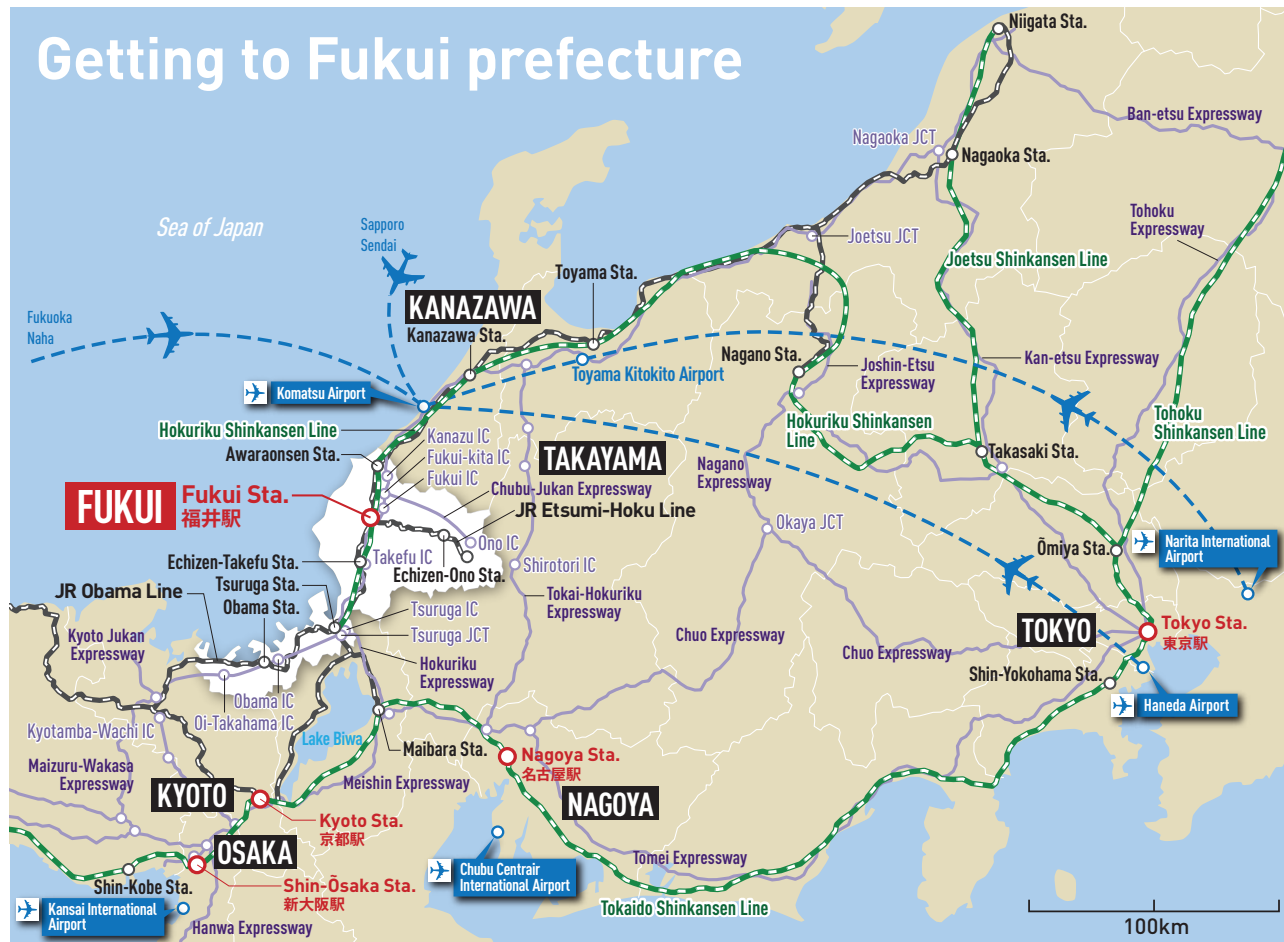


Getting to Fukui prefecture



By Shinkansen & Other Trains

From Tokyo
(Travel Time: Tokyo to Fukui — 3 hr., 10 min.)

The fastest way to get here from Tokyo Station is via the Kagayaki train on the Hokuriku Shinkansen Line.

Another option available is to take the Hikari train on the Tokaido Shinkansen Line, then transfer at Maibara Station to the Shirasagi Limited Express train on the Hokuriku Main Line (with a transfer at Tsuruga Station).

From Tsuruga Station to Fukui Station, either take the Tsurugi train on the Hokuriku Shinkansen Line, or take a train on the Hapi-Line Fukui.

For destinations toward Obama, make a transfer at Tsuruga Station to the Obama Line.

From Nagoya
(Travel Time: Nagoya to Fukui — 1 hr., 42 min.)

The fastest way to get here from Nagoya is via the Tokaido Shinkansen Line from Nagoya Station to Maibara Station, then transfer at Maibara Station to the Shirasagi Limited Express train on the Hokuriku Main Line (with a transfer at Tsuruga Station).

From Tsuruga Station to Fukui Station, either take the Tsurugi train on the Hokuriku Shinkansen Line, or take a train on the Hapi-Line Fukui.

Alternatively, take the Shirasagi Limited Express from Nagoya Station directly to Tsuruga Station.

From Osaka
(Travel Time: Osaka to Fukui — 1 hr., 52 min.)

From Osaka, the most convenient option is to take the Thunderbird Limited Express to Tsuruga Station.

From Tsuruga Station to Fukui Station, either take the Tsurugi train on the Hokuriku Shinkansen Line, or take a train on the Hapi-Line Fukui.

By Airplane

Komatsu Airport, in Ishikawa Prefecture, is the main option for access by air.

The airport's international flights connect to Seoul, Shanghai, and Taipei, while its domestic flights connect to Tokyo, Sapporo, Fukuoka, and Okinawa. Buses are available from Komatsu Airport to Fukui Station (the trip takes roughly an hour).

