

The Rise of Japanese Cuisine in Iceland:

From Asian to New Nordic Influences?

Kristín Ingvarsdóttir

Date: June 5, 2025

Time: 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Venue: Room 301, Building 10, Sophia University

In person only / No registration required

In the 1980s, several factors converged to transform Iceland's monotonous culinary landscape, fostering the growth of Chinese and later Japanese cuisine. The lecture examines the mix of domestic and international drivers behind this development, including rapid growth in immigration and tourism, trade liberalization, and the global spread of Japanese cuisine. Initially met with some skepticism, sushi has become a popular choice over the past decade, exemplifying the successful fusion of Icelandic seafood with Japanese culinary techniques. The lecture will delve into why Icelanders dominate the Japanese food trend in Icelandic restaurants, while Asian immigrants lead other Asian cuisines. Additionally, it will consider whether the Japanese food trend in Iceland in recent years may owe as much to New Nordic cuisine as to Japan, emphasizing the integration of local ingredients into high-end dining experiences.

Kristín Ingvarsdóttir received her Ph.D. in Social Sciences from Hitotsubashi University in Tokyo in 2006 and a master's degree from the same university in 2002 after completing undergraduate studies at Copenhagen Business School in Denmark. She joined the University of Iceland as Assistant Professor of Contemporary Japanese Studies in 2019 and has been the Head of Japanese Studies since 2020. Kristín primarily teaches courses on Japanese modern history and society. Her current research interests include the history of Icelandic-Japanese relations, Japan's engagement with the Nordic countries and the Nordic Arctic, as well as other aspects of Japan's diplomacy and international affairs. In 2022, Kristín held a Visiting Associate Professorship at the Graduate School of Social Sciences at Hitotsubashi University. In the same year, she received a Commendation from Japan's Foreign Minister for her contributions to promoting Japan-related research in Iceland.

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This talk is organized by James Farrer (Professor of Sociology, Sophia University) and the ICC Collaborative Research Unit "[Sophia Food Studies](https://www.icc-sophia.com/)."

