind processed food from all over Japan. What’s more, over a hundred Chinese mainland food manufacturers are expected to join, enabling Japanese traders to source direct from them” said HKTDC marketing manager, Mr Masahiro Ito said.

Supported by Japanese Consulate General in Hong Kong, the Japan Pavilion at the Grand Hall, will include suppliers from Prefectural Government of Hokkaido, Aomori, Tochigi, Shizuoka, Hyogo, Fukuoka, Oita, Kumamoto, Miyazaki, Kagoshima, Okinawa and Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting (MURC). Miss Japan has also been appointed as the Friendship Ambassador of the Japan Pavilion. She joined today’s press briefing and will fly to Hong Kong during the fair to give her full support to the event.

Riding on the success of its debut in 2009, the Premium Food Zone will return this year with more than 30 quality brand names. A new Noodle & Pasta Zone will bring a comprehensive offering of all related products in one area. Nissin is one of the big brands joining this zone, along with other prestigious noodle and pasta products from Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Korea, Singapore and Taiwan. Numerous cooking demonstrations by professional chefs will take place.

Running in tandem is the **Hong Kong International Tea Fair** (12 to 14 August). The encouraging results of the inaugural edition last year paves the way for a better edition this year with more than 330 exhibitors, 25% more than last year. Amongst them 7 Japanese exhibitors confirmed to join. “The fair aims to be Asia’s premier tea trading hub, and has secured support from major world tea producers. Participants include the Indian Tea Board, Sri Lanka Tea Board and Board of External Trade in Tanzania.” said Mr Ito.

A new highlight of the tea fair is the Friends of Tea. This works on the combination of teas and food, a culinary art that is well represented in Western and Eastern tea cultures. This highlight showcases various foods served with tea, including cookies, cakes, Chinese pastries, nuts and chocolates. Under the “Vote for the Most Popular Tea 2010” competition, all the Merit Award tea winners will be combined with selected food from the Friends of Tea for visitors to taste during the fair period.

A signature event, the International KamCha competition (Hong Kong Styled Milk Tea) will have its final round at the Tea Gallery on 14 August. This tea is peculiar to the Hong Kong culture of mixing tea with milk. Running various rounds in various regions, regional winners from the Chinese mainland, Australia and Canada will gather at the final round for championship.

Following the Hong Kong government’s decision to abolish duty on wine and beer in 2008, the territory has emerged as a vital wine hub in Asia. The **Hong**

Kong International Wine & Spirits Fair (4-6 November) is growing in popularity and importance with 600 exhibitors expected this year. Last year's event was a huge success, exhibitor numbers doubled to 525 from 34 countries and regions, whilst buyer numbers increased by 36% with almost 12,000 buyers from 62 countries & regions.

Australia, a famous and prominent wine producing country from the new world, is the fair's partner country this year. The HKTDC is working with Austrade to present a Vino Syrah/Shiraz Forum to introduce the vast collection of Shiraz wines in Australia.

Another highlight of the fair is the Cathay Pacific Hong Kong International Wine & Spirit Competition, which is organised in conjunction with London's renowned International Wine & Spirit Competition. A new food and wine pairing trophy for "Best Wine with Sashimi" and two new spirits award categories, for the best Scotch Whisky and Cognac, will be added to this year's competition.

"The food, tea and wine fairs are supported by a good combination of international quality exhibitors and buyers, and present many business opportunities for Japanese traders," Mr Ito concluded.

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