

Local Delicacies in Ise-Shima

The regional cuisine of Ise-Shima is based on seafood. The area was once called Miketsu Kuni (Land of Divine Offerings) because seafood from its waters was served to the Imperial Court, and was also presented as sacred offerings to the kami (Shinto deities) of Ise Jingu. The latter is a tradition that continues to this day. Sampling some of these seasonal delicacies is a good way to gain insight into local culinary traditions.

Abalone is a leading delicacy harvested in the region. Three types of abalone are caught here—Japanese abalone, disk abalone, and giant abalone—and charcoal-grilled is the favorite of local diners. Japanese spiny lobster (*Ise ebi*) is a seasonal winter favorite that is usually served grilled, or boiled whole.

Many fish species are caught off the shores of Ise-Shima, and are served as sushi, sashimi, and in other dishes. They include *Ise maguro* (Pacific bluefin tuna), *sawara* (Spanish mackerel), *suzuki* (sea bass), and others. Bonito is also a regional staple, served over a bed of rice as a type of sushi known as *tekonezushi*, or dried for use in dashi soup stock.