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Report Name: Trade Show Opportunities in Western Japan

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Post: Osaka ATO

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Report Highlights:

The western half of Japan, with its main hub in Osaka, accounts for nearly 40 percent of Japan's population and one-third of the country's gross domestic product. Many of Japan's largest food manufacturers and processors are headquartered in the Kansai region which includes the three major cities of Osaka, Kobe, and Kyoto. As a result, Osaka is host to several major food-related trade shows that may be of interest to U.S. exporters. This report provides details on the three largest shows and how U.S. exporters can participate. With Osaka set to host the World Expo in 2025 and the city's planned opening of Japan's largest integrated resort by 2029, international export opportunities in the region are set to grow.

Background on Western Japan

The Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) Osaka promotes U.S. agricultural exports in western Japan, a region with four distinct areas – Kansai, Chugoku, Shikoku, and Kyushu – which together account for around 50 million (40 percent) of Japan’s population and 33.7 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) (Table 1). The Kansai region is the second largest market in Japan and lies in the center of the Japanese archipelago. The Kansai region includes three major cities – Kyoto, Kobe, Osaka – and is well-known for its food culture. The Kyushu region – led by Fukuoka city – is next largest market in western Japan. Many supermarket chains, foodservice companies, and manufacturers are headquartered in Western Japan, making it an attractive market for U.S. exporters. In particular, the retail market in Japan is highly regionalized with local chains dominating the market (see [GAIN JA8708 – Japan Regional Retail Food](#)).

Table 1: Western Japan Regions (2019 data)

Region	Population (million)	GDP (% of Japan)	Major Cities
Kansai	22.3	16.7	Osaka, Kyoto, Kobe
Kyushu (incl. Okinawa)	14.3	9.1	Fukuoka, Kagoshima, Naha
Chugoku	7.3	5.3	Hiroshima
Shikoku	3.7	2.5	Matsuyama

Source: Japan Cabinet Office

Regional Tradeshows in Western Japan

Across Japan, trade shows remain the highest impact market entry strategy as Japanese business culture favors this model to discover new products and initiate dialogue with potential partners. Compared to Tokyo-based trade shows such as FOODEX Japan and the Supermarket Trade Show which are national (and often international) in focus, Osaka-based trade shows offer unique opportunities for U.S. exhibitors to forge strong partnerships with local Japanese retailers, restaurants, and manufacturers who wield strong market influence in western Japan and are eager to try new products. According to the trade show organizers, only 7 percent of attendees to the Tokyo-based shows are from western Japan whereas 90 percent of participants in Kansai-based shows are from the region.

Over the past few years, ATO Osaka has observed an uptick in the number of international suppliers and products exhibited at regional trade shows, especially those in the Kansai region. This is partly due to a concerted effort by the Osaka government to attract more international visitors. Osaka is set to host the World Expo in 2025 and build Japan’s largest integrated resort and casino facility by 2029. The anticipated rise in international visitors has driven many local retailers and foodservice establishments to consider expanding their purchase and use of international agricultural products.

Highlighted below are three of the largest trade shows in western Japan that may be of interest to U.S. exporters (Table 2). ATO Osaka has organized USA pavilions at FABEX Kansai for the past three years and may participate in other shows if there is sufficient interest from U.S. exporters. Companies interested in participating at any of these shows are encouraged to contact ATO Osaka at atoosaka@usda.gov.

Table 2: Food and Beverage Trade Shows in Western Japan (2021 data)

Name	Timeframe	Visitors	Exhibitors (international)	Organizer	Venue
FOODEX Japan in Kansai	July (3 days)	4,032	83 (5)	Japan Management Association	Intex Osaka (Osaka, Japan)
FABEX Kansai	September- October (3 days)	24,178	284 (21)	Japan Food Journal	
JFEX	November (3 days)	10,327	434 (15)	RX Japan	

FOODEX Japan in Kansai



[FOODEX Japan in Kansai](#), held every July, is organized by the Japan Management Association (JMA), the same company that organizes FOODEX Japan in Tokyo every March. FOODEX Japan in Kansai evolved from an earlier show called Hoteres Japan which was a food and beverage exhibition specifically targeting hotels and restaurants. The show changed its name in 2020 to FOODEX Japan in Kansai to promote greater participation from international suppliers and target a broader range of Japanese food industry buyers. With the inaugural show occurring just after the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has yet to achieve strong attendance numbers, reaching just 4,000 visitors in 2021. However, given JMA’s experience organizing FOODEX Japan in Tokyo, Asia’s largest food show, it is expected that FOODEX Japan in Kansai will see considerable growth in the years ahead.

Historical Performance:

	2019	2020	2021
Visitors	N/A	3,581	4,032
Exhibitors	N/A	95	83
International Booths	N/A	1	5

ATO Osaka Assessment:

- Good for U.S. suppliers with an established presence in Japan
- Focused on hotels and high-end restaurants seeking high-value products
- New show with expected future attendance growth
- Medium-range exhibitor fees

FABEX Kansai



The [World Food and Beverage Great Expo in Kansai](#) (herein FABEX Kansai) is one of Japan's largest trade exhibitions for commercial food, cooking ingredients, equipment, and food containers. FABEX Kansai is particularly strong in the ready-to-eat meal sector as one of the co-sponsors is the Japan Ready-Made Meal Association. Within FABEX Kansai, there are individual exhibitions focused on café and drinks, dessert sweets and bakery, food service, and restaurants. In 2021, FABEX Kansai added “Osaka Global Food Show” as one of the event categories to promote the increased presence of international food suppliers. As an added benefit, FABEX Kansai offers a “buyer’s desk” service which enables exhibitors and buyers to request pre-arranged meetings that take place during the show.

Historical Performance:

	2019	2020	2021
Visitors	39,724	24,023	24,178
Exhibitors	400	314	284
International Booths	18	13	21

ATO Osaka Assessment:

- Good for both established and new-to-market U.S. suppliers
- Targeting food service and manufacturers/processors/bakeries
- Established history with high attendance
- Medium-range exhibitor fees

Japan Int’l Food Expo (JFEX)



The [Japan Int’l Food Expo \(JFEX\)](#) is a new trade show beginning in 2021 that aims to exhibit food and beverages from all over the world. The show is subdivided into three specialized shows focusing on processed foods, wine and spirits, and meat and dairy. The show evolved from an earlier exhibition that focused on promoting Japanese food exports, but the organizer is now eager to recruit more international suppliers exporting to the Japanese market. As a result, the organizer, RX Japan, offers a variety of services to international exhibitors including assistance in shipping samples, prescheduled meetings with

potential buyers, and translation/interpretation services. Due to venue scheduling conflicts, the next JFEX show in Osaka will take place in fall 2023.

Historical Performance:

	2019	2020	2021
Visitors	N/A	N/A	10,327
Exhibitors	N/A	N/A	434
International Booths	N/A	N/A	15

ATO Osaka Assessment:

- Attractive services for new-to-market U.S. suppliers
- Targets all sectors
- New show with expected future attendance growth
- Higher-end exhibitor fees

Contact Information

For more information on these shows and other export opportunities in western Japan, please contact the Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) Osaka at the following:

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Attachments:

No Attachments.