

Chapter 3-1

Traditional Culinary Culture of Shiga Prefecture

Abstract

A unique culinary culture has developed in Shiga Prefecture featuring traditional dishes of beans and vegetables served on rice. This well-balanced and nutritious diet also includes various fermented items such as funazushi and pickled vegetables. Five items have been selected as Shiga Prefectural cultural cuisine assets: Narezushi (fermented fish), Tsukudani fish, Hinona pickle, Decchi-yokan (sweetened red bean paste) and Amenoio Gohan (boiled rice with Biwa salmon).

Keywords: Traditional food, Cuisine, Fermented fish, Funazushi

1. Traditional Fish and Rice Culinary Culture of Shiga

Shiga Prefecture has an Asian monsoon climate which brings a great deal of rain ideal for producing many types of food. Rice and fish are bountiful in the prefecture. Since rice is the staple, there are many rice-based dishes such as boiled mixed rice, sushi, dango dumplings, mochi rice cake and sake.

2. Traditional Fish Dishes

Lake Biwa provides a lot of freshwater fish and shellfish which are used for traditional dishes such as “tsukudani” (cooked with soy sauce), “ebimame” (cooked with soybean), sashimi and “namasu”(raw fish with sour miso), fish sukiyaki, miso soup, roasted and stewed dishes. “Amenoio gohan” (cooked rice with Biwa salmon) is a particularly well-known dish.

“Funazushi,” a type of “narezushi,” is



Fig. 3-1-1 “Amenoio gohan”: Cooked rice with Biwa salmon.

made from round crucian carp and rice. It is served as a dish for special occasions such as New Year’s Day and festivals.



Fig. 3-1-2 “Funazushi”: Fermented crucian carp with rice

3. Traditional Vegetables

There are many kinds of turnip and radish in Shiga; Ibuki radish, Yamada radish, Hinona turnip, Yurugi turnip, Yajima turnip, and Yogo-yama turnip. People in rural areas grow special vegetables such as Aigana green, Takatsuki green, and Onoe green.

Other traditional products are Minakuchi dried gourd, Shimoda eggplant, Sugitani eggplant, Toira green onion and Miyano green onion.

4. Soybeans, Red Beans, Taro and Yams

There are many vegetarian dishes made from soybeans and red beans in

Shiga; tofu, “yuba,” natto, “shiraae,” and redbean “itokoni.”

Many villages use taro and yam for festivals. Hatashoimo, which is a kind of yam, is glutinous and suitable for “imojiru,” miso soup with yam.



Fig. 3-1-3 Taro offering on Imo festival in Kusatsu, Oiwake.

5. Traditional Dishes in Shiga

People have long practiced rice planting and fishing around Lake Biwa. Fishing by farmers is a unique feature of life in Shiga Prefecture. Fish has supported the lives of people in the area as a good source of protein, calcium and fat.

Farmers grow not only rice, but also various vegetables, beans, taro and yam and this is what makes the cuisine of Shiga Prefecture so special and nutritious.

Traditional Shiga culture has been influenced by the neighboring prefectures of Kyoto, Fukui and Mie. Saba mackerel from Fukui and buri yellowtail from Mie are served at festivals. New year’s “misozoni” in Shiga resembles the “zoni” of Kyoto.

Each area of Shiga Prefecture is characterized by its own unique methods of food preparation. Omi beef, red “konnyaku” and Asamiya tea are well known. This unique food culture has been passed down from one generation to the next.

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Table 3-1-1 Special product in Shiga Prefecture

city, town, district	special product I	special product II	city, town, district	special product I	special product II
Citsu	rape blossoms	chrysanthemum	Hikone	Cyabu turnip	bamboo shoot
Shiga	string pumpkin	Kunhara burdock	Hatasho	Hatashou yam	grape
Kusatsu	Yamada radish	potherb mustard	Echigawa	red turnip	Chinese cabbage
Manyama	Manyama melon	Yajima turnip	Toyosato	pumpkin	tamato
Ritto	fig	soybean	Kora	glutinous rice	red turnip
chuzu	Narikura melon	Hyozu turnip	Taga	yam	broccoli
Yasu	smartweed	glutinous rice	Santo	bamboo shoot	oriental melon
Minakuchi	dried gourd	cucumber	Ibuki	Ibuki radish	Japanese ginger
Tsuchiyama	Aigana green	Omi tea	Maibara	Akamaru turnip	Itachi cucumber
Koka	pumpkin	Habutamochi rice	Omi	persimmon	Takamizo peach
Konan	Sugitani eggplant	pumpkin	Nagahama	corn	gourd
Shigaraki	tea	taro stem pickle	Asai	ume plum	wasabi
Ishibe	burdock	potherb mustard	Biwa	grape	chinese yam
Koser	Shimoda eggplant	soybean	Torahime	Chinese cabbage	red turnip
Yokaichi	cucumber	rape blossoms	Kohoku	Onoe green	soybean
Eigenji	buckwheat	Mandokoro tea	Takatsuki	Takatsuki green	Takatsuki eggplant
Gokasho	fig	soybean	Kimomoto	yam	blue berry
Aito	rape blossoms	soybean	Yogo	Yamakabura turnip	Japanese pepper
Koto	Shozu taro	fig	Nishiazai	Sugaura orange	Icho yam
Natogawa	abi taro	black soybean	Makino	oriental melon	chestnut
Gamo	Nishiki soybean	red bean	Imazu	persimmon	buckwheat
Omihachiman	Kitanoshou turnip	Mube	Kultsuki	udo	horse chestnut
Azuchi	Toira green onion	carrot seed	Adogawa	Yuuugi turnip	burdock
Hino	Hinona turnip	Kitayama tea	Takashima	Miyano green onion	tomato
Ryuo	grape	buckwheat	Shimasahi	black rice	millet

Shiga prefectural cultural cuisine assets: Shiga prefecture designated 5 items of cuisine as cultural assets in 1998.

Narezushi: Fermented fish or meat with starchy food. Several kinds of fish are fermented to narezushi with rice by lactic bacteria in Shiga.