

Nature's blessings delight your palate

Foodstuffs from Shiga

やっぱり
滋賀のもんがええなあ

Omi Rice



Omi Beef



Omi Teas



Lake Fish



Omi Vegetables



For more information



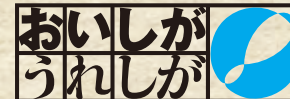
Shiga Tasty

Search

Food Brand Promotion Division, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries,
Shiga Prefectural Government

4-1-1 Kyomachi, Otsu City, Shiga 520-8577

Nature's blessings delight your palate



やっぱり滋賀のもんがええなあ



Omi Rice



Omi Beef



Omi Teas



Lake Fish



Omi Vegetables

Water is the mother of all delicacies.

We live together with Lake Biwa, our Mother Lake.

近江の茶

Omi Teas



Excellent teas supported by
long-established techniques of experts.

近江米

Omi Rice



Grown with the natural environment
surrounding the lake and farmers' passion.

湖魚

Lake Fish



The blue and rich waters of Lake Biwa
bring about the fresh flavor of the fish.

近江牛

Omi Beef



The renowned brand beef is
the fruit of its producers' care and attention.

近江の野菜

Omi Vegetables



A wide variety of distinctive vegetables
protected and cultivated
in each district.

Omi Rice

Abundant water from the mountains surrounding Lake Biwa produces delicious rice. The rice has a chewy and sticky texture, and gets sweeter as you chew it. That's because each grain is filled with its producers' passion.



Passion and pride of the farmers supporting the leading rice production site

Ever since wet-rice cultivation was introduced to the country, Japanese people have developed productive land through rice farming. Through the Edo period (1603-1868) to the Meiji era (1868-1912), Shiga Prefecture was one of the leading rice production sites in Japan along with the Hokuriku region and boasted top-class production volume and quality. Omi Rice has been cultivated in a flat basin that is surrounded on all four sides by mountains and blessed with clayey, fertile soil that includes abundant nutrition and, amongst all, the rich water resources around Japan's largest lake, Lake Biwa.

Being engaged in rice cultivation over a long period of time, farmers in the Omi region have maintained their sincerity and passion for rice farming. Their strong will for producing delicious rice has long been passed down and maintained the high quality of their rice.



Wide varieties of rice that meet diverse needs

Three types of rice are grown in Shiga Prefecture: food rice (which is usually eaten), sake rice and glutinous rice (used for making rice cakes). Omi Rice boasts excellent quality in terms of its flavor, texture and taste.

Mizukagami	An early variety that was developed in Shiga and inherits the quality of Koshihikari and Hitomebore. With its well-balanced stickiness and sweetness, the rice also tastes good eaten cold.
Koshihikari	Popular nationwide because of its stickiness and excellent flavor. It is produced all over Shiga, mainly in the Kohoku and Takashima districts.
Aki no Uta	An original variety made from Koshihikari, featuring large grains and a sticky texture. Harvested later than early varieties, it also contributes to the extension of the cropping period.
Shiga Habutae-mochi	Since established in 1938, the variety has been highly evaluated as glutinous rice and been produced for over 70 years. This high-end glutinous rice is cultivated all over the prefecture today.

Environmental conservation around Lake Biwa brings about rice with assured safety

Shiga Prefecture has a system to certify "Eco-friendly Agricultural Products" that were produced with eco-friendly techniques that protect Lake Biwa and its surrounding environment while reducing the use of synthetic agrochemicals and chemical fertilizers to less than half the normal amount. What lies beneath this system is a strong will to offer consumers rice with assured safety as well as to protect Lake Biwa, an essential water resource for people in the Keihanshin (Kyoto, Osaka and Kobe) area. With a sense of responsibility for conserving the valuable water resources of Lake Biwa, each farmer in Shiga is making consistent efforts to improve the quality of Omi Rice by, for example, preventing the outflow of agricultural wastewater and recording rice production history. We also encourage consumers to support farmers' efforts under the catchphrase "Eat Eco Shiga."



