



Rice

Rice, being a staple of Asian cuisine, is of course also grown in Japan. Koshihikari is a Japanese variety that is one of the world's most premium kinds of rice. Of which, the Koshihikari that is grown in Niigata is at the top of its class in terms of both quality and quantity. In 2017, a new premium rice called Shinosuke, characterized by its size and sweetness, hit the shelves and gained a lot of attention for being a new variety out of Niigata, the rice capital of Japan. Additionally, Niigata is home to so many rice-based snacks and dried mochi cake companies that it ranks number one in shipment value of rice based goods. *1 On top of that, food related companies in Niigata are striving to creatively develop new sake, snacks, rice-based pasta and sweets, and other health and medical foods.

*1 Economic Census for Business Activity (DEC) businesses of with at least 4 employees by the Statistics Bureau, Ministry of International Trade and Commerce, and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

Sake

Brewing this "rice wine" is one of the characteristic industries of Niigata. The sake that is made in Niigata is characteristically crisp and dry. The prefecture holds the top spots in the rankings for shipment volume of special-designation sake and for highest sake consumption per capita. *2 The prefecture also boasts the Niigata Prefectural Sake Research Institute, the only publicly run research-based organization devoted to sake, which contributes to Niigata's sake industry by guiding breweries and training sake brewers.

*2 Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES) 2014 (two-person household, average consumption per family)



The Cuisine of Niigata City



CITY OF GASTRONOMY NIIGATA



Niigata City is located along the sea, where the cold and warm currents meet, and built upon fertile lands fed by Japan's two great rivers—the Shinano and the Agano. Thanks to its location, Niigata is blessed with all kinds of wonderful food from both the land and sea. Niigata also boasts the most rice-producing land in the country while having both urban and rural areas that prosper together.

Niigata's cuisine is centered around rice, which is used both in sake and in cooking, and was developed with a mix of cultural influences as it had been a port town for trade since the 17th century.

In Niigata, various dishes and sake utilizing local ingredients led to the development of local dishes enjoyed in the farming areas and traditional feasts enjoyed at Ryoutei restaurants in the urban areas.

The colorfulness of the local dishes is one of the main characteristics of Niigata's food culture. Each region has its own array of traditional dishes that change with the seasons as ingredients are at their peak. Examples of these dishes include: toppo, kakae-namasu, sasadango, and triangular chimaki.



The hospitality of old port town Niigata won over the hearts of many. Typically, guests would enjoy a dinner and a Geigi performance at Ryoutei restaurants. They would skillfully plan each dinner so that everything, including the food, dishes, the garden, and even the dances of the Geigi, were all complementary to one another. This sort of very traditional Japanese hospitality can still be enjoyed at any of the Ryoutei restaurants in Niigata, including some with over 200 years of history.

Getting to Niigata

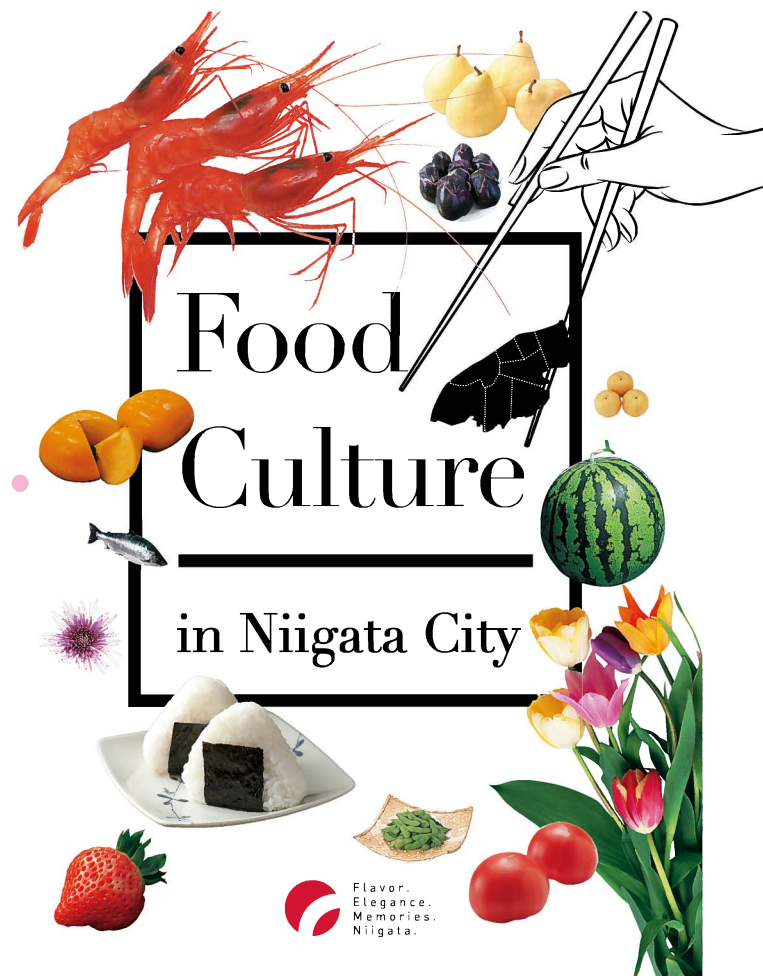
| | From Tokyo | From Osaka | From Nagoya |
|---------------|---|---|---|
| JR Shinkansen | Joetsu Shinkansen from Tokyo to Niigata, approx. 2 hours | Tokaido Shinkansen from Shinjuku to Tokyo, transfer Joetsu Shinkansen from Tokyo to Niigata, approx. 5 hours | Tokaido Shinkansen from Nagoya to Tokyo, transfer Joetsu Shinkansen from Tokyo to Niigata, approx. 3 hours 40 min. |
| Airplane | | Osaka (Itami) - Niigata, approx. 1 hour 10 min. | Nagoya (Centrair, Komaki) - Niigata, approx. 1 hour |

