

Cape Kuzaki and Ise Jingu Grand Shrine

Princess Yamatohime-no-mikoto was deeply moved when the *ama* divers of Toba presented her with gifts of abalone. She declared the delicacy a food fit for the gods. Abalone ranks as the single most important ingredient in the sacred meals offered to the deities of Ise Jingu. The choicest specimens are gathered from Cape Kuzaki, home to a dedicated processing facility that prepares them as offerings to the shrine. There the abalone is sliced into strips, stretched, and dried using a technique that was first perfected in the Heian period a thousand years ago. Neither the facility nor the offering ceremonies at Ise Jingu are open to visitors, but examples of the prepared abalone are on display at the Toba Sea-Folk Museum.