



NPO Organization to Promote Japanese Restaurants Abroad (JRO)

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Umami – Tool That Helps Food Business

Magic of Japanese cuisine

demonstrated at the 2008 National Restaurant Association Show

CHICAGO, Illinois – The Organization to Promote Japanese Restaurants Abroad (JRO) has highlighted the essence of Japanese cuisine through *Umami* at the 2008 National Restaurant Association (NRA) Restaurant, Hotel-Motel Show held from May 17 through May 20 at McCormick Place in Chicago.

Umami is a name for flavor-enhancing substances first discovered in Japan in the early 1900s, contained in various foods across the world. To substantiate *Umami*, which can be expressed in every cuisine, JRO held cooking exhibitions at the Show, demonstrated food prepared with fresh Japanese ingredients, and served to 3,600 visitors. It also handed out 12,000 ZAGAT booklets listing Japanese restaurants in the U.S. in order to provide guidance to Japanese cuisine.

Food sampled at the JRO booth included Japanese seared beef served with salsa sauce and spicy tuna and avocado salad, as well as grilled spiced chicken with spring salad. Ingredients used were ordinary products in the market, which were marvelously transformed into delicious dishes with the magic of *Umami*.

“Today, *Umami* is the focus of interest in international culinary scenes because of its power to raise quality of food. JRO is dedicated to convey *Umami* across the nation, and help further improve the American culinary market through the application of Japanese ingredients,” said Kazutaka Kato, President of JRO.

A number of visitors who sampled the dishes at JRO’s booth identified *Umami* as one of the hottest topics for the year. An increasing number of restaurants and chefs are applying *Umami* to enhance the popularity of their foods and stimulate their businesses.

The Organization to Promote Japanese Restaurants Abroad (JRO) was established in 2007 as an incorporated NPO by volunteers who wish to promote Japanese cuisine to the world. The purpose of the JRO is to globally convey the appeal of Japanese food and culture and eventually contribute to the development of overseas markets for Japanese food products. For more information, please visit http://www.jronet.org/eng_index.html.

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Appendix

JRO booth was designed to materialize the soaring effects of *Umami* applicable to foods. The booth was conspicuous in the North floor, demonstrating the enhancing power of Umami.



Umami illustrated in Japanese characters implies the origin of the *Umami* taste, Japan. Names of ingredients around *Umami*, such as *MISO* and *SOY SAUCE*, symbolize the various taste components made in Japan.

