

# SAVOR JAPAN



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**MAFF**

# What is SAVOR JAPAN?

The different regions of Japan each have their own local cuisine.

SAVOR JAPAN is your guide to the attractions of Japan's small farming, fishing, and mountain communities — especially the great food they offer.

All SAVOR JAPAN areas are, after careful vetting, certified by the Japanese Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. As of 2017 there were 15 such certified areas.

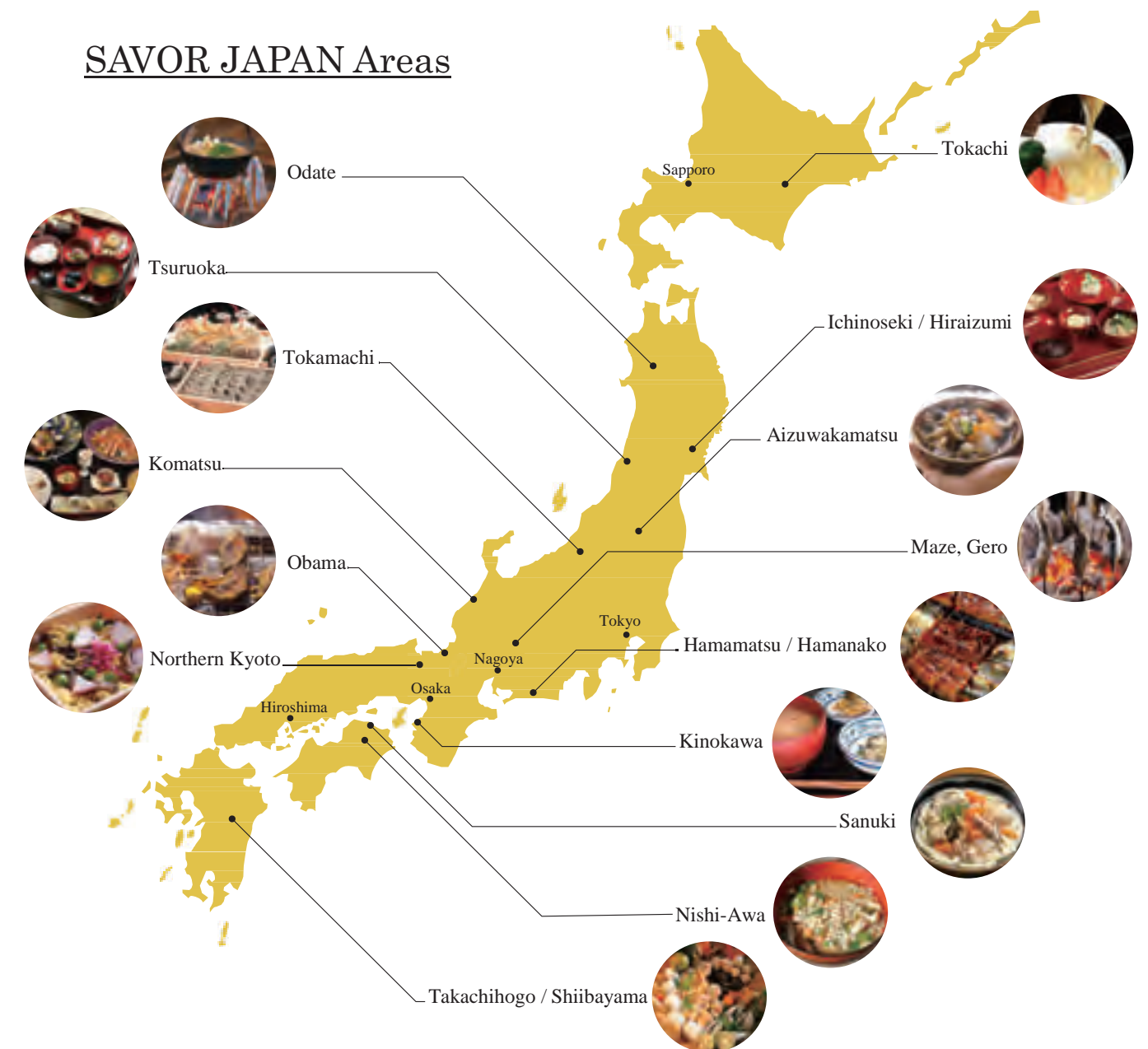
SAVOR JAPAN certification is designed to draw attention to the local brand that come from the numerous farming, mountain and fishing villages throughout Japan where food is a way of life, and lead to an increase in interpersonal exchanges through a deeper discovery of Japanese cuisine and the enjoyment of unforgettable experiences in authentic Japanese food culture.

We look forward to seeing you in one soon.

## contents

<b>TOKACHI</b> HOKKAIDO .....	4
<b>ODATE</b> AKITA PREFECTURE .....	6
<b>ICHINOSEKI/HIRAIZUMI</b> IWATE PREFECTURE .....	8
<b>TSURUOKA</b> YAMAGATA PREFECTURE .....	10
<b>AIZUWAKAMATSU</b> FUKUSHIMA PREFECTURE .....	12
<b>TOKAMACHI</b> NIIGATA PREFECTURE .....	14
<b>KOMATSU</b> ISHIKAWA PREFECTURE .....	16
<b>MAZE, GERO</b> GIFU PREFECTURE .....	18
<b>OBAMA</b> FUKUI PREFECTURE .....	20
<b>HAMAMATSU / HAMANAKO</b> SHIZUOKA PREFECTURE .....	22
<b>NORTHERN KYOTO</b> KYOTO PREFECTURE .....	24
<b>KINOKAWA</b> WAKAYAMA PREFECTURE .....	26
<b>SANUKI</b> KAGAWA PREFECTURE .....	28
<b>NISHI-AWA</b> MIYAZAKI PREFECTURE .....	30
<b>TAKACHIHOGO/SHIIBAYAMA</b> MIYAZAKI PREFECTURE .....	32
<b>The Four Characteristics of Washoku Culture</b> .....	34

## SAVOR JAPAN Areas







# TOKACHI

HOKKAIDO



Delicious Tokachi foods supported by the fertile land



Cheese created in a rich natural environment

## Regional foods

### Cheese

Tokachi Raclette Cheese Moor Wash is one of the few cheeses in the world to use hot spring water. A unique method to fully draw out the umami of the cheese is to wash it in spring water (moor springs) that includes fermentation extract from Tokachi vegetation. Along with special cheeses, there is nothing more luxurious than eating fresh vegetables grown in Tokachi.

## Indulging in food and spectacular sceneries in Tokachi, the farming frontier of Japan!

Tokachi, the largest farming area (approx. 3,600 km<sup>2</sup>) in Hokkaido, is an enormous plain surrounded by 2000-meter-high mountains with the Hidaka mountains to the west and Daisetsuzan to the north where you can enjoy the magnificent sense of openness unique to Hokkaido. One of the key attractions is the agricultural and livestock products raised on the soft, nutrient-rich volcanic ash soil with the longest daylight hours in the country. People come to enjoy the rich cheese made from high-fat raw milk in Tokachi, where the majority of natural cheese in Japan is produced.



