



# GASTRONOMY

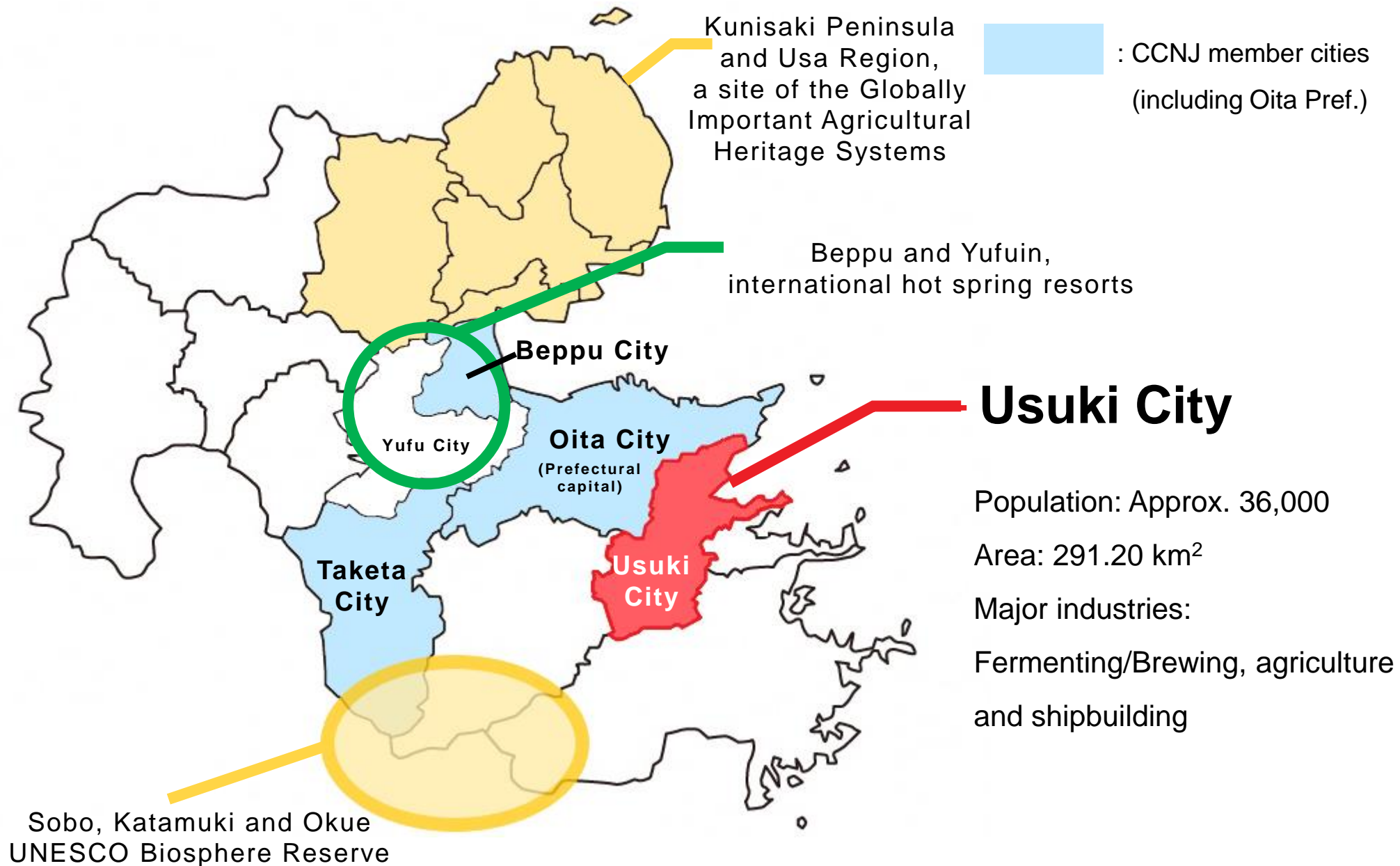
- Usuki City, Oita Prefecture -



# Table of Contents

• Usuki City Overview	2–4	• Supply of Local Produce as School Lunch Ingredients	22
• Usuki's Water	6	• Progress in the Fishing Industry	23
• Miso and Soy Sauce	7–10	• Conservation of the Seabed Environment and Fishery Resources	24
• Fermentation Technology Innovation at a Laboratory	11	• Branding Locally Produced Fish • and Promoting Local Food Production and Consumption	25
• Sake Brewing	12	• Open Lab	26
• Local Dishes	13–14	• International Exchange	27
• Buddhist Vegetarian Cuisine	15	• Forest Cultivation for Water Source Cultivation	28
• <i>Honzen</i> Cuisine	16	• Creative Tourism	29–30
• <i>Kabosu</i>	17	• A Small Town Young Japanese Want to Live in	31–32
• Puffer Fish Cuisine	18	• Usuki's Attempt to Become a Creative City of Gastronomy • through Fermentation and Circulation	33
• Mature Compost	19	• Usuki Creative City of Gastronomy Promotion Council	34–36
• Original Certification System • of Organic Agricultural Products	20		
• Ordinance Concerning Sustainable Food and Agriculture	21		

