

【魚っとモール】三陸いわてお魚販売サイト <http://uomall.npo-iwate.jp/>



In the distant past, Marco Polo, Saigyō Hoshi, and Matsuo Bashō all longed for a so-called ‘Golden Land’. That land was Hiraizumi, the cultural landscape associated with Pure Land Buddhist Cosmology.

In more recent times, during Japan’s Meiji era (China’s Qing dynasty), trading of high quality seafood products began in China. These products were wrapped in a straw bag called *tawara* and so the seafood is now known as *tawaramono*. In Iwate, there was a tradition of trading Sanriku coast seafood, as part of the *tawaramono*.

As the years have passed, and Hiraizumi progresses towards UNESCO World Heritage inscription, the ancient legend of the ‘Golden Land’ (Cipangu) has spread and fused with the allure of the *tawaramono*, resulting in the emergence of the ‘Sanriku Golden Tawaramono’.

1) Dried Abalone



From Sanriku, Ofunato City, Southern Iwate

2) Dried Sea Cucumber



From Yamada, Shimohei County, Central Iwate

3) Caviar



From Kamaishi City, Southern Iwate

Limited supplies of the new 'Sanriku Golden Tawaramono', with its ancient origins and modern allure, are now available. Bringing a taste of Hiraizumi's culture and history to the people of the world, it is a flavour to be relished.

◆Sanriku Golden Tawaramono – Dried Abalone

Abalone is a spiral shaped shellfish of the genus *haliotis*. The Sanriku area of Iwate is the largest producer of abalone in Japan, and abalone cultivation has been associated with the region for hundreds of years. The abalone located along the entire Sanriku coast of Iwate is of the *ezo*-abalone variety, which feeds off of seaweeds such as kelp and wakame.

In Iwate Prefecture abalone must be larger than 9cm in order to be harvested. It takes more than 5 years for an abalone to reach this size, so harvesting seasons, harvest limits, and population sizes are carefully controlled.

Archeological evidence from the Jōmon (14000 BC to 400 BC) and Yayoi (400 BC – 250 AD) periods shows that abalone was eaten even long ago. Dried abalone, called *hoshiawabi*, became well known through trade with China. Dried abalone exhibits a brilliant golden color and is well known today as a high-class ingredient.

◆Sanriku Golden Tawaramono - Dried Sea Cucumber

Sea cucumbers, an echinoderm, have thousands of varieties and are spread across the world; nearly one hundred varieties are located in Japan. Of these, three edible varieties, *manamako*, *kinko*, and *okinamako*, live in the waters along the Sanriku coast.

Since antiquity, sea cucumbers have been prized for their use in Chinese herbal medicine. The name *Hoshinamako*, meaning dried sea cucumber, has become famous as a high-class ingredient through its trade with China. It is considered that the larger the spines on the skin, the higher the quality of the dried sea cucumber.

◆Sanriku Golden Tawaramono - Caviar

Caviar consists of salted sturgeon eggs, and this glistening gourmet food is one of the three most delicious in the world.

During medieval times, emperors from numerous countries are reputed to have used the image of caviar as their symbol.

The caviar you will receive is from the purebred Amur Sturgeon variety, and not of the more commonly farmed Bester Sturgeon hybrid. It is un-pasteurised, with no added preservatives, and has a low salt content – ranging from 2.6 – 2.8%. The caviar is preserved through rapid freezing by liquid nitrogen

◆History



Tawaramono date back to the early modern era of the Edo period (1603-1868), when Japan's trade with Qing dynasty China was conducted through the port of Nagasaki in southern Japan. Trade through Nagasaki involved valuable trade goods called *tawaramono*, instead of precious metals such as silver or copper.

Goods such as sea cucumber, dried abalone, and shark fin from all over Japan were sold through Nagasaki as *tawaramono*. Even today these goods are widely known as gourmet ingredients in Chinese cuisine. The Sanriku coast had too primitive an infrastructure to deliver its products inland. However, as Japan entered the early modern era, goods from the Sanriku coast made their way to Nagasaki to be traded as *tawaramono*.

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