

# SUMMER PROGRAM, 2026

2026大阪プログラム: "天下の台所"の過去と未来を探る

# OSAKA, JAPAN

EXPLORING THE PAST AND FUTURE OF 'JAPAN'S KITCHEN'

AN IMMERSIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE BLENDING  
HISTORY, CUISINE, AND SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION

**4 WEEKS | 3 COURSES | 15 CREDITS**



**FIELD VISITS:**  
FUJI OIL, KIZU MARKET, FACTORY

**CULTURAL EXPERIENCES:**  
DASHI MAKING, SHOJIN CUISINE

**SUSTAINABILITY TOPICS:**  
FOOD TECHNOLOGY AND THE  
FUTURE, NUTRITION, ALLEVIATING  
POVERTY THROUGH BUSINESS

**DATE & LOCATION:**  
SESSION 1: MAY 30 - JUN 27, 2026  
SESSION 2: JUL 04 - AUG 01, 2026  
**OSAKA, JAPAN**

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# OSAKA THE KITCHEN OF JAPAN 2026 SUMMER PROGRAM, 2026

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**GLi**  
Gustolab®  
International

## WHY Choose Osaka?

### | A City of Rich History and Culinary Legacy

Osaka has long been known as the **"Kitchen of Japan"**, a title dating back to the 1600s when the city became a vital hub for the distribution of food and goods across Japan. During the Edo period (1603–1868), Osaka flourished as the country's commercial center, with its bustling merchant districts and thriving markets setting the foundation for its culinary prominence. Even today, the city preserves this legacy through its vibrant food culture, historic markets, and dedication to traditional cooking techniques.

This program offers immersive experiences that bridge **historical traditions, contemporary food business, and future innovations in Osaka**. Students will gain firsthand insights through guided field visits, cultural workshops, and industry engagements.

### | A Global Food Tourism Destination

Modern Osaka is a **must-visit destination for food lovers worldwide**. From its signature street foods like **takoyaki (octopus balls)** and **okonomiyaki (savory pancakes)** to its world-renowned Kobe beef and sushi, the city offers an unmatched culinary experience.

Numerous Michelin-starred restaurants, as well as long-standing family-owned eateries, provide a rich contrast of **fine dining and comfort food**, making Osaka a paradise for gastronomes. The city's commitment to innovation in food technology and sustainability further enhances its global reputation as a leader in the culinary world.

### | A Thriving International Destination

With its rich history and modern appeal, Osaka continues to attract millions of visitors each year. In **2019 alone, the city welcomed 18.5 million international tourists**, making it one of the most visited cities in Japan. Its **warm hospitality, vibrant nightlife, and diverse attractions** make it an ideal place for an immersive cultural experience. Whether exploring traditional markets like **Kuromon Ichiba**, enjoying a boat ride along the **Dotonbori River**, or experiencing the latest in **food technology and sustainability**, Osaka offers something for everyone.

By choosing Osaka as the location for our 2026 summer program, we invite you to discover the **past, present, and future of Japan's culinary and cultural landscape** in an engaging and unforgettable way.





# WHY Choose GLI and JFSC?

## | Faculty Highlights



**Takakazu Yumoto, Ph.D.**  
湯本 貴和

- President, Japan Food Studies College
- Professor Emeritus | Department of Ecology, Kyoto University



**Aiko Tanaka, Author and Chef**  
田中 愛子

- Founder & Executive Director, Japan Food Studies College
- Master Chef, Food Activist
- President Kitchen Conversations



**Jack D. Harris, Ph.D.**

- Director, Extension Programs & International Development, Gustolab International, LLC
- Professor Emeritus in Sociology, Hobart & William Smith Colleges

## | About Gustolab International

**Gustolab International** has been active in educating around **Food Systems and Sustainability** since 2006 when interest in Food Studies was still in its infancy. Headquartered in **Rome, Italy**, and conducts teaching programs in **Japan, Vietnam, and China**. The institute has 12 PhD-level professors and collaborates with 50 universities worldwide. Every year, between 300 and 400 students from around the world visit Rome for training programs. From 2018, students from partner universities studied **Critical Food Studies and Sustainability** through the food culture of Osaka.



## | About Japan Food Studies College

**Japan's first research and educational institution** dedicated to the scientific study and dissemination of information on food and food culture. The various challenges we face today—climate change, the biodiversity crisis, the loss of regional cultures due to globalization, and the intensification of international competition over resources—are all deeply connected to our dining tables. The Japan Food Studies College is guided by the philosophy of **"The Philosophy on the Dining Table"** proposed by Chairperson Aiko Tanaka, as a roadmap for reform. This philosophy serves as the core principle of our institution. By practicing "The Philosophy on the Dining Table," we aim to collect and integrate intelligence from diverse fields to create a sustainable food culture for the 21st century, ensuring that everyone on the planet can enjoy a healthy and sustainable diet. We function as a think tank dedicated to fostering sustainable food culture.





