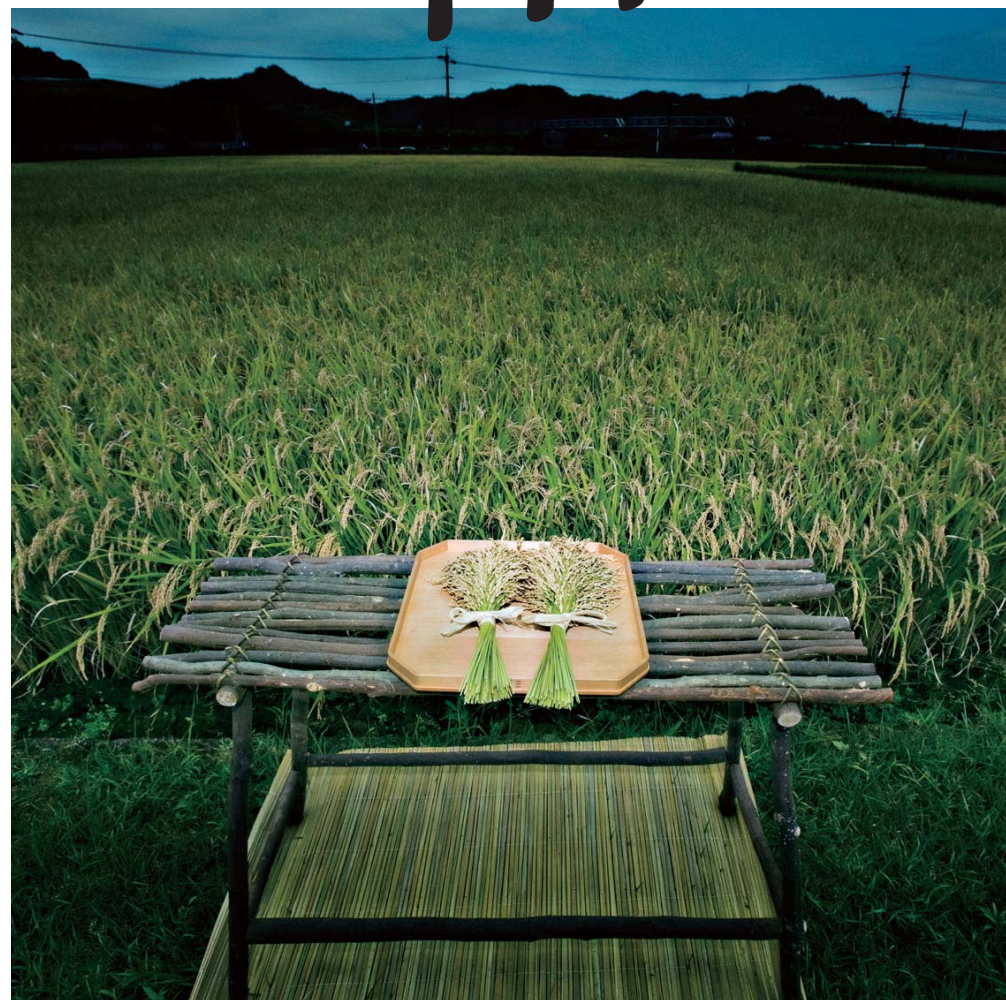


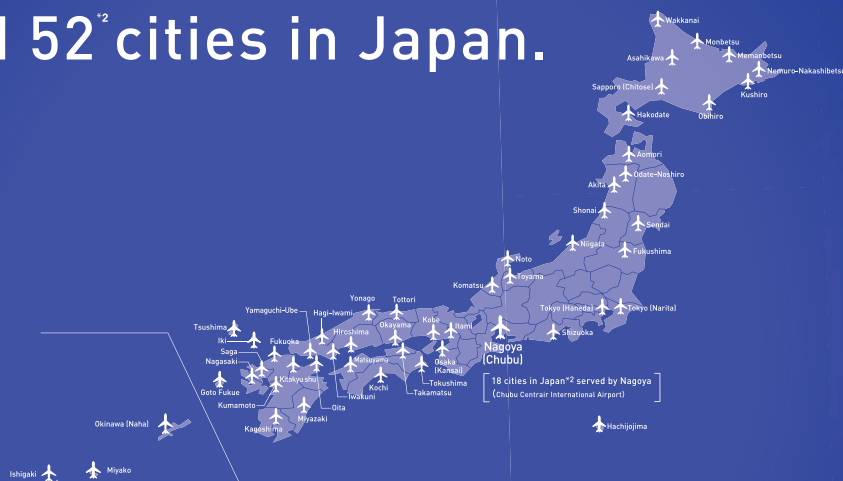
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The image shows a seat from a selected Boeing 787-8.



“Discover the many treasures of Mie Prefecture”

## Eikei Suzuki

Governor of Mie Prefecture

Photo : Tsukuru Asada (Secession)  
Text : Kosuke Kawakami (Deluxe Continental)

Welcome  
to *Mie*



It is a privilege to represent Mie Prefecture, an area rich in food, local culture, and natural beauty. Add in the historic sites and a thriving industrial sector, and we have several treasures worthy of international interest. But when I'm asked to name one thing that makes Mie truly special, I reply without hesitation: the people.

Throughout history, the people of Mie have been immensely welcoming of visitors. We saw this especially in the Edo era (1603-1868), when millions of pilgrims descended upon Ise Jingu to celebrate the cyclical rebuilding of both the shrine and Izumotaisho, another important Shinto shrine (the two events coincide once every sixty years). Many came from remote rural areas, bravely walking for several days to complete the journey. Such was their determination to reach Ise Jingu. When they finally reached their goal, they were generously met with offers of food, drink, and shelter from the locals. A warm welcome to all and a helping hand to those in need: That is what the people of Mie have always personified. This is why I contend that the famed concept of *omotenashi*—Japanese-style hospitality—is rooted in Mie.

It doesn't matter if, like me, you were born or raised elsewhere. You are sure to be taken good care of while in Mie, just as I was during my election campaigns. I will never forget that sensation of being surrounded by such tremendous warmth and support during those months. The more I engaged with the locals, the more I came to love everything about the place.

Why are these people so magnanimous and open-minded? Without a doubt, it is because their hearts are guided by the values of Ise Jingu, a sacred place that accepts visitors from anywhere. As someone who goes there

at least ten times a year, I can say that the very aura of the place inspires locals to accept, love, and embrace.

Ise Jingu is rebuilt every twenty years. This custom enables us to not only preserve thirteen centuries' worth of local history, but also allow our most famous monument to reflect the latest cultural and technological trends. After all, to be permanent requires constant innovation—"a combination of sustainability and diversity," in modern political parlance.

"Sustainability," of course, is the very principle that has, since the seventh century, guided the women divers (*ot ama*) of Shima, who make sure not to catch more than they need. By cherry picking and not plundering, these women have preserved the beauty of the local sea, thus proving that humans and nature can coexist in peace and harmony. Present and future generations should be inspired by their philosophy.

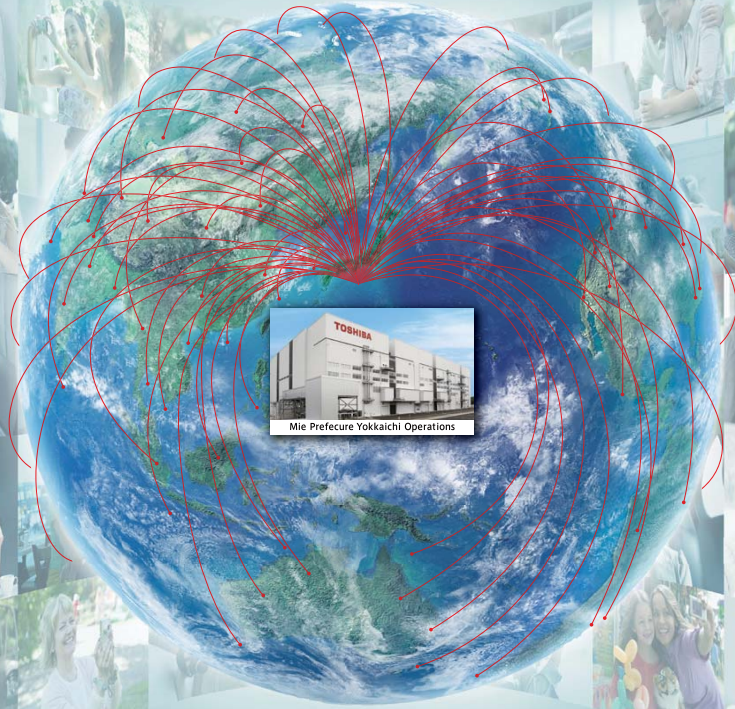
The upcoming G7 Summit in Ise-Shima will open Mie's doors to countless first-time visitors from across the globe. My message to them is to seize the opportunity, however small, to meet and interact with the people of Mie. They will warmly welcome you, entertain you, and expect nothing in return. All you need to say to delight them is, "Arigato"—the Japanese word for "Thank you." Once you have thanked them, retain that feeling of gratitude and spread it as widely as you can. Let's try and create a new spirit of appreciation with Mie at its core!

You will never know the wonders of Mie unless you actually come here. It is the heart of Japan, a place that offers everything that makes this country great. A large part of Japan's soul lies right here. Sample it, witness it, taste it, and talk about it—and surely you, too, will fall in love with Mie.

Eikei Suzuki was born in Hyogo Prefecture in 1974. After graduating from the University of Tokyo's Faculty of Economics, he joined MITI (currently the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry), where he worked on localized regeneration projects such as SME support, special economic zones, and strengthening ties between agriculture, commerce, and industry. He was elected Governor of Mie Prefecture in 2011, and re-elected for a second term in 2015. His active role in his son's upbringing led him to receive the "Ikumen of the Year Award" for outstanding fathers. He and his wife are expecting a second child in April.



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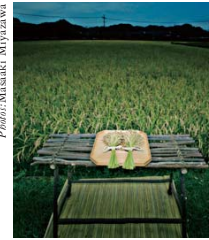
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Photo: Masaaki Miyazawa



Ise Jingu has its own rice fields, known as the Jingu-shinden. The first rice of the year is cultivated in a ritual ceremony called Nuibo-sai.

