



New Japan-U.S. Trade Era Commences Year 2020

With Japan and the US representing about 30% of global GDP, the US-Japan Trade Agreement signed on October 7, 2019, promises to ramp-up trade in goods and digital commerce between the two nations. Covering a huge range of goods, from soy sauce to industrial machinery; and also digital trade in software, contents, etc. -- the agreement will, for example, enhance access for Wagyu beef from Japan into the US market, and US beef and California wine into Japan's market with lower tariffs and relaxed trade rules. For instance, prior to this agreement, Japanese Wagyu imports at a low-tariff rates were also capped at low quota volumes. Under this agreement, these low-tariff quota volumes have been significantly increased, meaning that we may soon enjoy authentic Wagyu at a reasonable price! Tariffs on Kaki persimmons from Japan will also be eliminated – even more to enjoy! New rules take effect January 1st.

Prime Minister Abe and Pope Francis Meet in Tokyo

During his visit to Japan, His Holiness Pope Francis met with Prime Minister ABE Shinzo on Nov. 25. The prime minister welcomed Pope Francis to Japan, and noted that Japan and the Vatican both emphasize the importance of peace and a world without nuclear weapons.



Credit: Cabinet Public Relations Office



Foreign Minister Motegi Delivers Policy Speech

Speaking at the 1st Tokyo Global Dialogue held on Dec. 2, Foreign Minister MOTEGI Toshimitsu delivered a foreign policy speech in which he noted that rules of the international community should held guide solutions, and that the international order needs to be made more sustainable.



G20 Aichi-Nagoya Foreign Ministers' Meeting Held

Foreign Ministers from the G20 nations convened on Nov. 22-23. The meeting focused on such themes as the promotion of free trade and global governance, realizing sustainable development goals, and Africa's development.



[Japan's Climate Change Initiatives](#)

The UN Climate Change Conference COP 25, was held Dec. 2-14 in Madrid, Spain.

Learn more about Japan's efforts to address climate change.



[103rd Agricultural Society of Japan Commendations](#)

This year's recipients of Agricultural Achievement Awards from the Agricultural Society of Japan (Dai Nihon Nohkai) Southern California Branch, Mr. Kazuhiko Nakanishi and Mr. Katsumi Shigeta, were honored in a ceremony hosted by Consul

General MUTO Akira at his official residence. Mr. Nakanishi, with some 50 years of gardening experience and expertise, has worked on gardens large and small, and most recently the rehabilitation of the "Shoseian and Japanese Friendship Garden" in the City of Glendale, for which he was also honored by that city. Mr. Shigeta, through his pioneering efforts in the Hokuto Kinoko Company, has succeeded in introducing many varieties of high-quality, and also certified organic, Japanese mushroom varieties into the US marketplace. Learn more of their tremendous accomplishments and award ceremony details by clicking the title.

[The Winners of the Minister's Awards for Overseas Promotion of Japanese Food](#)



On December 13th, the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan awarded persons who have made outstanding contributions to the introduction and spread of Japanese cuisine, Japanese food and other Japanese agricultural and fishery products overseas. From Los Angeles, Mr. Toshiaki Toyoshima, the owner of esteemed Sushi restaurant “Sushi Gen” received this honor. For over a half century, Mr. Toyoshima has worked on the popularization of Japanese cuisine and Japanese food

culture in Los Angeles through his widely celebrated sushi. Further, he is strongly committed to Edomae sushi which is predicated upon fresh quality ingredients, and excellence in preparation and presentation.

Recap of 2019: Economic and Foreign Policy Presentations at JAPAN HOUSE LA

This past year was a busy time for the Consulate General of Japan and JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles, which organized special presentations on economic and foreign policy topics. For more information about events at JAPAN HOUSE LA, please click the title above.

- “Gender Equality as a Global Goal: Where Do We Stand Now?” Lecture (Feb. 11, 2019)
- Presentation by Walk in U.S., Talk on Japan delegation (March 7, 2019)
- “ARIGATO” Host Towns in support of Team USA – Toward and Beyond Tokyo 2020 - (Sept. 25, 2019)
- Special Presentations: Japan’s Foreign Policy & Japan-U.S. Relations (Nov. 15, 2019)
- Panel Discussions: The New Era for Japan” Business, Economy, and Regional Security (Dec. 12, 2019)



Spotlight on "Japan's Indo-Pacific Strategy in the Emerging US-China Rivalry" at JAPAN HOUSE in January 2020

On Jan. 17, Keio University Professor of International Politics HOSOYA Yuichi will discuss Japan's efforts to initiate the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy (FOIP) in the time of the U.S.-China rivalry. Don't miss this special event at JAPAN

HOUSE Los Angeles!



Panel Discussions on the New Era for Japan

The Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles and JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles co-presented "The New Era for Japan: Business, Economy and Regional Security" at JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles on December 12, 2019. Deputy Mayor of

Los Angeles for International Affairs Ambassador Nina Hachigian gave the opening keynote speech, entitled "The Enduring Friendship of Japan and Los Angeles." Following the keynote were two panels: "Trade & Investment in the Asia-Pacific" and "Changes in Japan's Political Economy and Foreign Policy."



2020 Japanese American Leadership Delegation Selected

Ten leaders from throughout the U.S. have been selected to participate in the 2020 Japanese American Leadership Delegation, sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and administered by the U.S.-Japan Council. The delegation will travel to Japan in March 2020 to meet with government and business leaders, and will participate in a public symposium in Tokyo. Mr. Jeffrey Maloney, Councilmember of the City of Alhambra and Chief Counsel of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, will represent the Los Angeles consulate region on the delegation.



New Year's Eve and New Year's Day in Japan

How do you plan to mark New Year's Eve and New Year's Day marking the start of 2020, or the year of the Rat? The *kadomatsu*, or gate pine, is a traditional Japanese new year decoration set in the entrance of a building to bless the location for the coming year. The

kagami mochi, or "mirror rice cake" is also a traditional Japanese New Year's decoration that can be placed in multiple locations in one's home as an offering to the deities that visit on New Year's. The ornamental mochi is removed on Jan. 11 and then broken into smaller pieces before being eaten.

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