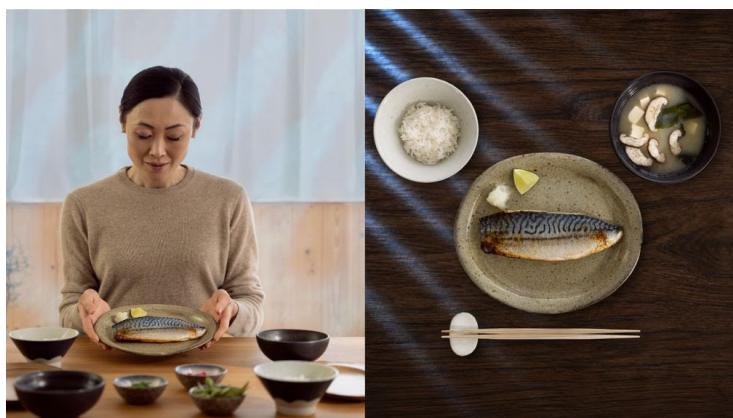


Norwegian Saba Nouveau Mackerel Arrives in Japan for Seasonal Seafood Tradition

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Norwegian mackerel has returned to Japan as the first catch of the 2026 season arrives in Tokyo, coinciding with the Norway Seafood Festival. The 'Saba Nouveau' mackerel was flown fresh from Norway to Japan on September 11, marking the sixth year of the seasonal seafood tradition.

Inspired by the French Beaujolais Nouveau tradition of celebrating the first wines of a new vintage, Saba Nouveau highlights the arrival of Norway's premium mackerel at the start of its peak season. The initiative is supported by Japan Airlines and JALUX, which facilitate the fresh delivery to Tokyo.

The seasonal mackerel is harvested between August and November, when Atlantic mackerel migrate into Norwegian waters after months of feeding. During this period, the fish develops a naturally high fat content, which can reach up to 28 per cent, contributing to its rich flavour and juicy texture.

Beyond its culinary appeal, Norwegian mackerel is a source of omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin D and high-quality protein, nutrients that support normal bodily functions and overall nutrition.

In Japan, Saba Nouveau has gained popularity as a seasonal delicacy and reflects the cultural appreciation of hatsumono — the first produce of a season. Mackerel can be prepared in several ways, including saba no shioyaki, or salt-grilled mackerel, and saba misoni, where the fish is simmered in miso. Frozen mackerel can also be used in sushi preparations.

This year, Norwegian herring also made an appearance at the Norway Seafood Festival in Tokyo for the first time, expanding the showcase of Norwegian seafood in the Japanese market.

Jan Eirik Johnsen, Country Director, Norway Seafood Council (NSC), Japan, said the annual tradition has created a connection between Norway's seasonal seafood and Japan's appreciation for hatsumono.

The initiative demonstrates how premium seafood can combine seasonality, nutritional value and cultural food traditions while strengthening the culinary connection between Norway and Japan.