# Usuki City Overview





# Usuki City Overview

Usuki City is known to have one of the major castle towns in Oita Pref. Old town blocks that appear in an old map from the Edo period still remain and serve as city blocks, and many buildings from those days stand there, including merchants' houses, warriors' residences, temples and shrines.

## Map Comparison in the Area around Usuki Castle (Ruins)





# Usuki City Overview

## Scenic Spots in the Castle Town



### Usuki Castle Ruins (Oita Pref.'s designated historical site)

Usuki Castle was built in 1562 by Otomo Sorin, a famous Christian feudal lord. It was once surrounded by the sea. Now retaining only two turrets, part of a garden for a *shoin* reception building, and some stone walls, the castle ruins serve as a place of rest and relaxation for citizens as Usuki Park.

### Nioza Historical Road (“Nioza Rekishi no Michi”)

This historical road has been cleared through a hill of tuff, into which volcanic ash from Mt. Aso hardened.

Designated as one of the top 100 urban landscapes by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, the path is lined with many temples and warriors' residences and provides a historic streetscape of the castle town, entertaining the eyes of visitors.



### Three-story pagoda (of Ryugenji Temple) (a tangible cultural property designed by Oita Pref.)

This pagoda, where Prince Shotoku is enshrined, is in Ryugenji Temple (built in 1600), a branch temple of Jodo Shu head temple Chion-in.

Takahashi Dannai, a master craftsman born in Usuki, developed an idea for this pagoda, and his pupils gave shape to the conception. It took them 10 years from 1848 to build the pagoda, which was completed in 1858. This is one of Kyushu's only two existing wooden three-story pagodas from the Edo period.

## Otomo Sorin's encouragement to bring in European and Christian culture has nurtured Usuki's local dietary culture

Otomo Sorin is a famous Christian feudal lord in the mid-16th century. In the midst of the Warring States period, Sorin was based in Usuki, Bungo Province (today's Oita Pref.) and ruled his vast domain in today's east part of Kyushu.

Sorin actively introduced Western medicine, education and food. With the influx of European and Christian culture, his domain grew into one of Japan's most advanced areas. Usuki, Funai (today's Oita City), and other neighboring towns saw a spike in Christians. Usuki enjoyed great prosperity as one of Japan's leading ports for trade with Spain and Portugal. With many trade ships coming and going, the town was brimming with an air of exoticism in all terms, including food, clothing and housing.

*Ohan* ("yellow rice"), Usuki's local specialty, reportedly originated from paella, which foreign missionaries cooked as their own local dish. Historians also say that pumpkins, now enjoyed daily in Japan, were introduced to Bungo and spread there in Sorin's times. These examples give a glimpse of Sorin's policies of actively introducing European and Christian culture into food local dietary and other customs.



# Usuki's Water

A huge coral reef that formed a calcareous shell some 300 million years ago under the sea has risen due to crustal movements and many other factors into mountains with a lime deposit in Usuki.

Usuki's groundwater, which runs through the limestone layer, boasts a good balance of minerals and meets the requirements of "tasty water."



Clear stream in the upper course on Kaizoe's side,  
Kaizoe district, Usuki City

## Usuki's groundwater

Calcium ion: 26 mg/L

Hydrogen carbonate ion: 87 mg/L

Source:

*Shirabete Wakatta Oita no Mizu no Kao* (the Oita Pharmaceutical Association)

## Usuki's tap water

Usuki City's waterworks consist of seven water purification plants and use groundwater as the source of the city's water supply.

A highly stable quality of the groundwater spares most of these purification plants from filtering the water; they just need to chlorinate it.

# Miso and Soy Sauce

## Start of the local fermenting industry

Records show that Usuki's fermenting industry dates back to 1600, when Inaba Sadamichi was transferred from Mino Province (today's Gifu Pref.) to the Usuki domain as its head. **Kani Magoemon (the father of the founder of Kani Shoyu) accompanied the lord as a purveyor to Usuki and started fermenting miso there.**

One of the factors behind the prosper of Usuki's fermenting industry is the availability of **top-ranked water in terms of quality and taste**. Also, successive local lords protected and fostered fermenting, growing it into a major industry in Usuki.