Amazing combination with Tokachi vegetables



Tokachi bread has a full wheat flavor

In Tokachi, you can enjoy fascinating regional foods that are unique to the area, including delicious-smelling Tokachi Bread made from 100% Tokachi-grown wheat, Tokachi Wine that has a balanced acidity from Tokachi-grown grapes, Tokachi Beef raised on the cool green land, as well as desserts using Tokachi-grown adzuki beans.



High-quality Tokachi beef



## Scenery

The grand nature of Tokachi has a different appearance in each of the seasons. In spring, the plants bloom, in summer the crops bend with fruit, and in autumn you can enjoy the dynamic harvest scenery that includes large agricultural machinery. The winter scene is particularly special as the wintery ground is covered in snow in a freezing -25° atmosphere which creates a magical world of diamond dust and glaze ice.



A calm scene typical of Tokachi



Magical Tokachi clear skies and glaze ice

## Experiences

Tokachi Garden Spa, one of the few plant-origin moor springs in the world, is a hot spring that you can enjoy in swimwear. In recent years, in particular, a popular activity is to visit the fields with a guide to learn about food and farming on a “Field Guide Tour” where you can taste fresh vegetables harvested there and then. You can also enjoy a cheese and ham making experience.



A new day-trip location for relaxation and food



A picnic in the fields of Tokachi

## Sightseeing routes

Tokachi has many different attractions so visitors can enjoy the area in different ways. Enjoy Tokachi wine at Ikeda Wine Castle, or relax your body and mind in the Tokachi river hot springs, or enjoy the history of Tokachi pioneers and racing spectacles at the world's only Banei Horse Racing. A unique Tokachi welcome that will stay with you forever is waiting for you.



Moor springs are famous as beauty baths



The world's only Banei Horse Racing





# ODATE

AKITA PREFECTURE



Kiritanpo pounded rice served on skewers made by farmers' wives



Kiritanpo hotpot

## Regional foods

### Kiritanpo

Kiritanpo can be enjoyed in different styles of cooking: Freshly cooked rice grown in the fertile Odate Basin is pounded and mashed up, and wrapped around Akita cedar skewers, which are then toasted over charcoal and served with miso made from soybeans and rice. The broth of kiritanpo hotpot is made from the bones of famous Hinai-jidori chicken, one of the top three Japanese locally-bred flavorful chickens. Hinai-jidori chicken meat and locally grown vegetables are cooked together in this broth.

## The birth story of Akita's traditional dish, kiritanpo and the warm hospitality of farmers' wives!

Kiritanpo is a traditional dish from Akita, a leading producer of rice nationally. A long time ago, the matagi, people who made their living from hunting in the mountains, cooked pounded rice and birds together in a pot. This is said to be the origin of kiritanpo. The dish has been handed down for generations as a meal for family gatherings and for guests. As "good old home cooking," this dish is deeply rooted in the region.



Akita's traditional dish kiritanpo



Hinai-jidori chicken skewers

This region offers a variety of specialty foods for visitors to enjoy. Hinai-jidori chicken is bred by crossing the Hinai chicken, recognized as a natural monument and a protected species, with other breeds. The rearing time of this chicken is three times longer than that of a broiler chicken. Tonburi is the dried seed of summer cypress, also known as "field caviar." Nutrient-rich edamame, green soybeans are grown using manure of the Hinai-jidori chicken.



Edamame coming into the fall season



## Scenery

Mt. Moriyoshi is designated as one of a hundred flower mountains in Japan, and is also known as one of the few places in the world where rime ice covered trees can be observed. Lake Towada, a caldera lake formed by a series of volcanic eruptions, offers the beautiful scenery of its spring and autumn foliage. The authentic Japanese view from the windows of the Akita Inland Line running through the mountains conjures up feelings of nostalgia. Visit these places and delight in the four seasons.



Akita Inland Line



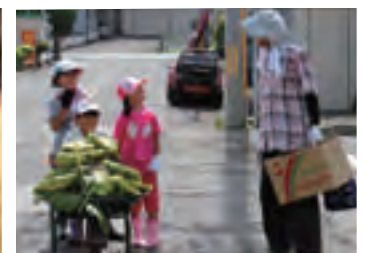
Mt. Moriyoshi

## Experiences

Have fun making kiritanpo with a farmer's wife or harvest rice and seasonal fruits yourself. Staying at a farm house also offers an opportunity to experience the local food culture and the charms of a country lifestyle.



Enjoying the conversation with a farmer's wife



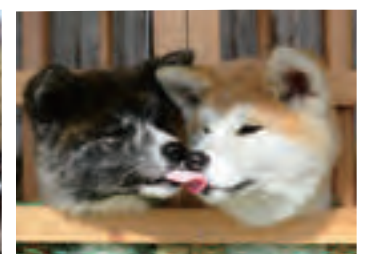
Harvesting experience with local people

## Sightseeing routes

Why not trace back the history of kiritanpo through the various attractions? Make kiritanpo and participate in the harvest during a farmhouse stay. Find the origin of kiritanpo through a mountain walk with a matagi, a hunter, as your guide. Meeting the Akita Inu which played a critical role as a hunting dog is also crucial to understanding the culture of the matagi.



Farm life experience through farm stays



Adorable Akita Inu



# ICHINOSEKI/HIRAIZUMI

IWATE PREFECTURE



Honederamura manor ruins



Mochi honzen

## Regional foods Mochi Honzen

Mochi honzen (full-course mochi dinner) came from the samurai culture of showing respect for rituals. This basis of the ceremonial dinner adopted by Lord Masamune Date of Sendai Hanso is a dinner of three soups and seven vegetable dishes, and it is the highest level of hospitality cooking for presentation at ceremonial gatherings (formal gatherings) such as family ceremonies. Please enjoy this traditional regional cuisine that has been continuing since the Edo Period.

## The Mochi culture of Japan and the eternal landscape of the Land of Gold

The origin of the “mochi dining culture” dates back 400 years to the Hansei era when the Date-han offered up mochi to the gods every month in prayers for peace and health. Later, hare-no-shoku (celebratory cuisine) included the practice of making and eating mochi on important days during life and at the end of seasons, including important family ceremonies and on New Year's Day, which is still going on today. Even in Japan, the opportunity to experience the traditional food rituals of Ichinoseki-Hiraizumi is scarce.



Mochi making



Various mochi-based dishes

Ichinoseki-Hiraizumi mochi cuisine has evolved uniquely throughout history since the Hanso era, and there are now more than 300 recipes. You can enjoy a wide range of mochi dishes to suit your taste, including traditional regional mochi dishes such as anko (red bean), walnut and furube (winter vegetable), as well as pizza mochi, mochi rolled cabbage, and mochi spring rolls.



## Scenery

There is more to see than just Chuson-ji and Motsu-ji. There are many sights that fascinate tourists, including Honederamura Manor Ruins, where the amazing rural scenery of yesteryear still exists today, Geibikei, a famously beautiful valley with a range of cliffs at a height of approximately 100m that is one of the 100 Landscapes of Japan, and Genbikei, a natural treasure with famously dynamic scenery produced by erosion from the river.



