

AJC conducted a workshop on gastronomy tourism in Wakayama, Japan for tourism stakeholders from the ASEAN Member States



Left: Tuna fish bidding at Katsuura fishing port, Right: Koyasan

The ASEAN-Japan Centre (AJC) conducted a "Workshop on Sustainable Tourism: Gastronomy Tourism" from 17 to 23 November 2019 in Wakayama Prefecture, Japan. It was organized for the management-level stakeholders in tourism of the ASEAN Member States to learn cases of gastronomy tourism in Wakayama Prefecture. A total of 12 participants joined this workshop.

The participants first received lectures on Japan's recent overseas travel market trend and gastronomy tourism at Wakayama University. They also delivered presentations on their own country's gastronomy tourism at the university.

From the following day, the group visited gastronomy tourism sites in Wakayama Prefecture which were arranged with the support of Wakayama Prefectural Government. Buddhist vegetarian food served at Shukubo (temple lodging) in Koyasan is a famous gastronomic attraction, but Wakayama has many more gastronomic tourism attractions. The participants visited and experienced fruit picking, tuna bidding and tuna can making, a unique agritourism venue which used to be a school building, and a traditional soy sauce manufacturer in Yuasa town, the birthplace of soy sauce. The group also visited Tanabe City Kumano Tourism Bureau, which promotes the world heritage Kumano Kodo Pilgrimage Route in a sustainable manner with the local community.

Participants commented that they experienced different gastronomic attractions of the locality by

visiting different places. Some were surprised by the uniqueness of Shukubo in Koyasan, as temples in their countries are not open to visitors to stay overnight.

Sometimes referred to as “from farm to table,” gastronomy tourism can provide a variety of experience-based activities starting from growing and harvesting food ingredients to cooking and tasting food. Such activities are suitable for repeat-travelers who seek unique experiences and can be applied in the ASEAN Member States to further provide programs for visitors to experience and know about food and culture of the Member States. It is expected that this workshop will help the development of the unique and sustainable tourism products to introduce rich food culture of the ASEAN Member States.

The AJC will continue to make efforts to enhance sustainable tourism development in the ASEAN Member States by providing capacity-building programmes for tourism stakeholders by highlighting Japanese gastronomy tourism cases.

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