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**Eikei Suzuki** Governor of Mie Prefecture

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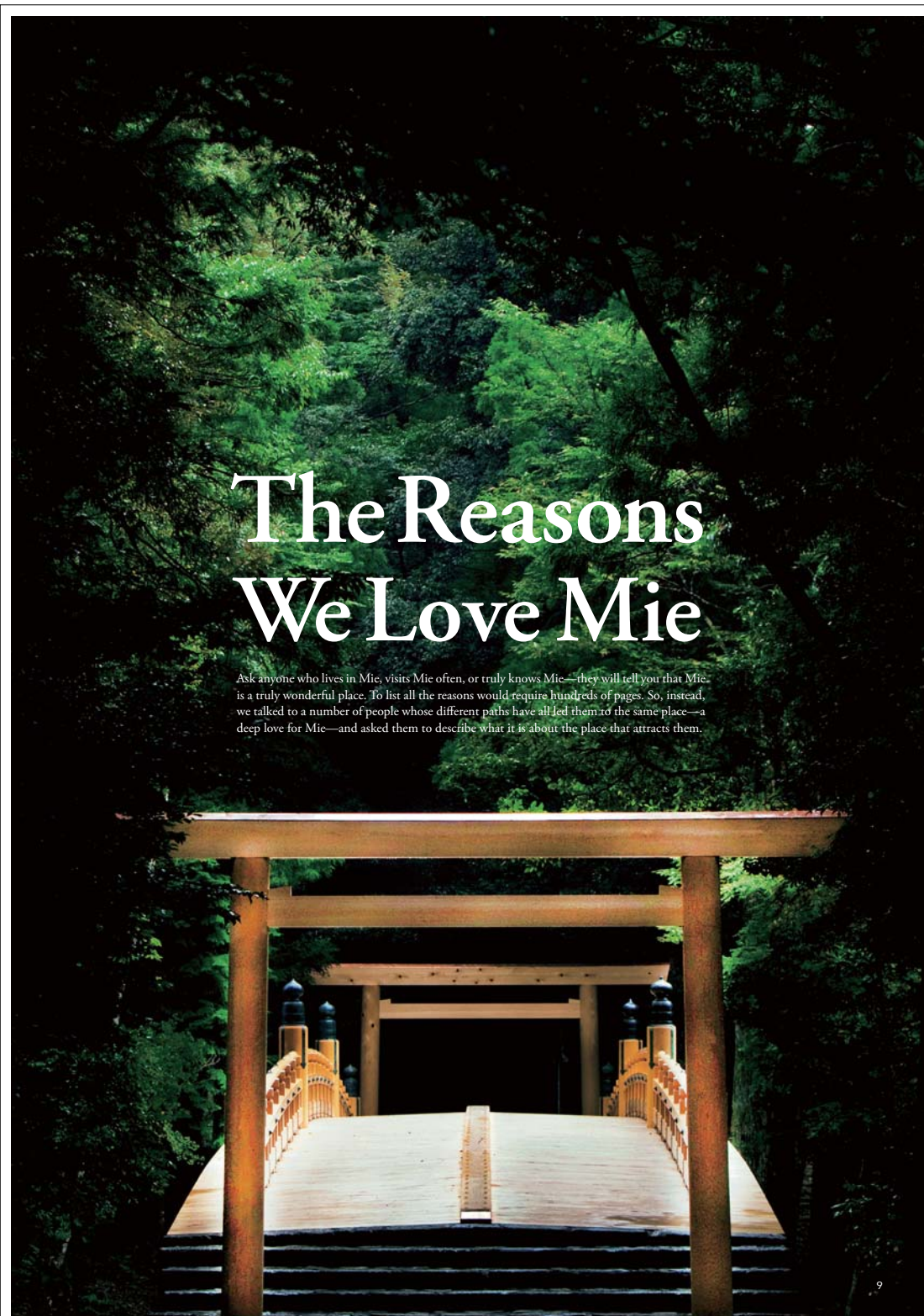
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# The Reasons We Love Mie

Ask anyone who lives in Mie, visits Mie often, or truly knows Mie—they will tell you that Mie is a truly wonderful place. To list all the reasons would require hundreds of pages. So, instead, we talked to a number of people whose different paths have all led them to the same place—a deep love for Mie—and asked them to describe what it is about the place that attracts them.







# Ise Jingu

“Where nature and people  
exist as one”

**Masaaki Miyazawa**

Photographer / Film director

Ise Jingu lies in the center of Mie, and is, in some ways, the heart of Japan. It is sacred, solemn, and above all, accepting of all who visit. It is no exaggeration to say that Ise Jingu lives in the hearts of every Japanese person.

*Photos: Masaaki Miyazawa*

*Text: Minako Mitsui*





I have always had an interest in the religions of nature, and from an early age, I made it my life's work to photograph the three Kumano Sanzan shrines and the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage routes. I was interested in beliefs and religious outlooks that imagined humans and nature existing as one, and became deeply influenced by this kind of cosmological thinking. Perhaps overly beholden to these ideas, I, at one time, thought that Ise Jingu had an artificial side—that it was touched by civilization.

However, I was later blessed with the opportunity to photograph the shrine, and by revisiting it, seeing it with fresh eyes, and experiencing it anew, my opinion began to change. Ise Jingu is not a place that assimilates humans and nature into a single whole, but it is a place where they can coexist. The people who visit the shrine offer gratitude for food, clothing, and shelter—the basic needs of life. In doing so, they weave a wonderful world where gods, nature, and people are all intertwined.

The shrine embodies the impulse to worship the forests that exist here in the complex. I cannot help but feel that, like an old myth, this impulse is still alive today, having survived for 2,000 years. Is it possible to capture this impulse in a photograph? That was the question that drove me as I began to explore the Ise legend.

I have had an ongoing conversation with Ise Jingu that has lasted for over ten years. As the years went by, I began to feel that the act of prayer and worship is not, fundamentally, something that is taught and compelled by others. Ise Jingu is, I believe, a place where people pray for what

they feel in their hearts, and not what they have been told to pray for. What is it, then, that drives these worshippers? Is it some divine secret of the universe? Or are they drawn by some invisible force that resides in the forests—that which we Japanese refer to as gods? I do not know. What I do know is that whatever their reasons, worshippers are always welcome in Ise Jingu. It is this embrace of diversity that I believe is the shrine's great appeal.

Ise Jingu reminds the Japanese people of where we come from. It possesses something that resonates in our very DNA. It feels like an unwavering, unmoving prototype of Japan itself, honed to its purest simplicity. Yet, with every visit, its features change, reflecting the seasonal transformations that occur in the surrounding nature. No matter how often I go, the shrine presents a different face.

It may reveal itself as a gentle breeze blowing through the serene grounds of the shrine; or a mysterious, intangible presence passing through the darkness of night. There is an indescribable purity here; you are wrapped in a darkness of such purity and divinity that you feel as if time has come to a halt.

Ise Jingu—and Mie Prefecture, for that matter—is the one place in Japan that all Japanese people hope visitors from overseas get to see. The region is a true paradise blessed with three priceless treasures: delightful food, beautiful natural scenery, and a gentle climate. For the open, magnanimous people of Mie, the act of hosting others requires no special effort. Visitors are welcomed as a matter of course, and made

to feel at ease.

I was born in Tokyo, but my heart is in Mie. It is where I always feel at ease, and where both my mind and body are allowed to rest. What a joy it is to have a place you can call home.



Takumi Aoki (Seisen-sha)

Miyazawa was born in 1960 in Tokyo. He graduated from the College of Art, Nihon University, with a degree in photography. He received the inaugural New York International Center of Photography Rookie of the Year Award in 1985 for his infrared photography work, *Yume jyu: Ten Nights of Dreams*. Miyazawa began photographing Ise Jingu at the 2004 Imperial Festival. He later received official permission in 2013 to photograph the 62nd Sengu, a ceremony held every twenty years to rebuild the shrine. He has taken over 90,000 photographs of the shrine over the course of 9 years. Published photobooks include *Jo-an* (A pure darkness) and *Sengu*. He has also directed a full-length documentary, *Umi Yama Aida*, about the forests of Ise Jingu. It was awarded for Best Foreign Feature Documentary at the Madrid International Film Festival.



## A Beginner's Guide to Ise Jingu

Perhaps you have heard of Ise Jingu, but do you know about the differences between the inner and outer shrines? And just what is or isn't considered to be part of the shrine? Whether you are already familiar with the shrine or not, here is your chance to learn a little more about it.

Illustration: MACCHIRO

Text: Minako Mitsui, Kosuke Kawakami (Deluxe Continental)

### Ise Jingu: A complex composed of 125 smaller shrines

Dedicated to the patron god of the Imperial household, Ise Jingu is considered to be the premier shrine in all of Japan. In addition to the two main shrines of Kotai Jingu (the Imperial, or inner, shrine) and Toyouke Daijingu (the Toyouke, or outer, shrine), there are also numerous associated, auxiliary, subordinate, and administrative shrines, which total 125. This entire complex is what constitutes Ise Jingu. The inner shrine is dedicated to Amaterasu Omikami, goddess of the sun, while the outer shrine is dedicated to Toyouke Omikami, goddess of cereals and grains. The two main shrines are located approximately 5 kilometers apart.

Custom dictates that worshippers start at the outer shrine and then move to the

inner shrine. At either location, they must first pray at the main shrine before moving on to the other shrines. Another important thing to keep in mind is that Ise Jingu is not intended to be a place where people come simply to pray for things. It is where one offers thanks for the blessings they receive every day. However, if there is an especially important prayer or expression of gratitude that one would like to offer to the shrine, one may do so by performing a ceremonial dance known as a *mikagura*, or make a sacred offering in the form of food, which is called an *omike*.

On the first day of every month, a tradition known as *tsuitachi mairi* is performed at Ise Jingu. Just outside the gate

of the inner shrine, there is a shopping area called Okage Yokocho where a special morning market takes place. It begins very early, opening at around 4 a.m., and the area is filled with stands selling local specialties and goods. Okage Yokocho is located in Oharaimachi, a small town built around a pilgrimage route that stretches about 800 meters north from Uji Bridge. Oharaimachi is always lively, since it is constantly crowded with worshippers from all over the country who have come to pray at Ise Jingu. They flock to the many restaurants and shops in this area, which are housed either in buildings that date back centuries, or replicas.