## Three leading manufacturers of miso and soy sauce in the city

The city once had many miso and soy sauce factories, from large to small. Today, three local leading producers are in the city center: **Kani Shoyu, Fundokin Shoyu, and Fujijin Shoyu.**



**Kani Shoyu**  
(Established in 1600)

Kani Shoyu is said to be Kyushu's oldest producer of miso and soy sauce.

While carrying on the company's tradition and history, the 12th head of Kani Shoyu actively develops products that are conscious of a modern sense of taste. Kani Shoyu retains traditional face-to-face communication as its major style of sales and has many fans in and outside the city.



**Fundokin Shoyu**  
(Established in 1861)

As Kyushu's largest producer of miso and soy sauce, Fundokin Shoyu has a research institute for product development and multiple factories in the city.

While constantly employing the most advanced technologies, the company cherishes the traditional manufacturing process. Particularly, Fundokin Shoyu boasts the world's best soy sauce fermented in wooden barrels and pursues an authentic taste.



**Fujijin Shoyu**  
(Established in 1883)

While being loyal to the traditional manufacturing techniques that are over 100 years old, Fujijin Shoyu makes every effort to employ new technologies and has acquired two patents for a soy sauce manufacturing process.

Also, the company is actively engaged in community activities centered on culinary culture, delivering dietary lectures in elementary schools in the city.



# Miso and Soy Sauce

## Cooperative associations

Along with Japan's rapid economic growth, an increasingly fierce competition with large-scale companies in the same industry caused small-, mid- and tiny-sized businesses to drop out of the competition. Under the guidance of the nation, improvement in the organizational structure of small- and mid-sized companies led to cooperation and collaboration between companies in Oita Pref.

In Usuki City, four cooperative associations were formed between 1972 and 1984: the Niho Miso Cooperative Association and the Niho Soy Sauce Cooperative Association; and the Oita Miso Cooperative Association and the Oita Soy Sauce Cooperative Association.

These cooperative associations have many member companies of small, medium and tiny size in the industry in Oita Pref., and Usuki City has become a focal point of the fermenting industry in the prefecture.

Factories separately produce each member company's products, producing a wide variety of items in small lots.

### Associations (and the numbers of their member companies as of May 2021)

#### **Niho Miso Cooperative Association** (formed in 1972)

Number of member companies: 19

A miso-producing cooperative association led by Fujijin Shoyu

#### **Niho Soy Sauce Cooperative Association** (formed in 1980)

Number of member companies: 18

A soy sauce-producing cooperative association led by Fujijin Shoyu

#### **Oita Miso Cooperative Association** (formed in 1984)

Number of member companies: 10

A miso-producing cooperative association led by Fundokin Shoyu

#### **Oita Soy Sauce Cooperative Association** (formed in 1974)

Number of member companies: 19

A soy sauce-producing cooperative association led by Fundokin Shoyu

# Miso and Soy Sauce

Oita is one of the largest (**miso**) producers in Japan

Rank	Prefecture	Production
1	Nagano	215,524 t
2	Aichi	40,324 t
3	Hokkaido	24,302 t
4	Gunma	23,566 t
5	Hiroshima	17,436 t
6	Oita	16,646 t
7	Fukuoka	10,902 t
8	Aomori	10,446 t
9	Kyoto	10,206 t
10	Toyama	8,029 t

## Production (Usuki City)

Approx. **16,440 t**  
(Usuki City accounts for  
approx. **99%**)

### Source:

- **National rankings**

Statistical Charts on Industry 2019 (figures for 2018) by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

- **Proportion of Usuki City's production in Oita Pref.**

A survey by Usuki City (inquiries among companies in the city)

# Miso and Soy Sauce

Oita is one of the largest (soy sauce) producers in Japan

Rank	Prefecture	Production
1	Chiba	259,101 kl
2	Hyogo	145,926 kl
3	Aichi	68,151 kl
4	Gunma	52,220 kl
5	Kagawa	47,352 kl
6	Fukuoka	31,169 kl
7	Oita	25,802 kl
8	Mie	23,700 kl
9	Hokkaido	20,503 kl
10	Aomori	20,337 kl

Production (Usuki City)

Approx. **23,130 kl**  
(Usuki City accounts for  
approx. **90%**)

**Source:**

- **National rankings**  
Statistical Charts on Industry 2019 (figures for 2018) by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry
- **Proportion of Usuki City’s production in Oita Pref.**  
A survey by Usuki City (inquiries among companies in the city)



# Fermentation Technology Innovation at a Laboratory

## Fundokin Shoyu Co., Ltd.

Fundokin Shoyu is Kyushu's leading manufacturer of seasoning, which Oita is proud of. The company develops, manufactures and sells a wide variety of seasoning from miso and soy sauce to barbecue sauce, dressing and *ponzu* sauce.