Genbikei, a Natural Treasure



Geibikei, one of the 100 Landscapes of Japan

## Experiences

At Ichinoseki-Hiraizumi, you can enjoy unique mochi honzen experiences and mochi-making experiences along with mochi-making songs that have been handed down in the region since ancient times. At Tategamori Ark Farm and Honederamura Manor Ruins, there are many experiences to get the most out of the local attractions, including various agricultural experiences to be enjoyed while interacting with local people.



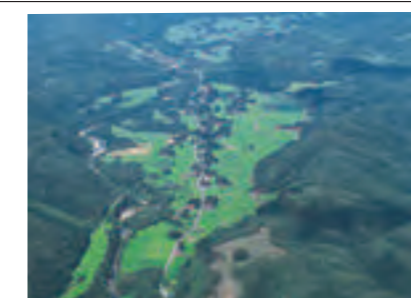
Mochi honzen experience



Agriculture experiences

## Sightseeing routes

Enjoy agricultural experiences and the rural scenery at Honederamura Manor Ruins, which was once the manor house of Chusonji, and at World Cultural Heritage sites such as Chusonji and Motsuji. After experiencing the hospitable cuisine of mochi honzen, take a boat downstream at the famously beautiful Geibikei, and enjoy a comforting stay at a traditional ancient home unique to this region. This may become an unforgettable memory.



Honederamura manor ruins





# TSURUOKA

YAMAGATA PREFECTURE



Sacred Mount Gassan and Haguro's Otori Gate

## Experiencing food and culture in the UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy

Surrounded by mountains, fields, rivers and the sea, Tsuruoka city is rich in seasonal blessings. With more than 50 varieties of indigenous produce including dadachi-mame and Atsumi turnip, superior varieties of “living cultural treasures” are the inheritance of this region. Even today, a unique food culture and family ceremonial dining/local cuisine that is closely related to the spiritual culture of shugendo and Kurokawa Noh from the Three Mountains of Dewa is still being passed down in this region.

### Regional foods

#### Vegetarian Diet of the Three Mountains of Dewa

The Vegetarian Diet of the Three Mountains of Dewa has been passed down since ancient times as a “diet for life” that was studied by ascetics deep in Mount Gassan and other mountains. The food is prepared with traditional methods using vegetables such as seasonal wild plants and mushrooms from the base of the mountain without using any meat or fish. Eating while giving thanks to nature refines the body and the soul.



Vegetarian Diet of the Three Mountains of Dewa

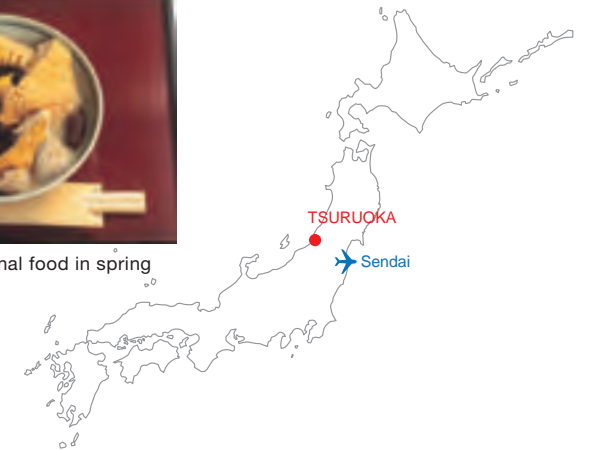


Dadacha-mame - a kind of edamame

Dadacha-mame, a special type of edamame from Tsuruoka, has a unique sweetness and umami flavor that is said to be the most delicious in Japan. In addition, there are many simple yet deep flavors, including Atsumi turnip and other indigenous produce that has long been farmed using slash-and-burn farming, as well as local cuisine such as miso soup made with seasonal ingredients, and delicious rice and mellow sake.



Moso-jiru - a traditional food in spring



### Scenery

The amazing Mount Haguro Sugi-Namiki features a 350-year old cedar-lined stone-step path to the shrine and a five-storied pagoda that is a National Treasure. It is so beautiful that it was awarded three stars in the Michelin Green Guide Japan. We hope you will also visit the magnificent rural scene of the Shonai Plain with a backdrop of Mount Gassan and Mount Chokai, as well as the sun setting into the Shonai coast, and Tsuruoka Park, which is one of the Japan's Top 100 Cherry Blossom Spots.



Buddhist mountain monks and the five-storied pagoda, which is a National Treasure



Shonai coast sunset

### Experiences

There are also Japanese spiritual and cultural experiences to be enjoyed, such as shugendo (Buddhist mountain asceticism), vegetarian cuisine and the Zen meditation practices by the monks in the Three Mountains of Dewa. There are also harvest experiences for indigenous produce and fresh fruits that are a living cultural treasure, as well as cooking experiences, including soba (buckwheat) pounding. There are many other programs to enjoy, too, including candle-making experiences and Japanese lime bark (Japan's oldest textile) weaving experiences in a castle town, and a fishing boat cruise on the Sea of Japan.



Cherry harvest



Fishing boat cruise

### Sightseeing routes

Please come and enjoy nature and history experiences in the mountains, villages and seas around Tsuruoka, including touring the Three Mountains of Dewa, which represent the past, present and future, and visiting the production areas for indigenous produce, the Kamo Aquarium, which displays more varieties of jellyfish than anywhere else in the world, and the castle towns. Be reborn on your journey as you refresh body and soul by staying at a hot spring hotel where you can enjoy the traditional food culture.



Atsumi hot springs



Kamo Aquarium has more varieties of jellyfish than anywhere else





# AIZUWAKAMATSU

FUKUSHIMA PREFECTURE



Featuring pastoral countryside scenery

## Enjoy traditional “gottso” in the Samurai City

\*Gottso means a “feast served for important guests” in the Aizu regional dialect.

As a stronghold in the Tohoku region, the Aizu area was governed by famous feudal warlords. Surrounded by an abundance of nature including Lake Inawashiro and Mt. Bandai, Aizu maintains its nostalgic, unspoiled scenery and the atmosphere of a castle town. Closely linked to the area, the food and sake which originated in Aizu have developed into a unique food culture sustained by the natural bounty of each season.

## Regional foods

### Kozuyu

The cuisine originated as food served to the feudal lords who were required to spend every other year in residence in Edo (Tokyo). Even today this local dish is indispensable for ceremonial occasions. The dish consisting of dried seafood, such as scallops in a soup stock, is invaluable in understanding the food culture in Aizu. Eating the food in traditional Aizu lacquerware also provides an opportunity to enjoy the local culture.



Kozuyu - An essential dish for ceremonial occasions



Simple flavored dengaku

Dengaku (tofu and vegetables grilled on skewers with sweet soybean paste) was originally eaten by feudal warriors on the battlefield, wappa-meshi (a rice dish served in a round wooden container) and sake brewing were handed down from the Edo period; the Aizu Basin surrounded by mountains abounds with high quality agricultural produce. Enjoy flavorful local dishes using natural ingredients.