Course

Modules & Learning Objectives

Course Title	Food and Food Culture: Born from Osaka History The Present and Future of Osaka's Food • 5 Credits	The Business of Japanese Food Japanese Business Practices Through the Food Industry • 5 Credits	Critical Food Studies in Osaka, Japan The Case of Osaka's Food Systems and Agriculture • 5 Credits
Core Topics	The <b>geography, history, and culture of Osaka</b> have had a critical impact on local and Japanese cuisine. You will learn all about Osaka, <b>the Kitchen of Japan</b> , gaining a holistic understanding of the foundational ideas behind Osaka's food culture.	Develop an appreciation of the <b>Food business in Osaka</b> , Japan, by way of a careful analysis of its circular economies, inclusive capitalism, and community coexistence. Form an understanding of <b>agricultural</b> and <b>aquacultural development</b> .	<b>Understand Japanese food systems and their environmental impact.</b> Generate insights into critical food issues and the realities of the food system, such as Sustainable agriculture, food waste reduction, and future food technologies.
Hands-on Activities	Monastic training experience at <b>Mount Koya</b> , visit to a traditional <b>soy sauce brewery</b>	Visiting companies, farms, fisheries, and factories to learn about <b>the business of food</b> , opportunities for interviews with executives, managers, and staff	Farm research, visits to <b>agricultural</b> and <b>industrial factories</b> , discussions with expert researchers.
Students will learn	<b>Mastering Japanese Culinary Culture</b> • Learn to <b>taste and analyze</b> Japanese cuisine. • Understand the impact of <b>geography, history, and economy</b> on Osaka's food culture. • Gain knowledge of <b>seasonings, fermentation, and dashi (broth)</b> . • Familiarize yourself with <b>Japanese food-related vocabulary</b> for better communication.	<b>Exploring Food and Tradition</b> • Understand the role of <b>gastronomy tourism</b> in Japan. • Study <b>architectural aesthetics, traditional living, and Shojin Ryori (Buddhist cuisine)</b> . • Engage in <b>monastic experiences and industry visits</b> to explore food traditions and innovations.	<b>Analyzing the Food Industry and Future Trends</b> • Evaluate the <b>environmental impact of food systems</b> with a <b>Critical Food Studies perspective</b> . • Examine <b>Japan's food industry</b> , from traditional markets to modern corporations. • Explore <b>food technology and sustainable business models</b> . • Learn about <b>global sustainability challenges</b> and Japan's strategies.





# Field Studies & Signature Activities

This program offers immersive experiences that bridge **historical traditions, contemporary food business, and future innovations** in Osaka. Students will gain firsthand insights through **guided field visits, cultural workshops, and industry engagements**.

## | Essential Destinations (Historical & Future Perspectives)

🏰 **Osaka Castle** – A deep dive into **Edo-period** commerce, exploring how Osaka became Japan's historic food hub.

🐟 **Kizu Wholesale Market** – An **early-morning market visit**, witnessing real-time transactions between suppliers and chefs while examining the **supply chain challenges** in Japan's food industry.

🙏 **Monastic Stay at Mount Koya** – A temple immersion experience, learning about **Buddhist vegetarian cuisine** (Shojin Ryori) and its spiritual significance in Japanese food culture.



## | Cultural & Culinary Experiences (Hands-on Learning)

🍣 **Sushi-Making & Dashi Tasting Workshop** – Master **traditional Japanese culinary techniques**, with a focus on **seasoning, fermentation, and umami**.

🍙 **Rice Koji And Miso Cooking Workshop** – Learn the art of cooking with fermented Japanese ingredients.

🌱 **Plant-Forward Cooking Workshop** with Osaka Summer Vegetables – Craft a fresh meal using locally-sourced vegetables.





# Application Information & Timeline

We welcome applications from **university students** (both undergraduate and graduate) and **independent scholars** or **professionals from all fields of study**.

No Japanese language proficiency required. The program provides an introduction to the Japanese language, especially the vocabulary of food.

## | Eligibility:

Undergraduate and graduate students are required to have a minimum GPA of 2.5 and maintain a good academic and social standing at their home university.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us.

## | Enrollment Fee:

Early Enrollment Fee: \$5,500 USD

Regular Enrollment Fee: \$6,000 USD

## | Application Deadlines:

**Early Bird Discount: by March 9, 2026**

Regular Application: by April 6, 2026

## | Program Fees Include:

Local accommodations and meals (homestay)

Special program lunches and dinners

Course materials and guided field visits

Local transportation for study trips

## | Program Cancellation :

Failure to recruit sufficient students will lead to program cancellation.

## | Credits :

Students can earn university credits upon completion of all course obligations by passing the final assessment. It is recommended that you consult your university advisor to discuss studying abroad and to ensure you receive full academic credit, either directly from them or through transfer credits.

Transfer credit transcripts are available through Portland State University for a transcript fee of \$600.

All participants are awarded an official Certificate of Attendance.

## | For more information contact :

**Jack D. Harris, Ph.D., Professor EmeritusD**

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