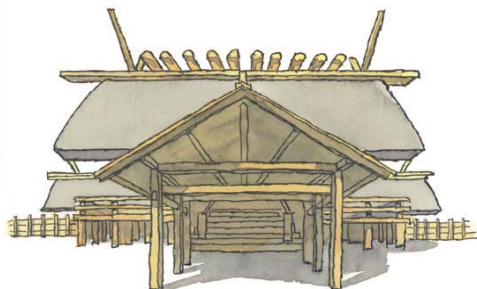
#### Outer Shrine (Toyouke Daijingu)

This shrine is dedicated to the goddess Toyouke Omikami, who watches over human industry, especially in relation to food, clothing, and shelter. The outer shrine complex has three associated shrines—Taga-no-miya, Tsuchi-no-miya, and Kaze-no-miya—as well as ten other lesser shrines. Toyouke Omikami was first enshrined here 500 years after the inner shrine was built. She is now worshipped as the goddess who tends to the *omike* offered to Amaterasu Omikami. For 1,500 years, this sacred food has been prepared in a building called the Imbiyaden and offered to the gods at every major shrine, in a special ceremony that is performed twice a day.



#### Inner Shrine (Kotai Jingu)

This is the heart of Ise Jingu, where the goddess Amaterasu Omikami is worshipped. Since she is considered the great ancestral goddess of all Japan, this is a place of special reverence for the Japanese people. The Isuzu River just east of the shrine has long been thought to divide the world of the gods from the material world, with Uji Bridge serving as the connection between the two realms. In addition to the main shrine itself, there are two associated shrines—Aramatsuri-no-miya and Kazahinomi-no-miya—as well as ten other administrative shrines. In total, the inner shrine complex encompasses 55 km<sup>2</sup> of land, of which just 0.93 km<sup>2</sup> is considered sacred. In 2,000 years, no tree has been allowed to be chopped here.



### Do you know about the “shrine offering” sticker?

Toyouke Omikami, who is worshipped in the outer shrine, is the patron goddess of food and industry. She blesses the people with food (especially rice), clothing, shelter, and the gifts of nature. This is why the *omike* is prepared in the outer shrine.

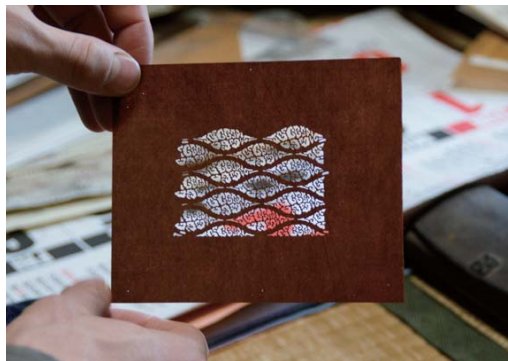
Every year, certain businesses from around Japan are given permission to present their wares as offerings to Toyouke Omikami. These include agricultural products such as rice and tea, as well as goods such as alcohol and confectionery. Once the goods have been presented, the business owners must make a vow to abide by honest

business practices and to continue to work hard to create their products.

The Ise Chamber of Commerce and Industry promotes these products by providing the businesses with stickers that indicate that their wares have been deemed worthy of being offered to Toyouke Omikami. These good, honest products can be found in stores nationwide. Consumers who have been to Ise Jingu can purchase these products as reminders of their time there, or to share the joy they experienced at the complex with friends and loved ones.

This “shrine offering” sticker is a mark of quality. Over 300 businesses around Japan are given permission to participate in the Ise Jingu offerings ceremony, which takes place four times a year. On each occasion, the Ise Chamber of Commerce and Industry organizes a market in front of the outer shrine, where these products are sold.





Nakata visited noted Ise-Katagami craftsman Masaaki Kimura, who taught him how to appreciate the technique at a deeper level. Ise-Katagami involves gluing together several sheets of Japanese washi paper to form a base that is then etched to create a stencil known as a *katagami*. This stencil is used for dyeing kimono and accessories. The technique stretches back over 1,000 years, but it underwent its most significant development in the Edo period (1603-1868), when it was under the protection of the Kishu domain. It was during this time that *katagami* gained prestige around the world, especially among the 19th century European artists who espoused the style known as Japonism; Monet and Van Gogh were just some of the more notable fans. In 2014, Nakata joined Kimura and influential Japanese product designer Naoto Fukasawa for a collaborative work combining Ise-Katagami and Yamanashi lacquer—the traditional craft of Nakata's home prefecture of Yamanashi. The project has helped breath new life into *katagami*.

# Mie and Culture

“Visitors should try to explore as many sites as possible—not just Ise-Shima.”

## Hidetoshi Nakata

Representative Director, Take Action Foundation

Text: Kosuke Kawakami (Deluxe Continental)



Nakata was born in 1977 in Yamanashi Prefecture. He played soccer for Japan in three FIFA World Cup tournaments before retiring. Since then, he has traveled extensively both within Japan and abroad. In 2009, he established the Take Action Foundation. That same year, he began a journey to all 47 prefectures and regions in Japan, which inspired him to start the Revalue Nippon Project to support traditional Japanese cultures and craftsmanship.

Starting in 2009, I traveled all around Japan. My journey began on Hateruma Island in Okinawa Prefecture, the southernmost inhabited island in Japan. Over the course of seven years, I worked my way north to Cape Soya in Hokkaido, the northernmost point in the country, where I finally arrived in 2015. Surprises and discoveries seemed to await me everywhere I went. Each region had its own distinctive culture, food, and people. I met many interesting people who imparted different bits of wisdom to me. Looking back on all the places I visited, Mie Prefecture stands out as the place where I learned the most. This is because Mie is a mosaic of unique cultures that cannot be found anywhere else in Japan, and which have remained unchanged from the past.

One of the lessons I learned from my journey was that things became more interesting the further one is from Tokyo

—and I don't mean simply in terms of geographical distance. The journey from Mie to Tokyo feels much longer than the actual ground covered. There are certainly destinations such as Kyushu and Hokkaido that are further away from Tokyo than Mie, but those regions are just a two-hour plane ride away. Getting to the heart of Mie is not quite as straightforward. You can't get there directly via high-speed Shinkansen; you need to transfer to a local train line along the way, and then finally take a car. It's not an easy journey. But, I think this is precisely why Mie's original cultures have survived to this day, and why it has never succumbed to the monotonous influence of Tokyo.

The well traveled will no doubt already know about the solemn majesty of Ise Jingu and the beauty of the ocean by Shima Peninsula. They might know less about the sublime natural scenery that stretches along the coast of the city of Kumano, or

the hundreds of terraced rice fields that compose Maruyama Senmaida—a work of art born out of a collaboration between humans and nature. They may also want to spend some time exploring the Ise-Katagami paper stencils that are used for dyeing fabrics, Ise's distinctive *netsuke* (miniature carvings), and *Suzuka-zumi* ink—exquisite products of Mie's craft arts history. In 2014, I brought together a number of different creative professionals for a project focused on exploring new possibilities for Ise-Katagami. This technique was used to create light fixtures, bicycles, dresses, and other products that were highly acclaimed by the art world. I like to think that I played a role in hinting at a new future for a technique that was once used to create only dyeing tools.

Mie is well known for the quality of its seafood and agricultural produce. However, there are many wonderful varieties of sake

to be enjoyed there as well, and there is nothing quite like a local brew to accompany the regional cuisine. When in Mie, try visiting one of the local breweries. Learning about the philosophy behind a particular label is sure to help you better appreciate its flavor.

Mie is a place where a Japan that no longer exists in much of the country still remains strong. I, of course, hope that the foreign dignitaries who will be visiting Ise-Shima for the upcoming G7 Summit will get to experience this culture. But more than anything, I would like more of my fellow Japanese to learn more about the wonders of Mie Prefecture. Its distance from Tokyo is exactly what makes it such an appealing place to visit. Visitors should try to explore as many sites as possible—not just Ise-Shima. I promise that all kinds of surprises and discoveries await you wherever you go. Mie deserves to be one of the top domestic travel destinations.



# Area Information

Each of the five regions of Mie offers its own distinctive natural, cultural, and culinary experiences. Here are some highlights.

Text : Kosuke Kawakami (Deluxe Continental)

# 北

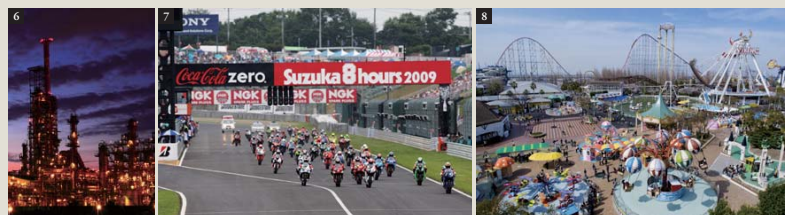


## A blend of nature and contemporary entertainment

Hokusei

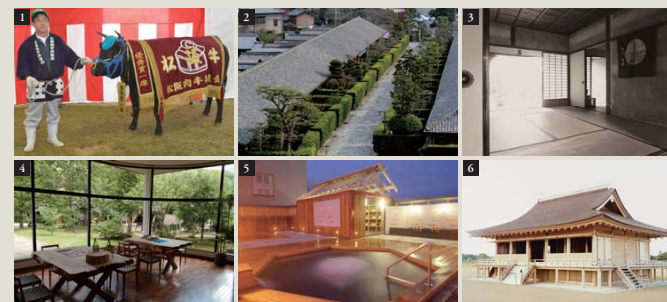
The Hokusei region provides an enjoyable blend of nature and contemporary entertainment. Among the natural attractions is Mt. Gozaisho, a 1,212-meter mountain with a peak that can be reached from the very bottom via ropeway—one of the longest in the world. Visitors who make the long ascent will find themselves in a sprawling park that stretches between Mt. Gozaisho's two peaks. Following their return journey, visitors can take a dip in the Yunoyama hot spring—once a popular destination for some of Japan's greatest writers and poets. The spring is located right at the foot of Mt. Gozaisho. Other attractions in the area include Nabana no Sato, a spectacular flower garden where visitors are greeted by a stunning array of beautiful colors and shapes any time of the year. Many seasonal events are held throughout the year, the

most popular of which are the nighttime illuminations—the largest of their kind in Japan. Today, these light shows attract travellers from all over the world. Hokusei is also home to a multifacility leisure complex that includes the Nagashima Spa Land amusement park, a waterpark, hotels, and Suzuka Circuit. It is a popular destination that brings in many tourists from all around Japan.



