

Rausu Kombu Trimming Experience

Rausu kombu is a type of kelp that only grows in Rausu's coastal waters. This kombu has garnered a high reputation among some of the world's best restaurants for its umami. Umami is the rich, savory taste that forms the basis of dashi broth—the backbone of Japanese cuisine. Visitors to Rausu can discover more about this special variety of kelp at a kombu trimming experience.

The large seaweed fronds grow for two years in the Nemuro Strait shallows before being harvested. The 3-meter-long kombu is plucked from the water using hooked wooden poles. Rausu fisherfolk then embark on a labor-intensive, 23-step process involving drying, stretching, wrapping, rolling, trimming, and packaging.

During the Rausu kombu trimming experience, participants view video images of this harvesting and maturation process before learning how to trim and package the seaweed. Visitors then tour the kombu warehouse at Rausu fishing port to see how the seaweed is graded and stored. Staff hand out a detailed English pamphlet to non-Japanese speaking participants and communicate using simple English phrases and gestures.

The waters off the Rausu coast are rich in nutrients due to the ice floes that pack the Nemuro Strait during winter. This mineral-rich water is the likely reason that the seaweed only grows here. Inquire at the Shiretoko Rausu Michi no Eki tourist information counter for further details about the Rausu kombu trimming experience.