

Karato Market

Karato Market sits at the heart of the district that bears the same name, between the Karato intersection on National Route 9 and the Kanmon Strait. Locally described as “Kanmon’s Kitchen,” Karato Market is the beating heart of Shimonoseki’s culinary life, catering to seafood retailers, chefs, local residents, and tourists alike.

The Karato area has flourished as a transportation and trade hub since ancient times. Its heyday came in the Meiji era (1868–1912), when Shimonoseki, along with Moji across the Kanmon Strait, was a major center for overseas trade and shipping. During those years, several foreign consulates, trading agencies, and financial institutions lined its bustling streets. Today’s Karato is the result of land reclamation work on Karato Bay at the mouth of the Tanaka River between 1894 and 1896.

The market has its origins in 1909, when street vendors received official permits from Shimonoseki to sell fruits and vegetables. This led to the creation of a small fish market in Amidaji, a neighborhood centered on Akama Jingū. In 1924, that market was moved a short distance southwest, to the current location of Karato Market. Since then, it has been frequented by both professional traders and the general public.

On April 25, 2001, as part of a major waterfront development project, Karato was expanded to become a comprehensive seafood market that would appeal to domestic and overseas visitors. Along with Kaikyōkan Aquarium and Kamon Wharf, it has become a leading Shimonoseki tourist attraction.

Karato Market is famed for a variety of seafoods, especially puffer fish, or *fugu* (locally pronounced *fuku*). Depending on the season, the market’s holding tanks and chopping blocks teem with tilefish (*amadaï*), octopus (*tako*), red sea urchin (*akauni*), and swordtip squid (*kensaki ika*). It is also possible to find more unusual offerings, such as the longtooth grouper (*kue*) and the grotesque-looking yet delicious angler fish (*ankō*).

Vendors tend to specialize in specific kinds of fish or seafood. Ready-to-eat, freshly prepared seafood dishes are available at many stalls, in particular during the Iki-iki Bakangai seafood festival, held every weekend and on public holidays. Puffer fish soup (*fugujiru*) is a popular and less expensive option for visitors looking to taste the region’s famous fish.

コメントの追加 [BC1]: NO.8 解説文へのハイパーリンクを挿入

Grocery items, including dried and canned seafood, seaweed, and shellfish products, are also sold at Karato Market. Puffer fish products are among the most popular souvenirs. There is even a puffer fish vending machine and puffer fish *gacha* capsule machine, where customers can spend ¥3,000 to receive up to ¥15,000 in puffer fish products.