

# The Global Izakaya:

## The Trans-Urbanization of Japanese Restaurant Cuisine

by the ICC Collaborative Research Unit “the Global Japanese Cuisine Project”  
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Room 10-301, 3F, Building 10, Sophia University

After the *sukiyaki*, *teppanyaki*, *sushi* and *ramen* booms, we now have a global *izakaya* boom, albeit in its early stages. Each of these earlier global Japanese restaurant booms represented not only new foods to consumers around the world, but new styles of service and social space, from the flashy performances of teppanyaki chefs to the casual quick service atmosphere of the ramen counter. The izakaya presents customers not only with novel menu items (especially *yakitori*), but a new style of service based on shared plates that appear in no particular order, a business model focused on alcohol sales, and a conception of the meal based on a chaotic variety of cooking styles. Most significantly, the izakaya is a space in which a global Japanese drinking culture based on *sake*, *shochu* and cheap Japanese cocktails is taking shape. It also represents a style of interior design and urban space that is associated, not with fine dining, but with urban adventuring of young hipsters, both male and female. It is a highly mediated space, represented in television dramas such as “Midnight Diner” (*Shinya shokudo*). As such, it connects an imaginary of Tokyo’s Shinjuku with other iconic neighborhood spaces from New York’s St. Mark’s Place, to Hong Kong’s Sheung Wan, to Berlin’s Friedrichshain. The global izakaya is a trans-urban experience, as much Manhattan as it is Shinjuku, a new site producing a global hipster urban aesthetic.

Lecture in English / No prior registration required

Sophia University Research in Priority Areas project 2016-2018 “Culinary Globalization from Below” <https://www.global-japanese-cuisine.org/>  
Institute of Comparative Culture; 7-1 Kioicho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-8554 / <http://icc.fl.sophia.ac.jp/index.html>



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