Travelers can also take a bus or taxi from Komatsu Airport to Komatsu Station, then take the Hokuriku Shinkansen Line to Fukui Prefecture.

By Highway Bus

Daytime highway buses run to Fukui from both Nagoya and Osaka. Please note that all seats on these buses require reservations.

For More Info on Visiting Fukui



食の國ふくい
Land of Food Fukui

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食の國
ふくい

Land of Food **Fukui**

Safe, delicious food from
Fukui, Japan

来る人も
住む人も
しあわせ福井
FUKUI
HAPPINESS
福井県



Land of Food – Fukui Background



A treasure-trove of food Blessed with a wonderful natural environment

Climate

The seasons are distinct, with high rainfall throughout the year and a period of snow during winter. In Fukui Prefecture there are many regions surrounded by mountains, causing significant differences in morning and night temperatures in spring and autumn. It is said that these temperature differences are the reason for Fukui's delicious agricultural crops.



Environment

Fukui is situated in almost the center of the island of Honshu. On the western side is the Sea of Japan, and on the eastern side is a mountain range with many peaks 1000m or higher. Rural land lies in between. The farmers work hard and use various techniques to create quality soil that is suited to the land and perfect for growing crops.



Water

Tributaries from the sacred Mt Hakusan as well as the Kuzuryu River (that traverses Fukui Prefecture) provide bountiful water that is delicious and mild-tasting. Fukui Prefecture also has an abundance of natural springs and ground water with a reputation for great taste. One famous spring is Oshozu in Ono City in the east of the prefecture, which is still sought after by residents today for domestic uses.



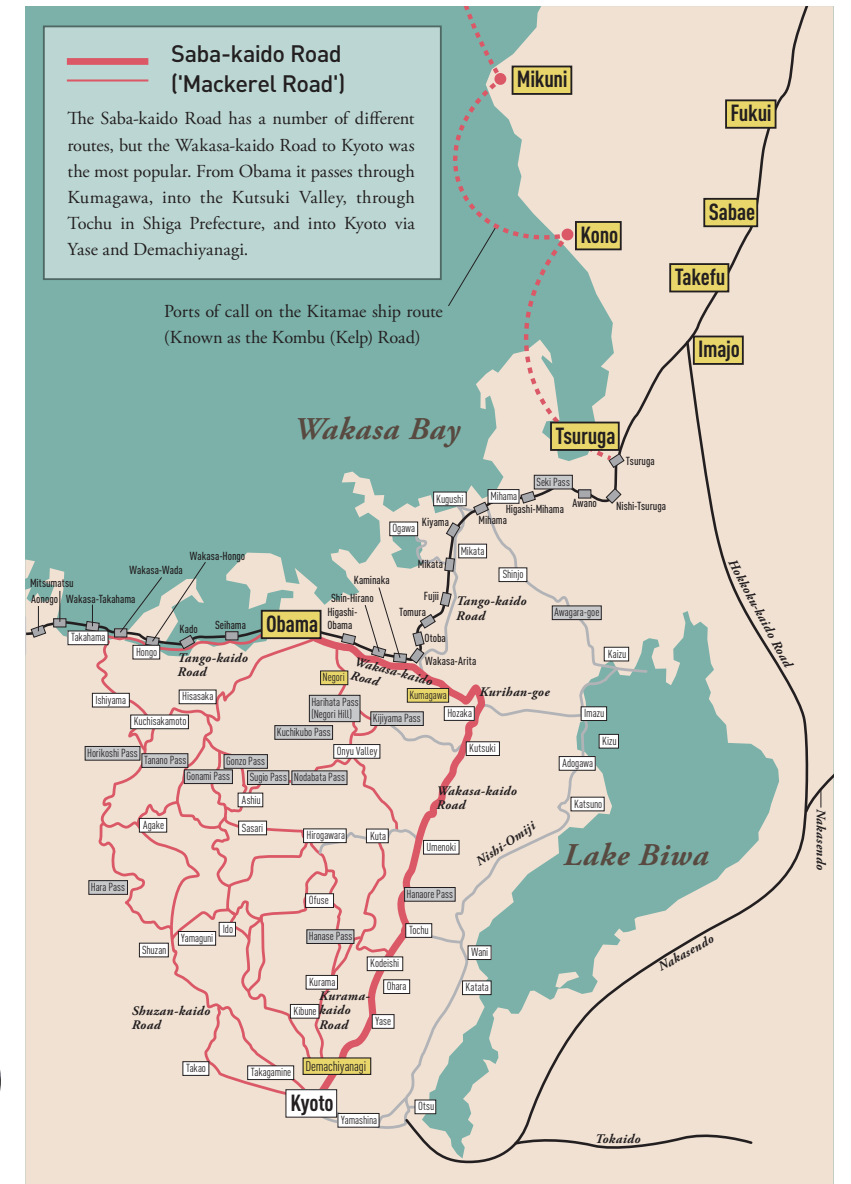
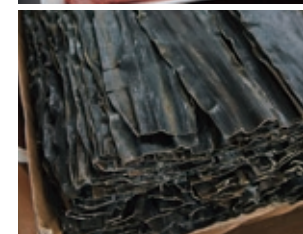
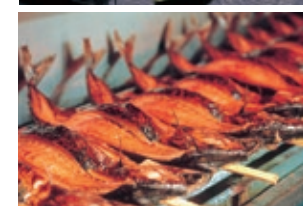
Produce

Fukui Prefecture has a plentiful supply of food from the sea, mountains and land. It is a place where rice cultivation is thriving, with the Koshihikari variety grown throughout the prefecture. A range of vegetables and fruit are also grown, such as Koshi-no-Ruby tomatoes, sweet potatoes, melons, watermelons, shallots, taro and Japanese plums. Echizen Gani crab, Amaebi shrimp and various other seafood are caught in the Japan Sea, and the aquaculture industry is also flourishing, with farming of Fukui Salmon, Wakasa Fugu Blowfish and Wakasa Oysters, among others.