Inquiries about
Omi Rice

Omi Rice Promotion Council

TEL 077-523-3920 <http://www.ohmimai.jp/>

JA Zen-noh Shiga

TEL 077-521-1667 <http://www.si.zennoh.or.jp/>

Shiga Staple Food Collectors Commercial Cooperative

TEL 077-524-6718

Omi Beef

The extra-special flavor, tender sweetness and mellow aroma even mesmerized shoguns of Japan.
Fostered by a rich natural environment and producers' care and attention, the beef maintains its top-class quality in Japan.



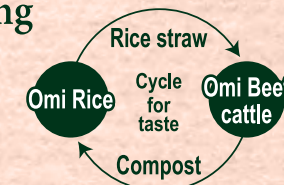
With the pride of Japan's oldest brand beef

With a history of over 400 years, Omi Beef is quite widely recognized as Japan's oldest brand beef. During the Edo period (1603-1868), the Hikone Domain presented the shogunate family with miso-marinated beef. As seen in this, the beef has long established a solid position as a rare specialty food. Noted for its fine texture and tenderness, as well as its distinctive chewy feeling and glaze, the beef is dubbed as an edible artwork. The feudal lord of the Mito Domain, Tokugawa Nariaki, also loved Omi Beef and showed his gratitude in a letter sent to the feudal lord of the Hikone Domain, Ii Naoaki. While many beef brands have emerged recently throughout the nation, Omi Beef producers are continuing efforts to maintain and improve their product's quality and to further enhance the strength of the long-established brand. In 2007, the Shiga Meat Center was established. Equipped with an intensive sanitation management system, the facility serves as a base for exporting to Macau, Thailand, Singapore, the Philippines and other regions.



Human- and eco-friendly cycle system combining crop cultivation and livestock farming

Many Omi Beef fattening farmers carefully select and use domestic feed with assured safety, such as straw of Omi Rice. Rice straw fed to the cattle will eventually become compost that cultivates Omi Rice, and its straw will again be fed to the cattle. The human- and eco-friendly, sustainable cycle system that combines crop cultivation and livestock farming is formed within the prefecture. Furthermore, farmers are making efforts to improve their fattening techniques by learning from others through peer assessment of cattle houses and carcass study sessions.



Authentic Omi Beef with a certificate of trust

Omi Beef is defined as “Japanese Black which for the longest time have been raised in Shiga Prefecture, a place blessed with a rich natural environment and water.” In 2007, it was registered as a Regional Collective Trademark of Japan. The “Omi Beef” Production Circulation Promotion Conference accredits products of particularly high quality, and issues the Omi Beef certificate. It also issues a certified Omi Beef store registration card for restaurants and retail stores dealing with Omi Beef, so that consumers can recognize them at a glance.

Certified Omi Beef store registration card



Omi Beef certificate

The certificate is issued to Omi Beef that meets certain standards (e.g. carcass ranking of A4, B4 or higher).



Inquiries about
Omi Beef

Association for promoting the production
and distribution of “OMI BEEF”

TEL 0748-37-2635 <http://www.oumiushi.com>

Shiga Meat Market (c/o Shiga Meat Center)

TEL 0748-37-7215 <http://shiga-shokuniku.or.jp/index/kousha/market>

Omi Teas

Warm during daytime, and cold at night.
Great daily temperature fluctuations promote tea leaves to store
an abundance of rich aroma within themselves.
You will never forget the deep flavor once you taste it.



Secret history of the teas that have attracted refined persons since ancient times

Omi Teas have been developed over a history of 1,200 years. Their origin dates back to the year 805 in the early Heian period, when the famous Japanese Buddhist monk Saicho brought back some seeds of the teas from the Tang Dynasty (present-day China) and planted them at the foot of Mt. Hiei. These first tea trees are considered to have been incorporated into the tea garden on the premises of Hiyoshi Taisha Shrine at the foot of Mt. Hiei, and the place is believed to be the origin of Japanese tea leaves. The techniques of tea experts that have been passed down over a long period of time allow us to enjoy the excellent taste of Omi Teas today.

