

Fermentation and gastronomy tourism

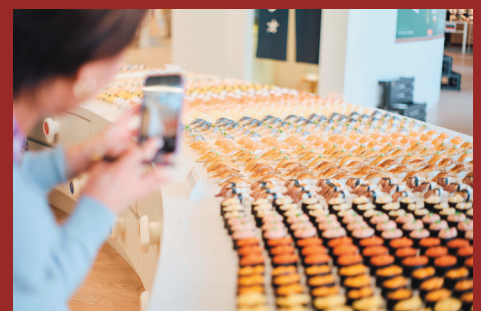
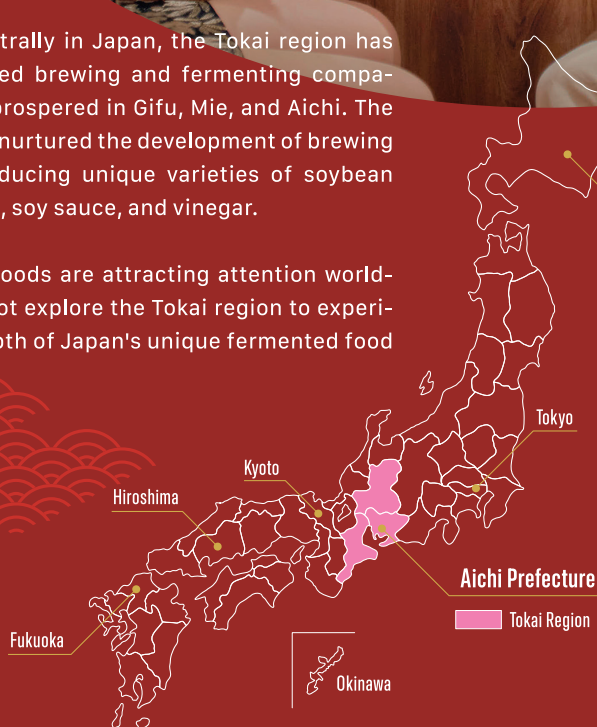
A journey to explore brewing culture

Handa City, Aichi Prefecture

Experience Japanese flavors via fermentation tourism

Located centrally in Japan, the Tokai region has long attracted brewing and fermenting companies. Many prospered in Gifu, Mie, and Aichi. The rich climate nurtured the development of brewing culture, producing unique varieties of soybean miso, tamari, soy sauce, and vinegar.

Fermented foods are attracting attention worldwide. Why not explore the Tokai region to experience the depth of Japan's unique fermented food culture?



Brewing industry

Brewers use microorganisms to ferment and mature grains to produce sake and fermented foods: soy sauce, miso, mirin, and vinegar. Aichi Prefecture boasts top-class fermenters and brewers. Japan's oldest mirin (rice wine for cooking) company is in Mikawa, Aichi.

Koji malt

Soy sauce, miso, and other fermented foods are made from koji malt, a product made by adding koji mold to steamed grains. The enzymes of *Aspergillus oryzae* provide umami flavor and nutrition. In 2006, the Brewing Society of Japan recognized *Aspergillus oryzae* as a national fungus.

Orientation

Fermentation culture enhances Japanese cuisine.

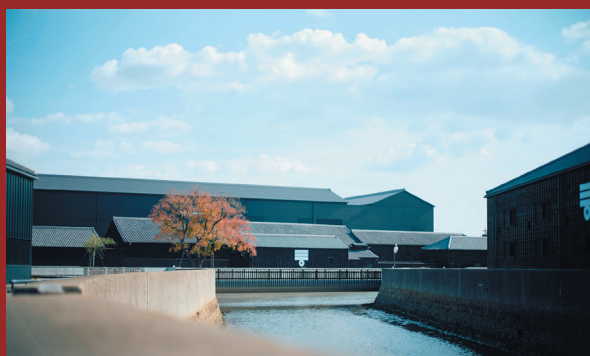
During the Edo period (1603-1867), Handa's brewing and shipping industries flourished. Ships carried fermented foods and drinks, such as sake and vinegar, across Japan. Today, warehouses with unique black exteriors retain the architecture of the Edo period, when the brewing industry flourished along the Handa Canal.

The world is now realizing the attraction of Japanese fermented products, including sake, soy sauce, miso, mirin, and vinegar, all made with koji mold.

Microorganisms cause ingredients to change during fermentation. Breweries use a variety of microorganisms for fermentation: acetic acid bacteria for vinegar and koji mold for soy sauce and miso. Fermentation powers Japan's unique brewing culture, supporting the yumminess of Japanese food and providing numerous health benefits.



