

***Sasakama* (Surimi Fish Cakes)**

Kamaboko are cured *surimi* (ground fish) cakes that originated as a way to use unsold fish. They are now an important part of Miyagi Prefecture's culinary heritage, and this is particularly true of Shiogama's leaf-shaped *sasakama*.

Sasakama are made with ground white fish, mainly *kichiji* rockfish, mixed with salt and other natural flavorings. The shaped cakes are then steamed and lightly roasted, creating a fluffy, pleasantly chewy consistency.

These fish cakes were originally known as *berokama* ("tongue cakes") for their elongated oval shape but were later renamed to the more elegant *sasakama* ("bamboo-leaf cakes"). This name was inspired by the bamboo leaf in the crest of the Date family, who ruled parts of modern-day Miyagi and Iwate prefectures during the Edo period (1603–1867).

Sometimes playfully called "fast fish," as the lack of bones makes for an easy protein-snack, *kamaboko* can be purchased at gift shops across the area. Besides the plain versions, Shiogama's 18 producers also create *sasakama* in seasonal flavors or mix in additions like cheese, green onion, or shellfish.