Wappa-meshi, rice and seasonal toppings steamed in a round wooden container



## Scenery

The pastoral scenery of the countryside set against Mt. Bandai with the Iide Mountains in the background, and the old samurai residences of Aizu reminiscent of the Edo period, still remain in Aizuwakamatsu. The tower of Tsurugajo Castle, a symbol of the city, provides a bird's-eye view of the Aizu Basin and the castle town, and provides ever-changing views of nature depending on the season.



Tsurugajo Castle in spring



Aizu old samurai residences

## Experiences

Spring asparagus, summer tomatoes, autumn rice and sake, and winter Aizu-jidori chicken; local specialty dishes along with a wide variety of seasonal menu items are all available to enjoy. Visitors can also enjoy experiences involving traditional crafts such as Aizu lacquerware, as well as agricultural experiences.



Harvesting cabbages under the snow



Japanese sake made of high quality ingredients

## Sightseeing routes

Aizuwakamatsu, also known as Samurai City, offers a wide variety of attractions: A tour to the symbolic Tsurugajo Castle, strolling through the castle town, fruit picking in the farming areas which once served to support the Aizu Domain, and visiting produce stands. Feel refreshed in the vast natural areas surrounding Lake Inawashiro with its considerable expanse of farmlands and waterfront areas. The hot spring resort within the city also provides accommodation to accompany the enjoyable experience of extended sightseeing.



Mighty Mt. Bandai



Historical Higashiyama Hot Springs Village





# TOKAMACHI

NIIGATA PREFECTURE



Snow on the Hoshitoge Rice Terraces

## The Exceptional Beauty and Gastronomy of the Snow Country

Tokamachi City is one of the world's snowiest cities. This region is covered in deep snow for almost half the year – a microclimate which has nurtured a Snow Country culture with origins that trace back 5,000 years to the ancient Jomon era. Back then, while living in harmony with the snow and their plentiful natural surroundings, the Jomon people handcrafted kaen'gata doki, extravagant pottery which has today been designated the oldest pottery among Japan's National Treasures. These precious artefacts symbolize the origins of Japanese culture and tell the historical tale of Snow Country Tokamachi. Unravel these ancient secrets while indulging the palate with the delicious flavors of a heavy snowfall region.

### Regional foods

#### Hegi Soba

Since ancient times, as the farmer's fields are buried beneath the snow during the long winter months, people living in Tokamachi City have woven textiles as a means of livelihood. Hegi Soba is a local delicacy inspired by this Snow Country way of life. It was born from an unusual idea to knead funori, a seaweed which local weavers were using as a glue in textile manufacture, into the soba, and this results in a firmer than usual noodle. Hegi Soba is presented on a handcrafted wooden tray known as a hegi, in neat coils intended to symbolize bundles of silk yarn, and the beauty of kimono.



Hegi Soba has a uniquely firm texture



Local sake matches perfectly with local produce

Glittering snowmelt water filters goodness through Tokamachi's soils, helping to grow delicious Uonuma-Koshihikari brand rice, and sansai, edible wild plants picked from the mountain in spring. The people living here since the Jomon era have savored these flavors both by season and preserved through the winter. Accompanied by a cup of locally-brewed sake, it's easy to understand why people have settled in this region since ancient times.



Sansai (Mountain vegetables)



### Scenery

Tokamachi City's satoyama landscape is home to the Hoshitoge Rice Terraces – chosen as “Number 1” of “30 Reasons to Go to Japan Before You Die” (tsunagu Japan) – and the Echigo Tsumari Art Triennale, a contemporary art festival that has placed over 200 art installations throughout the entire region. As a unique chance for visitors to travel across rural Japan, seeking out artworks between rice terraces and mountain valleys, the Triennale provides a new way to discover the beauty of the original Japanese landscape.



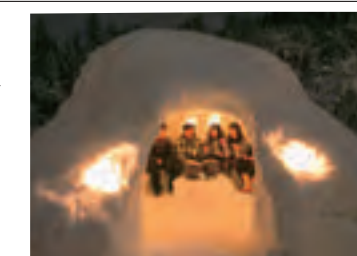
Echigo Tsumari Art Triennale



Gimyo Rice Terraces

### Experiences

Tokamachi is one of a select number of areas which specializes in both weaving and dyeing stages of kimono manufacture. The region's intimate connection with kimono can be experienced at the annual Tokamachi Kimono Festival, and through guided tours of kimono factories which also offer hands-on experiences. Additionally, visitors can experience snow-inspired activities such as building a kamakura snow hut; spend a night in a traditional farm house; or savor the delicious tastes of local produce and sake, after bathing in one of the region's many onsen. There are many ways to spend an unforgettable time in Tokamachi.



Kamakura (snow hut) Experience



Kimono Town Tokamachi

### Sightseeing routes

The Tokamachi City Museum offers multilingual audio guidance through its exhibition space that showcases the history and culture of a heavy snowfall region, including the kaen'gata doki (Flame-style Pottery), one of Japan's most ancient National Treasures. Visitors can also discover scenic rice terraces, which have earned a place among “Japan's 100 Most Beautiful Villages”, and soak away their fatigue at the Matsunoyama Onsen village, one of “Japan's Big 3 Medicinal Onsen”, which offers delicious cuisine prepared from local ingredients and rice grown in the local rice terraces. Experience a beauty one can only find in a heavy snowfall satoyama region.



National Treasure: Kaer'gata Doki



Snow-view Outdoor Bath at Matsunoyama Onsen





# KOMATSU

ISHIKAWA PREFECTURE



Pastoral landscape and Lake Kibagata with sacred Mt. Hakusan in the background

## Experience banquet cuisines and traditions developed in a land administered by humble farmers

Komatsu City, located in the center of Kaga Plain in southwestern Ishikawa Prefecture, has been prosperous as the center of the Kaga region since early times. The city, surrounded by sacred Mt. Hakusan and the Sea of Japan, is blessed with the heritage of nature and culture. “Hoonko cuisine” which was developed as a result of the century-long governance of the land by humble farmers, and tea drinking customs along with kaiseki cuisine as the culture of the merchant class, have been handed down to the present day as the food culture of Komatsu.

## Regional foods Kaiseki cuisine

Customs of tea drinking and kaiseki cuisine were developed as the culture of the merchant class. Like the manufacturing techniques passed down from master to apprentice, this culture has been handed down to us today as the food culture of Komatsu. The cuisine is characterized by its refined and delicate taste. Serving the food in Kutani ware makes the cuisine a piece of art.



Kaiseki cuisine developed as the culture of the merchant class



Hoonko cuisine

Hoonko cuisine developed as a result of the administration of the land by humble farmers, the delicate and smooth taste of sake, and the specialty Komatsu udon which uses thin soft noodles served in a dried fish based soup; this is one of the many other must-try dishes in Komatsu.



Smooth flavorful sake



## Scenery

Hiyo Moss Garden, where 48 different kinds of moss grow, is one of the most famous moss gardens in Japan. The garden, surrounded by a beautiful cedar forest, shrines and old residential houses, has been preserved in its lovely rural setting. Also, on the premises of Natadera Temple with its 1,300-year history, the beautiful forms and shapes of the rocks created by nature in the Kigan-Yusenkyo (enchanted rock outcrop) garden, provides a uniquely splendid view.



