

Gastronomy of Shiga

Unique geography and year-round humidity gave rise to the development of a rich local food culture here in Shiga since the historic days of Omi.

滋賀の食文化

独特の地形と年間を通して湿度が高いという特徴から、滋賀県には、古くより発酵文化が根付いています。



FUNAZUSHI

A Genesis of Sushi Born from Lake Biwa

The etymology of the word “sushi” first meant “sour rice,” and the cuisine itself has roots in a primitive form of sushi called *narezushi*, made of raw fish fermented with rice and salt. Shiga’s delicacy, *funazushi* (“carp sushi”), is the dominant local variety of *narezushi*, and is a version made with *funa*, or carp, caught from Lake Biwa. In recent times, funazushi has increasingly drawn attention at home and abroad as both a power food and local delicacy.

寿司の元祖、鮒寿司

「寿司」の語源は「酸っぱい飯」で、米を発酵させて酸っぱくした「なれずし」を意味します。「なれずし」の中でも琵琶湖でとれたフナを米と塩で漬け、熟成させて作る「鮒寿司」は滋賀県の風土が生んだ珍味。近年では美容と健康に良いパワーフードとして世界中で知られ始めています。



During the funazushi-making process.
鮒ずしを漬けている様子。



A pastoral landscape.
暮らしのそばにある田園風景。

Eaten as a Festive Dish and Local Delicacy

The taste of funazushi can vary from year to year or even across containers within the same batch, depending on slight changes in weather, storage location, etc. since the fermentation is activated by bacteria in the air.

In spring, carp are caught from the lake and pickled with salt, and in summer are put into tubs with steamed rice. Fermentation is complete before the year's end, so it became a local area tradition for people to put out a spread of funazushi at the feast during the New Year family gathering.

ハレの席で食べる鮒寿司

鮒寿司は空気中の菌等によって発酵が進むため、環境の違いでひと桶ごとに味が変わります。春に琵琶湖でとれたニゴロブナを塩漬にし、夏にごはんを漬け込む。それをお正月の家族が集まるハレの席で食べるのが昔からの習慣です。



Funa (carp) caught from Lake Biwa in early spring.
春先に琵琶湖で獲れるニゴロブナを用意。



Funazushi making process:
stuffing carp with steamed rice.
手作業でニゴロブナにお米を詰めている様子。

OMI RICE

Grown with Blessings of Clear Water and Fertile Soil

Thanks to the abundance of water from the lake and surrounding mountains, as well as rich soil filled with nutrients, the Omi Rice of Shiga has put us among the leading regions of rice production in Japan. Rice farming in Shiga practices pesticide reduction and organic farming methods, not only for quality improvement but also for environmental conservation, under the slogan, "Eat Eco Shiga," which encourages the consumption of these eco-friendly agricultural products to support the Lake Biwa ecosystem.



清らかな水と大地の恵み「近江米」

周囲の山々からの豊かな水と、養分をたっぷり含む肥沃な土壌に恵まれた日本有数の米どころ滋賀県。「食べることで、びわ湖を守る」をキャッチフレーズに、減農薬や有機栽培など、品質向上と環境保全を目指す米づくりにも力を入れています。

OMI BEEF

Top Wagyu Brand with a Long History

Omi Beef is acknowledged as one of the three finest wagyu beef varieties in Japan. It has a long history stretching back nearly 400 years, when it was prepared as a specialty for shogun and daimyo nobles of the medieval era. Many Shiga restaurants serve delicious Omi Beef in a variety of dishes and styles such as steaks, sukiyaki, and shabu-shabu.



