

Sanriku Cuisine and Food Culture

The waters off the Sanriku coast are fed by currents from north and south, creating one of Japan's largest and most fertile fishing grounds. The inlets act as natural harbors, and each area has adapted fishing techniques and marine-product cultivation methods to local topographical features. These marine products, along with the fish caught in coastal waters, feed much of Japan. They are tastiest, of course, when eaten fresh from the sea at local restaurants.

Otsuchi

Iwate Otsuchi salmon

A sustainable catch, this delicious salmon is a local delicacy that is farmed in the sea just off the coast of the town of Otsuchi.

Otsuchi gibier (venison)

Hunters in the mountains of Otsuchi must manage the burgeoning deer population, and the result is this tasty venison, marketed under the "Iwate Gibier" brand name.

Raw sea urchin

Local residents pick sea urchins off the seabed, then individually jar and ship them. But this seasonal delicacy is best enjoyed here in spring and summer, served atop a bowl of rice.

Kamaishi

Kasshi persimmons

Kasshi persimmons are smoked in a chamber for several days. This removes any astringency and leaves them soft and tender, with an almost jelly-like texture.

Kamaishi ramen

The classic style of ramen in the Kamaishi area is typically made of thin, curly noodles that are served al dente in a soy sauce-based clear amber soup.

Ofunato

Saury

Fresh saury is a gourmet treat. The fishing season begins in mid-August, and fishermen here catch more saury than anywhere else on the island of Honshu.

Abalone

Local abalone are some of Japan's best, and the specialty here is *kippin*, or dried abalone. During the Edo period (1603–1867), this delicacy was so highly prized that it was exported to China.

Scallops

The local scallops are known for their large size, rich flavor, and sweet taste. They are sustainably farmed using locally developed methods.

Wakame seaweed

Sanriku wakame is a type of crunchy seaweed cultivated in inlets up and down the Sanriku coast. It is highly nutritious; though low in calories, it is full of vitamins and

minerals.

Rikuzentakata

Hirota Bay Ishikage shellfish

Hirota Bay is the only place where this large bivalve is cultivated. Its cream-colored flesh is tender and sweet, and also rich in nutrients.

Takata-no-yume rice

This local rice variety is an original brand grown only in Rikuzentakata. Cultivation began as a symbol of agricultural reconstruction after the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 11, 2011.

Yonesaki apples

This sweet, juicy variety of apple has been cultivated since the Meiji era (1868–1912). Many orchards are found close to the sea, an unusual location for apple farming.

Kesennuma

Bonito

Kesennuma port is bustling during the bonito fishing season, which lasts from June to November. Bonito caught in the spring have a light flavor, while those caught in autumn have a higher fat content.

Shark's fin

Sun-dried shark's fin is a marine product unique to this region, with a history dating

back to the Edo period (1603–1867). A shark museum is located at the city's fish market.

Swordfish

Swordfish is a longtime favorite of residents of the Sanriku region. It is particularly prized during the winter months, when the high fat content of the fish makes it more tender.