1: Yunoyama hot spring is located at the foot of Mt. Gozaisho. Legend has it that a wounded deer once healed its injuries in the hot spring's waters. 2: Nature lovers should visit Mt. Gozaisho. The ropeway, which stretches all the way to the top, offers fantastic views throughout the year. Cherry blossoms, lush greenery, and fall leaves create a different tone for every season. 3, 4: Seki-juku offers visitors a glimpse into the past, with buildings preserved from over 150 years ago. During the Seki-juku Gion summer festival, visitors can view a parade of colorful traditional floats. 5: Visitors from around the world flock to Nabana no Sato for its nighttime flower illuminations—the largest of their kind in Japan. There is also an observatory from which visitors can see as far away as Nagoya. 6: Yokkaichi Industrial Complex is a major contributor to Japan's industry. The lights of the factories located here create beautiful nightscapes that can be viewed from the deck of a cruise ship. 7: Suzuka Circuit hosts many of the world's top motorsports races. It is part of a complex that includes hotels and an amusement park. There is plenty to do, even for non-racing fans. 8: Nagashima Spa Land is one of Japan's biggest amusement parks, offering a wide variety of exhilarating rides and hot springs.

# 中



## Historical ruins and world-class beef

The Chunansei region treats visitors to history, nature, as well as culinary delights. Located in the center of the prefecture, the region is best known for its historic ruins, including Matsusaka Castle and Saiku. Saiku was the palatial home of the Saio, an unmarried Imperial princess who was ordered to serve Ise Jingu—one of the holi-est Shinto sites. Today, the Saiku ruins are an official Japan Heritage site. It has been

partially rebuilt and offers visitors a taste of what the complex once looked like. Nearby is Sakakibara hot spring, where Imperial princes once cleansed themselves before paying their respects at Ise Jingu. It is a historic site that makes an appearance in the 11th-century Japanese classic, *The Pillow Book*. Chunansei is also known for its world-famous Matsusaka beef. Although high in fat, this prized meat has a sweetness and tenderness that has made it a hit with gourmards of all nationalities. There are many sukiyaki and yakiniku restaurants in the region that serve Matsusaka beef.

Chunansei

# 南



1: Matsusaka beef, which comes from cows raised with a lot of care, is famous throughout the world for its melt-in-your-mouth quality. 2, 3: Gojoban-yashiki is the complex that once housed the samurai of Kishu domain who guarded Matsusaka Castle. The northern part of the west annex is open to the public. 4: Okuise Forest Pia is a resort that celebrates Mie's natural beauty. It is surrounded by hills and rivers and serves exquisite cuisine prepared with local ingredients. 5: Fireflies visit Sakakibara hot spring in early summer, performing a natural light show for bathers. 6: Saiku was the palatial home of the Saio, an unmarried Imperial princess who was ordered to serve Ise Jingu. The complex has been partially restored, and a museum located at the ruins offers visitors deeper insight into this historical site. 7: Miya River runs 91 kilometers into Ise Bay. It is famous for the purity of its water and the lush vegetation that grows along its banks. Visitors can enjoy rafting in the summer.

# 勢



# 伊

Iga

# 賀



## Ninjas and stunning waterfalls

Iga is the ancestral home of the Iga ninja clan, but it is also famous for its many waterfalls, each a stunning work of art composed by nature. Iga Ueno Castle and Ninja Museum of Igaryu offer a glimpse into the lives of the ninjas who once ruled the area. From the outside, the museum looks like an ordinary thatched-roof farmhouse, but inside, it is filled with traps designed to surprise intruders. A *kunoichi*, or female ninja, guides visitors through the museum, revealing the many trapdoors and hidden compartments built into the architecture. Visitors can even try their hand at throwing shuriken. Those who wish, instead, to enjoy the region's natural offerings can head to Muro-Akame-Aoyama Quasi-National Park, which is home to 48 waterfalls, all located along a 4-kilometer trail. Every

waterfall offers its own unique beauty, but the most famous is Ninai-daki. This spectacular waterfall drops from a height of 8 meters, and is then separated into two by a large rock just above the river—giving it the appearance of a rock shouldering a column of water.



- 1: The Akame Falls are a series of 48 waterfalls, located along a 4-kilometer trail. In the past, waterfalls were considered places of worship, and pilgrims would make stops to pray at every one of the 48.
- 2, 3: Iga Ueno Castle, also known as Hakuho Castle, is a classic example of wood architecture. It was built in 1611, but the castle keep was destroyed by a storm the following year. The keep was restored in 1935. Today, armor, helmets, war fans, and other items from the era are on display.
- 4: Haiseiden is an octagonal gazebo with a roof made of cypress bark. Its design is modeled on the attire that Matsuo Basho—Japan's best-known haiku poet—was known to wear when traveling. It was designated an Important Cultural Property in 2010.
- 5: Iga no Sato Mokumoku Tezukuri Farm offers activities designed to help visitors discover how agriculture is closely linked to craft making and food.
- 6, 7: Iga is the ancestral home of the Iga ninja clan. Ninja Museum of Igaryu acquaints visitors with the lifestyle of the ninja, as well as the tools they used and traps and hidden compartments they built throughout their homes. Ninja are well known among people from overseas so this museum is a popular place to visit.



## The spiritual capital of Japan

Ise-Shima is an ideal destination for those who seek spiritual as well as culinary fulfillment. This region is home to Ise Jingu, the spiritual home of the Japanese. Once visitors have paid their respects at the shrine, they can take a stroll through the old-fashioned Okage Yokocho district located in Oharaimachi, a small town that stretches almost a kilometer north, just east of the shrine complex. Okage Yokocho recreates the feeling of ancient times, when millions of worshippers would participate in pilgrimages to commemorate the rebuilding of both Ise Jingu and Izumo-taisha, another sacred site—an event that occurred only once every sixty years. Visitors can experience a variety of Ise specialties at the town's many shops and dining establishments. The cuisine here centers on the fresh produce and seafood that the region is famous for. Shima Province, in what is now Ise-Shima, was once an official supplier of food to the Imperial household. Fresh seafood in particular is plentiful inside the trenches of Ise-Shima's beautiful ria coast. In the past, these

bounties of the sea were caught by *ama* divers who, today, are better known for collecting pearls. When they are not out at sea, *ama* can be found relaxing in designated huts. Visitors are welcome to drop by and listen to them chat about their adventures while snacking on some of their catch.



- 1: This pairing of two rock formations is known as Meoto Iwa, or the Husband and Wife Rocks. Like nearby Futami Okitama Shrine, this is a popular spot for people to pray for luck in love.
- 2: The Okage Yokocho district located in Oharaimachi (the town stretching north, just east of Ise Jingu) is a great place to sit down for a meal or shop. There are many shops offering local specialties that visitors can take home as souvenirs.
- 3: This hut is where *ama* divers go to relax and warm up after fishing. Visitors are welcome to enter the hut and chat with them.
- 4: Mikimoto Pearl Island is where Kikichi Mikimoto, the "King of Pearls," became the first person in the world to successfully culture pearls. Today, it is a theme park where visitors can learn everything there is to know about pearls.
- 5: Pearls are cultivated by hanging pearl oysters with ropes from wooden rafts and glass floats.
- 6: Yokoyama Observatory is a bit off the beaten path, but the spectacular views of Ago Bay and Kashiko Island make it well worth the trip.

# 伊

# 勢

Ise-Shima

# 志

# 摩





# 東

Higashi-Kishu

# 紀

# 州

## A slice of nature etched in time

Time seems to come to a halt in Higashi-Kishu, a region that harkens back to a Japan that no longer exists in much of the country. Visitors know it best for Kumano Kodo, a series of pilgrimage routes that worshippers once traveled on their way from Ise Jingu to the three Kumano Sanzan shrines. Today, it is a World Heritage Site. The stone-paved paths are beautifully scenic routes that pass through a serene bamboo forest, offer a majestic view of the Kumano Sea, and also wind along the Kumano River. A visit to Higashi-Kishu would not be complete without a stop at the Maruyama Senmaida terraced rice fields. Composed of 1,340 terraces, it is the largest of its kind in Japan and is a reminder of how closely intertwined nature and Japanese society once were. Along the coast, visitors will find a number of

unique, dynamic rock formations sculpted by the Kumano Sea. They can also find Shichirimi-hama, Japan's longest gravel beach, which, in the summer, hosts a major fireworks festival. The explosive sound of the fireworks reverberates off rock formations and echoes out of caves, creating a sonic tapestry that makes this festival a truly singular experience.



1: Shishi Iwa, or Lion Rock, is a 25-meter-tall rock that resembles a lion roaring into the ocean. 2: This stunning view of Shichirimi-hama was taken from Matsumoto Toge, one of the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage routes. 3: Onigajo, or Demon Castle, is a product of wind and wave erosion as well as geological movement. This natural work of art is imposing in appearance, giving off the feeling that demons could be dwelling inside. 4: Hana-no-iwaya Shrine is dedicated to this magnificent 70-meter-tall rock. Twice a year, a thick rope hanging from the top of the rock is extended towards a nearby sacred tree. It is a ritual so long observed that it is mentioned in the 8th century tome, *Nihon Shoki*. 5: At 22 kilometers in length, Shichirimi-hama is Japan's longest gravel beach. It extends from the city of Kumano to the town of Kihochi. It is one of Japan's most scenic coastlines. 6: The Maruyama Senmaida terraced rice fields are composed of 1,340 terraces of different sizes. 7: Kumano River is recognized as one of the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage routes. Worshippers and their luggage once traveled down this river in *sandanba*, boats that are propelled by three horizontally long sails.



## Iseji, Kumano Kodo: A World Heritage Site *A road paved with history and nature*

In July 2004, the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage routes were designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site, under the name, Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range. These ancient roads connect the Kumano region in the south of the Kii Peninsula to Ise, Osaka Prefecture, Wakayama Prefecture, Mt. Takano, and Mt. Yoshino. The route that travels from Ise Jingu to the three Kumano Sanzan shrines—Kumano Hongu Taisha, Kumano Hayatama Taisha, and Kumano Nachi Taisha—is known as Iseji, and has long been used by worshippers traveling to and from Ise Jingu. It is no short walk, however; the total distance from Ise Jingu to Kumano Hayatama Taisha is 170 kilometers.

Unlike Kiji (the route that travels along the western coast of Kii Peninsula and was once used exclusively by abdicated emperors and their cohorts), Iseji was the commoner's route. Those who used this route were typically worshippers who had completed their pilgrimage to Ise Jingu. Or they were participants in the Saigoku Kannon Pilgrimage—a tour of thirty-three Buddhist temples located in western Japan. Iseji is composed of numerous short paths, such as Nisaka Toge, Ikkoku Toge, Magose Toge, Obuki Toge, and Matsumoto Toge. Also part of Iseji is Yakiyama-goe—a mountain pass once considered to be the most difficult route in western Japan.

