

## **Gionbo Persimmon**

A popular souvenir from Akiota is the persimmon grown in the mountains near the town. This Gionbo persimmon is recognizable by its large size and by a distinct crease in the middle of the fruit, similar to a peach. The tip of the fruit is slightly pointed, and the flesh is rich and juicy. Ninety-nine percent of Gionbo persimmons are seedless. The Gionbo is an astringent persimmon with a dry flavor in its fresh form. It is processed using various methods, including drying and steeping in alcohol, to make it sweeter. Akiota now produces the most Gionbo persimmons in Japan.

The persimmons are usually eaten dried (*hoshigaki*), either on their own or paired with cheese and wine. Some dried persimmons are sold cut into strips, semi-dried and covered in white chocolate. Gionbo are harvested from the middle of October until the middle of November, and the drying process begins immediately after harvesting. The fruit is marketed from November onward.