Introducing Handa City, Aichi Prefecture



Handa City, located on the east side of the central part of Chita Peninsula, Aichi Prefecture, developed into an influential city. Hundreds of years ago, the shipping industry developed thanks to the nearby port of Kinugaura. Along with that, brewing, textile, and salt companies flourished. Lining the Handa Canal, warehouses with unique black exteriors retain the vestiges of the Edo period. Today, utilizing traditional methods, Handa is still a center of Japan's brewing culture.



Issuance

Handa City Tourism Association



Handa City Tourism Association



You can download the Handa City tourist brochure here.

Edomae sushi and Handa sake lees vinegar

Sparking a nigiri sushi boom across Japan

Edomae sushi, the most commonly consumed sushi variety, uses kasuzu, a vinegar made with sake lees, byproducts of sake production, Two hundred years ago. Matazaemon Nakano, who was in the sake brewing business, found a way to utilize sake lees and founded Mitsukan. His successor, Matazaemon, infused rich flavors and deep umami into kasuzu by slowly aging the sake lees. He named this vinegar after a flower called yamabuki because the colors are similar. Mitsukan signifies its highest quality products with the rank of Mitsuhan. Mitsuhan Yamabuki is the pinnacle of Mizkan red vinegar. Mitsukan sold its vinegar in Edo (ancient Tokyo). Sushi utilizing vinegar made with sake lees became popular. Both Edomae sushi and kasuzu spread across Japan.



Explanation of kanjis for sushi

Sushi is written in three ways: 鮓, 鮓, and 寿司. The kanji 鮓 expresses the sour vinegar taste of vinegared fish. The kanji 鮓 conveys the idea of delicious fish. Last is 寿司. Sushi is often at celebratory occasions. The kanji 寿 means to congratulate and 司 means to dispense or process.

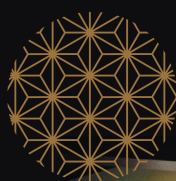
【SU】

酢

Learn about vinegar fermentation culture

Be impressed by the slow, breathtaking fermentation

Visitors to the interactive MIZKAN MUSEUM get hands-on with the history of vinegar production and the charms of food culture. The Mizkan company, headquartered in Handa City, developed the museum into five zones. At the Daichi no Kura zone, visitors learn about vinegar making in the Edo period (1603-1868). Then, peering through the bottom of an Edo-period bucket, visitors can watch workers at a modern-day brewing factory on the floor beneath. The facility is state-of-the-art, but Mizkan still follows fermentation methods from the Edo period. Natural fermentation leads to richly flavored vinegar. Amazingly, fermented ingredients develop into patterns that appear like modern artworks. In the Toki no Kura zone (Storehouse of Time), climb aboard a 20-meter-long replica of a wooden ship from the Edo period. A light and sound show creatively illustrates the journey to ancient Tokyo. Visitors enjoy sushi and nabe-themed quizzes and games, create future foods, and take fun photographs in the Garden of Light.



Food and Vinegar Culture Tour

MIZKAN MUSEUM (MIM)



Crossing time and space
on an ancient ship

Nigiri sushi experience

Conveyor Belt Sushi Restaurant, Uotaro, Handa Branch



Feel and speak like a real
sushi chef

【SAKE】

酒

Sake section, learning about brewing culture

Introducing Edo period (1603-1867) sake brewing at a 200-year-old brewery.

Nakano Sake Brewery, founded in 1844 in Handa City, maintains traditions while creating new sake varieties matching today's food culture and tastes. Kuni Zakari, the name of the brewery's representative brand, expresses our hope for the prosperity of our country and sake.

The 200-year-old sake brewery building, where sake was produced until 1972, now houses the Kuni Zakari Sake Museum, where visitors learn what sake brewing was like hundreds of years ago. You'll see authentic tools that Edo period sake masters used to brew high-quality sake, for instance, a wooden pulley called Amida. Workers used Amida to raise and lower giant wooden sake vats.

At the Sake Tasting Corner, visitors can sample the recommended sakes of the season and purchase their favorites. Our current toji, master sake brewer, uses perfected techniques to transform sake rice, pristine water, and selected koji and yeast into premium sake.



Compare the famous Kuni Zakari sakes

Sake-making tour—learn about sake culture

Kuni Zakari Sake Culture Museum



Focus on calligraphy

Sake label calligraphy experience

Old Nakano Hanroku House



Sugidama (cedar ball)

A traditional sugidama, or ball of cedar leaves and twigs, hangs under the eaves of the Sake Culture Museum. A green ball signals the creation of fresh sake at the start of a new sake season. The green cedar balls turn brown as the sake matures. Sugidamas also express sake makers' gratitude for the cedar wood used in many sake brewing tools.