The sections along Iseji that are still paved with stones are said to have been built as far back as the Kamakura period (1185–1333). With ancient trees growing along these paths, one can easily imagine being transported back in time to a past when pilgrimages to Ise were conducted entirely on foot, no matter where in Japan the worshipper was travelling from.

One can almost hear the echoes of footsteps from the past on Magose Toge, a once well-traveled section of the Kumano Kodo route known as Iseji.





# Mie and Food

“Mie is overflowing with delicious food”

## Shingo Murabayashi

Mago-no-Mise

Photo: Tsukuru Asada (Secession)  
Text: Kyosuke Akasaka

Mie is one of the greatest culinary centers of Japan, and also home to the top high school chefs of the country. The students of Oka High School consistently win nationwide cooking contests, and even cook for customers at Mago-no-Mise—the only restaurant of its kind in Japan. The restaurant is the brainchild of Shingo Murabayashi—their teacher, and a lover of all things Mie.

Text: Kosuke Kawakami (Deluxe Continental)

Mie is abundant with hills and coastlines. This means both seafood and agricultural produce are readily available and can reach consumers without traveling long distances. This is one reason why the food served in Mie is so fresh and delicious. Nearby Hyogo Prefecture is famous for its Akashi sea bream, considered to be the best in Japan, but Mie offers its own exceptional sea bream when the fish is in season. Generally, the sea bream caught in the Sea of Japan are considered the tastiest but, depending on the season, Pacific sea bream caught off the coast of Mie are nice and fatty as well. Needless to say, if you want to eat the freshest Pacific sea bream from Mie, you will need to dine on it right here in Mie.

Mie's best-known specialties are



The Hana-gozen course includes tempura, cooked seasonal fish, *nishime* (vegetables cooked in a sweet-and-sour sauce), *shira-ae* (vegetables seasoned with tofu, white sesame, or white miso), *dashimaki tamago* (Japanese omelet), *sunomono* (seafood and vegetables dressed with vinegar), rice, and miso soup—and it all costs only ¥1,200. All the ingredients are seasonal, so the dishes often change. The *dashimaki tamago* is especially popular, since it is topped with Matsusaka beef *shigure-ni*—a local dish cooked with ginger, sugar, and soy sauce.

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Matsusaka beef and Ise lobster, neither of which would be out of place at a five-star restaurant anywhere in the world. Both can be described as works of art, but while the former is more manmade—the care given to the cows by farmers being a big component of its quality—the deliciousness of the latter is entirely due to nature. Both of these foods are symbols not only of Mie, but also of Japan as a whole.

There are many foods in Mie that are indicative of the Japanese way of life. One such food that especially stands out, at least in my opinion, is Mie rice. Koshihikari and Musubi-no-kami are two of the better-known brands. Both are very rich in flavor. Musubi-no-kami, in particular, is tasty even when cold, so it is often served in the meals that are offered to Ise Jingu.

I would like to invite the foreign dignitaries who will be visiting Mie in 2016 for the Ise-Shima G7 Summit to dine at Mago-no-Mise, a restaurant operated entirely by the students of Oka High School. All of the dishes served at Mago-no-Mise center on local ingredients, but if you would like to experience a good introduction to the qualities and charms that define Japanese cuisine, I recommend you order the Hana-gozen. It is a course meal that is especially popular with customers.

The freshly fried tempura that comes with the meal is served with a dipping sauce made with all natural, fresh ingredients, as well as a side of grated daikon radish that, similarly, uses no artificial seasoning. Each item is built on the natural flavors found in Mie and the qualities that define the

Japanese way of life. This makes it all the more surprising that each item has been prepared entirely by high school students. No wonder Oka High School dominates nationwide cooking contests. Graduates include winners at several international culinary competitions, and these chefs continue to represent Mie throughout the world.

I love Mie. I love the relaxed atmosphere you find everywhere you go, the majesty of Ise Jingu, the refreshing water that flows through our rivers, and the fresh food you can easily enjoy at any time. But, most of all, I love the people of Mie. Without their faith in their children—and, of course, myself—I could never have opened a restaurant like Mago-no-Mise. I hope I can do justice to their confidence by supporting the growth of the prefecture as a whole.



## Excellent Foods

Mie is a treasure trove of food that is renowned around Japan and throughout the world.

Below is a selection of the best that Mie's farms and seas have to offer.

Illustration : MACCHIRO  
Text : Sachiyo Kamata

### Matsusaka beef

Meat that is a work of art

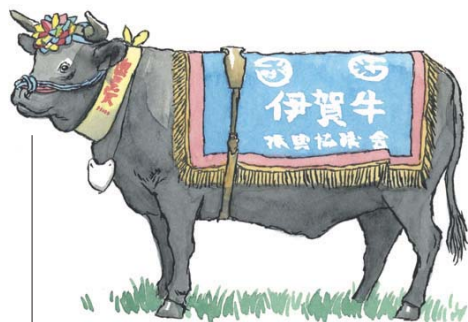
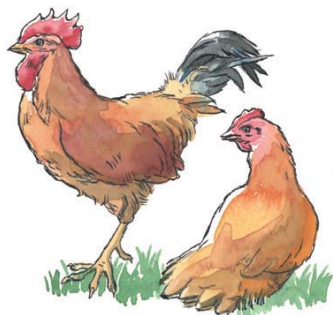
Matsusaka beef was named Japan's best beef after receiving the top prize at the 1935 All Japan Meat and Livestock Exposition. Matsusaka cows are fed quality feed designed to keep them healthy, while they are fed beer to stimulate their appetites. They are also massaged with shochu, a distilled liquor. The meat features an exquisite marbling of fat, making every cut appear like its own work of art.



### Kumano jidori

The most tender chicken

A combination of the Yakido chicken (a variety that is native to Mie), Ise Akadori chicken, and Nagoya Kochin chicken, these prized birds are raised in large barns where they are free to roam around. They are fed Kumano rice grown as animal feed as well as local citrus fruits, and their drinking water comes from the pure valley waters that flow by Kumano Kodo. Top chefs from all over the world seek out this chicken's rich, fleshy meat.



### Iga beef

Favorites of the Iga ninja

Iga beef's bright color, richness of aroma and flavor, and its unique tenderness have helped it become an eminent brand in Japan. Having been mentioned as far back as in an early 14th century tome, it has a long history. It is said that ninja once carried Iga beef jerky as emergency rations. Iga cows continue to be exchanged between buyer and seller the old fashioned way—through face-to-face meetings at the farm.



### Abalone

A sacred offering caught by *ama* divers

For over 2,000 years, *ama* divers have been fishing for abalone in reefs off the cities of Toba and Shima. Those abalone caught in the Kuzaki area of Toba are especially sacred and are offered to Ise Jingu. You can try a taste of fresh abalone in the huts where *ama* take a break after diving. There, the *ama* grill their catch over charcoal until they are bursting with juices.

### Anori fugu

A local winter specialty

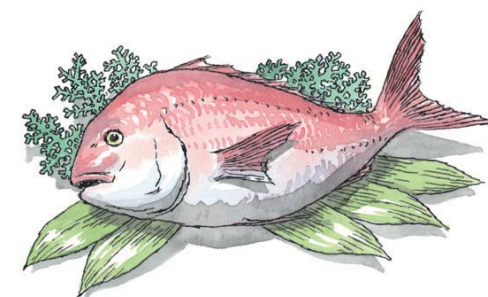
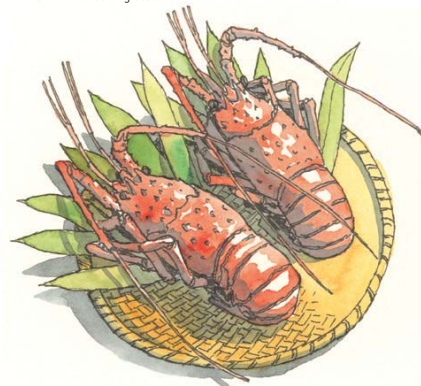
This puffer fish is caught primarily around Anori Harbor in Shima Peninsula. Each fish weighs over 700 grams and has a ferocious look that belies the tenderness and sweetness of its pink flesh. It is in season during fall and winter. During this time, ryokan inns and dining establishments in the area serve puffer fish courses that include sashimi, casseroles, and other dishes.



### Ise lobster

Nature's gift to gourmands

Ise lobsters are raised in the ecologically rich Ise Bay and the nutrient-rich Kuroshio Current. As a result, their flesh is juicy and sweet, whether eaten raw, grilled, or boiled. The fishermen take particular care to maintain this flavor by gently removing each lobster from their nets, one at a time. Smaller lobsters are returned to the ocean, and a ban on lobster fishing is in place during breeding season.



### Red seabream

A feast for good fortune

In Japan, red seabream is considered the king of fish, a delicacy traditionally served as a symbol of good fortune at weddings, rites of passage, and other celebrations. It is fished all year round, but red seabream caught in the spring just before breeding season is especially fatty and delicious. Mie's wild seabream are primarily fished in the Kumano Sea, but those caught via handline at the mouth of Ise Bay are particularly meaty. The fish is also farmed. Technological advances in recent years have made it possible to farm red seabream that offer the same rich quality and deep red skin as their wild equivalent.



### Oysters

Succulent delights of the Mie seas

Oysters are widely cultured off the coast of Mie, from Ise Bay to Kumano Sea. The waters are rich with minerals, so the oysters grow a year faster than in other parts of Japan, making them especially plump and sweet. Each oyster is raised in its own cage to ensure its health. Oysters meant for raw consumption are washed in seawater and then disinfected with UV rays. Matoya, Uramura, and Watari oysters are Mie's most famous.



## Rock oysters

Large, creamy delicacies

Mie rock oysters that are caught in the spring and summer are bigger and more robust in flavor than those caught during fall and winter. Squeeze some fresh lemon juice over a cooled rock oyster and slurp it off its shell to enjoy its briny aroma and creaminess.



## Sea lettuce

A rich, briny vegetable

Sea lettuce is widely farmed throughout Mie, from the mouth of Ise Bay—where nutrient-rich river water combines with warm seawater brought in by the Kuroshio Current—to the Kumano Sea. Mie is, in fact, Japan's largest producer of sea lettuce. This becomes evident during the wintertime, when the waters off of the Shima region are cast completely green. Rocked by gentle waves and painstakingly attended to by farmers, the sea lettuce turns a deep shade of green as it becomes more fibrous, and its rich, briny aroma intensifies.



