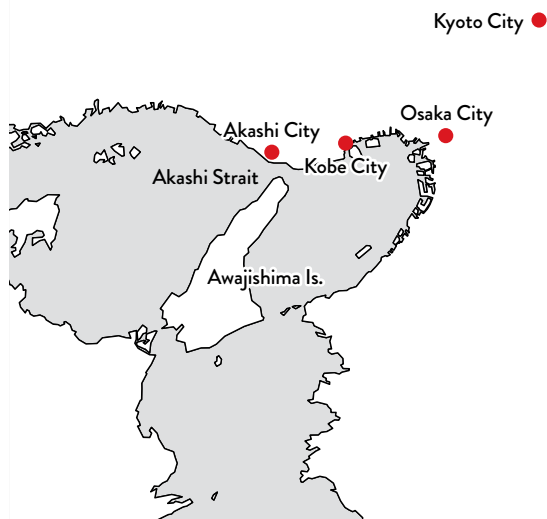


FEATURES



Akashi Sea Bream: Japan's Most Prized Sea Bream

The Akashi sea bream, which is caught in the sea off Akashi City in Hyogo Prefecture, is one of Japan's most prized fish. Doi Yusuke, a member of the Akashi-ura Fisheries Cooperative told us about the appeal of this local delicacy. (Text: Morohashi Kumiko)

The Akashi sea bream is a red variety of sea bream caught in the sea off Akashi City, Hyogo Prefecture. The popularity of Akashi sea bream as a high-end fish is said to be due to the location of the Akashi Strait, which is right off Akashi.

The Akashi Strait has rapid tidal currents, which cause a particular ocean flow that brings nutrients from the depths of the sea up to the surface. These nutrients allow crustaceans, such as shrimp and crabs, which serve as sea bream feed, to breed in abundance, while the shallow areas form natural fish ponds rich with seafood.

The Akashi sea bream's reputation for great taste is said to be thanks to this diet and to the fast currents. These factors tone the flesh and give it a strong

umami.

Sea bream brought in at the Akashi port, in particular, are carefully handled one by one. They are processed in a special way that ensures that the fish is delivered to the consumer still fresh.

Because of its superb flavor and texture, Akashi sea bream is often served at first-class *ryotei* (traditional Japanese-style restaurants) and other luxurious restaurants. It is used in a variety of dishes, including sashimi and sushi.

Another reason for the popularity of Akashi sea bream is its beautiful appearance. It is often described as the "Queen of the Seashore" because of the blue makeup-like pattern over its eyes, called eye shadow, and its light-pink body spattered with dots of blue.



Akashi Port, where large numbers of Akashi sea bream are brought in

Photo: Akashi-ura Fisheries Cooperative

Photo: PIXTA



View of the Akashi Kaikyo Bridge, which spans the Akashi Strait. The sea surrounding the Akashi Strait offers an expanse of rich fishing grounds.



Akashi sea bream at the Akashi Port, freshly caught in the nutrient-rich waters of the Akashi Straits

Photo: Akashi-ura Fisheries Cooperative

Akashi sea bream caught in spring is also called sakura-dai (cherry blossom sea bream), because of its beautiful pink tinge, which resembles the color of Japanese cherry blossoms in spring. The cherry blossom sea bream is prized as a good-luck charm.

The City of Akashi is famous not only for its sea bream but also for the Akashi octopus. Another local

attraction is the Akashi Kaikyo Bridge, one of the world's longest bridges (3,911m). If you have a chance, visit Akashi and enjoy its selection of local seafood delicacies, including the famous Akashi sea bream, and its beautiful scenes overlooking the ocean. **7**

1. An approximately 4km-wide channel between Akashi City, Hyogo Prefecture, and Awaji Island



Sashimi prepared from fresh Akashi sea bream, arranged in its original shape

Photo: PIXTA



One of the characteristics of the Akashi sea bream is the vibrant blue pattern over its eyes

Photo: PIXTA