

Shiogama City Fish Market

Shiogama's large fish market is run by the city, and for 91 years, it has been an important point of sale for fish that eventually makes its way to tables all across Japan. For the past 30 years, it has been one of the country's largest markets for fresh (not frozen) tuna, and boats come from across the archipelago to sell their catch at the morning auctions.

To prevent overfishing, the market requires fishing boats that drop their catch here to abide by strict quotas and fishing practices. The prized black tuna sold at this market are caught using longlines, rather than nets.

Every morning (except Wednesdays) around 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m., tuna and other fish are sold to the highest bidder in a "walking" auction, where the auctioneer quickly walks down the rows while taking bids. This format makes Shiogama's auction one of the fastest in Japan, at around 2.5 seconds per fish/case. Around 3,000 fresh tuna are sold each morning, before they are transported to markets all around Japan, including Tokyo's famous Toyosu Fish Market (which replaced the historic Tsukiji Fish Market). Visitors are welcome to watch the action from the gallery hall above the market floor.

In the gallery, visitors can learn about the market and the fish sold there through various interactive displays. These include a virtual sushi shop, a booth where visitors can try on a fish seller's apron and pose with a wide array of realistic plastic fish, and a giant stuffed tuna for children to play on. At the market's small restaurant and shop, visitors can enjoy some of the freshly caught fish, including ruby red tuna sashimi.

The market is a 15-minute walk from both Higashi Shiogama Station and Hon Shiogama Station and is open daily except on Wednesdays.