



OHAYŌ!
japan

by Blaise Van Buren



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Take a much
needed break in
sunny Nice

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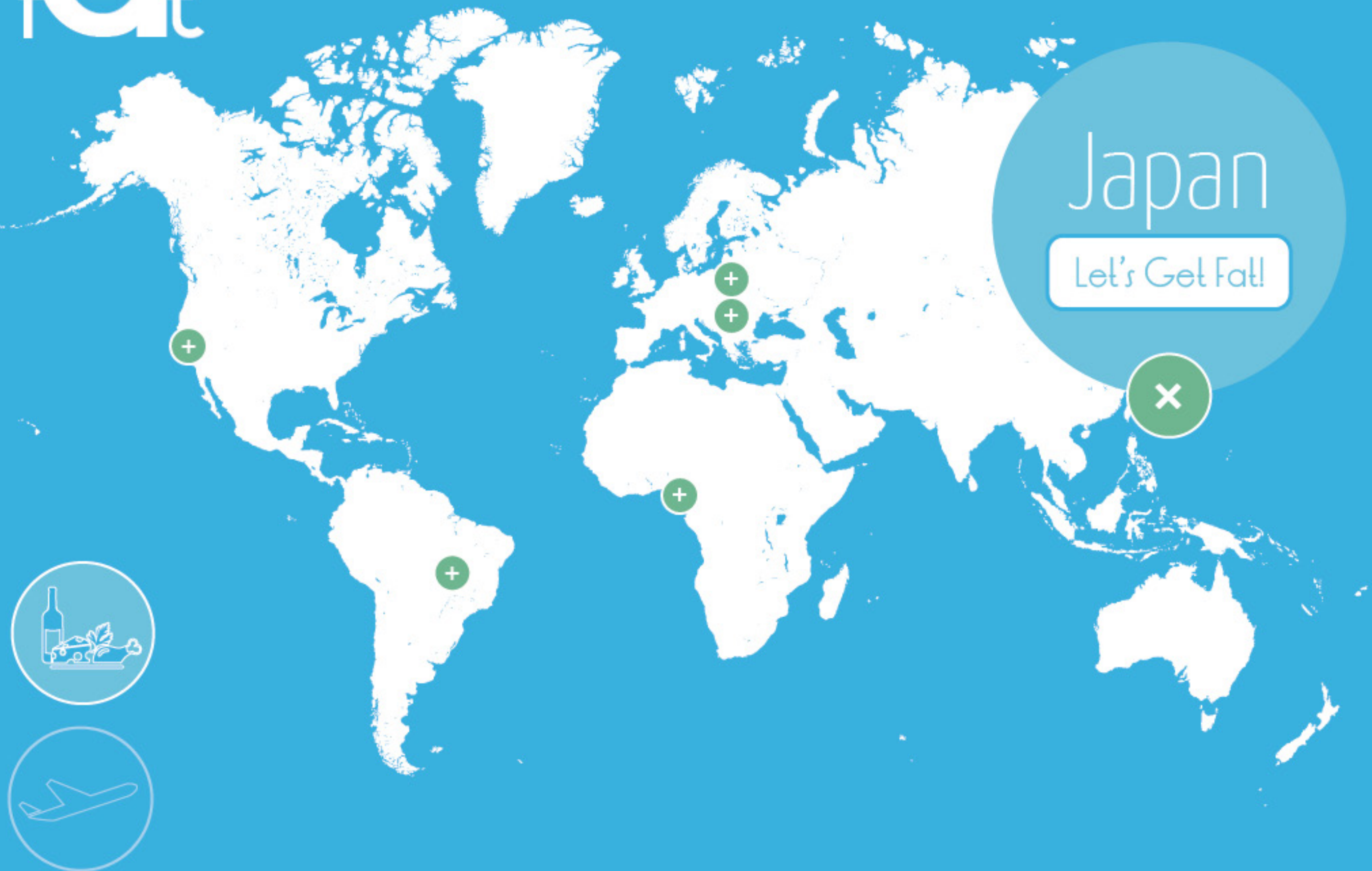
Joga Bonito!
As we spend a
week in Brazil

p. 100

It's bulking
season: gotta
get that
protein!



Where Do You Want To Travel?



Japan

Let's Get Fat!

What Do You Want To Eat?



kaiseki



feijoada



geschnetzeltes



confit de canard





Places

tokyo



Yoking past and future, Tokyo dazzles with its traditional culture and passion for everything new.



kyoto



Kyoto is quiet temples, sublime gardens, colourful shrines and geisha scurrying to secret liaisons.



ToDo

Info

kaiseki

perfection on a plate



The strips of dried seaweed slip and crackle under my knife. I slide the long blade through the inch-wide stack as I had been shown, but tear the fragile leaves. Yet when I use more force, the glassine sheets shatter. My companion, a four-year veteran of shredding nori at Kyoto's Kikunoi Restaurant, looks at my growing pile of

misshapen slivers with concern. "They are too thick," he says, then points to his own. They are as light and fine as a newborn's hair. I see the head chef making his way over, shove the offending pieces into my mouth and start on a fresh sheet. My tongue is washed by a burst of smoky brine. Yoshihiro Murata pauses at my station

and watches me work. My hands start to sweat and the moisture glues the sheets together. “You hold your knife well,” he declares. It’s faint praise, but I glow anyway. Emboldened, I continue cutting, wanting to prove that a foreign apprentice can do the job; that my years as a French chef are worth something in a Japanese kitchen. Again I show my slivered seaweed to the master. He plucks three strands from the pile and drops them into a glass jar. He nods. “Better.”

In a few hours those strands will garnish a medallion of tilefish wrapped around fresh soba noodles and simmered in a broth perfumed with green tea. It will be presented in a porcelain bowl that wouldn’t look out of place in a museum. Borne by a waitress clad in a pale gold kimono, dish No. 5 of a 14-course menu

“My tongue is washed by a burst of smoky brine”

will pass through the sliding paper door that isolates the kitchen, with its clanging pans and steaming pots, from the tranquillity of the garden-fronted dining rooms. Diners, lounging on the tatami-mat floors of the early 20th century wooden inn, may not notice just how thin the curling strands are. But they are the final flourish on a dish so sublime that I take pride in my humble contribution to one of the finest dining experiences Japan has to offer.

So traditional it’s almost cutting edge, Kikunoi is a temple to authentic Japanese cuisine, and Murata is a practitioner of the craft’s highest art form — kaiseki. Derived from the elaborate 16th century rituals of the



Japanese tea ceremony, kaiseki has evolved into a highly formalized meal that celebrates the seasons by using only fresh, natural and local ingredients. Under an expert like Murata, kaiseki is not merely the apotheosis of Japanese cuisine, but of Japanese culture.



and watches me work. My hands start to sweat and the moisture glues the sheets together. "You hold your hands well," he declares. It's faint, but I see a glow anyway. Emboldened, I start cutting, wanting to prove to my apprentice that I can do this as well as a French chef. I'm in a Japanese kitchen, and my slivered seaweed plucks three strands and drops them into a bowl. "Better."

In a few hours, those medallions of tilefish, fresh soba noodles and broth perfumed with green onions be presented in a porcelain bowl. It wouldn't look out of place in a museum. Borne by a waitress clad in a pale gold kimono, dish No. 5 of a 14-course menu



kaiseki has been formalized over the seasons by natural and local ingredients. An expert like me is not merely the chef of Japanese cuisine, but of Japanese culture.



References

Images

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Article

TIME's Summer Journey - TIME http://content.time.com/time/specials/2007/article/0,28804,1628191_1626317_1631908,00.html