日本で最古の歴史を持つブランド和牛「近江牛」

日本三大和牛のひとつ「近江牛」。約400年前より、かつての将軍や大名に献上されていたといわれる銘品。県内のレストランでは、近江牛をステーキ、すき焼き、しゃぶしゃぶなど様々な味わいで提供しています。

The Origin of Tea in Japan

Arrival and Growth of Tea Culture

Did you know the first tea plant was planted in Shiga? The story of tea in Japan dates back around 1,200 years. Saicho, the founder of the Tendai Sect of Buddhism, brought tea seeds back from China and planted them somewhere near his Tendai monastery at Mt. Hiei, which is now part of Otsu City, Shiga. This planting became recognized as the moment that tea was first introduced to Japan, and local tea farming has thrived here to this day, now called Omi Tea, which is some of Japan's finest green tea.

日本茶のルーツ

実は、日本で最初にお茶が植えられたのは滋賀県でした。お茶が日本に伝わったのは約1,200年前。当時の日本は仏教を学ぶ留学僧を中国に派遣していました。その中で、のちに天台宗の宗祖となる最澄が中国から茶の種を持ち帰り、滋賀県にある比叡山の麓に植えたのが日本茶の起源と言われています。

SHIGARAKI

Agriculture and Art from Ancient Soil

良質な土に恵まれた、お茶と陶器の町「信楽」



Vibrant tea fields of Asamiya Tea, Shigaraki.
信楽の茶畑。

Asamiya Tea

Premium Tea from a Perfect Environment

Asamiya Tea from Shigaraki Town, in the southern region of Shiga, is a specific variety of Omi Tea known for its superb quality and aroma, enabled by its ideal growing environment on mountain farms where the temperature drops down at night and fresh clear water passes down through the granite rock. Asamiya has recently drawn international attention allowing more tea lovers worldwide to enjoy this local specialty.

朝宮茶

信楽の「朝宮茶」は、朝晩の寒暖の差が厳しい環境と、地層から湧き出る良質な水に育まれ、香りが良く美味しい緑茶の最高峰として知られます。近年では茶葉の輸出も始まり、海外に住む緑茶ファンの間でも好評です。



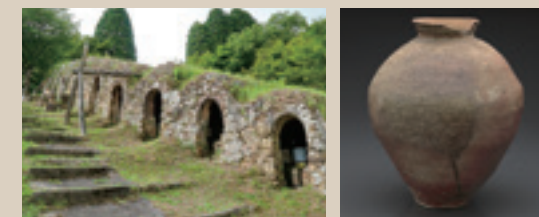
Some of the many uniquely designed tanuki statues.
作り手ごとに趣向を凝らしたたぬきの置物が並ぶ。

Shigaraki Ware

from one of the Six Ancient Kilns of Japan

日本六古窯のひとつ「信楽焼」

The fertile grounds which nurture the quality tea of Shigaraki are also at the heart of the town's other industry, pottery known as Shigaraki ware. This local craft began around 700 years ago when people made kilns by digging burn pits in the ground for large items such as pots and jars. Traditional Shigaraki ware is defined by a raw, earthy texture and warm scarlet glaze.



古くから良質なお茶を育み続けた信楽の土は、製陶にも生かされました。約700年前、地中に掘った穴に火を入れる穴窯によって、壺や甕（かめ）などの大物づくりが行われたのが信楽焼の始まりといわれています。信楽の土から生まれる温かい「緋色」が信楽焼の特徴です。

A DIVERSITY OF SHIGA CERAMICS

信楽焼以外にもある 滋賀の焼き物

While Shigaraki is undoubtedly Shiga's most famous producer of ceramics, it is by no means alone in the craft. With a long and vibrant history of local art, culture, and religion, Shiga has been home to many artists and craftspeople through the ages. Here are a few more of Shiga's notable ceramic styles.

古くから焼き物づくりが行われてきた滋賀県。地域ごとに異なる風土や歴史、信仰や生き生きとした暮らしの中から様々な焼き物が生まれました。



ZEZE WARE
WABI SABI MADE FOR TEA
膳所焼



SHIMODA WARE
POPULAR WARE FOR EVERYDAY USE
下田焼



KOTO WARE
A CASTLE TOWN'S LEGENDARY KILN
湖東焼