## Tuna

Delectable offerings of the sea

A wide variety of tuna can be found in Mie—from wild tuna caught both in coastal and distant waters, to quality farmed tuna. Both fishermen and fish farmers take great care to preserve the quality and freshness of the fish, so visitors are guaranteed to find high-quality tuna anywhere they travel in Mie.



## Ise hijiki

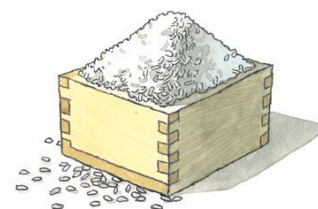
Soft, flavorful sea vegetables

Ise *hijiki* makes up seventy percent of all *hijiki* consumed in Japan. These brown sea vegetables grow on rocks in the shoals of Ise Bay, where they develop into thick strands that are very rich in flavor. Soon after being harvested, they are dried outdoors and put back in water to rinse off the residual salt. After this, they are steamed at high temperatures, and then dried again. This process gives Ise *hijiki* its distinctive softness.

## Rice

Treasures of Mie's ecosystems

Koshihikari rice is produced throughout Japan, but the brand grown in Iga has been particularly blessed with optimal climate and soil conditions. It has been named one of the best in Japan. There is also a local variety of rice called Mie 23-go. One Mie 23-go brand, Musubi-no-kami, was hand-selected to be cultivated as a premium item. When cooked, its grains expand nicely and are imbued with a rich sweetness that comes forward at first bite. Japanese and Western restaurants alike use this rice for a variety of dishes, from rice balls to risotto.



## Nanki mikan

A citrus fruit of many flavors

The Nanki region enjoys a warm climate throughout the year, due to the Kuroshio Current that passes through the nearby Kumano Sea. This is why mikan oranges are grown here all year round. These fruits are indigenous to the area, and come in a variety of delicious flavors, ranging from sweet to sour, that lend themselves to a wide array of beverages and dishes.



## Ise tea

A soothing, aromatic beverage

Ise tea ranks third in production among all of Japan's teas. The taste is a fine balance between sweetness and bitterness, and its aroma is subtle and enchanting. Ise tea has won several awards at tea competitions. There are many local techniques to preparing the tea, such as covering the tea leaves in a dark cloth before picking them to reduce their bitterness, and steaming the leaves for a long period of time to give them a more mellow flavor.



## Sake

Flavorful local brews

Sake is made from fermented rice, but it is not just the quality of the local rice that makes Mie's sake so exceptional. The prefecture's rich culinary culture, its ideal climate, and the purity of its water also contribute to its flavor. There are 35 distilleries throughout Mie that offer a wide range of sake that compliment a variety of cuisine. Many of their products have earned high marks at sake contests around Japan.





## ( Food that carries on through generations )

Many Mie specialties go back centuries. These include Ise udon, *tekone-zushi* from Shima, *sanma-zushi* from Higashi-Kishu, and *mehari-zushi* from Kumano.

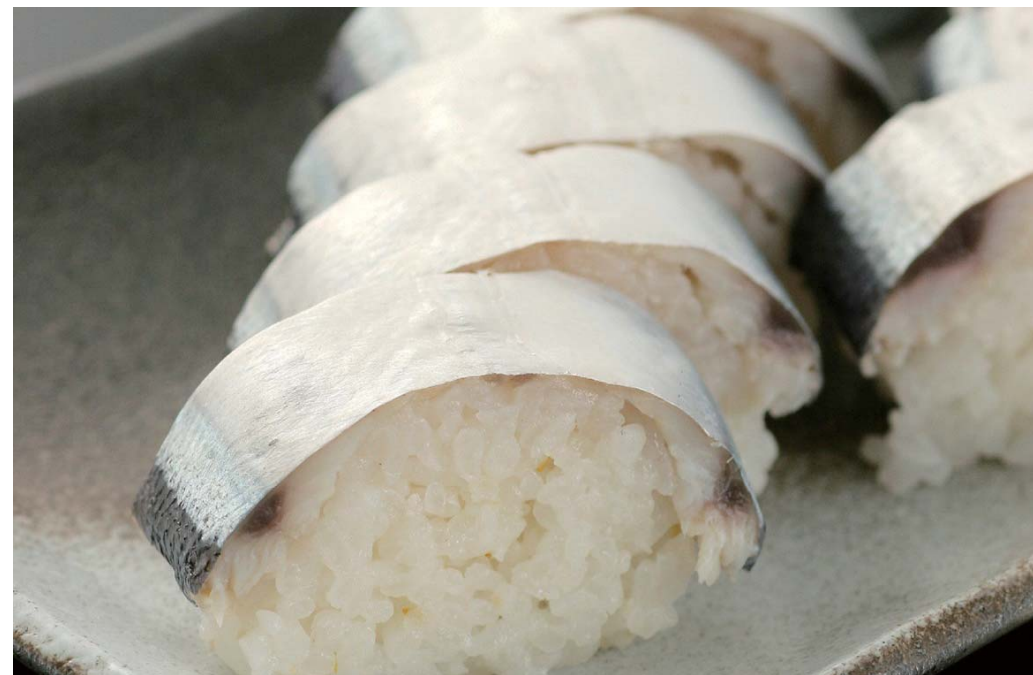
### Ise udon

Thick udon noodles, cooked until tender, are dipped in a rich, dark sauce made from thick soy sauce and a broth that has been extracted from flakes of dried fish (such as bonito), kelp, and other ingredients. A handful of chopped Welsh onions is all the garnish this traditional dish needs.



### Mehari-zushi

In this traditional lunch dish, rice is wrapped in a leafy vegetable that has been marinated in salt or bran. "Mehari" means "eye-opening," which refers to its tastiness as well as the ridiculous amount one has to open one's mouth to take a bite out of it.



### Sanma-zushi

Saury is sliced open and lightly salted and then wrapped around vinegar-infused rice. There are different regional interpretations on the dish. For example, sometimes the saury is cut from the back instead of from the stomach, or a dab of hot mustard sauce might be added to add a little zing.



### Tekone-zushi

In this local specialty, bonito (or another type of red fish) is marinated in soy sauce and then mixed with sushi rice. It is typically eaten by fishermen between shifts, but it was also once served to celebrate special occasions, such as large hauls.



"I want to continue making products here in Mie that will amaze the world."

## Yasuo Nishikimi

President and CEO, Nishikimi Chuzou

Photo: Tsukuru Asada (Secession)  
Text: Kosuke Kawakami (Deluxe Continental)

# Mie and Industry

Nishikimi was born in Aichi Prefecture in 1960. After taking over Nishikimi Chuzou, the manufacturing company founded by his father, he developed the Magic Frying Pan. He moved the company to Mie Prefecture in 2002, after which the product became a major hit. The company has sold over 150,000 pans throughout Japan. "Long-lasting products have great appeal," Nishikimi says. "Some hotels have been using the same kitchen equipment for over twenty years."

The people of Mie are very serious. Whether young or old, they are grounded and pragmatic, tackling every job with commitment. You get the sense that this is fertile ground for serious technological development. Yes, the people of Mie are famous for their relaxed magnanimity. But when it comes to manufacturing and craftsmanship, their manner is anything but casual. They have a keen eye for quality and make sure that every detail is meticulously designed. Over Mie's long history, the prefecture has produced many new crafts and technologies, and I believe it is due to this character of the people.

The Magic Frying Pan—for which there are currently 40,000 backorders and a 30-month-long waiting list—is an example of a Made-in-Mie hit product. Its manufacturer, Nishikimi Chuzou, was founded in 1960 by my father in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture. For many years, the company produced industrial machinery components as a subcontractor for automobile makers and other manufacturers. However, as the

economy slowed in the 1990s and manufacturing began to shift overseas, the company entered a difficult period. I was managing director at the time, and I realized that if we wanted to survive the headwinds we faced, we needed to make unique goods that no one else could imitate. So, we began developing our own products.

In 1992, our various research efforts culminated in a 2 mm-thick frying pan. Then, in 1995, we successfully reduced the pan's thickness to 1.5 mm. This involved technology on the same level as that used to manufacture Formula One parts. I was so confident in our product that I began visiting hotels and restaurants around the country to get professional chefs to give the pan a try. As I expected, the chefs praised the pan for the speed with which it heated their ingredients. The major selling points of the Magic Frying Pan are its excellent heat efficiency and its ability to retain heat. These qualities allow food cooked in the pan to retain its original flavor. Despite these attractive attributes, sales at the time were

sluggish, perhaps because the pan was seen as a tool designed only for professionals.

That changed in 2002, when we moved the company to Kuwana-gun in Mie. The media began to report on what the professionals had long been saying about our frying pan, and, all of a sudden, the general public began to show interest in it, too. Perhaps we had picked up the good vibes of Mie. Whatever the case may have been, our company's fortunes transformed overnight. One reporter who saw our product dubbed it the "Magic Frying Pan," and the name stuck. After that, sales grew dramatically, and orders started to outstrip production.

I started getting inquiries from American and European companies seeking technology tie-ups. If my goal was simply financial success, perhaps I should have listened to those offers. But it wasn't. My aim has always been to create technology that did not exist before. I want to continue making products here in Mie that will amaze the world.

Stunning natural vistas and history are not the only things that Mie has to offer. The prefecture also boasts many homegrown technologies and world-class industries that are the results of innovative ideas given birth by the land, people, and character of Mie. Nowhere is this more apparent than in one of Mie's biggest hit products: the Magic Frying Pan.

## Mie's Amazing Technologies



©Mitsubishi Aircraft Corporation

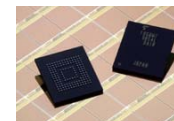
### Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (Matsusaka)

November 11, 2015, saw the maiden flight of the first prototype of the domestically produced MRJ jet aircraft—the first commercial aircraft developed by Mitsubishi Aircraft Corporation. Mitsubishi Heavy Industries' Matsusaka Plant is scheduled to begin full production of the aircraft's horizontal and vertical stabilizers.



### NTN (Kuwana)

NTN is a bearings maker founded in 1918. It is globally renowned for its cutting-edge technology. The company's bearings are used in the rotating parts of machines around the world, from automobiles and airplanes to trains and wind generators. NTN produces environmentally friendly products that help save energy by reducing friction.



### Toshiba Semiconductor and Storage (Yokkaichi)

Toshiba invented flash memory, and in Yokkaichi, the company runs the world's most sophisticated flash memory manufacturing plant. The factory has produced the world's smallest chips in every generation, and was the first in the world to develop 48-layer 3D flash memory.



