



Rich Fisheries and Craftwork of Wakasa-Obama

Obama Hiromine and Elsewhere, Obama City

Dabbled with oil and grilled immediately after being brought ashore, the *hamayaki saba*, or “beach-grilled mackerel,” is one of Obama’s many famous seafood delights. Delicious fresh or chilled, these fish are a major part of the local diet, and the smoke rising from the grills cooking them remind one of the area’s reputation as one providing food for the imperial family and court in times past.



Fresh caught and grilled mackerel^①



Market street in Idzumi-cho, located at the start of the old Saba Highway^②



One among Obama’s many rich fishing ports^③

Wakasa was once referred to as *Miketsukuni*, or “food country,” by the imperial court to whom it provided a considerable volume of foodstuffs from the sea. Then as now, the ocean has played an indelible role in shaping Obama’s culinary culture.

The Saba Highway, so called because the pickled mackerel (*saba*) conveyed along it were ready to eat by the time they reached Kyoto, begins at what now constitutes Obama City’s Idzumi-cho. There, fish markets and grilled mackerel abound, and in the nearby Nishidu district fish are still dried in the sun. These sights and more remind one of the continued importance of the sea in Wakasa’s local food cultures.



Traditional fish drying^④



Fishing for ice goby^⑤

Wakasa lacquer has a history of 400 years, dating to when a lacquerer began employing Chinese shell inlay techniques and motifs to create works of lacquer art. It was subsequently dubbed *Wakasa nuri* (lacquer) by Sakai Tadakatsu, the lord of Obama, who promoted its production among his subordinate samurai, leading to its spread first among Wakasa and then throughout the area. Now, Obama’s *Wakasa nuri* amounts to 80% of the nation’s lacquered chopstick production, and their



Wakasa lacquered chopsticks

beauty makes them a popular souvenir for Japanese and foreign tourists alike



Making Wakasa lacquered chopsticks



Obama Castle Ruins (Prefectural Historical Ruins)