Hiyo Moss Garden



Kigan-Yusenkyo Garden of Natadera Temple

## Experiences

More than 50 different types of traditional craft experiences, including Wajima lacquerware and Kutani ware, are offered at Kaga Traditional Cultural Amenity -Yunokuni no Mori, Traditional Handcrafts Village. At TAKIGAHARA HOUSE, a renovated traditional Japanese house, you can try farming in a beautiful natural setting, and also enjoy dishes prepared with seasonal garden fresh vegetables at the adjoining cafe.

Komatsu features many more attractive tourist spots for visitors to explore the old culture of the townsfolk. One such famous culture site is the Hikiyama Children's Kabuki. You can try the unique kabuki makeup yourself, enjoy the kaiseki cuisine served at the tea ceremony at a historic Japanese restaurant, or take part yourself in a tea ceremony in the tea ceremony house. You can also enjoy a sake brewery tour and try sake blind tasting.



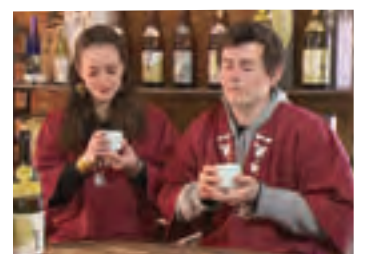
TAKIGAHARA HOUSE



Kaga Traditional Cultural Amenity -Yunokuni no Mori, Traditional Handcrafts Village



Kabuki makeup



Sake brewery tour and blind sake tasting





# MAZE, GERO

GIFU PREFECTURE

下呂市馬瀬



Fish-protecting forests and the clear waters of Maze River



Salt-baked sweetfish

## Regional foods Sweetfish

There are many ways to cook the beautiful and delicious sweetfish, and it is an essential ingredient in Japanese cooking. Maze River sweetfish have won the main prize in the “Sweetfish Taste Test Contest” that gathers sweetfish from all over Japan, so the deliciousness is guaranteed. The charcoal-cooked “salt-baked” sweetfish are particularly highly regarded.

## The most beautiful village in Japan / The building of a beautiful village

Maze River sweetfish are highly regarded for being delicious. The reason for this is that the delicious sweetfish are protected by local inhabitants. Since the 1940s, they have systematically stocked and managed the sweetfish, while also proactively engaging in volunteer activities, such as river cleaning activities and assigning surrounding forests as “fish-protecting forests.” The inhabitants of this area have spared no effort in order to protect the flavor of the sweetfish.



Maze River upstream sweetfish



Hoba-zushi (magnolia leaf sushi)

In the Maze region, there are countless dishes that utilize the rich food culture of the mountain villages. Hobo-zushi (sushi rice covered in a magnolia leaf), mountain river fish dishes, handmade miso using wheat husks, and pickles using turnip and other local vegetables are all dishes that you really must try.



River fish dishes



## Scenery

The Maze Satoyama Museum is a model area for scenic preservation in the Maze region which is registered with the NPO “The Most Beautiful Villages in Japan.” In the Sugou area and around the Soshima Hachiman Shrine, which are among the “Maze Ten Sights chosen as beautiful spots by local inhabitants, one can view a mountain village scene that will stay with you forever, including clear streams, forests that protect the living environment of fish, paddy fields, shrines, and temples.



Scenery points



Satoyama Museum

## Experiences

The salt-baked sweetfish taste particularly good in the magical atmosphere at night while watching “fire fishing” on the Maze River, a traditional method of driving the fish into the net using bonfires and torches. Take the time to walk around the Satoyama Museum while gazing at the beautiful scenery and to enjoy a friendly conversation with the local people.



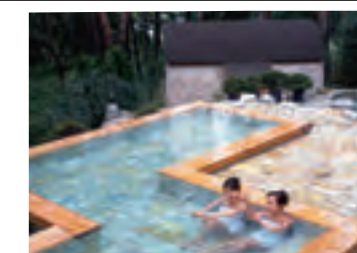
Fire Fishing on the clear Maze River



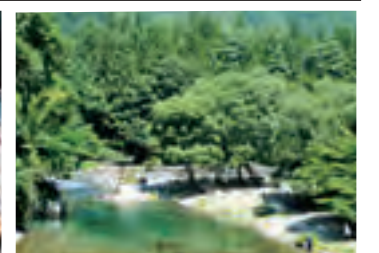
Satoyama experience

## Sightseeing routes

It takes approximately 1 hour to get to the Maze region on the JR Takayama Line from Takayama City (train), and 30 minutes by car from Gero Station (Gero Onsen). It's about 1 hour from Gujo Hachiman by car. From all of these regions, you can enjoy Maze either as a brief stop, a day return or an overnight stay (hot spring hotels or ryokan).



Spa bathing facilities



The Clear Maze River





# OBAMA

FUKUI PREFECTURE



Obama - blessed with natural resources



When grilled, a savory aroma fills the air

## Regional foods

### Mackerel heshiko (pickled mackerel)

The fermented food, mackerel heshiko, is made by pickling fresh mackerel in salt and rice bran for nearly a year. This has been the preferred method of preserving a good catch of mackerel. Compared to fresh mackerel, preserved mackerel contain 8 times more glutamic acid which gives it a uniquely rich and savory flavor. Don't be surprised if you find you can eat several bowls of rice with this traditional local food.



Pickled mackerel goes well with rice

## Wakasa Obama, "Miketsukuni" or the region responsible for sending food to the Imperial Household

—The "Sabakaido (mackerel highway)" leading to Kyoto, starts right here—

Wakasa Obama was once a region responsible for supplying salt and marine products to the Imperial Household. Blessed with riches from the mountains, plains, rivers and the sea, natural foodstuffs were sent over roads known as the Sabakaido (mackerel highway) to Kyoto, establishing Kyoto's food culture. Excellent food preservation techniques as well as a lifestyle indebted to nature that brings forth blessings to the people, are still alive in this region even today.



Fresh seasonal seafood

In addition to eating fresh seafood, there are many recipes for preparing seafood caught in Wakasa Bay that will not ruin its natural savory flavor. One example is narezushi which uses pickled mackerel. Sushi is said to have been developed based on this dish. Other examples include mackerel sushi, an indispensable treat found at festivals in Obama and Kyoto. Wakasa Obama kodai sasazuke are small sea bream fillets pickled with salt and vinegar in a small cask made of cedar. High quality tilefish, whose meat and scales are tender, are grilled Wakasa-style and served.



Mackerel sushi



## Scenery

Sotomo Arch boasts 6 km of scenic cliffs, unusual rock formations and rock tunnels stretching into Wakasa Bay. This picturesque spot was chosen by the American news channel CNN as one of the most beautiful places in Japan. The rice terraces in Tagarasu are surrounded by the ocean and mountains offering an original landscape of Japan. As you cruise around the shore, your eyes will be pleased by the variety of views.



Rice terraces in Tagarasu



Sotomo Arch

## Experiences

Harvesting seaweed and fishing for octopus with a trap net; fishing, cooking and eating sea bream; making your own chopsticks; and cooking local dishes; a wide variety of hands-on attractions are available that let you enjoy seafood from Wakasa Bay and learn about the fishing village lifestyle.