**Established** 1861

**Employees** 500

**Production**

Miso: 15,000 t,  
soy sauce: 17,500 kl

## Food science laboratory



- For product development and quality verification, Fundokin Shoyu conducts the analysis and bacteriological testing of raw materials and products at its own laboratory.
- The company launches four or five new products a year, and for each of them, the lab conducts prototyping about 100 times.

## Halal products

- Fundokin Shoyu's halal soy sauce that appeared on the market in 2019 was developed jointly with a team of 11 undergraduate and graduate students from seven countries studying at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University. This product has been certified by the Japan Halal Association.
- As part of its future overseas business, Fundokin Shoyu is also planning to develop a new project in Malaysia and launch it in 2022 or later.



## Four sake breweries in Usuki City

Today, the city has four sake breweries. They jointly hold a storehouse-opening event every year. This year, they produced an original blend of the four breweries' *shochu* liquor, actively striving to nurture sake brewing culture.

### Kotegawa Shuzo (established in 1855)

As the precursor to Fundokin Shoyu, Kotegawa Shuzo has still continued to produce hand-brewed sake. In a 150-years-old white-washed storehouse, where this brewery has been located since its founding, Kotegawa Shuzo lays barley *shochu* liquor down in large pots, which is a rare method in the prefecture.

### Kuge Honten (established in 1862)

Aiming to become a brewery that promotes a society oriented to the recycling of local resources, Kuge Honten actively uses agricultural products grown in Oita Pref. (especially in Usuki City). This brewery continues to contribute to the local society through a close collaboration with farmers, the cultivation of eating and drinking culture, and eco-friendly actions.

### Fujii Shuzo (established in 1872)

With the spirit of *wajo ryoshu* ("great harmony among brewers makes great sake"), Fujii Shuzo uses high-quality water and raw materials from a rich natural environment to make *shochu* liquor, especially barley *shochu* liquor with barley produced in Oita Pref. In 1999, this brewery obtained OCPP certification and started to produce organic barley *shochu* liquor. Fujii Shuzo launched "organic barley *shochu* liquor laid down in sealed pots in a cave" in 2006, striving for further technical innovation.

### Akamine Shuzojo (established in 1872)

Akamine Shuzojo carefully brews sake for each bottle, with almost the whole brewing process conducted by hand. While valuing tradition, this brewery pursues sake brewing that goes with the times, developing liquor with the residue of organic ginger produced in Usuki (its juice squeezed out to make a local brand-name confection) and producing liquor with fruits grown in Usuki.

# Local Dishes

Usuki City has many local dishes that date back to the Edo period.

In the late Edo period, the Great Tenpo famine struck across Japan. Historians say that many domains in the country implemented financial rehabilitation reforms, many of which failed. Under such circumstances, the Usuki domain issued Tenpo no Kaikaku, an original thrift ordinance that obliged Usuki people to live a simple frugal life. Their wide variety of efforts ended up leading this reform to success.

One of the keys to the success was the spirit of simplicity and frugality, a temperament that characterizes Usuki people. Some local dishes of Usuki have their source from this spirit.

Here are three typical local dishes that the citizens of Usuki still love and enjoy today:

(1) *Ohan*      (2) *Kirasumameshi*      (3) *Chadaizushi*

## Typical local dish 1: *Ohan*



*Ohan* is rice cooked with yellow water dyed with gardenia fruit dipped in water. *Ohan* is paired with Kayaku, simmered white-meat fish, vegetables and tofu (similar to *kenchinjiru*, a soup loaded with vegetables).

Some experts say that this yellow rice was originally cooked as a celebratory dish that substituted for red rice, which was too luxurious in the simple frugal life. Others say that *ohan* was inspired by paella from Europe and is a relic of the introduction of European and Christian culture in the Warring States period.

Many houses in Usuki City have a gardenia plant in their gardens. On festive occasions and at the end of a year, people used to pick gardenia fruit from their gardens and cooked *ohan* with it. Today, *ohan* is served at school lunch and restaurants in the city and loved by men and women, young and old, as a popular local dish.



# Local Dishes

## Typical local dish 2: *Kirasumameshi*



*Kirasumameshi* is an economical dish. Leftover sashimi or fish meat scraped off the bones is coated with *okara* (a by-product of making tofu) to increase the volume.

People say that *kirasumameshi* was named after *kirasu* (“*okara*”) and *mamesu* (“coat”) in the Usuki dialect.