'Miketsukuni – Land of Royal Provisions' Supporting the Food Culture of the Old Capitals

Miketsukuni Wakasa

The southern part of the prefecture is called Wakasa, a place known as a 'Miketsukuni (land of royal provisions)' for more than 1,000 years (since sometime in the 8th century). Wakasa supplied food to be offered to the gods and served to the Emperor in the old capitals of Nara and Kyoto. The seafood caught here was transported to the capitals via the Wakasa-kaido Road (also known as the Saba-kaido Road).



Kitamae Ships

The ports of Fukui Prefecture (Mikuni, Kono, Tsuruga, Obama) became ports of call for the Kitamae ships (trading ships that voyaged between Hokkaido and Osaka via the Sea of Japan route) from around the 1700s, and they were bustling midway points for goods being taken to the capital of Kyoto. When the ships came into port, produce, products and culture from around the country, in particular from Hokkaido and Tohoku, were loaded onto the Kitamae ships to be taken to their next stop.



Fukui Rice

Production area : All areas of the prefecture
Harvest : August to October



A proud tradition of Fukui rice, cultivated with plentiful water and quality soil

'Etsuzan Jakusui', as an alternative name for Fukui, signifies the abundant green of the Echizen mountains and the clear running waters of Wakasa, which greatly contribute to the production of a range of produce in this area.

Fukui Rice, detailed in this section, is grown all over the prefecture, as a result of an abundance of water and fertile soil fed by a number of rivers flowing down from the mountains. It is sought-after as a first-rate product.

First let's look at water, which is essential for rice growing. By way of example, production of agricultural crops thrives on the Fukui and Sakai Plains (the highest rice production area in the prefecture) due to nutrients from the Kuzuryu River. It is known among anglers as a prime river for cherry salmon, and is the biggest river in the prefecture, collecting snow-melt from the Hakusan mountain range, which is positioned on the border between Fukui, Ishikawa and Gifu Prefectures. The cool, plenti-

ful water is used for agriculture. In recent years, pipes have replaced the agricultural waterways making it easier to use this cold water for cultivation. The temperature of the water is lower and it is anticipated that the quality and taste of the rice will further improve.

Next is soil - the base for agricultural production. Even if the soil is fertile, long years of crop production can result in deficiencies in nutrients needed by the plants. To avoid this, producers continue to feed their soil in a way that is suited to the land, thus ensuring its viability for future generations. Quality soil takes time and effort, for example testing the soil and adding insufficient nutrients, and regenerating the soil with fertilizer. Soil preparation is carried out for all crops such as vegetables and fruit, as well as for rice, with producers on a relentless quest to create soil that is suitable for their crops.

Ichihomare -
a new rice variety from
the birthplace of Koshihikari rice!



Watch out for the new variety produced by the Fukui Agricultural Experiment Station!

Fukui Prefecture is well known among the numerous rice growing regions around Japan, but what catapulted it to fame was Koshihikari. Synonymous with delicious rice, it is now grown throughout Japan, but it was Fukui Prefecture where it all began.

Koshihikari was born in 1956, created as a result of long years of cultivar improvement. The Fukui Agricultural Experiment Station is a facility that supports all types of agriculture in Fukui Prefecture, by conducting development for high quality and reliable production techniques for paddy field rice, wheat, soybeans, vegetables and fruit. After Koshihikari was created, cultivar improvement continued, and a range of research and development was conducted based on Koshihikari. As a result, more than 40 varieties have been produced, including Hanaechizen and Akisakari.



A rice variety that shines from Fukui to the rest of Japan

Fukui Koshihikari Rice

Koshihikari was born in 1956 at the Fukui Agricultural Experiment Station. Its name is formed from 'koshi' which is the same character as the 'echi' in Echizen (northern Fukui), and 'hikari' (light) with the hope that the rice would 'shine' in this area. The central figure in cultivar development was Keiichiro Ishizumi, and he was also the developer of a range of other varieties as well as Koshihikari.

Koshihikari is currently cultivated around Japan and there are also a number of varieties (descendants) born from Koshihikari, such as Hitomebore, Akitakomachi, Haenuki and Nanatsuboshi.



■ The Taste:

- A whiteness and silky sheen
- A mild sweetness that fills the mouth
- A perfect balance between grain separation and stickiness

A new brand of rice to watch out for - even better than Koshihikari

In the 2018 season, Ichihomare, a new variety created by the Fukui Agricultural Experiment Station, is being put into full-scale production. Fukui Prefecture, with an accumulation of techniques and as the birthplace of Koshihikari, has produced a miraculous type of rice, chosen from around 200,000 varieties. Even in a taste test, it obtained an evaluation value of 0.70, where 70 out of 100 people said it was more delicious than the control variety. With science backing up its stickiness, firmness and composition, it is a variety of rice that is even more delicious than Koshihikari. Keep an eye out for it - this variety is attracting the attention of those in Japan's rice industry too.



Can't wait for new season rice? Try this.

Fukui Hanaechizen Rice

Hanaechizen rice came onto the scene 35 years later than Koshihikari. Its name comes from the fact that it 'blooms' (hana o sakaseru) earlier than Koshihikari.

Since it is harvested sooner than Koshihikari, it has a reputation for being 'the' rice to try when you want to eat delicious new season rice from Fukui as soon as possible.

This variety was second only to Koshihikari in terms of growing area in Fukui Prefecture in 2016, with more than 20% of the total. It is shipped to an increasingly wide area - mainly to Kansai (Osaka, Kyoto) but also to the Chukyo (Nagoya) and Kanto (Tokyo) areas.

