

Queen Elizabeth II's birthday

Friendly relations between U.K., Japan

Celebrating Her Majesty The Queen's birthday with GREAT British food and drink

Tim Hitchens
BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN

I am delighted to have been asked to send a message to the readers of The Japan Times on the occasion of Her Majesty The Queen's 88th birthday — what is known in Japan as *beiju*, a particularly lucky anniversary. Every year, we receive many kind messages from all over Japan, which show the great warmth and affection in which the Japanese people hold the British Royal Family, be they Her Majesty or the new Prince George.

Because the history of Japan and Britain goes back so far and is so deep, there are few years which don't mark some significant milestone. Last year marked 400 years since the beginning of formal and trade relations between the two countries. The letter from Tokugawa Ieyasu to King James of England and Scotland, giving permission for British people to live in Japan and trade here, is still at the Bodleian Library in Oxford.

But this is a partnership for the twenty-first century, not the seventeenth. The ties between the U.K. and Japan are stronger



Queen Elizabeth II smiles as she visits the Marche aux Fleurs (flower market) in Paris on June 7 during her state visit to France following the international D-Day commemoration ceremonies in Normandy, marking the 70th anniversary of the World War II Allied landings in Normandy. AP

and our priorities more closely aligned than they have been in many years. These priorities rest on the joint values and principles laid out by our prime ministers in London last month: the rule of law, the settlement of disputes by negotiation, transparency, human rights and global responsibility.

Those are the serious aspects of our partnership. But, as suits a birthday, there are shared pleasures too. One aspect of modern British life remains relatively unknown in Japan — the dramatic changes that have been taking place over the last decade in the world of British food and drink.

A growing wave of consumer interest in the U.K. about the food and drink they eat, cook and buy has given birth to a burgeoning industry that prides itself on quality products served in an experience to be savored. The U.K. is now home to more than 150 Michelin-starred restaurants; a

new breed of British chefs whose recipes are being served around the world; and a new generation of gastro-pubs serving affordable, but quality food and drinks to visitors.

So The Queen's birthday party celebrations in Japan this year will showcase the gastronomic delights of modern Britain. Even if you don't have an invitation to the party, we want everyone across Japan to be able to enjoy this. From July 1 to Aug. 31, ABC Cooking Studio at Tokyo Midtown will be running a special Queen's Birthday Party Menu cooking class. And we are proud to announce that Rakuten Ichiba is today launching a dedicated page where you can not only find special Queen's birthday party menu recipes, but purchase leading British products and ingredients right here in Japan. And don't forget that more of the "Food is GREAT" campaign's recipes are available on a special "Embassy's Kitchen" page on cookpad.com.

So please, raise a glass (perhaps of award-winning English sparkling wine!) and join me in celebrating Her Majesty's 88th birthday and the enduring ties between Britain and Japan. Long may she reign, and may the rain fall elsewhere today.

Eat, cook, buy

If this has given you a taste for Britain, here are some more opportunities for readers to get cooking and tasting:

- Like the Taste of Britain: Food is GREAT page at www.facebook.com/oishii.igirisu
- Sign up for a Queen's



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(Above) the official logo of the "Food is GREAT" campaign. Coronation chicken (right) and elderflower cordial jelly topped with fruit salad (bottom right) are both served at the Queen's Birthday Party. BRITISH EMBASSY



Birthday Party Menu cooking class with ABC Cooking Studio at www.abc-cooking.co.jp.

• Discover Queen's birthday party recipes and purchase British products and ingredients with Rakuten Ichiba online at <http://event.rakuten.co.jp/food/uk>

• Search for "Embassy's Kitchen" on www.cookpad.com to discover "Food is GREAT" campaign recipes.



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Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II*



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Her Majesty

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