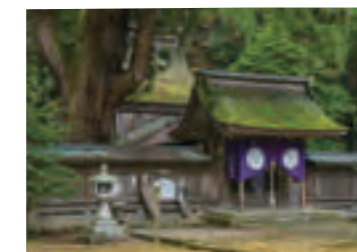
Sea kayaking



Octopus fishing with a trap net

## Sightseeing routes

Wakasa Obama is often likened to Nara Prefecture which features numerous temples and shrines. One big difference between these two locations is that no part of Nara is bordered by the ocean. Temples and shrines classified as national treasures can be found in Wakasa Obama. In parts of the Sanchomachi district where the atmosphere of Kyoto culture is deeply reflected, you can play games with Geisha. At the Miketsukuni Wakasa Obama Food Culture Museum, visitors can learn about Japanese food culture through exhibits and hands-on experiences. A built-in kitchen studio offers full-fledged cooking workshops.



Wakasahime Jinja Shrine



Playing games with Geisha





# HAMAMATSU / HAMANAKO

SHIZUOKA PREFECTURE



Whitebait fishing boats setting out from port in the morning haze

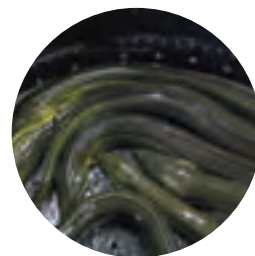


Broiled eel

## Enjoy seasonal specialty cuisine and farm experiences in Hamamatsu and Hamanako

—Enjoy cuisine and hands-on attractions in Hamanako, the center of Japan—

Lake Hamana is an ocean-connected lake located near the center of Japan. More than 500 years ago, as a result of an earthquake, it became a brackish lake, where freshwater and seawater are mixed. Lake Hamana has been a prime location for cultivating eels, soft-shell turtles, seaweed and oysters since historical times. Hamamatsu and Hamanako, where you can enjoy their unique fishing style and fresh seafood, are known as places of specialty food.



Eels caught in Lake Hamana



Eel farming pond

## Regional foods

### Eel

With a history of more than 100 years as the birthplace of eel and soft-shell turtle culture, there are more than 100 eel specialty restaurants in the Hamamatsu and Hamanako areas. Because the areas are situated halfway between Eastern and Western Japan, eel cooked in two different ways can be enjoyed here. In the Eastern style, the eel is slit open along its back before broiling; in the Western style, it is slit open along the belly and then broiled. You can also learn about the food culture of the East and West in addition to enjoying the delicious broiled eel.



Mud crab

The freshness is undoubtedly the greatest appeal of the seafood, including a ghost crab known as a “mud crab,” and whitebait and blowfish caught off the coast of Enshu. You can enjoy fresh seafood prepared in a variety of ways in the Hamamatsu and Hamanako areas.



Fresh whitebait



## Scenery

The “Eight views in Totomi” are often used as themes in tanka and haiku poems as well as ukiyoe woodblock prints, all of which are part of Japanese traditional art. The amazing sunset of Bentenjima Island on Lake Hamana is one of those eight views. Stunning views of Lake Hamana and the streets of Kanzanji hot spring resort can be seen from a ropeway traversing over the lake, the only one of its kind in Japan.



The sunset of Bentenjima Island, one of the eight views in Totomi



Kanzanji Ropeway

## Experiences

As the boatman masterfully steers his boat over the pitch-black lake, and illuminates the lake surface with a light, it attracts prawns and crabs, which are then caught using a net or a harpoon. This traditional fishing method is known as “takiya fishing” and can be enjoyed by people of all ages. Your catch is then cooked by the fishermen and can be eaten at “Takiya-tei,” a raft floating on the lake; there would be no greater bliss than this.



Freshly caught prawns and crabs



Traditional “takiya” fishing

## Sightseeing routes

Why not rent a bicycle at any of the JR Hamamatsu, Bentenjima or Araimachi Stations and cycle along the Lake Hamana Cycling Road? Enjoy the gorgeous cityscape of Hamamatsu and the nature of Lake Hamana while cycling in the refreshing breeze from the ocean lake. You can also enjoy fresh food along the cycle trail.



Lake Hamana Cycling Road



Mikkabi Tangerine, Shizuoka's representative farm products





# NORTHERN KYOTO

KYOTO PREFECTURE



Farming areas overlooking the blue ocean, Kyotango City



Mackerel crumbles used as an ingredient

## Regional foods

### Tango-style barazushi

Tango-style barazushi with mackerel crumbles scattered over rice is served on ceremonial days such as festivals. Sushi rice is spread out in a shallow wooden box called a matsubuta, and is cut into pieces with a wooden spatula. This unique form of sushi is a local cuisine eaten with family members.

## Kyoto by the sea - The origins of food

—A land full of food resources, surrounded by the sea, mountains and countryside—

The “Kyoto by the sea” area in northern Kyoto has been a gateway to the culture of the continent from time immemorial, and had provided a variety of foods and human resources to the capital Kyoto. Because this area is also the home of Toyouke no Okami, the God of Food, many myths and folklore about the origins of food, including the birthplace of rice cultivation, have been passed down. Even today, an abundant variety of foods from the surrounding natural environment and food culture are used and observed in the people’s daily lives.



Tango-style barazushi making

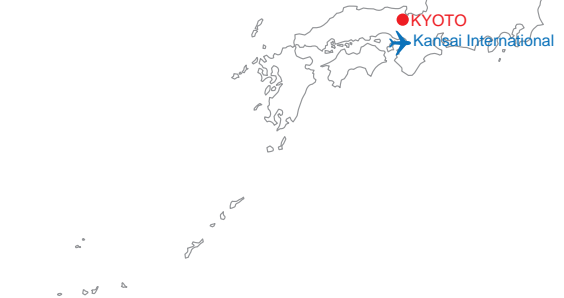


Local dish heshiko

A local dish called heshiko is comprised of mackerel or horse mackerel pickled in rice bran, and has been eaten as a preserved food since long ago. This region is also the birthplace of yellowtail shabu-shabu hotpot, baked crab and nikujaga (meat and potato cooked in sweetened soy sauce broth). The Kyoto by the sea area offers a variety of foods used in scrumptious seasonal cuisine.



Yellowtail shabu-shabu hotpot



## Scenery

In northern Kyoto, you can enjoy different scenery and landscapes where the resident’s lives are closely linked to the natural environment. Some examples include Amanohashidate, one of the three most scenic spots in Japan, Funaya houses in Ine which has been designated as one of the most beautiful villages in Japan, historic red brick buildings in Maizuru, and Chirimen Kaido Street where Japanese and Western styles of streetscapes have been preserved.



Amanohashidate looking over from the Kasamatsu Park cable car



Funaya houses in Ine

## Experiences

Making Tango-style barazushi and hand-rolled sushi using fresh fish are one of many ways to experience the attractions of the regional food culture. If you prefer outdoor activities, fishing in little-known secret spots, sea kayaking or farming would be perfect for you. There are many more hands-on attractions to enjoy the charms of the ocean, mountains and countryside.



