

Tiger Puffer Fish

Kanezaki Fishing Port in Munakata lands the most tiger puffer fish (*torafugu*) in Fukuoka. The rough seas off the coast of Munakata are believed to foster the growth of strong, firm-fleshed puffer fish.

Tiger puffer fish are considered a delicacy in Japan. Known simply as “fugu,” this fish is renowned for its delicate flavor and firm texture. Tiger puffer fish contain a potent neurotoxin, concentrated in the liver and ovaries, and chefs need a special license to prepare the fish. The special preparation makes fugu an expensive dish.

Puffer fish is commonly eaten raw as paper-thin sashimi, arranged on a plate to resemble a chrysanthemum flower. A hotpot with tofu and vegetables (*tecchiri*) is a popular way to enjoy the fish in Munakata. Winter is the peak season for tiger puffer fish. As protection from the cold, the fish gain a layer of fat, which gives the flesh a richer flavor. From February to March, restaurants across Munakata celebrate the catch, offering tiger puffer fish dishes at reduced prices.