

Coastal Terraces in Tsuru

The Tosashimizu region is distinguished by its lack of flat, arable land, especially at or near sea level. Forested hills tower over the coast, leaving very little space for buildings and fields. The only exceptions are so-called coastal terraces, which are found in several places along the shore, often in a stair-like pattern and usually several dozen meters above the water. These table-like landforms, which are called *daba* in the local dialect, were formed over many millennia by marine erosion in shallow waters. They are thought to have emerged from the waves gradually, following land uplift and repeated changes in sea level.

The coastal terraces accommodate farming and have traditionally been used to grow vegetables and other crops. They remain in use in the adjacent areas of Tsuru and Otani; in Tsuru, camellias and other trees and shrubs have been planted along the edges of fields on the terrace to protect crops from the wind, while in Otani the *daba* hosts rice paddies, the irrigation systems for which were built in the Edo period (1603–1868).