Contact:

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Niigata City website: <http://www.city.niigata.lg.jp>

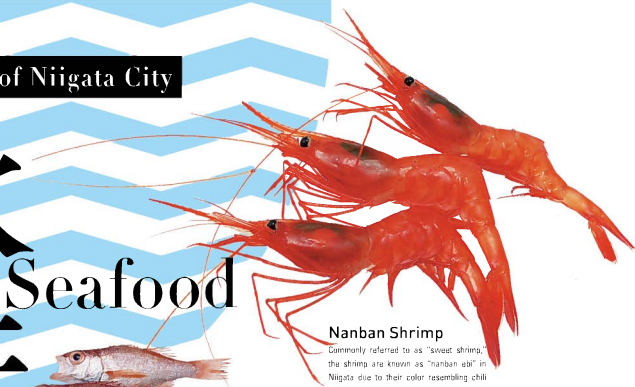


Flavor.
Elegance.
Memories.
Niigata.

The Food of Niigata City

水産物

Seafood



Nanban Shrimp

Commonly referred to as "sweet shrimp," the shrimp are known as "nanban ubi" in Niigata due to their color resembling chili pepper's (ubi known as "nanban"). These shrimp are characterized by their fragrance, sweetness, and the richness of their flesh.

Year-round (fishing banned in July and August)

Nodoguro

Abundant in the south of Japan, this top-class fish can also be found in the cold waters around Niigata which make for fatter and more delicious fish that is best enjoyed from winter into early spring.

Early December through late March

Yaki Nasu and Niigata Juzen Eggplants

There are many varieties of eggplants grown in Niigata. Two of the most popular are the Yakinasu with its smooth texture when roasted, and the firm and slightly sweet Niigata Juzen.

Yakinasu Eggplants Early June through late August

Niigata Juzen Eggplants Mid June through late September



Kurosaki Chamame

These sweet and aromatic adzuki beans are grown in the rich soil of the Kurosaki region of Niigata's Nishi Ward. Known for its outstanding quality, it has brand recognition that in 2017, was registered as a Japan Geographical Indication.

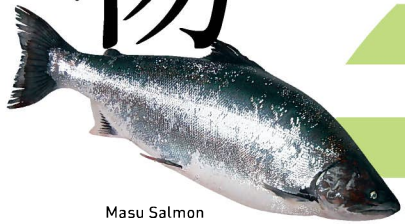
July 20 through August 20



Masu Salmon

Known as the most delicious of the salmon and trout family, this meaty and juicy fish is best cooked over charcoal flames.

Early March through late May



Le Lectier Pears

In the beginning of the 20th century, saplings were brought to Niigata from Orleans, France. Many people and fans of their rich fragrance, sweet juiciness, and smooth texture. They have the nickname "the Phantom Pear" due to how difficult they are to grow.

Late November through late December

Kakinomoto Edible Flowers

The custom of eating chrysanthemum flowers is characteristic of Niigata and the surrounding areas. When boiled and dressed in a healthy soy sauce they make a delicious and crisp side dish.

Mid August through mid December



野菜

Vegetables



Niitaka and Shinko Pears

Japanese pears can be split into two categories: "red" and "green." Both the Niitaka and Shinko varieties are classified as "red" and are large, soft, and juicy fruits that keep their quality well.

Niitaka Pears October
Shinko Pears Late October through late January



Echigohime Strawberries

These regal fruits, whose name means "Princess of Echigo," are large and sweet with a light tartness and rich aroma. These strawberries get to grow nice and slowly to develop their sweetness over the long winter months before being picked at their peak and enjoyed.

Mid January through late June

Niigata Watermelons

From the beginning of June through the end of July, these watermelons are harvested from their sand dune fields. They are characteristically sweet and crisp.

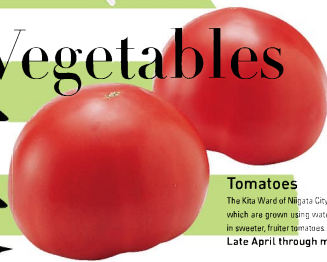
Early June through late July



Tomatoes

The Kita Ward of Niigata City is a big producer of tomatoes, most of which are grown using water conservation techniques that result in sweeter, firmer tomatoes.

Late April through mid July



果物

Fruits



Koshiwa Okesa Persimmons

Easy to eat and full of sweetness, these fruits are eaten only after being treated with carbon dioxide to remove astringency.

Early September through late November

Togoro Plums

Harvested in June, these large fruits have a characteristically sticky flesh that is well suited for making umeshu (licorice, umeshu), and juice.

June



Kyoho Grapes

As the king of grapes, they are large, dark, and sweet. They are mostly grown in the fertile areas along the Shinano and Nakanokuchi rivers.

Mid July through mid September



Azaleas

Originally an Asian variety of Rhododendron that was selectively bred in Europe, Niigata boasts the highest production of named azaleas in the country. The gorgeous double-flowering blossoms color Niigata in the winter.

Early September through late April

Tulips

Niigata City is one of the country's top producers of tulips in terms of both cut flowers and bulbs. There are over 500 varieties of tulips grown here in an array of colors and shapes.

November through March (cut flowers)



Koshi no Shizuku Figs

Nutrient rich and said to be good for your health and beauty, these figs are characterized by their crunchy seeds and sweetness.

Mid August through mid November

花き

FLOWERS



Signature Foods and Flowers

Niigata City is proud of and recognizes foods grown or caught in the city as "Signature Foods and Flowers," and supports their production, sales, and name recognition. For more information, search "Niigata Signature Foods and Flowers."