### Okitsumo (Nabari)

Heat-resistant, high-emissivity, and anti-friction coatings are just some of the functional coatings that Okitsumo develops and manufactures. These are used in a wide range of industrial applications, including home appliances, cars, and even rockets. Okitsumo is also the world's leading producer of silicon-based heat-resistant coatings.



### Sumitomo Wiring Systems (Yokkaichi)

The company provides products—such as the world's top wire harnesses for cars—that meet the needs of today's electric cars, hybrid vehicles, and electronic components. With superior technology and quality, the company is helping to build a richer society.



### Ureshinoagri (Matsusaka)

This agricultural company uses cutting-edge systems such as computer-aided greenhouse monitoring and systems that reuse heat waste and excess steam produced in their factories. By doing so, they hope to promote reliable, high-quality solutions to farmers in Japan, as well as the rest of the world.



# Take a Piece of Mie Home With You



## Itoin Senbei

These small, light crackers were first made in 1905 by the Haritaya teashop as an offering to the Emperor when he visited Ise Jingu. This delightful confection is characterized by its gentle scent of egg whites and a subtle sweetness. ¥780 (15 pack). [Haritaya]



## Ise Udon

These thick, white noodles are made with Mie's flour and spring water. They are sold under the Marukawa Shoten brand by Istgraph—a company that designs products inspired by traditional cultures, with the goal of revitalizing these cultures. ¥648 (2 servings). [Istgraph]



## Isenishiki Rumiko no Sake (Tokubetsu Junmai)

Produced by Moriki Shuzo, one of Mie's renowned sake breweries, this sake is named after the current brewery owner, Rumiko Moriki. A good sake requires three things: good rice, good water, and good people. This bottle meets all three criteria and reaffirms the reputation of Mie's sake. ¥1,980 (720 ml). [Moriki Shuzo]



## Satonaka

These popular cookies served at Monna Lisa, a café, are crispy on the outside and soft inside. They are made with ingredients typically offered to Ise Jingu, such as salt, rice, sake, kelp, and brown sugar. The contemporary-looking logo is actually a late 19th century design. ¥645 (3 salt, 3 rice, and 3 sake cookies). [Monna Lisa]



## Nagamochi

These oblong rice cakes have been sold as souvenirs at Ise Jingu since 1550. Both sides are lightly grilled to give the cakes a crispy exterior while retaining its chewy center. Each cake is filled with a mildly sweet red bean paste. ¥648 (7 pack). [Sasaiya]



## Iwato-no-shio

This natural sea salt has had very little of its brine removed, thus retaining many essential nutrients. It is the perfect seasoning to supplement minerals that tend to be missing from modern diets. Just a pinch can make a huge difference to your food. ¥820 (125 g). [Iwatokan]



## Omotenashi Kabuse-cha

This tea is rich in sweetness and umami. During the cultivation process, the tea leaves are covered with a dark cloth for 14 days before being picked, which reduces their bitterness. It is a popular tea with children, as well as adults who find typical Japanese teas to be too bitter. ¥1,080 (100 g). [Marushige Seisui Seicha]



## Matsusaka Roast Beef

Asahiya is a butcher shop that specializes in world-renowned Matsusaka beef. The shop prides itself on the reliability of its producers. People line up outside the shop on a daily basis to buy their meat products, including their rich, melt-in-your-mouth Matsusaka roast beef. ¥1,555 (100 g). [Asahiya]



## Sea Lettuce Nori

This nori is made from sea lettuce grown in the seas off Ise-Shima, an area that receives plenty of sunlight. The smell of the ocean hits you the moment you open the package. It can add flavor to any dish, Japanese or Western. ¥500 (20 g). [Hashimotoya Tokubei]



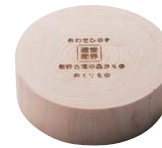
## Niihime Ponzu

Niihime is a tiny citrus fruit discovered by chance in the Atashikacho district of the city of Kumano. Its strong acidity, flavorful bitterness, and refreshing aroma make it the perfect ingredient for ponzu, a dressing that goes well with a wide variety of dishes. ¥822 (300 ml). [Kumanoshi Furusato Shinkou Kousha]



## Hitoshizuku

This Japanese tea set for children is made at a traditional Banko-yaki workshop in the city of Yokkaichi. It is the perfect introduction to the Japanese tea ceremony—a tradition that is emblematic of the Japanese concept of hospitality known as *omotenashi*. ¥4,320 (1 teapot and 2 cups). [Fujiiso Pottery]



## Aromatic Woodblock (Owase Cypress)

This woodblock, which is meant to be floated in bath water, is carved from an Owase cypress tree growing along the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage routes—a World Heritage Site. The wood is said to soothe nerves, rejuvenate and disinfect skin, and also kill bacteria. ¥420 (Small size). [Yume Kodo Owase]

“The secrets of Mie only known to me.”

## Yoshiko Ikoma

Creative Director, Mie Terrace

Photo : Atsuko Toyama (Crossover)  
Text : Yoshiko Ikoma

It has been less than four years since I first visited Mie Prefecture, but I already feel like we are soul mates. For most of my life, I had never even considered the possibility, despite my grandmother being born there, in the city of Ueno in Iga. In fact, before becoming creative director of Mie Terrace, my travels were far more likely to involve international art or fashion exhibitions in Paris, Milan, and New York. But since assuming my latest post, I have visited Mie around forty times, and the place never ceases to enthrall me.

Mie's proud history glitters with examples of the Japanese approach to hospitality known as *omotenashi*. In the 18th and 19th centuries, about twenty percent of Japan's population visited the prefecture to pray at Ise Jingu. Most of this activity occurred on the occasion of the reconstruction of both Ise Jingu and Izumo-taisha, another sacred site—an event that occurred only once every sixty years. Some people pooled their savings to send a representative of their village—selected by lottery—to Ise Jingu. Other stories tell of people strapping wooden ladders—an item that the worshippers left at the gates of the shrine at the end of their pilgrimages—to their pet dogs and sending them off to the shrine. The fact that even citizens of Edo (the historical name of Tokyo) were willing to travel for two to three weeks on foot to reach the shrine is a testament to the strength of their faith, and to a nationwide yearning to be within close proximity of this magnificent shrine. How did the people of Mie react to the millions of outsiders descending upon their land? With hospitality.

One example is the wheat noodles known as Ise udon. This local delicacy is soft and airy, and thick but soft—the opposite of al dente. It was intentionally conceived in this way to be easy on both the palates and stomachs of weary travelers, especially when flavored in a sweet-and-sour dipping sauce.

Visitors to Mie were also warmly welcomed with a variety of mochi rice cakes, a

tradition that continues to this day. In fact, the iconic approach to Ise Jingu, known as Sangu Kaido, is lined with so many confectionery shops that it has been nicknamed Mochi Road. There are cakes smothered in red bean paste, and cakes with only a thin veneer of mochi wrapped around a generous red bean paste filling. Some cakes are lightly grilled on both sides; others come in long, oblong shapes. There are even cakes that are made with whole mochi rice, not pounded as is usually the case with these confections. The tired worshippers happily scarfed down these delectable treats, along with a cup of local Ise tea.

Several provinces in what is today Mie Prefecture once served as official suppliers of food to the Imperial household. Today, the prefecture continues to be a producer of high-quality seafood and agricultural products. Mie is famous for its Matsusaka beef, Iga beef, and Kumano jidori chicken. You will also find delicious lobster, abalone, oysters, seaweed, citrus fruits, tea, sake, and Iwato-no-shio, a natural salt that is also presented as an offering to Ise Jingu. The prefecture is also renowned for a flourishing craft arts scene, led by cypress woodwork and Banko-yaki pottery. Both Mie's food and its craft art works are products of the prefecture's bountiful nature, and are available for visitors to take home with them as souvenirs.

The spirit of Mie revolves around three principles: living in harmony with nature; combining tradition with innovation; and promoting sustainability, a concept embodied by the reconstruction of Ise Jingu every twenty years. It is these principles that makes Mie the spiritual home of the Japanese. In May 2016, Mie will play host to the Ise-Shima G7 Summit. VIPs from around the world will have the opportunity to take a piece of Mie home with them. However, it is my hope that what these dignitaries take home with them will not be limited to souvenirs, but also include the respect for nature and spirit of peace and harmony that Mie represents.



Yoshiko Ikoma's early career saw her take up several editorial positions at top fashion magazines including *VOGUE*, *ELLE*, and *Marie Claire*. In subsequent years, she has focused on raising awareness of eco-living and corporate social responsibility through the prism of fashion journalism. Ikoma currently leads WOA, a government-run initiative designed to promote traditional Japanese craft arts by creating contemporary fashion items inspired by these arts. She also serves as a member of the Cool Japan Public-Private Expert Council.



# Mie Map



## ① Inabe

Population: 46,000. Located in the northernmost point of Mie. Has a thriving auto industry. Famous for its rice and tea.

## ② Toincho

Population: 25,000. Birthplace of the celebrated kabuki actor Matsumoto Koshiro VII and famous for its children's kabuki. Has an 35.8-acre park that is popular with families.

## ③ Kuwana

Population: 142,000. Has an industrial sector, focused primarily on metal and machinery, that developed thanks to its accessible location. Home to a large leisure complex.

## ④ Kisosakicho

Population: 6,000. Located near the mouth of Kiso River, which feeds the area's farms, and overlooks expansive Ise Bay, which provides bountiful seafood. Famous for the cherry blossom "tunnels" that form over the roads in the spring.

## ⑤ Asahicho

Population: 10,000. The smallest town in the prefecture. According to the national census, the population grew 35.3% in 2010—the highest in the country.

## ⑥ Kawagoecho

Population: 14,000. A thriving industrial center and home to a Chubu Electric Power thermal power plant. Also has a robust processed seafood products business.

## ⑦ Komonocho

Population: 41,000. Nestled in the foothills of the nature-rich Suzuka Mountains. Local Yunoyama hot spring is a major tourist attraction, having been in operation for nearly 1,300 years.

## ⑧ Yokkaichi

Population: 312,000. Originally developed as a town to provide lodging for travelers on the Tokaido road. Now one of Japan's leaders in industry and environmental reform. Its factory lights produce interesting nightscapes.

## ⑨ Suzuka

Population: 200,000. Home to Suzuka Circuit, one of the world's most famous racetracks. Considered the mecca of Japanese motorsports.

## ⑩ Kameyama

Population: 49,000. An inland city that offers both history—Seki-juku is brimming with architecture preserved from the 19th century—and industry, with its world-leading LCD production facilities.