*Kirasumameshi* has been popular as a home-cooked dish since the Edo period. Today, it enjoys entrenched popularity as a local dish and is always available at restaurants and the deli section of supermarkets.

## Typical local dish 3: *Chadaizushi*

*Chadaizushi* is a traditional hospitality dish that used to lend charm to the dinner table of each household in the city when wisteria bloomed and bamboo shoots came in. This sushi is characterized by commonly available ingredients on top and bottom of the rice.

Despite the use of vegetables and other ingredients far from luxurious, this local dish is designed to look gorgeous, suggesting a simple and frugal temperament of Usuki people.

A generally accepted theory is that *chadaizushi* was named after its resemblance to a refined *chataku* (“saucer for a teacup”) used by a lord. Today, *chadaizushi* is served at restaurants in the city.



# Buddhist Vegetarian Cuisine

## Buddhist memorial services and Buddhist vegetarian cuisine

Usuki's Buddhist vegetarian cuisine, which follows in the wake of Kyoto cuisine, is indispensable to local traditions on the occasion of a Buddhist memorial service.

Usuki's unique traditions that take place before and after a funeral are accompanied by Buddhist vegetarian cuisine offered to its participants.

The city has many Japanese-style restaurants that serve Buddhist vegetarian cuisine. Usuki people have fostered the culture of always offering and being offered minutely-specified Buddhist vegetarian cuisine in face of the death of someone close to them and sharing their memories of the deceased over the meal.

### Usuki's unique traditions concerning Buddhist memorial services (examples)

Odetate

A simplified Buddhist vegetarian cuisine served before a funeral, over which close relatives and friends bid farewell to the deceased together

Toriage

A meal that includes meat and/or fish and alcohol served after a funeral

## Seigetsuan's Zenmi Ryori

Zenmi Ryori is a Buddhist vegetarian cuisine made by Ekun Ando, a Buddhist priest in charge of Kenshoji, a Zen temple that stands in the castle town. This scrumptious meal, known to those in the know, is available only at Seigetsuan, a Buddhist vegetarian cuisine specialty restaurant run by Mr. Ando himself. His cuisine combines traditional dishes handed down over 800 years at Zen training halls with his own ingenious recipes. Its taste is so special that Mr. Ando is asked by many temples of the Myoshinji school around Japan to take charge of meals served at large-scale Buddhist memorial services and rituals that celebrate a new Buddhist priest's coming to live in his temple.

Zenmi Ryori highly values a sense of the season and uses commonly available seasonal ingredients except animal-derived ones. The primary policy of this cuisine is to make the most of the flavor of each ingredient and cook with great assiduity. Cooked with five cooking techniques, five views of the universe, and five seasonings, Zenmi Ryori is savored with the five physical senses (sight, sound, smell, taste and touch) and the mind (heart).



# Honzen Cuisine

People say that in Japan, there are now only three places where you can taste an authentic *honzen* cuisine, an original form of Japanese cuisine. The *honzen* cuisine that has survived in Usuki City is of samurai type (*buke honzen*) with which domain lords entertained their guests on festive occasions and Buddhist services, and can be said the prototype of *honzen* cuisine.

## Honzen cuisine handed down in Usuki City

In Usuki City, you can savor *honzen* cuisine at Kiraku-an, a fancy Japanese-style restaurant established in 1878.

This restaurant has many traditional recipes from those days and has served *honzen* cuisine.

While always cherishing the traditions handed down from previous generations, Kiraku-an makes a simplified version of the traditional cuisine to adapt to the changes of the times, work on activities to further enhance public recognition of *honzen* cuisine, and pass the tradition on to the next generation.

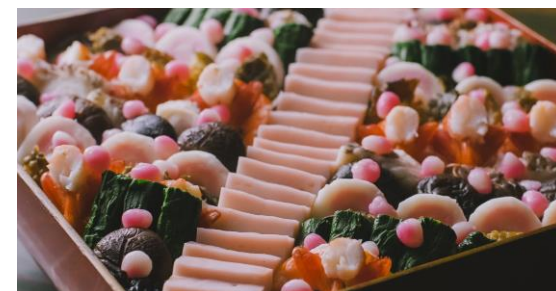
## Arrival and transmission of *honzen* cuisine

The *honzen* cuisine handed down to Kiraku-an originated in the Inaba clan (the Usuki domain), which was transferred from Gujo Hachiman, Mino Province to Usuki, Bungo Province.

The origin dates back to the Edo period, when the Usuki domain brought the elements of *honzen* cuisine from Edo. Later, the second head of Kiraku-an, who had been trained by the Usuki domain's kitchen chef, was allowed to learn and share this culinary art and started to serve it at his restaurant.