Once cooked, the rice is white and shiny, and is said to have the three features of being 'white, early, and delicious'.



Production area : All areas of the prefecture
Harvest : July, October-November

Echizen Oroshi Soba Noodles



Echizen Oroshi Soba Noodles are normally served with green onions and shaved dried bonito. It is a perfect match between the aromatic soba noodles and the piquant grated daikon radish.

The long history and tradition of soba is a source of pride in Fukui, where growing conditions are perfect

Echizen Oroshi Soba Noodles are representative of Fukui's food culture. It is a simple dish of soba noodles paired with finely grated daikon radish, yet it has a depth of flavor, and is attracting attention as a food that could give long life. In this section we will unravel the history of the great taste of Echizen Oroshi Soba Noodles.

The history of soba (buckwheat) is long. It came to Japan from China via the Korean peninsula around the 8th century, and it is said that it was eaten as food since the Nara Period (AD 710-794). At that time it wasn't eaten in noodle shape as it is today, but mainly eaten as buckwheat dumplings or buckwheat balls made from kneading soba flour with hot water. It wasn't until the 1600s that soba was made into noodle shapes called 'sobakiri' and it became popular with the common people.

The history of soba in Fukui is said to have begun around the time that Asakura Takakage built a castle in Ichijodani (from 1473). As a result of many battles, soba became appreciated as a

food to sustain those holed up in a castle during a siege, and also because soba can be harvested in a shorter time than other crops. However in that period, soba was mainly eaten in the form of buckwheat dumplings or buckwheat balls.

In Fukui, the culture of soba noodles began in 1601. There was a change in the way soba was eaten when Honda Tomimasa became the lord of the castle in Fuchu (now Echizen City), accompanied by the soba master Kaneko Gonzaemon. It is said that it was in this era that noodle-shaped soba appeared, as well as the practice of eating them with finely grated (oroshi) daikon radish.

Finely grated radish with noodle shaped soba. This combination became widespread among the common people, and later, with the guidance and cooperation of Fukui Prefectural Government and the Fukui Prefecture Husked Buckwheat Promotion Council, the cultivation and consumption of soba increased, leading to the present-day popularity of oroshi-soba.



It was 1947 before the oroshi soba of Fukui became known around Japan as Echizen Oroshi Soba Noodles. In October 1947 the Showa Emperor visited Fukui and ate two bowls of oroshi soba, and after he returned to the Imperial Palace he reminisced about 'that Echizen soba...' which led to the name we know today.

The taste of Echizen Oroshi Soba Noodles is deeply dependent on the quality of the buckwheat grains and the milling techniques. The buckwheat harvested in Fukui is mainly a local variety, cultivated in the region for many years. The local variety of Fukui has a small grain but a depth of flavor and excellent aroma, which has a good reputation around Japan. As for the milling process, all soba milling companies in Fukui Prefecture use stone milling. The time and care taken with stone milling means that there is no loss of the characteristic soba flavor or aroma.

■ Soba Cultivation in Fukui

Soba seeds are sown in the middle of August, and by the middle of September to late October, fields all over Fukui are filled with pretty white soba flowers. After that, the stems redden, the white flowers become black grains, and from early November the harvest begins. That is the time for new-season aromatic soba. Soba is cultivated all over Fukui Prefecture, and the cultivation area is the 4th largest in Japan [as at 2015].



Echizen Gani Crab

Production area: Sakai City, Echizen Town, Tsuruga City, Obama City
 Fishing Season (average year) : Echizen Gani Crab - 6 Nov to 20 Mar,
 Seikogani Crab - 6 Nov to 31 Dec, Mizugani Crab - 9 Feb to 20 Mar

*This is what winter in Fukui is all about!
 A limited season for an exquisite taste*

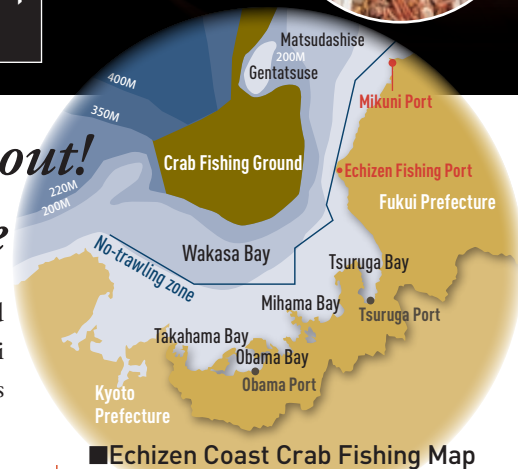
The Sea of Japan in winter. The colder it gets, the more fat the sea creatures build up and therefore the more delicious they are. One of these creatures, and a specialty of Fukui Prefecture, is Echizen Gani Crab, called the king of winter gustation. Fans of this delicious crab can be found all over Japan, and it has also been recognized by food connoisseurs.

The sea floor resembling a terraced field makes an ideal environment for crabs

With a taste befitting its title of 'king of gustation', it has a profound umami flavor that is unforgettable. The amazing fishing environment is the source of that umami flavor. Crab are of course fished in most harbors along the Sea of Japan coast, with notable types including Hokkaido's Tarabagani (Red King Crab) and Kegani (Horsehair Crab), Kyoto's Taizagani (Taiza Snow Crab), and Sanin's Matsubagani. However, what is special about Fukui's Echizen Gani Crab is that the fishing environment is different from other locations.

With a complex flow of currents, the cold water containing plentiful nutrients from the sea floor is mixed with the warm surface water so that phytoplankton thrive. This provides food for zooplankton as well as fish and shrimp, creating a rich fishing ground. Furthermore, the seafloor along the Echizen Coast is said to be a comfortable habitat for crabs, since there is a plentiful food supply, and it goes without saying that this means one thing - tasty crabs.

In addition, the distance from the port to the fishing area is not far, and this is important. At only 1-2 hours away, the crabs can be taken straight from the fishing ground to the port, ensuring that they are shipped while still fresh.