Hand-rolled sushi making is popular with overseas tourists



Farming experience

## Sightseeing routes

How about visiting a sake brewery and taking a winery tour in the “Kyoto by the sea” area? Twelve sake breweries and wineries engaged in traditional yet innovative sake and wine making are located in this area. Meeting and socializing with the brewers and wine makers over different local sakes and wines provides a genuine opportunity to enjoy the origins of food.



A line up of original local sake



Sake tasting inside the brewery





# KINOKAWA

WAKAYAMA PREFECTURE



Peach trees along the Kinokawa River unfold in the breathtaking wonder of full bloom

## Stay at a farmhouse and enjoy some of the many different fruits available 365 days a year in Kinokawa

Kinokawa developed as a fruit production area from long ago owing to its mild climate and the fertile soil brought down by the clear waters of the Kinokawa River. As a “city capable of offering fruit throughout the year,” the charm of fruit farming, the passion of the farmers engaged in growing fruit, and the value of the fruit the city boasts to the world have been widely promoted.

### Regional foods

#### Rice porridge made with tea

Together with the clear waters of the Kinokawa, tea rice porridge which is a big part of the farmers' daily diet, has contributed to the development of local agriculture. The pleasant bitterness of the tea and the taste of rice together make this dish very flavorful. Also known as okaisan, tea rice porridge has been handed down and can be found as an essential dish on the dining tables of the Kishu people.



Tea rice porridge also known as okaisan



Fruit sushi

At farm shops and U-pick farms visitors can enjoy fresh and flavorful produce. Processed products such as jam, and original sushi, pasta and sweets using fruit are also available. Kinokawa City enhances nutritional education using its many different fruits, and organizes various events to promote the benefits of fruit.



Fruit pasta

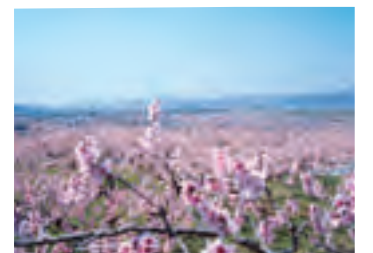


### Scenery

The view of blooming peach trees along the Kinokawa River has been selected as one of the 100 best aromatic landscapes by the Ministry of the Environment. The hazy pink color of the peach blossoms and the slightly sweet scent that fills the air enthralls visitors. The Kokawadera Temple garden features a variety of carefully arranged stones. This unprecedented design of the Japanese garden is eye-catching.



The garden with arranged stones at Kokawadera Temple



Fully bloomed peach trees

### Experiences

Year-round U-pick fruits and vegetables, paragliding in the largest flight area in western Japan, canoeing in the Kinokawa River, and fresh fruit jam making; a lot of different types of hands-on attractions are on offer in Kinokawa.



Peach jam making



Paragliding

### Sightseeing routes

If you are planning a visit to famous sightseeing areas like Osaka, Wakayama Castle, Koyasan or Nanki Shirahama, or if you use Kansai International Airport for travel, why not take a little side trip to Kinokawa City? You can enjoy fruit picking and local dishes here in Kinokawa, and experience the charm of Japanese agriculture firsthand!



Persimmon picking



Peach picking





# SANUKI

KAGAWA PREFECTURE



Golden barley field and Mt. Sanuki Fuji



Shippoku udon

## Regional foods

### Sanuki udon

Sanuki udon, which has been eaten in households since early times, is characterized by its firm texture. There are a variety of udon menu items including traditional shippoku udon or uchikomi udon (noodles loaded with seasonal vegetables cooked in soup stock) and exquisite olive beef udon, which is a fusion of beef produced from olive-fed cattle and a premium local wheat brand called “Sanuki no Yume.”



Olive beef udon

## Experience the spirit of Japanese hospitality along the Sanuki no Michi Road

—The spirit of omotenashi (hospitality) for you, for here, for now—

Sanuki udon noodles are believed to have been brought back from China by Kukai, a Japanese Buddhist monk. Because the climate and soil of Sanuki Plain is suitable for growing wheat, good quality wheat has been cultivated here since early times. Dried young sardines, salt and other local resources are combined with the wheat to create what we call Sanuki udon today. Although Kagawa is famous as the “udon prefecture”, there are also lots of other fascinating attractions down the Sanuki no Michi Road.

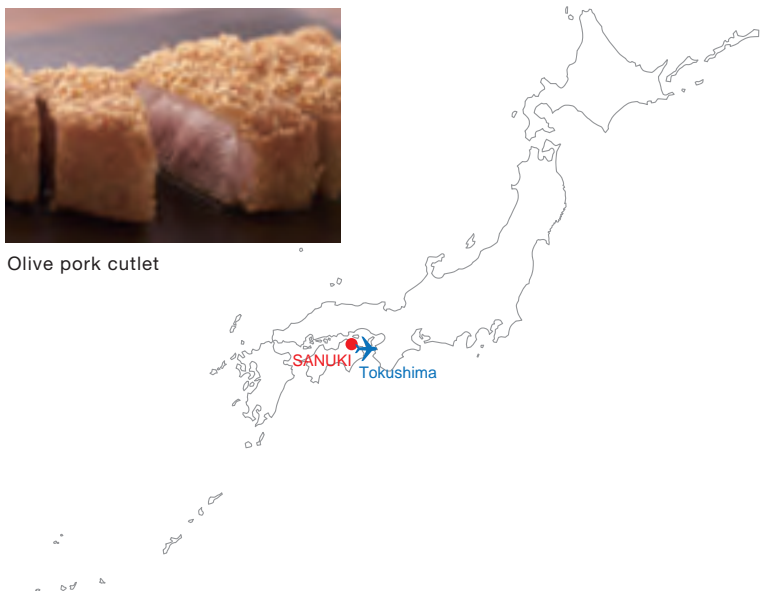


Olive yellowtail sashimi

A variety of seasonal Sanuki cuisine: olive pork produced from olive-fed pigs, olive yellowtail raised on bait mixed with olive leaves, the very sweet “Sanuki San Fruit” comprised of a variety of original cultivars, a local dish called kankan zushi which uses Spanish mackerel caught in the Setouchi area in spring, all help you enjoy your visit.



Olive pork cutlet



## Scenery

Manno Pond, Japan's largest irrigation reservoir, Honenike Dam, Japan's first multi-arch dam resembling a medieval European castle, and pilgrimage routes in a reflective atmosphere; the instagrammable scenery enriches the hearts of visitors.



Pilgrimage route



Honenike Dam

## Experiences

Making udon noodles, farming experiences during a farmhouse stay, picking the original strawberry cultivar “Sanukihime,” yellowtail feeding in the Ado Pond where yellowtail farming originally started, and staying in temple lodging; there are a variety of attractions that can only be experienced here in Sanuki.



Strawberry picking



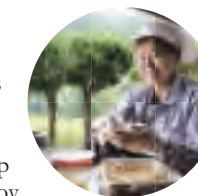
Making udon noodles



Feeding yellowtail

## Sightseeing routes

Stroll around Manno Pond which fertilizes the Sanuki Plain, make handmade udon noodles at Nakano Udon School, and stay in the lodging at Zentsuji Temple. Wake up early for the morning religious service, enjoy walking a pilgrimage route or strawberry picking, and stay at a farmhouse in the Gomyo area. Visit the fascinating Sanuki no Michi Road, and make your experience an original one!