Today, Chairman (the fourth head) of Kiraku-an takes the lead in cooking *honzen* cuisine there and has been giving guidance to the current (the fifth) head of the restaurant to hand *honzen* cuisine down to future generations.

Local citizens used to have *honzen* cuisine often at wedding receptions and Buddhist memorial services, but opportunities to enjoy this traditional cuisine have been decreasing with the march of the times. In recent years, the city collaborates with the private sector to pass on this gastronomic culture to the next generation.





Sour citrus fruit that originated in Usuki City



\* A survey conducted by Oita Pref. in March 1976 confirmed that this specific tree was certainly the origin of *kabosu*, and the prefecture designated the tree as its special protection tree.

*Kabosu* is a local specialty of Oita Pref. Researchers say that this sour citrus fruit originated in today’s Usuki City and that its cultivation started in the Edo period.

In Usuki City, there once was an over 300-year-old *kabosu* tree recognized as the “origin”\* (the third generation of this originator propagated by grafting is in the city). The oldest surviving *kabosu* trees are around 200 years old.

Oita Pref. accounts for over 90% of the national production of *kabosu*, and Usuki City is the largest producer of this fruit in the prefecture.

*Kabosu* is said to accentuate the flavor of ingredients and dishes, and Oita Pref. has a deep-rooted culture of sprinkling some *kabosu* juice on various dishes.

For *kabosu* lovers to enjoy this seasonal fruit all the year around, processed goods are actively produced in Usuki City, including bottled *kabosu* juice, *kabosu* sake, and *kabosu* sweets.

Production (FY 2018)

Rank	City	Production (t)
1	Usuki	1,060.0
2	Taketa	948.0
3	Bungo Ono	910.0
4	Kunisaki	532.3
5	Bungotakada	481.4

Fully ripened yellow *kabosu*

Although unripened green *kabosu*, which tastes mildly sour, is widely known in Japan, Usuki people have preferred and enjoyed fully ripened yellow *kabosu*, which have more juice and tastes less sour since old times. In the mid-Heisei era, Usuki City marketed yellow *kabosu* as “Usuki-colored (pronounced the same as “light yellow”) *kabosu*” and started to distribute yellow *kabosu* around the prefecture.



# Puffer Fish Cuisine

## Japanese pufferfish cuisine characterized by thick slices of very fresh *sashimi*



Generally, puffer fish fillets are left overnight and thus can be sliced thin. In Usuki City, however, they are sliced on the day when the fish are caught, without being left for hours. Fresh fillets are so firm that they cannot be sliced thin. That is why puffer fish *sashimi* served in Usuki are in thick slices.

These thick slices of puffer fish *sashimi* are so fresh and rich in taste that this signature cuisine of Usuki is loved by people in and outside the city. Some of them in the Kanto region take a day trip all the way to Usuki to savor the cuisine.

### Many restaurants serve puffer fish cuisine, and some of them do so in summer, too

Usuki City has over 30 restaurants that serve puffer fish cuisine. Although Japanese pufferfish is known nationwide as a winter treat, some of the restaurants serve a Japanese pufferfish course meal even in summer and have customers all the year around who come for Japanese pufferfish cuisine.



### Homemade *kabosu ponzu* sauce

Each restaurant that serves puffer fish *sashimi* uses locally produced soy sauce and *kabosu* to make their original *kabosu ponzu* sauce, which goes perfectly with puffer fish *sashimi*. You can enjoy different tastes of homemade sauce at different restaurants.



# Mature Compost

## Usuki City Compost Manufacturing Center

In 2012, to vigorously promote agriculture of environmental conservation type and organic farming based on the preparation of good soil, Usuki City established the Usuki City Compost Manufacturing Center to manufacture mature compost similar to leaf mold.

A compost manufacturing facility run by an administrative organ to prepare soil is rare in Japan, and the center has many visitors from in and outside the prefecture, including from overseas.

Number of visitors: 1,078\*

\* Based on aggregated data from 2014 to 2020



## Usuki Yume Taihi (“Usuki Dream Compost”)

Usuki Yume Taihi’s major raw materials are plants (80%). They are mixed with pig feces (20%), and the mixture is stirred daily to cause fermentation. It takes six months for the mixture to turn into mature compost best for soil preparation. Similar to leaf mold, this compost improves the balance among soil components, boosting microbial action.

The center stably produces 1,600 to 1,800 tons of compost every year and supplies it to farmers and citizens. Recent years have seen an increase in demand, and the facility is wanted to produce more compost.