Daily temperature fluctuations strengthen the tea leaves

Omi Teas have been traditionally known for their unparalleled aroma, and widely recognized among tea ceremony lovers. Since the tea trees are cultivated mainly in the hills in southern Shiga noted for their great daily temperature fluctuations, the tea leaves store an abundance of nutrition in themselves and produce high-quality tea with dense aroma and deep flavor. Tea trees that have become old are regularly replanted, so that younger trees can sprout new leaves in the refreshed field. These growing environments and ceaseless efforts of the farmers produce Omi Teas that draw well even when soaked in hot water in a pot two or three times. Omi Teas enjoy high acclaim, and have received the Minister's Prize from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in a competitive show. Relaxation time with a cup of an excellent tea from a pot is a true refreshment in our busy daily lives.



Omi Teas grown in distinctive production sites

Varieties of excellent teas with distinctive flavors are grown within Shiga Prefecture, taking advantage of the unique local geological features and climates.

Asamiya Tea	Counted as one of the five most excellent teas of Japan, and features rich aroma and deep flavor. Located in the mountains with an elevation of approximately 400 meters, the Asamiya district features great daily temperature fluctuations and frequent fog, a climate suited for tea cultivation. The aroma of newly harvested tea is particularly great, and is loved nationwide.
Tschiyama Tea	Tschiyama is Shiga's major tea production site, boasting the largest production area and volume in the prefecture. Its origin dates back to 1356, when the monk Don-o of Jomyo-ji Temple in southern Tschiyama brought back some tea grains from Daitoku-ji Temple in Kyoto and began cultivation. This variety is grown in gentle hills with longer sunshine hours. Kabusecha (tea grown in the shade) is also produced here.
Mandokoro Tea	There is a tea-picking song praising Mandokoro Tea in comparison with tea from Uji. It is known nationwide as a high-quality tea, but its production volume at present is extremely small. The cultivation is reported to have started during the Muromachi period (1336-1573), taking advantage of the rich water resources of the Echigawa River and the foggy climate. There is an old tea tree of this variety estimated to be 300 years old; the tea has high rarity value.



Unified brand supported by strong cooperation of production sites

Among the teas from Shiga Prefecture that enjoy high acclaim in Japan, only the tea leaves carefully selected by quality assessment professionals are used in the two unified brand teas: Kiwamisencha Saicho and Biwako Kabuse. Kabuse (or kabusecha) is a tea with a condensed flavor and reduced astringency brought about by covering new buds with screens to cut out the sunlight before harvest. They can be purchased in tea specialty shops in Shiga, and make perfect souvenirs and gifts.



Inquiries about
Omi Teas

Shiga Tea Industry Corp.

TEL 0748-63-6960 <http://www.biwa.ne.jp/~shigacha/>

Shiga Tea Business Cooperative

TEL 0748-67-0308



Lake Fish



The unique fish food culture around the lake is a testament to people's lives being supported by Lake Biwa. The mild taste of fish from the Mother Lake somehow brings you back to the good old days.



Seasonal calendar of Biwako Hatchin (Eight rare delicacies of Lake Biwa)

Apr. May Jun. Jul. Aug. Sep. Oct. Nov. Dec. Jan. Feb. Mar. Apr.

Koayu (Small sweetfish)

Koayu (Small sweetfish)

Biwamasu (Biwa trout)

Honmoroko (Willow gudgeon)

Isaza (a goby variety)

Nigorobuna
(a crucian carp variety)

Hasu (Three-lips)

Hasu (Three-lips)

Biwa-yoshinobori
(Biwa goby)

Suji-ebi (a common prawn variety)



One of the world's rarest ancient lakes is a unique treasure trove of tastes

Lake Biwa was formed approximately four million years ago. It is one of the ancient lakes along with Lake Baikal and Lake Tanganyika (only some 20 ancient lakes remain worldwide). Over its long history, diverse environments have been formed in Lake Biwa from the reedy margins to the offing, with a depth of over 100 meters. Cleverly utilizing these environments, many endemic species have developed in the lake. Lake Biwa's unique species, such as biwamasu, isaza and honmoroko, gave birth to a unique food culture combined with rice and vegetables, such as narezushi (fish fermented with rice) and fish and bean stew. Local people, through their lives being supported by the lake, have created a wide variety of dishes.

