

WOULD YOU LIKE THAT SEARED OR RAW?

UNCOOKED CHICKEN AND THE POLITICAL ECOLOGY OF
DANGEROUS DELICACIES IN JAPANESE CUISINE

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Japanese cuisine has a reputation for being safe and healthy. Despite the high levels of trust that many associate with Japanese cuisine, some of these dishes have greater risks of food poisoning. In this talk, I examine the practice of eating raw chicken in Japan. I draw on two years of ethnographic research based out of Miyazaki prefecture, an area famous for serving chicken raw as chicken sashimi and partially cooked as chicken *tataki*. In addition to being undercooked, retailers evoke the traditional character of raw chicken by using domestically produced chicken and often a category of artisan chicken called *jidori*. I analyze consumer motivations, the unique pressures facing retailers, ecologies that exacerbate food poisoning, and the muted response to food poisoning incidents. This case study highlights a concerning trend within contemporary food systems. Driven in part by social media, consumers strive to eat adventurous foods, and this demand forces retailers and regulators to respond to precarious food options.



Benjamin Schrager is a geographer specializing in the political ecology of agriculture and food. He is currently a JSPS Postdoctoral Researcher at Kyoto University carrying out research on the link between food systems and rural revitalization in Japan. He received his PhD from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa's Department of Geography and Environment. With the support of the Crown Prince Akihito Scholarship, he conducted two years of doctoral field research based out of Miyazaki prefecture on chicken meat chains in Japan.

No prior registration necessary / Lecture in English

This talk is organized by Professor James Farrer (FLA) for the ICC Research Unit on Global Japanese Cuisine project