

## Food Culture

Locally grown, high-quality, and predominantly organic ingredients form the basis of the food culture of Sado, where fast-food restaurants are a rarity. Seasonal specialties are sold in local supermarkets and are used in restaurants throughout the island. Produce and food specialty items from Sado are also recognized throughout Japan, and butter, other dairy items, and dried fruit from the island are often featured at high-end department stores.

Each season and part of the island has its own distinct flavors. The warmer, southwestern part of Sado is covered with orchards that grow fruit such as apples and persimmons. Sado is known for *Okesagaki* persimmons, a hallmark of autumn on the island, which are often eaten dried. The central part of the island is mainly vegetable and rice farmland, and the flat, sheltered location protects the crops from the storms that ravage the island. One specialty of the northern part of the island is *kanburi*, or “winter yellowtail,” which is caught by fishermen based at Ryotsu Port. *Kanburi* is best eaten as sashimi or in Sado Tennen Burikatsu-don—a deep-fried fish cutlet on top of rice. *Kanburi* is celebrated with a festival every December.

Food and agriculture on Sado were greatly influenced by the history of gold and silver mining on the island. The mines brought laborers from all over Japan to Sado, swelling the population to around 40,000 to 50,000 in the town of Aikawa alone. To accommodate the sudden increase, terraced fields were built in places not previously used as farmland, such as on hillsides. These terraces remain in use today for growing rice and provide a habitat for the crested ibis, the symbol of Sado, which can be seen flying around the central lowlands.