New brand of fish from the lake: Biwako Hatchin

To encourage people to deepen their interest in the rich food culture derived from Lake Biwa, eight delicious fishes representing Lake Biwa have been designated as Biwako Hatchin ("eight rare delicacies of Lake Biwa"). Why not experience the delightful seasonal blessings of Lake Biwa through Biwako Hatchin?



Koayu (Small sweetfish)



Biwamasu (Biwa trout)



Isaza (a goby variety)



Honmoroko (Willow gudgeon)



Suji-ebi (a common prawn variety)



Nigorobuna (a crucian carp variety)



Hasu (Three-lips)



Biwa-yoshinobori (Biwa goby)

Local dishes from the lake, Shiga people's favorites



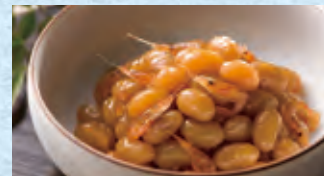
The best season of Seta-shijimi (Seta clam; endemic in Lake Biwa) is winter, and it is known as winter clam. With a savory taste condensed in its flesh, the clam makes a perfect, rich-flavored broth. It is a must-have ingredient during winter.



Honmoroko (a fish with a light and delicate flavor) simmered in a sweet, soy-based sauce is a local homemade delicacy. The bones of this small fish become soft when simmered. It offers a condensed savory taste when you bite into the whole fish.



The most well-known local food of Shiga is funazushi. It is made by naturally fermenting nigorobuna with rice. It has a cheese-like, mellow aroma, and a mildly acidic flavor spreads in your mouth.



Ebi-mame, made by simmering suji-ebi and soybeans ("mame") together, is a local dish prepared on festive occasions with wishes that everyone can live long until bent with age like a shrimp, and in good health (also expressed "mame" in Japanese). Sweet beans and savory shrimps go well with steamed rice.

Inquiries about Lake Fish

Shiga Prefecture Federation of Fishermen's Co-operative Association TEL 077-524-2418 <http://jfshiga.com/>

Shiga Freshwater Fish Farming Industry Cooperative TEL 077-521-4193 <http://www.eonet.ne.jp/~shigatansui/>

Shiga Fish Processing Industry Cooperative TEL 077-543-8078

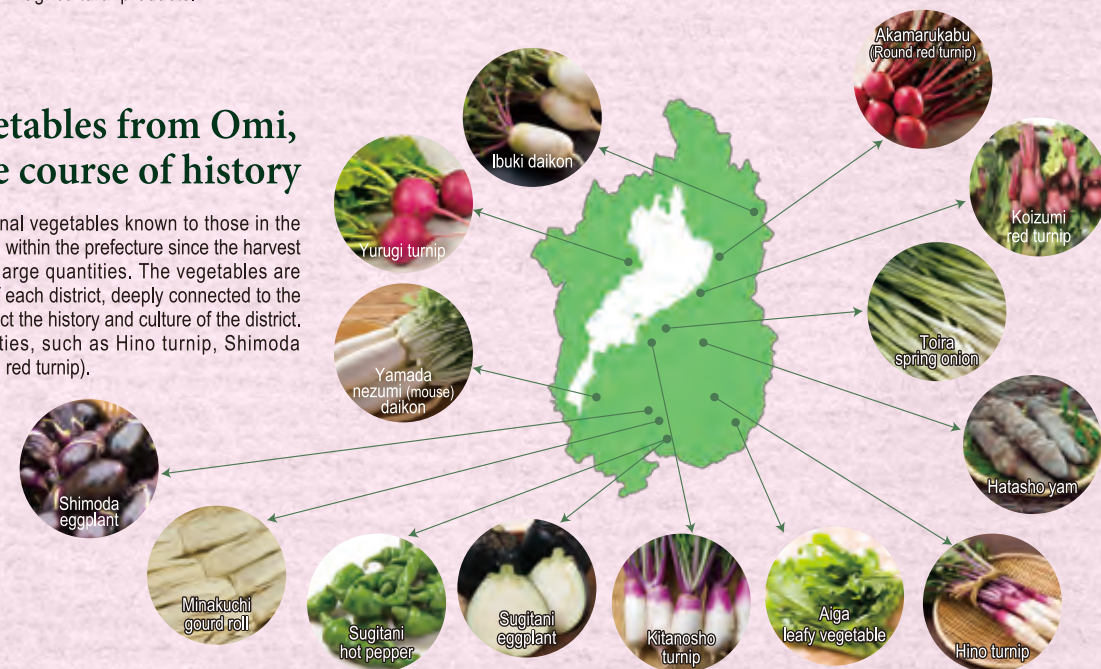
Omi Vegetables

Diverse characteristics are the result of farming in each season,
at each place and with each producer's passion.
Their attractive taste, enjoyed in their season,
cannot be expressed in words.



