

Tsuruoka Creative City of Gastronomy Promotion Plan

Facts and Issues

As stated above, the city of Tsuruoka boasts a traditional gastronomy unique to the region which has been protected and fostered by its citizens. This plan has been set forth to benefit fully from such appealing local gastronomy and its potential. Before implementing it, however, some of facts and issues need to be clarified and shared, mainly from the following points of view:

- With its vast plain surrounded by the Sea of Japan, mountains and rivers, Tsuruoka is abundant in food sources, due to its unique geographical features and four varying seasons. Thus, further promotion will be necessary to increase the number of restaurants serving such cuisine.
- Tsuruoka has inherited the agricultural wisdom and creativity of our forerunners, such as rice growing, indigenous crops, etc. To preserve such a tradition, the region needs to be better understood by, for example, offering opportunities for citizens to know what is going on in traditional agricultural sites.
- To clarify the history, characteristics and benefits of the local gastronomy, and to pass it down to the next generation, it is important to encourage the recording, preservation and exhibitions of local gastronomy, as well as to promote further research in relation to such activities.
- There is a greater awareness of environmental issues among Japanese people in general, as a reaction to the past emphasis on profit-making and destruction of nature. Tsuruoka, as an advanced city in environmentally friendly agriculture, needs to promote further projects in relation to environmental conservation.
- Based on our traditional gastronomy, Tsuruoka needs to create a new local gastronomic culture, establishing the brand “Tsuruoka,” while promoting some industries reflecting fully the attractive local cuisines.
- The decreasing and aging population of the mountain and rural areas is resulting in fewer people taking over the gastronomy of Tsuruoka. Some strategic projects will be necessary to attract young people in the region and outside visitors to be involved in activities related to our local food and to live here permanently.
- To infiltrate further the concept of “developing and taking advantage of our local food” (local production and local consumption), it will be necessary to encourage people to take over their home cooking, which fully incorporates the local gastronomy, while disseminating and implementing further the education on health benefits through local cuisine.
- Since Tsuruoka is full of attraction and potential in relation to the local gastronomy, it will be necessary to provide places within the region by coordinating local chefs to take advantage of such attractive aspects of the city.
- Tsuruoka, with several educational and state-of-the-art agricultural and life science research institutions integrated in the area, will need to encourage more coordination with other academic research institutions within and outside of Japan, taking full advantage of its potential.
- Regarding Tsuruoka’s gastronomy, more anecdotal information will need to be disseminated to increase visitors who enjoy local foods, since not enough information has been sent out so far to introduce our city as a treasure house of food.

- Tsuruoka possesses a unique gastronomic world fostered in the spiritual culture born from *Shugendo* (a unique Japanese religion in which ancient mountain worship and Buddhism were integrated) in the Three Mountains of Dewa and from some of the traditional performing arts, such as Kurokawa Noh. Thus, it will be necessary to utilize this attractive world strategically to deploy our gastronomic industry overseas.
- Tsuruoka has a history of international exchange programs mainly with sister cities. Placing such exchange activities at its core, it will be necessary to introduce our gastronomic culture outside of the prefecture and the country and further strengthen our ties with other regions in relation to gastronomy.

Basic Guidelines for Implementation

Considering the facts and issues mentioned above, the following are the basic guidelines for activities to realize the future image of the Creative City of Gastronomy set forth in this plan.

- The activities to create a new gastronomic culture are sorted into the six following elements. From each point of view, necessary mechanisms and places will be prepared to implement these interrelated activities.

Sites of Gastronomy		Foundation of Gastronomy			Exchange of Gastronomy
Create	Eat	Transmit	Foster	Learn	Connect
Projects related to promotion of agriculture, forestry, fisheries and food processing	Projects related to promotion of restaurants, commerce, and tourism	Projects related to human resource development and food education to conserve and disseminate the gastronomy	Projects related to human resource development and food education to support the gastronomy	Projects related to promoting academic research activities in gastronomy	Projects related to introductions and exchanges related to local gastronomy inside and outside of the country