■ Echizen Coast Crab Fishing Map

Echizen Gani Crab is also served in the Imperial Household!



Every year, Echizen Gani Crab, with the best taste and quality in Japan, is served in the Imperial Household. Fukui Prefecture is the only prefecture in Japan to do this, and has done so since the Meiji Period (1868-1912). Every year, one fish wholesaler out of four in Sakai City (Mikuni Town) next to Mikuni Port takes a turn to provide the crab. From the Echizen Gani Crab caught on the day, only the choicest quality crab is chosen, in terms of size, weight, taste and visual quality, and this crab is served to the Imperial Household including their majesties the Emperor and Empress.

Echizen Gani Crab (Snow Crab)



Look for this yellow tag to get an Echizen Gani Crab!

The Echizen Gani Crab was the first in Japan to use this tag system to differentiate these crabs from crabs of other production areas. The color and shape of the tags differs between production areas, thus you can instantly see the production area of each crab.

Repeated molting makes the king of crabs taste even better.

Echizen Gani Crab refers to the male snow crab. It lives at around 290m-350m below the surface, and molts more than ten times as it grows.

It is interesting to note the small brown granules on the crab's shell. These are fish leech eggs, and it is known that they are not present on crabs soon after molting. In other words, crabs in

which fish leech eggs can be seen are those in which a certain amount of time has passed since molting, therefore a sign that the crab meat will be tasty.

A big Echizen Gani Crab has a shell of 15cm or more wide, with large legs and claws - a fitting appearance for a king, and with a high price to match.

Seikogani Crab

Both the ovaries and the fertilized eggs are worth a try!

A delicacy for only 2 months of the year.



The Seikogani Crab is a female crab that lives 230m-250m below the surface. Its shell is about 8cm wide. The contents of its abdomen are the feature of this crab. The popping texture of the fertilized eggs makes for a delicious taste, and the dark orange ovaries are a delicacy known as 'red diamonds'. However, Seikogani Crabs can only be caught until the 31st of December in a

normal year, to protect crab stocks. It is therefore a rare taste that can only be enjoyed for about two months from the open season date of 6 November.

The size and the price of these crabs are within reach of many locals, thus they are liked by many people in this area.



The best of Echizen Gani Crab The 'Echizen Gani Kiwami' brand

Echizen Gani Crabs with a weight of 1.3kg or more, a shell of 14.5cm or more wide, and claws of 3cm or more wide are selected for this new brand called 'Echizen Gani Kiwami' (certified in the 2015 year) as the best Echizen Gani Crabs. They can be differentiated by the double tags - the original Echizen Gani Crab tag plus the new tag.



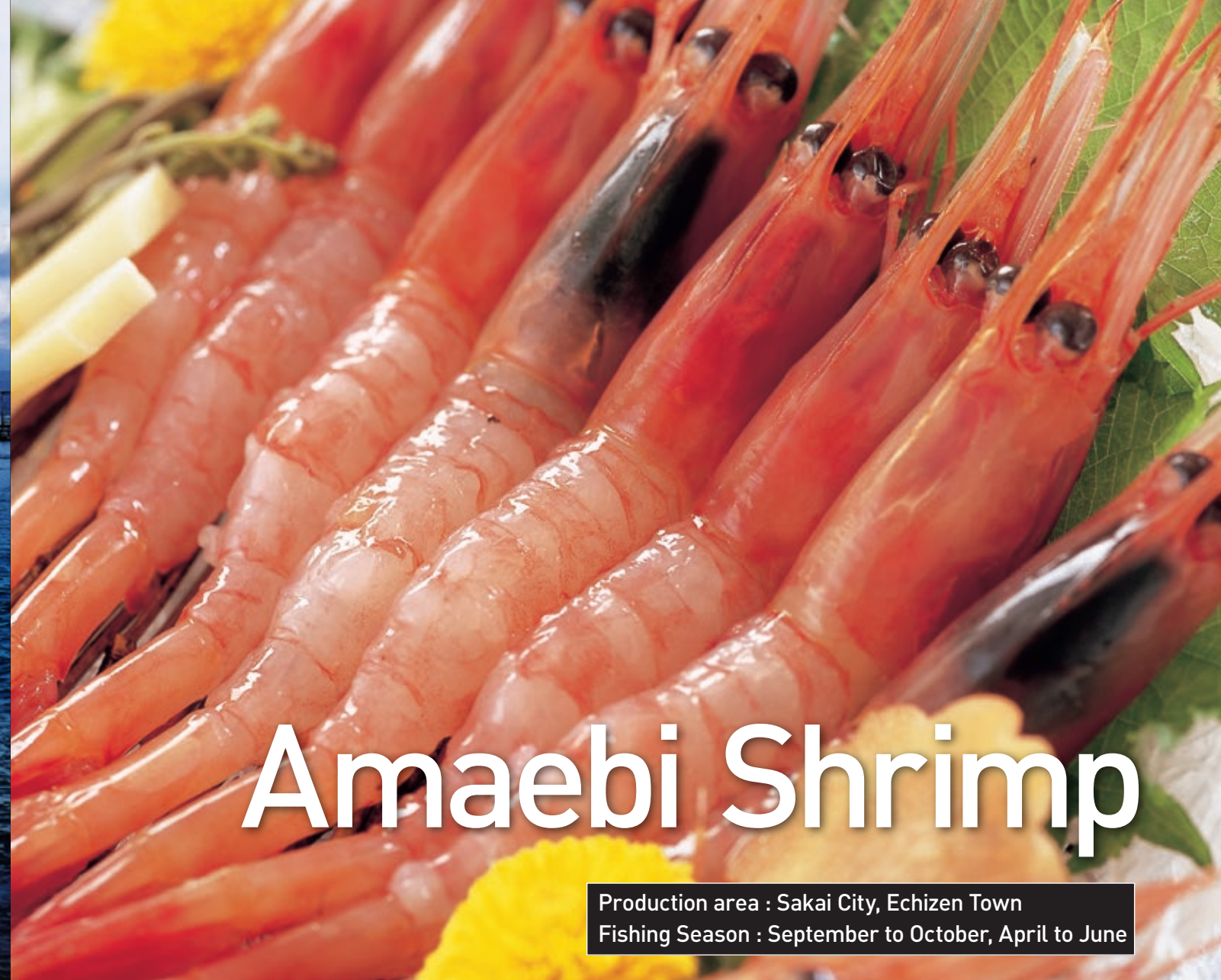
Fukui Salmon

Production area : Fukui City, Tsuruga City, Mihama Town,
Obama City, Ohi Town
Harvest Season : May to June