Traditional vegetables from Omi, developed in the course of history

In Shiga, there are many traditional vegetables known to those in the know. Most of them are consumed within the prefecture since the harvest is too small to be distributed in large quantities. The vegetables are characterized by the local taste of each district, deeply connected to the local food culture, and clearly reflect the history and culture of the district. There are 14 designated varieties, such as Hino turnip, Shimoda eggplant and akamarukabu (round red turnip).



New specialty vegetables being born one after another

New specialty vegetables are now being developed one after another through inventive approaches to cultivation methods and quality management, looking for vegetables that are larger, sweeter, or have other favorable qualities. Such vegetables have names related to each district (such as "Azuchi Nobunaga spring onion"), and each district extends concerted efforts to make them a local specialty. There are a variety of local unique vegetables for each season. Please enjoy the distinctive products of each district.



Aisai-na
(A variety of "wasabina" green mustard)



Moriyama field mustard



Azuchi Nobunaga
spring onion



Toyobo Kabochan
(Botchan pumpkin)



Taga carrot



Kohoku broccoli



Kohoku yume (dream)
strawberry

**Inquiries about
Omi Vegetables**

JA Shiga Chuokai

TEL 077-521-1611 <http://www.jas.or.jp/>

JA Zen-noh Shiga

TEL 077-521-1667 <http://www.si.zennoh.or.jp/>

Enjoy foodstuffs from Shiga at home!

Never-fail recipes

An owner-chef of a popular French restaurant offers special recipes so that we can easily cook and enjoy Shiga-grown foodstuffs filled with producers' affection. The dishes and accompanying professional tips are perfect for receiving guests. Let's give them a try!





Chef: Noritaka Ijiri

profile

Mr. Noritaka Ijiri is the owner-chef of the French restaurant epice. He was born in Maibara City, Shiga. After working at renowned French restaurants Bordeaux and Bistrot de Paris, and the garden restaurant Blueberry Fields Kinokuniya, he opened epice in 2007. He is skillful at French cuisine featuring vegetables.

Enjoy with tasty Omi Rice
Aisai-na and perilla leaves,
seasoned with miso and minced Omi Beef



Ingredients (2 servings)

- 100 grams minced Omi Beef
- Two aisai-na leaves (with stalks)
- Three perilla leaves
- 1 tablespoon miso
- 1 tablespoon mirin (sweet cooking rice wine)
- 1/2 tablespoon sake (rice wine)
- 1 teaspoon olive oil

- How to cook**
- (1) Shred aisai-na and perilla leaves.
 - (2) Spread olive oil in the pan and stir-fry minced beef over medium heat to break it loose.
 - (3) Add miso, mirin and sake and sweat it over low heat.
 - (4) Remove the pan from the heat. Add aisai-na and perilla leaves and stir. When the leaves become wilted, it is ready to serve. Spicy aisai-na gives a kick to the juicy, miso-flavored Omi Beef mince. By using the stems and leaves of aisai-na, you can enjoy different textures. This easily cooked but lavish dish goes very well with rice.

Column 1

How to cook the best Omi Beef steak



Take out the beef from the refrigerator and let it come to room temperature. Sprinkle salt and pepper on both sides and the edges. Finely ground salt and pepper would be better.




Spread oil in the heated pan and grill the beef over high heat. Never touch the beef once you have started cooking. (Never shake the pan, either.) When the beef is browned, turn it over and grill the other side. Also grill the edges to seal in juice.



When all sides are browned, put the beef on a dish and let it rest at warm room temperature (near the stove, etc.). This will help settle the juice inside. Leave the beef for just as much time as it was over the flame.