Sake Rice

Learn about various sakes. Daiginjo and ginjo sakes are classified by the degree of rice husk removal. Polishing off the husk, which causes off-flavors, results in refined sake. Commonly eaten rice is polished by at most 10%, but for brewing daiginjo sake, the rice is polished by 50% or more!

Savor fermentation culture and local dishes

Local food culture creates tasty fermented cuisine

The finishing touch to fermentation gastronomy tourism is savoring local food.

The first restaurant is the tranquil Kura no Aji, where beautiful cuisine celebrates the four seasons, and diners eat at their own pace. The atmospheric building, a renovated earthen-walled warehouse over 150 years old, floats along the canal in the faint light. Serving seasonal ingredients when they are at their best earned the owner a Michelin rating in the Aichi/Gifu/Mie 2019 special edition.

The second restaurant is Kosenrou, which offers casual dining. The most popular dish is miso sukiyaki, made with Chita Wagyu beef. The main ingredients are Chita Wagyu beef, raised with great care by a local producer, Oguri Farm, and refreshingly sweet soybean miso from a long-established local brewery, Nakatoshi. Enjoy the elegant flavor created by local fermentation culture and ingredients!



Enjoy the flavors of Chita's seasonal dishes



Kura-no-aji

Chita Wagyu with miso sukiyaki



Kosenro



Chita Wagyu Beef

Chita Wagyu is a brand of beef raised in the calm climate of Chita. Ranches raise the cows with great care, giving them a unique diet. Some farms use sake or soy sauce lees, which results in a quality of meat characterized by sweetness, a tender texture, and just the right amount of fat.

Savor Handa's flavors and meet locals

Lively nights at Handa bars

After delighting in Chita's brewing culture, drop into a local bar.

Noka-no-Yome, meaning farmer's wife, is well-liked because of the welcoming atmosphere. Actual farmers' wives and staff in aprons greet guests. Chefs prepare homemade-style dishes with Chita's mouthwatering local ingredients complementing the local sake. Recommendations include miso oden and the Chita pork dish doteni, which accents the local miso. Noka-no-Yome is open from 4 pm (3 pm on Saturdays).

Sakaba Yamikuro is another relaxing hangout with great food. A semi-private room on the second floor accommodates large parties. Craft beer and wine are available, and the manager will recommend creative dishes. The restaurant has a wide selection of records of all genres, and you can request your favorite music. The third Saturday of every month features a music event with a guest DJ.

Fully enjoy Chita's ingredients and local sake



Noka-no-Yome (Farmer's Wife)



A hidden but welcoming restaurant



Sakaba Yamikuro



Skewered clams

Kushi-asari means dried clams skewered one by one in the sun. Kushi-asari is an essential dish of the Kamezaki Siohimatsuri Festival, held in May in Kamezaki, Handa City. You can taste the concentrated flavor of the clams by roasting them over a fire or eating them tempura style.

Experience Japanese food culture

Enjoy Japan's rich four-seasons-influenced food culture.

Japanese people experience the four seasons through cuisine. Japanese cooks often express the changing natural scenery with Japanese sweets and seasonal ingredients. The Wagashi (Japanese sweets) Pairing Experience will facilitate your appreciation of Japan's rich food culture, including tea and sake.

The participants can closely see the delicate handiwork of Japanese confectioners and enjoy seasonal confections along with distinctive Japanese tea and sake from the Tokai region. After tasting one bite of various sweets, sip a small amount of Japanese tea or sake. The delicate sweetness of traditional sweets is followed by the bitterness of Japanese tea or the mellowness of the sake, resulting in refreshingly different taste sensations.

Enjoy nutritious soybean miso

Miso ball workshop



Oguri family residence



Often closed to the public.
It is a private home.

Since the Edo period, the distinguished Oguri family has had a long history in Handa, developing the sake brewing, shipping, and brewing industries. The Oguri family residential area, standing on the west bank of Handa Canal, is a group of mansions built over many generations and is still used as a residence today. 2022 saw its designation as an important national cultural property. Visitors can join cultural activities in these historic buildings.

Soybean-Miso (Mame Miso)

Mame miso is a miso whose main ingredients are soybeans and koji mold. Because the miso turns a reddish dark brown when matured, many call it red miso. The longer you simmer it, the more delicious it becomes. Mame miso complements various dishes, as it enhances meat and fish flavors.



Enchanted by delicate handiwork

Japanese sweets pairing experience



Maruhatsu Confectionery Honpo

Fragrant tamari soy sauce and nori

Grilled mochi experience



Tamari soy sauce

Tamari soy sauce was initially made by collecting the nutritious and flavorful liquid byproducts of making soybean miso. Soybeans are the main ingredient. Gluten-free tamari soy sauce is popular overseas.