Usuki Yume Taihi



Compost in the fermentation process



# Original Certification System of Organic Agricultural Products

As one of its efforts to encourage local food production and consumption, Usuki City has a system of giving certification by the mayor to **organically cultivated local produce** as **Honmamon Agricultural Products**.

## Three features of Honmamon Agricultural Products

### (1) Organic

Agricultural products grown without synthetic agrochemicals or chemical fertilizers in fields whose soil has been prepared with Usuki Yume Taihi or other mature compost, in an attempt to provide the natural (authentic) taste of vegetables

### (2) Grown with Usuki Yume Taihi

A mixture of plants and pig feces (in the ratio of about 4:1) is fermented for six months to make this mature compost similar to leaf mold. This product is manufactured at a publicly run compost center established to prepare good soil, which is rare in Japan, and is sold only for farmland in the city.

### (3) Certified

The Usuki City mayor certifies agricultural products that have proved no use of synthetic agrochemicals during the cultivation period based on screening by an organic JAS registration and certification body (including a production process record examination and an on-site inspection).





# Ordinance Concerning Sustainable Food and Agriculture

## Land of Vegetables with Authentic Flavors: Usuki City Ordinance on Food Production and Farming with Concerted Efforts of All Concerned (enforced in 2010)

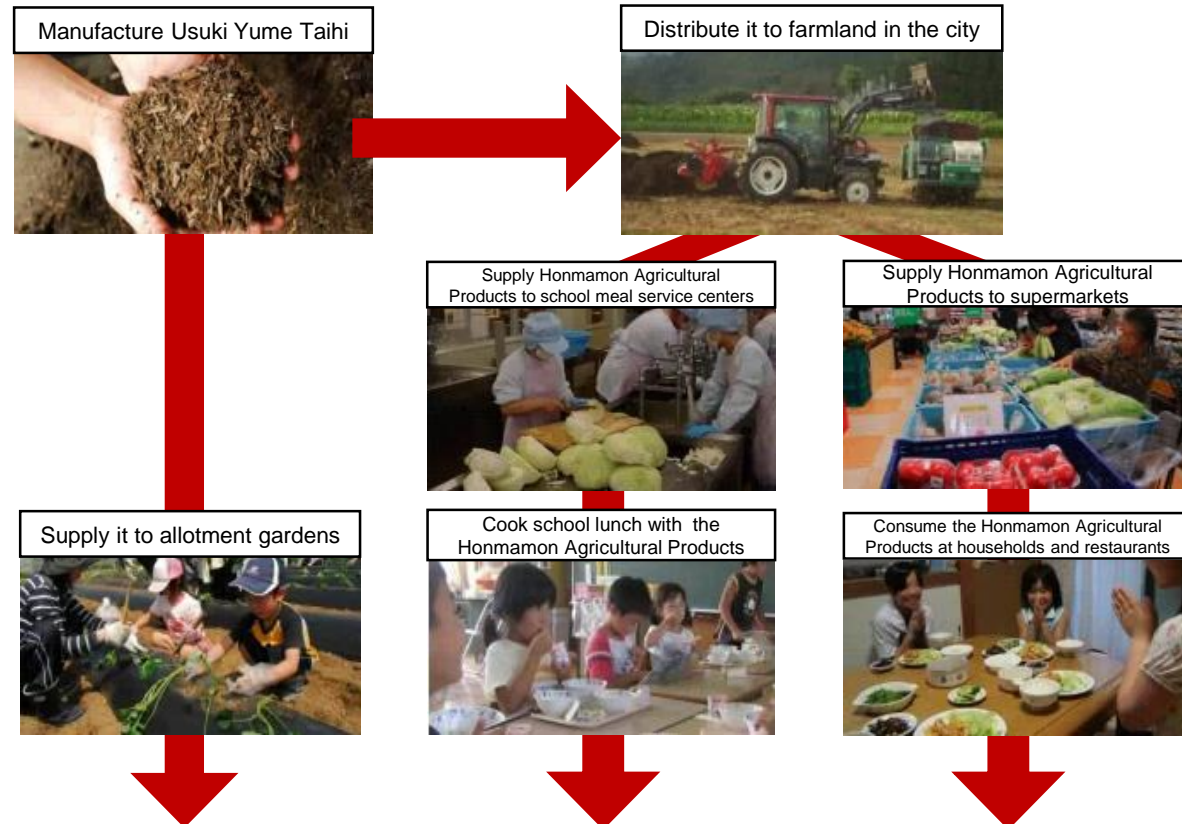
### Goal

To enhance citizens' understanding of food and farming, achieve a stable supply of safe and secure food, and establish farming that sustainably develops in natural circulation, thereby contributing to building an affluent and livable, local community