Finished!

Cut thick steak at right angles to the fiber, and then it will be soft to the palate and easy to eat. The beef is perfectly cooked if it shows a rosy pink section.



If you have Omi Beef, grill it in an appropriate way to bring out its flavor. The chef provides us professional tips on how to grill a thick filet. The important points are "let the beef come to room temperature," "do not touch the beef," and "let the beef rest." These tips will help you cook the perfect steak.

Biwamasu fried with rice crackers and nut breading
Tartar sauce with akamarukabu pickles



Ingredients (2 servings)

- Two slices (200 grams) biwamasu
- Rice crackers
- Nuts (Cashew nuts or whatever you like)
- One egg
- A dash of soft flour
- A dash of salt
- A dash of pepper
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

[Tartar sauce]

- 20 grams akamarukabu pickles
- One boiled egg
- 40 grams mayonnaise
- A splash of lemon juice

- How to cook**
- (1) Make the tartar sauce. Coarsely chop akamarukabu pickles and mash boiled egg, and then mix them with mayonnaise. Add lemon juice.
 - (2) Lightly sprinkle salt and pepper on the slices of biwamasu. Finely crush rice crackers and nuts.
 - (3) Coat the biwamasu with flour on both sides. Dip it in beaten egg and coat it with crushed rice crackers and nuts.
 - (4) Heat olive oil in the pan and grill (or rather, shallow-fry) (3) over low heat. Keep shaking the pan so that every part of the fish is heated evenly. Grill it for one minute, turn over and grill it for another one minute. Do not use a lid if you like a crispy surface.
 - (5) Serve (4) on a plate and pour tartar sauce. Savory breading of rice crackers and nuts goes well with biwamasu with modest fat. Sweet-sour akamarukabu pickles make a perfect tartar sauce for this dish.

Sweet spring rolls of Hino turnip



Ingredients (2 servings)

- 100 grams Hino turnip
- Four sheets spring roll wrapper
- 4 tablespoons custard cream (ready-made)
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon butter

- How to cook**
- (1) Finely chop Hino turnip.
 - (2) Heat the pan and put butter in it. Stir-fry Hino turnip over medium heat.
 - (3) Add granulated sugar and caramelize Hino turnip. When wilted, put it on a cooking vat and let it cool.
 - (4) Wrap the caramelized Hino turnip and custard cream with spring roll wrappers. Make slender rolls so that they will be easier to eat.
 - (5) Deep-fry (4) at about 180°C until golden brown. Cut the rolls in half and serve them on a plate. Now Hino turnip has changed into a dessert. Slightly bitter Hino turnip and sweet custard cream make a perfect match, and you will be surprised at their unexpected flavor. Top with powdered sugar or chocolate sauce to taste.

Column 2

How to make a delicious cup of Omi Tea



Pour hot water in the cups, filling to eight-tenths. Cool the hot water down to 50-60°C. (The temperature of hot water drops by approximately 5°C every 30 seconds.) Put tea leaves in the pot. Three to five grams of tea leaves make a serving.



Pour the cooled hot water in the pot and infuse the tea for one and a half minutes. When the leaves are 70% to 80% open, the tea is ready to serve. Be careful so that the leaves do not completely open.



Pour the tea in the cups little by little and one by one so that the amount and strength of the tea will be even. Pour to the last drop, which has a condensed flavor.

The hallmark of Omi Teas is the condensed aroma that spreads in your mouth. To bring it out to the maximum, precisely measuring the amount of tea leaves and hot water, and the temperature of the hot water, are important. This is the best way to make superior Sencha tea, which we often offer to guests, as introduced by the Shiga Tea Business Association.

Best in summer! Ice-infused Sencha tea

The infusing method that best brings out the sweetness of the tea leaves is ice infusion. When you infuse delicate tea leaves in lower temperatures, the astringency and bitterness will be weakened and sweetness will be brought out. It's very easy: just lay ice in the pot, put tea leaves over it (3 to 5 grams make a serving), and leave it at room temperature. When the ice has completely melted into water, it is ready to serve. You will be surprised at the fresh sweet flavor, which is quite different from that of hot water-infused tea.