*A new type of salmon - born in Fukui,
raised in Fukui.*

Fukui Salmon refers to rainbow trout farmed in Fukui. The farming takes place in the open sea in a large-scale net-cage near the Oshima Fishing Port as well as in the sea near the Fukui City Takasu Fishing Port. It is said that rainbow trout by nature only grow at water temperatures of 20°C or colder, thus farming began in Fukui with its low water temperature environment. First the

young fish are nurtured, and their real seawater growth phase begins. While trout or salmon are also farmed in other locations in Japan, production numbers are much lower than overseas. Given that there is a demand in the market, the goal is to stabilize production with branding that promotes produce of Fukui as safe and reliable.



Amaebi Shrimp

Production area : Sakai City, Echizen Town
Fishing Season : September to October, April to June

*Melt-in-your-mouth, tender,
rich and sweet – delicious!*

Mikuni Port (Sakai City) is one of the main fishing ports for trawl fishing in Fukui Prefecture. Amaebi Shrimp from Mikuni Port, with the largest catch of any port in Fukui Prefecture, is highly valued for its quality and exquisite taste. About 300 tons of Amaebi Shrimp are caught each year in two fishing seasons - April to June and September to October. There is a strict sorting process based on size, quality, and whether they have any roe, and the Amaebi Shrimp that is caught is put up for auction as soon as it reaches the port. Sales brokers and fish shop owners gather at the port as the fishing boats arrive back, and then the place comes alive with trading.

The highest price is paid for the Amaebi Shrimp that have blue granular eggs in their abdomen, and next is the shrimp with no eggs that are the largest. They are further graded by size as large, medium, small and extra-small. Along with Echizen Gani Crab and Wakasa Fugu Blowfish, these choice Amaebi Shrimp with a

charming glossy vermillion color are representative of the taste of winter in Fukui, and when you put them in your mouth you are hit with a mild taste of the sea and a rich fullness and sweetness. All Amaebi Shrimp have a really special taste and texture. In particular the shrimp caught from the silt at 200m-500m below the surface in coastal waters with clean seabeds have an exceptional texture and sweetness.

Freshness can be distinguished by the color of the shrimp's body. Fresh shrimp are those with a high degree of transparency and a head that is not dark-colored. Freshness quickly deteriorates after they are caught, so the shrimp are immediately snap frozen on board the boat to maintain freshness. Amaebi Shrimp can still be eaten raw as sashimi even after being thawed, and the characteristic sweetness and thick texture can be enjoyed to your heart's content.

Sake in Fukui

Production area : All areas of the prefecture
 Brewing time : October onwards



Echizenwakasa-no-Jizake Local Sake

Echizenwakasa-no-Jizake Local Sake refers to refined sake produced in Fukui Prefecture's Echizen and Wakasa areas, and has been trademarked by the Fukui Sake Brewers Association.



The decisive factor in sake brewing is quality ingredients and the skill of the master brewer. New-season sake is made after about 60 days of work encompassing various processes.



Traditional sake brewing — a small industry passed on through the generations.

Since ancient times, where the water was clean, people prospered and sake brewing thrived. Sake brewing uses a lot of rice and water, thus a good natural water source is essential. The Echizen and Wakasa areas of the prefecture have several major rivers flowing through them, including the Kuzuryu River, the Hino River and the Mimi River, all of which carry snow melt from the Hakusan mountain range to the Sea of Japan. It has long been called a place of sake brewing.

The sake breweries of Echizen and Wakasa each have their own well, with differences in water quality dependent on the depth of the wells and the groundwater veins, leading to distinct sake characteristics between the breweries. The delicious sake that is made with nature's bounties captures the essence of bountiful Fukui itself with its clean and delicious water.

Fukui's plentiful and delicious water grows good rice. Koshihikari, which is synonymous with delicious rice, was created in

Fukui, and the 'Gohyakumangoku' variety of brewers' rice (rice suited for sake brewing) has one of the highest volumes of production in Japan. The significant differences between day and night temperatures, well-fed land and dedicated crop care are all essential for growing good brewers' rice. It could be said that the environment in Fukui, which meets these criteria, and the enthusiasm of the people who cultivate rice for sake brewing, are the building blocks for making good sake in this region. Brewing sake requires the brewery owner, master brewer and brewery workers to come together as one and to make use of their experience, hard work and techniques, to work with the climate of the year and to maintain the characteristics of that brewery to create their unique flavor. In this way, Echizenwakasa-no-Jizake Local Sake is handmade using this knowledge of old.

Fukui Ume Plums

Production area : Wakasa Town, Obama City, Ohi Town, Minami Echizen Town, Tsuruga City, Mihama Town, Echizen Town
 Harvest : early June to early July



Fleshy Fukui Ume Plums are delicious in cooking, and good for health and beauty.

