

JTB Launches New Business Connecting Chefs and Accommodations

First phase of initiative to address chef shortage
to launch on March 1 in Kamaishi City, Iwate Prefecture

Tokyo, Japan, February 12, 2025 – JTB Corp will launch a new business to remedy the shortage of chefs in accommodations and tourist attractions by dispatching chefs who meet local needs throughout Japan, thus solving a problem for society.

As a first step, we will collaborate with Real Quality Co. (Head office: Shibuya-ward, Tokyo; Representative Director: Go Kobayashi) on a special dinner plan, a collaboration between an up-and-coming young chef and the chef of Houraikan. It will be available for a limited time from March 1 to March 6 at Houraikan, a ryokan in Kamaishi City, Iwate Prefecture, operated by the RQ Ryokan Revitalization Fund, a subsidiary of Real Quality (special plan sales website: <https://houraikan.jp/>, Japanese language only).



Living Auberge at Sanriku “TREASURE HEAVEN”

■ Challenges in the tourism industry and initiative background

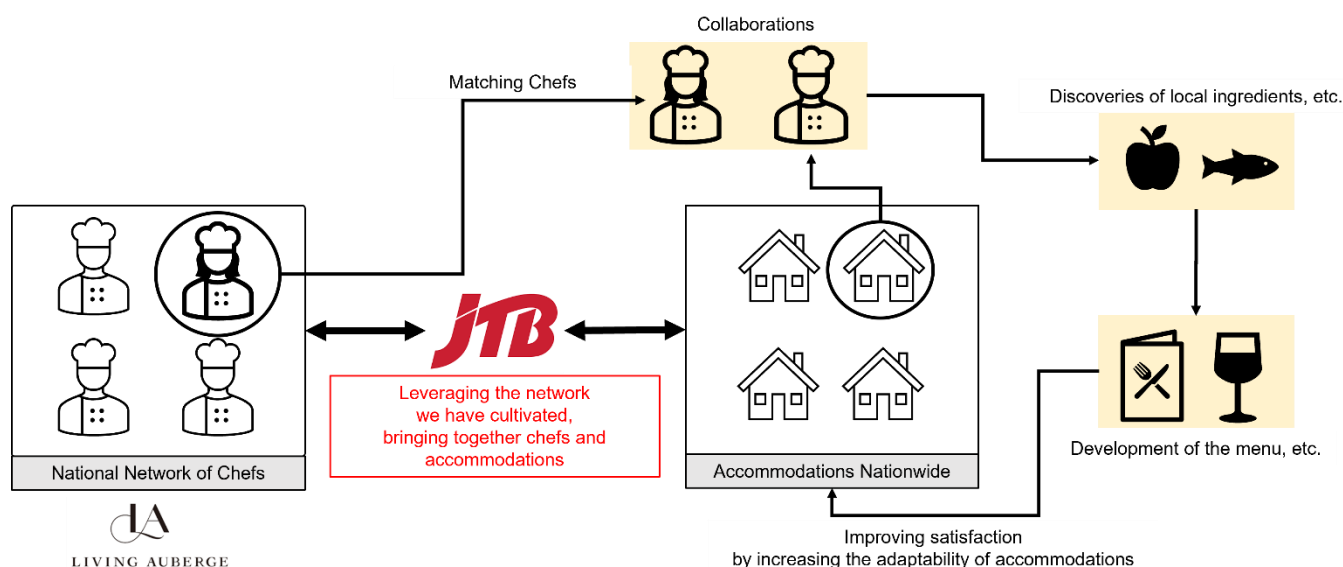
The tourism industry has long faced a shortage of chefs, especially at accommodations in regional areas. In recent years, the challenge of human resource shortages in the tourism industry has become even more apparent in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, amidst the rapid influx of inbound travelers to regional areas.

If the situation becomes more serious in the future, the number of lodging facilities and tourist attractions throughout Japan that are unable to provide high-quality meals will increase, resulting in a decline in the level of meal-related services. Since this is one of the major purposes of travel, the decline could significantly impact tourist satisfaction. In addition, the possibility of significant damage to local primary industries will increase.

■ Business description and objectives

Utilizing JTB's nationwide network of chefs and accommodations, JTB will develop a model that focuses on providing skilled chefs to accommodations that are facing the challenges of a qualitative and quantitative chef shortage. JTB selects chefs who can help solve the challenges and needs of each accommodation and region and sends them to stay in the region for a specified period of time. In addition to helping directly remedy the shortage of chefs, the project will also create various kinds of value, such as discovering hidden local ingredients from an outsider's perspective for menu development and improving the skills of local chefs through new encounters. It is also envisioned that accommodation plans incorporating the high value-added dishes created through this project will be marketed by JTB on an ongoing basis.

Through this project, we aim to help resolve food-related issues in tourist areas. By improving the level of service at small- and medium-sized accommodations, mainly in regional areas, by adding value through food, the project aims to increase the ability to attract visitors, including inbound tourists, and to contribute to solving regional and industry challenges by increasing the consumption of local products and updating the local food culture.



■ Initiative -Phase One-

Plan name	RED U-35 Bronze Award Winning Chef Oobuchi and Japanese Cuisine in Harmony Feast of Early Spring
Duration	March 1 2025 to March 6 2025
Venue	Houraikan Kamaishi city, IWATE prefecture
Eligible applicants	Customers staying during the period

The limited plan will be available to customers staying at Houraikan in Kamaishi City, Iwate Prefecture, from March 1 to March 6. Chef Taijyu Oobuchi, who has won awards in the Young Chef Competition and has been trained extensively in Europe, will be the chef in charge. Chef Oobuchi will stay in Kamaishi City for a period of time to discover and research local ingredients, and then collaborate with Houraikan's chef to create an original menu exclusively for this plan. The combination of the chef's traditional Japanese cooking techniques and in-depth knowledge of local ingredients with Chef Oobuchi's latest culinary techniques cultivated in French cuisine, trend-setting presentation, and cooking techniques that bring out the appeal of new ingredients, will create new value for local ingredients.



■ Outlook for the future

This project will be a starting point for creating a model that can be expanded horizontally to accommodations and tourist attractions throughout Japan that face similar issues in the future. JTB's network will capture the characteristics of the tourism demand cycle in each region of Japan and, through a chef-matching model, create the food services needed in that region at that time of year.

The project aims to expand nationwide as part of JTB's Area Solution Business, which aims to enhance the value of tourist attractions and realize sustainable development through co-creation with local businesses. This project is part of a series of initiatives to create food-related businesses and services by utilizing the know-how and network acquired through Living Auberge, an inspiring party production service launched by JTB in 2023.

We will continue to strive to solve social challenges by combining our nationwide network of chefs and accommodations.

Living Auberge Webpage: <https://living-auberge.com/> *Japanese Language Only



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