

Sapporo Autumn Fest

Hokkaido is known for the abundance and quality of its food, much of which appears at Sapporo's Odori Park in the autumn. For three weeks beginning in mid-September, restaurants and producers from throughout the island bring their harvest bounty to the park for a gourmet celebration. Regional specialties include venison and other wild game, beef and dairy products, seafood, fruits and vegetables, beer, wine, sake, and much more. Many of these items are organically produced and owe their high quality to the pure waters and clean soil of the island.

The word *kuidaore* is a key term for understanding the atmosphere at the festival. It is a common buzzword, even appearing in the name "Kuidaore Square" in 5-chome. *Kuidaore*, which implies eating oneself into bankruptcy, literally means to eat until you fall (whether physically or financially). In that spirit, sampling as much of the bounty of Hokkaido as one possibly can is the goal of many visitors to the festival.

The festival debuted in 2008 and is the newest of the major seasonal events in the city. It now draws over two million people each year. One of the original goals of the event was to revitalize Hokkaido as a whole. It is an expansion of an earlier annual festival held at Odori Park where food and beverage specialties from towns all over the island were brought together.

The event also includes a version of Oktoberfest, the renowned beer festival in Munich, Germany. This reflects the sister-city relationship between Sapporo and Munich that began in 1972.