Making local dishes at Gomyo Yamabiko no Yado



Zentsuji Temple lodging Iroha-Kaikan Hall



Farmhouse stay Gomyo Yamabiko no Yado





# NISHI-AWA

TOKUSHIMA PREFECTURE



The magical scenery of high-altitude, steep villages



Soba-rice porridge

## Regional foods Soba-rice porridge

A variety of grains are grown in the steep fields on the mountains of Nishi-Awa. “Soba-rice porridge” is a unique local dish that uses soba instead of rice and is said to have been made by nostalgic warriors who had escaped during wartime from the capital city (Kyoto) to this region where rice - a staple of the Japanese diet - could not be obtained.

## The hidden haven of Nishi-Awa

—A haven hidden for a thousand years —  
Traveling back in time through the mountains

For more than a thousand years, traditional agriculture and farming culture has been passed down in Nishi-Awa, Shikoku, the historical site of such legends as Heike Ochudo. The traditional food culture, which centers on long-standing products such as grains, soba (buckwheat) and potatoes, can still be felt in the lives of the people, who are known as the “people of the sky.” The mountain villages that spread out like a fan across the steep mountain range are so beautiful that they can rightly be called “paradise on earth.”



Soba grains



Local dishes eaten at ancient homes

Regional foods include dekomawashi, which is potato, konnyaku (devil's tongue), and rock-hard tofu skewered and roasted around a fireplace, and jibie wild game from the hills and fields. Your heart and body will be satisfied as you sit around the fireplace in the elegant and traditional ancient homes while having a friendly conversation with the villagers and eating local cuisine.



Dekomawashi



## Scenery

The unique mountain village scenery of Ochiai village, Sarukai village and Nishinosho village, for example, combines steep fields, ancient homes, and stone walls that spread out across the mountains that vary in altitude as much as 400 meters, which Asian cultural researcher Alex Kerr described as being “another world, like Shangri-La.”



Ochiai village



Stay at ancient homes

## Experiences

The attractions of Nishi-Awa include interacting with local people from the mountain villages who live in harmony with nature, staying at farm lodges and ancient homes where you will experience “life culture” and “food culture,” trekking in the sacred mountains of Tsurugi, and experiencing the abundant “gifts of the mountains and rivers,” including rafting and other river sports and pleasure cruises on the Yoshino River system.



Sacred Mount Tsurugi



Sightseeing pleasure cruise

## Sightseeing routes

Approximately one hour by car from Tokushima Airport, luxurious stores built in the 19th Century line the streets of Udatsu in Waki, which prospered as an area of blue dye production. Create unforgettable memories by spending a fulfilling time in agricultural experience at the sloped fields of Sarukai village, which is on a 40-degree slope, or by spending a relaxing time at the well-maintained ancient homes built hundreds of years ago.



Blue dyeing experience



Western nature environment tour





# TAKACHIHO/SHIIBAYAMA

MIYAZAKI PREFECTURE



The scenery of the good old days can still be seen in Shiiba Village



Kagura cuisine shoke-mori assortment

## Regional foods Kagura cuisine

Kagura cuisine is served during the yokagura (ancient Shinto music and dance which starts in the night and ends in the morning). An assortment of locally grown foodstuffs cooked by simmering and sushi rolls are arranged in a big container and served. Kappo-dori, chickens steamed in a bamboo container, kappo-zake, sake served in a heated green bamboo tube, and kagura udon, noodles served in soup stock made from chicken and burdock root, are also indispensable for kagura cuisine.

## The Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems - Takachiho/Shiibayama Sharing with the world the sustainable knowledge cultivated in the everyday life of mountain villages

People have engaged in agriculture and forestry in the mountainous regions of Takachiho and Shiibayama with a sense of awe for nature. They have prayed to the gods for a good harvest and offered their kagura (Shinto) dance and music in many different places throughout the region. Kagura cuisine served at village festivals has been handed down for generations as local traditional food which is eaten with the gods, giving thanks for the blessings of nature.



Kappo-dori chicken



Takachiho sirloin beef

The tradition of field burning, which is rare in Japan, still remains in Shiiba Village. Various grains, such as buckwheat and Japanese millet, grown in the burnt fields, are used in cooking to create exquisite cuisine. Cattle raised in the fresh air and clean water of Takachiho become the premium beef brand, “Takachiho beef,” a beef which is tender and whose fat is slightly sweet. The full-flavored beef is just exceptional.



Yakhata soba (buckwheat) noodles



## Scenery

The scenic beauty of Takachiho Gorge, the Togawa rice terraces in Hinokage Town, and the “Hermit’s rice terraces” (Machu Picchu of Japan) in Shiiba Village; spectacular scenery unfolds before your eyes, evoking the zeal for rice growing felt by the forefathers. The mosaic forest in Morotsuka Village and the landscape of the tea plantations in Gokase Town help soothe the mind.



Mosaic forest in Morotsuka Village



Tea plantations in Gokase

## Experiences

You can enjoy kagura cuisine while watching yokagura music and dance in Takachiho Town, and try making yakihata buckwheat noodles yourself in Shiiba Village. Other attractions include kamairicha tea making in Gokase Town, forest therapy and straw work in Hinokage Town, and shiitake mushroom picking in Morotuska Village.



Straw work



Kagura-no-Yakata Inn

## Sightseeing routes

A farmhouse stay helps you learn and experience the ideas, lifestyle, culture, and landscapes embodied by the agriculture and forestry systems of the mountainous regions of five towns and villages, designated as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System. The mystical atmosphere of Takachiho and Shiibayama, where tradition says that gods once set their feet, will heal both your body and your soul.



Amano Yasugawara



Therapeutic forest walk in Hinokage



# The Four Characteristics of Washoku Culture



## Definition

“Washoku”, as inscribed on UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, goes beyond the food itself, referring to Japan’s rice-centered culinary culture. It encompasses the food-related customs that are rooted in the Japanese people’s spirit of “respect for nature”.

1

## Diverse, fresh ingredients, and respect for their individual flavors

The land of Japan extends a long way from north to south, and is covered by an expressive expanse of nature through seas, mountains, and villages. Diverse ingredients with local roots are used in each part of the country, and preparation techniques and implements have developed to make the most of their flavors.



## Nutritional balance to support a healthy diet

The diet based on ichiju sansai (one soup and three dishes) makes it easy to get a good nutritional balance, makes the most of the umami of dashi stock and the fermented foods, and keeps down the intake of animal fats. That helps the Japanese people live long and resist obesity.

2

3

## Expression of the beauty of nature and the changing seasons

Dishes are decorated with items such as seasonal flowers and leaves and furnishings and utensil are used that match the season. These techniques express the beauty of nature and the changing of the seasons in a way that is another characteristic of washoku culture.



## Intimate linkage with New Year and other annual festivals

Japan’s dietary culture has grown up in close linkage with its annual festivals. Sharing the food that is the blessing of nature and sharing time for food deepens family and community ties.

4



