

Takasago Cuisine

Takasago is the birthplace of *nikuten*, a dish similar to *okonomiyaki*: a savory pancake fried with vegetables and meat and/or seafood, then topped with various condiments. However, unlike *okonomiyaki*, *nikuten* includes seasoned potatoes, beef tendon, crunchy bits of deep-fried tempura batter, and *konnyaku* (a jelly-like food made from konjac). The way *nikuten* is cooked is also different from *okonomiyaki*: the *nikuten* batter is cooked on a griddle before other ingredients are added on top. It is then folded in half, and more batter and ingredients are added to make it like a sandwich. It is a very filling dish.

Nikuten is believed to have originally been made at the request of a customer at a local restaurant; over the years, it developed into its current form. While the exact origin of the name is not known, it probably derives from the beef tendon (*sujiniku*) and crunchy tempura bits (*tenkasu*) in the dish, creating the portmanteau *nikuten*.

Another of Takasago's delicacies is grilled conger eel, readily available from the nearby Harima Sea, the eastern part of the Seto Inland Sea. The city's coastal location has long offered access to rich fishing grounds. Though conger eel is no longer fished in the area, local restaurants still serve it, cooked in the traditional way. Takasago's grilled conger eel has a fragrant aroma; rich flavor; and tender texture, making it a popular dish.