Ume plums are cultivated around Japan. However, Wakasa Town, which is a Fukui Ume Plum production area, has a proud history of cultivation for about 170 years. It is said that cultivation began around 1830, originating from the ume plum trees grown in the gardens of local farmers Heidayu and Suke-dayu, in the Nishida District of Wakasa Town. The trees were called the Heidayu Plum and the Suke-dayu Plum. Cultivar improvement was since carried out, leading to the current Benisashi and Kensaki varieties.

The harvest is in early summer. The green ume plums are harvested and shipped to both within and outside the prefecture. The quality and taste of Benisashi pickled plums (umeboshi) has a good reputation in Japan as a whole. The reason for this is because the ripe ume plums have no additives added in the manufacturing process - just a careful process of drying in the sun with only the ume plums, shiso leaves and

salt. Compared with ume plums from other prefectures, Fukui Ume Plums are fleshy with a small stone and therefore easy to eat.

A number of varieties of plum wine are also made, with the combination of Fukui Ume Plums and Echizenwakasa-no-Jizake Local Sake or other liquors.

Umeshu (Plum Wine)



Koshi-no-Ruby Tomatoes

Production area : All areas of the prefecture
Harvest : Year-round



Grown in sandy areas, these 'midi' tomatoes have a fruit-like sweetness.

Koshi-no-Ruby Tomatoes is the brand name of the midi tomatoes produced in Fukui Prefecture.

The variety Koshi-no-Ruby that became the brand name was created in the Department of Agriculture at Fukui Prefectural College (now Fukui Prefectural University). It is called a 'midi tomato' because it has a size in between a large tomato and a mini tomato, and it has a characteristic high sugar content as compared with large tomatoes. It is a popular tomato even within the prefecture, with its sweetness, and perfect size and shape. One production area is Shirakata Town in Fukui City, located on the Sanrihama dunes facing the Sea of Japan. The tomatoes produced from the sandy soil of Shirakata Town are of good quality - slightly bigger with a larger harvest as compared to other districts, and also with a comparatively higher sugar content. In addition, in terms of nutrition, they have twice the vitamin C of large tomatoes, and about twice the amount of

lycopene (that helps to reduce reactive oxygen species - said to cause lifestyle-related diseases), therefore they are not only delicious but are good for your health.

Recently, it has become possible to cultivate these tomatoes even in winter with careful management of temperature etc., so consumers can enjoy Koshi-no-Ruby Tomatoes year-round.

■ Koshi-no-Ruby Tomato Products

Products made from Koshi-no-Ruby Tomatoes such as juice and dressings, are also popular.



Kamisho Taro

Production area : Ono City
Harvest : October to December



A popular brand of small taro that is firm even when cooked.

Among all the types of taro cultivated around Japan, the Kamisho Taro, produced in the Kamisho District of Ono City, is famous as a popular branded product. The greatest reason for their popularity is their taste. They are small and firm, and do not soften and fall apart even if they are boiled well, allowing the natural taro flavor to be maintained.

A popular dish is 'nikkorogashi' or flavored simmered taro, but locally this taro is used in many ways including in oden hot pot, creamy stew, dengaku (skewered, grilled, and coated with miso), and croquettes.

Also, products that have been developed include icecream made using 100% taro, with no added milk products.



Tomitsu Kintoki Sweet Potatoes

Production area : Awara City
Harvest : August to October



Comprehensive temperature and humidity management allow the taste to be maintained for a long time.

These sweet potatoes are produced in the Tomitsu District of Awara City. If baked, their sweetness increases, and they are popular with famous chefs and confectioners around Japan. They are not only served as yakiimo (baked sweet potato) and in soups, but they are also used in desserts such as custard pudding and cakes. The reason they can be used in this way is because after harvest they undergo a curing and storing process with specific temperature and humidity management so that they are eventually shipped with a greater sweetness (maturity) than normal.



Members of the cultivation association are all 'Eco farmers' who strive to reduce their use of agrochemicals, thoroughly prepare the soil and carefully harvest and store the potatoes.

Melons

Production area : Sakai City, Awara City,
Katsuyama City, Sabae City
Harvest : June to July, July to October

Melons produced in Fukui Prefecture include the Earl's melon, one of the highest grade varieties, as well as the Andes melon, Prince melon and Marseille melon. In particular, the Prince melon, named in commemoration of the marriage of the Crown Prince in 1959, has an excellent aroma with sugar content of 15-17% and a consistent flavor. Furthermore, the Marseille melon has orange flesh and high sugar content despite having a short maturation period.



Nashi Pears

Production area : Sakai City, Awara City
Harvest : August to October

Kosui and Hosui are both typical varieties of nashi pear that are juicy and sweet. The Kosui variety has a large national share of the market as one of the main varieties, and they are characteristically crunchy with a good texture and high sugar content. The Hosui variety has a better shelf life as compared to the Kosui, and features a softer flesh and a slight tartness.



Grapes

Production area : All areas of the prefecture
Harvest : August to September

Grapes are cultivated in all areas of the prefecture. Centred on the varieties of the nationally popular Shine Muscat variety, where you can eat the skin and all, the black-skinned 'Black beat', the Fujiminori and the red Sunny rouge, they are mainly large-type grapes in a variety of colors. All of these varieties are seedless thus easy to eat, sweet and juicy.



Local Food Products

Miso Paste

Classic country-style miso paste with rice koji culture as its base

It was the 700s when miso first appeared in Japan. At that time it was a luxury food eaten only by those at temples and the aristocracy. Fukui miso is generally termed koji miso or miso made with rice koji culture, and a plentiful amount of this is used. Influenced by miso from Kyoto, it is a slightly sweet red miso. Since there is a generous amount of rice

koji culture used, when it is used as a marinade for chicken etc., the meat becomes tender, for a simple and delicious dish.

It is common for miso to be homemade in each household, and it is an essential requirement for every meal.