## ⑪ Iga

Population: 94,000. Former castle town of the Todo family. Once a popular stop for pilgrims heading to Ise Jingu. Famous for being the hometown of the Iga ninja clan and haiku poet Matsuo Basho.

## ⑫ Nabari

Population: 80,000. Kochi Valley and the 48 Akame Waterfalls offer stunning natural vistas. Originally developed as a commuter town for people working in the Kansai region.

## ⑬ Tsu

Population: 283,000. Capital of Mie Prefecture. Located along the coast, approximately in the center of Ise Plain. Famous for its hot springs, including Sakakibara, Mado, Inokura, and Hinotani. Also well known for its golf courses.

## ⑭ Matsusaka

Population: 167,000. Famous throughout the world for its Matsusaka beef. Also known for being the city where renowned film director Yasujiro Ozu spent his teenage years.

## ⑮ Meiwacho

Population: 23,000. Located right by the Ise Kaido pilgrimage path to Ise Jingu. Was once the residence of an unmarried female relative to the Emperor who was made to serve Ise Jingu.

## ⑯ Takicho

Population: 15,000. An inland town located in central Mie. Home to Mago-no-Mise, a restaurant run by high school students who are members of the cooking club at nearby Oka High School.

## ⑰ Odaicho

Population: 9,000. Part of the town is an official UNESCO Biosphere Reserve that is home to Osugi Valley—an official Natural Monument of Japan—and serene tea fields.

## ⑱ Tamakicho

Population: 15,000. Once a popular stop for pilgrims traveling to Ise Jingu and the three Kumano Sanzan shrines. Cherry blossoms decorate the Tamura Castle ruins in the spring.

## ⑲ Wataraicho

Population: 8,000. A historic town that is mentioned in some of Japan's earliest written works. Many of the preserved locations are related to Japanese myths and legends.

## ⑳ Taikicho

Population: 9,000. Tsuzurato Toge and Nisaka Toge—two of the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage routes—are located along the border with neighboring Kihokuchō. Has a flourishing fishing and dairy industry.

## ㉑ Ise

Population: 130,000. Home of Ise Jingu, which is dedicated to Amaterasu Omikami, the goddess of all Japan. Pilgrims have been flocking to this city for centuries.

## ㉒ Minamiisecho

Population: 14,000. Located just south of Ise-Shima National Park. Boasts the largest fish hauls in the prefecture. Famous for a heart-shaped bay that is a popular destination for couples.

## ㉓ Toba

Population: 20,000. Has a beautiful ria coast with trenches full of wonderful sea life. The first in the world to successfully culture pearls, traditionally caught by *ama* divers. Has more *ama* divers than anywhere else in Japan.

## ㉔ Shima

Population: 53,000. Site of the 2016 G7 Summit. Ago Bay, where rafts used for pearl cultivation float amongst islands both large and small, offers some of the most stunning sights in all of Japan.

## ㉕ Kihokuchō

Population: 17,000. Home to the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage routes, a World Heritage Site, and beautiful Choshi River. Famous for its rich variety of seafood.

## ㉖ Owase

Population: 19,000. Hills covered with forests of Owase cypresses and the Kumano Sea offer beautiful natural sights. A variety of local seafood specialties can be savored here. Also famous for its deep-sea drinking water.

## ㉗ Kumano

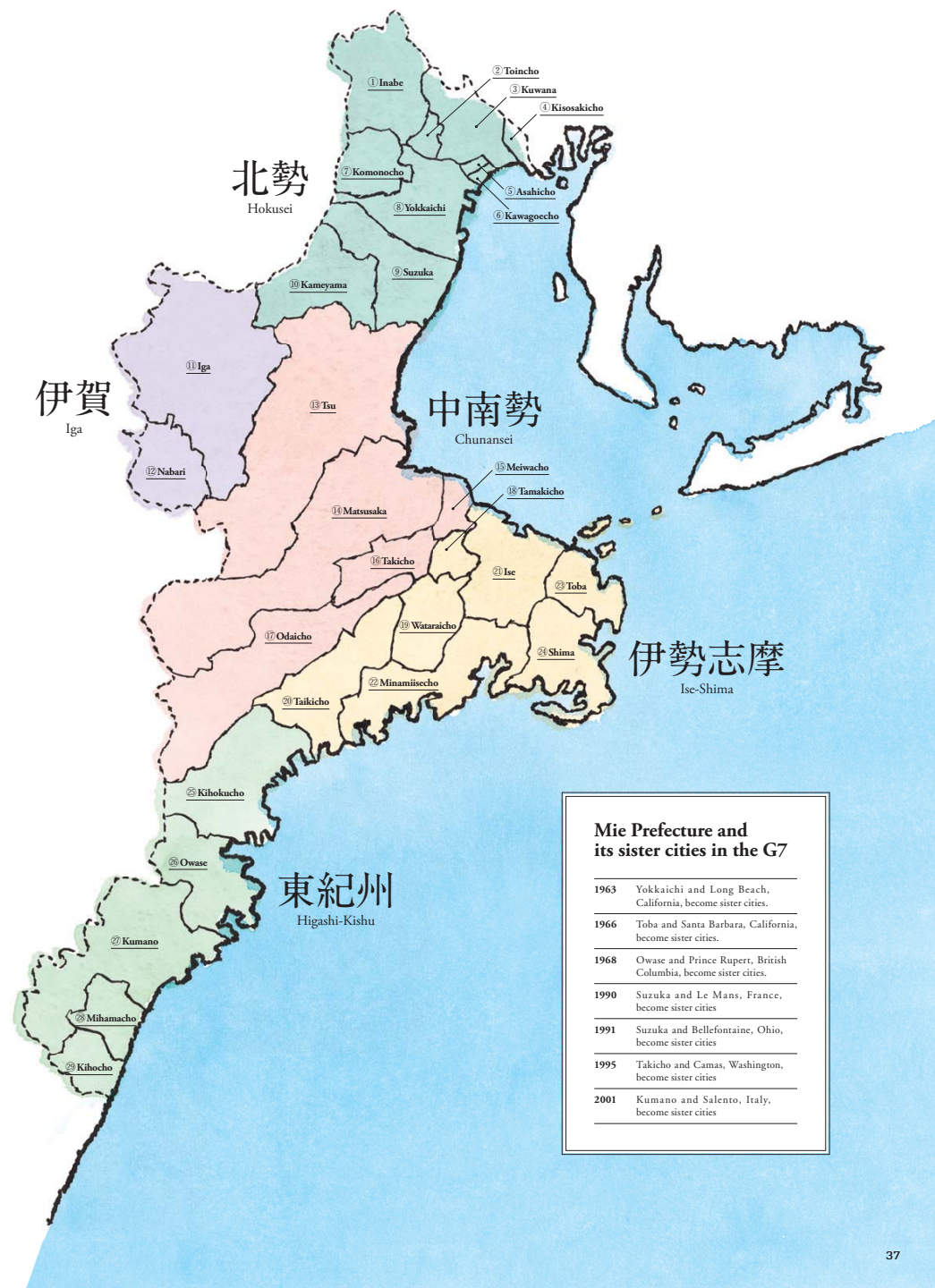
Population: 18,000. Brimming with history and nature, from the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage routes to Hana-no-iyawa—the oldest shrine in Japan—and the Maruyama Senmaida terraced rice fields. Famous for its seafood and chicken.

## ㉘ Mihamacho

Population: 9,000. Has a warm climate that lends itself to year-round mikan orange cultivation. Famous for the 1,500-year-old Hikitsukuri-no-Okusu camphor tree.

## ㉙ Kihochō

Population: 11,000. Boasts a warm climate and a rich natural environment. Located at the southernmost point of Mie. Famous for its sea turtle park and for Kumano River, which runs along a Kumano Kodo route.



## Mie Prefecture and its sister cities in the G7

1963	Yokkaichi and Long Beach, California, become sister cities.
1966	Toba and Santa Barbara, California, become sister cities.
1968	Owase and Prince Rupert, British Columbia, become sister cities.
1990	Suzuka and Le Mans, France, become sister cities.
1991	Suzuka and Bellefontaine, Ohio, become sister cities.
1995	Takicho and Camas, Washington, become sister cities.
2001	Kumano and Salento, Italy, become sister cities.



## The best things about Mie, according to middle schoolers

Mie Prefecture will be hosting the 2016 G7 Summit. The locals are excited about this opportunity—including the children. Here are some of the things that third-year middle school students in the cities of Ise and Yokkaichi love about Mie.

The view from Mt. Gozaisho. Akafuku-mochi rice cakes. Meoto Iwa at dawn. Abalone. Beautiful seas. Kumano Kodo. Matsusaka beef. Rendaiji persimmons. The 48 Akame Waterfalls. “Okinna” (“Thank you” in the local dialect). Okage Yokocho. Suzuka Circuit. Ise lobster. Beef croquettes sold at Butasute. Tonteki (a local pork steak). Matsuo Basho. “Ashita,” “asatte,” “sasatte” (“tomorrow,” “the day after tomorrow,” and “the day after the day after tomorrow” in the local dialect). Miya River during the cherry blossom season. “Nukutai” (“warm” in the local dialect). Banko-yaki pottery. Lovely nature. Saori Yoshida (Olympic wrestler). Fireworks in Kumano. Ocean sunfish at Shima Marine Land. Ise Jingu in the morning. Henba-mochi rice cakes. The view from Toba Observatory. Nagashima Spa Land. Onigiri senbei (Japanese crackers in the shape of rice balls). Being in the center of Japan. Ise udon. Shima Spain Village. All seafood is delicious! Panju (confectionery with a sweet filling). Ise-Katagami paper stencils. Friendly people. Home of the ninjas. Tsuitachi-mochi rice cakes sold only on the 1st of every month. Suizawa tea. The upcoming G7 Summit. Nishino Kana (pop musician). Isshiki Ohashi bridge at sunrise. Shimenawa (a ritual rope) are hung all year round in Ise. Nabana no Sato. Nagamochi rice cakes. Everyone feels at home here. Isshiki Noh. Mikan oranges from Kumano. Fall leaves at Miyazuma Valley. Mt. Fuji, which you can see in the morning on a good day from the coast of Ominato. The lights of Yokkaichi Industrial Complex. Stars at night. The view from Mt. Asama. Tsu gyoza dumplings.

(A big thank you to the students of Minato Middle School in Ise and Minato Middle School in Yokkaichi)

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AZUKI—the taste of  
Japanese tradition.

(Photo) Zenzai: A traditional dessert made from sweetened boiled azuki.

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