Soy Sauce

Umami is the star flavor, enhancing the taste of fresh ingredients

Soy sauce owes its origins to the fermented food 'hishio' and the seasoning called 'tamari' from the 1200s, but it wasn't until the 1500s that the present style of soy sauce was made with soybeans and wheat. Looking at soy sauces from around Japan, soy sauce from the Hokuriku region is generally described as 'sweet'. However, in actual fact the sweet and

salty components are adjusted to achieve a balanced soy sauce with a subtle umami flavor, thus it might be better to describe it as 'umai' (with umami flavor) as opposed to 'amai' (sweet).

In recent years, even powdered soy sauce has been developed, through a combination of traditional techniques and modern technology.



Vinegar

A seasoning brewed in Fukui that has been the backbone of Kyoto Cuisine

Fukui Prefecture is one of the leading rice-growing areas in Japan, and is the birthplace of the Koshihikari variety. In addition, clean, clear water flows down from the peaks of the sacred Hakusan mountain range, creating a number of springs throughout the prefecture, which are also used for household purposes.

In Fukui, there are companies that use both of these ingredients to make rice vinegar. With their commitment to

making vinegar from rice, the resultant vinegar is an excellent product with a full-bodied taste that maximizes the umami flavor. Rice vinegar is used in a range of dishes, and it is known as a taste that has been the backbone of Kyoto Cuisine. For example, the bamboo-pickled young sea bream and mackerel sushi that were transported to Kyoto via the Saba-kaido Road for hundreds of years were made with rice vinegar.



Heshiko Preserved Mackerel

Miketsukuni Slow Food

Heshiko Preserved Mackerel is a typical example of the food culture of Fukui. Heshiko is fish preserved in rice bran, and it is said that the name came about because 'heshikomu' is the name given for the action of pickling something by placing a weight on top. This unique delicacy is gaining popularity around Japan. The culture of eating mackerel developed in Wakasa, which was a Miketsukuni (a place providing food to the old capitals). Heshiko was made to

prevent the mackerel from going rotten and to preserve it long-term. There is also Heshiko preserved sardines, blowfish and squid, and recently there have been a number of unique products such as gochujang (Korean red chili paste) pickle, heshiko rice sprinkles and canned items.



Salted Sea Urchin

One of Japan's three great delicacies, known for centuries

Salted sea urchin is one of Japan's three great delicacies, and even in the series of books 'Nippon Sankai Meisan Zue' (a pictorial record of Japan's land and sea delicacies) from the 1700s, this local specialty is described as the Number 1 Salted Food.

This salted sea urchin is salt-pickled Japanese green sea urchin. This species of sea urchin is small, growing to 3-4cm across, and it is said to have the strongest flavor of all sea urchin types. This

flavor is enhanced by pickling in salt. However, to make 100g of product, over 100 sea urchins are required.

Recently this sea urchin has been attracting attention for not only Japanese cuisine but also as a premium ingredient for French cuisine.



Grilled Mackerel

A dynamic dish of grilled whole mackerel straight to the table

Many years ago, various types of seafood caught in Wakasa Bay were taken to Kyoto where the Imperial Court was, via the Wakasa-kaido Road. One type of seafood from Wakasa was mackerel. There are various ways of cooking it, but in Obama City, Hamayakisaba Grilled Mackerel is well-known. This dynamic dish of grilled naturally fatty whole mackerel is served with gingered soy sauce.

In Ono City it is also a custom to eat Hagesho grilled mackerel in early July, on the 11th day from the summer solstice. It is said that the practice originated a long time ago when the Lord of the Ono Domain recommended eating mackerel to supplement the diets of the farmers who were tired from doing agricultural work. The custom continues to this day.



Oboro Kombu Shaved Kelp

Made by experienced artisans for restaurant-quality taste

The port town of Tsuruga was formerly an important port of call for Kitamae ships. It thrived as a largest-scale collection point for food and goods. Kombu, or kelp, was the most important of these goods unloaded from the ships. In the Edo Period (1603-1868), kelp transported down from Hokkaido was processed in Tsuruga by experienced artisans and then shipped to the Kyoto-Osaka area as

a 'Tsuruga Specialty'. 'Oboro Kombu' Shaved Kelp was one of these processed kelp products. Hand-shaved oboro kombu is made as a result of the amazing skill of the artisans, and only hand-shaving can achieve the almost transparent thin shavings. The wave-like patterns are proof that it has been shaved thinly.

Mackerel Sushi

An excellent dish born from the 'Mackerel Road'

In a time when mackerel was caught in abundance in Wakasa Bay, the locals made many mackerel dishes, such as Hamayakisaba Grilled Mackerel, marinated mackerel, seasoned mackerel, pickled mackerel and Heshiko Preserved Mackerel, which are all still eaten today. Mackerel sushi is an exquisite dish essential for celebratory occasions in Kyoto, made from a fillet of mackerel marinated with salt and vinegar, placed on vinegared rice and rolled into a log

shape with a cloth or sushi mat. The route taken to transport mackerel from Wakasa Bay to Kyoto was called the Saba-kaido Road ('Mackerel Road'), and mackerel sushi became a popular dish in the villages and lodges along this route. Not only Kyoto, but Obama City in Fukui and other places have a number of eateries that serve mackerel sushi.



Kona-Wakame Dried Seaweed

A completely handmade delicacy with the aroma of the sea

Open season for harvesting of natural wakame seaweed begins in April. In the sea off Mikuni Town in Sakai City, fisherwomen skin dive for wakame seaweed. Most of the freshly harvested natural wakame seaweed is made into Kona-Wakame or dried wakame pieces. It is generally called 'Momi-Wakame' and is made by the fisherwomen.

The holdfast and stem sections of the

wakame are carefully removed, and the leaves are laid one by one on bamboo screens called 'su' to dry in the sun. Once dry, they are crumbled to complete the process. The freshly harvested wakame seaweed is processed on the day it is harvested, which is the secret to its taste. This Kona-Wakame, made with traditional methods is sold in cans.