### Basic principles

- ① Establish a system that stably produces and supplies safe and secure farm products
- ② Ensure that citizens understand the importance of food and farming
- ③ Establish a farming system that secures agricultural resources, including agricultural land, water and workers, and helps farmers self-sustaining and continuously develop
- ④ Promote organic farming that harmonizes with the natural environment
- ⑤ Promote local food production and consumption from the viewpoints of food safety, agricultural development, and reduction in environmental load
- ⑥ Help farming communities sufficiently fulfill their multifaceted functions, including the conservation of national land, the cultivation of water sources, the formation of excellent scenery, and interactions with urban areas

### Example of actions taken: Health promotion using Honmamon ("authentic-flavored") Agricultural Products grown with Usuki Yume Taihi



Promotion of citizens' health through food

# Supply of Local Produce as School Lunch Ingredients

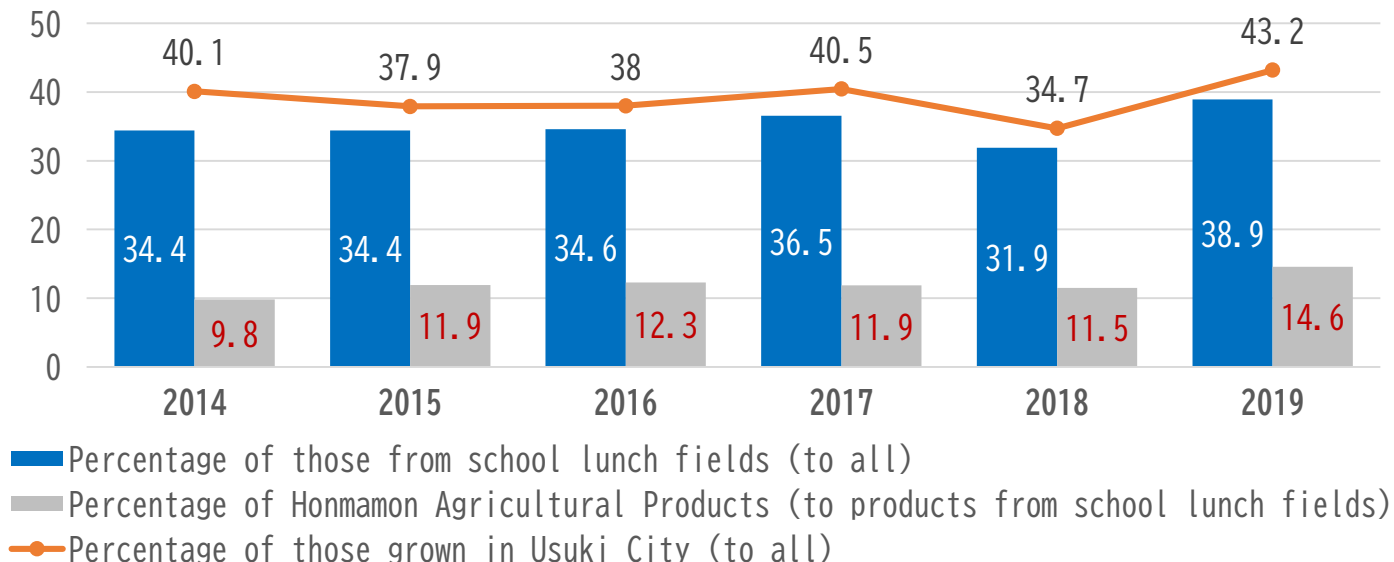
## The Grow Vegetables in School Lunch Fields project

In this project, Usuki City, **about 50** farmers in the city, and the Japan Agricultural Cooperatives (JA) work as one to supply locally grown agricultural products to be used for school lunch.

The project started in 2000 when Usuki City changed the school lunch system so that the school meal service centers would cook school lunch instead of individual schools, in an attempt to turn the centers into the best in Japan. This was one of the most pioneering projects in Japan, aiming not only to promote local food production and consumption but also to improve the quality of school lunch.

Use of fresh and safe, locally grown vegetables for school lunch **contributes to the sound development of students and fosters their understanding of agriculture and their attachment to the local community**. Today, the project actively uses Honmamon Agricultural Products (Usuki City's original local brand of organically cultivated agricultural products) to enhance food safety and also offers children with opportunities to harvest Honmamon Agricultural Products, proactively conducting dietary education.

Usage Rate of  
Locally Grown Agricultural Products



# Progress in the Fishing Industry

Usuki City faces the Bungo Channel and has a rias coast. Because of these geographical advantages, the fishing industry is prosperous in the city. The coast is dotted with 11 fishing ports, and fishers catch fish with a wide variety of methods. Pole-and-line fishing of scabbard fish is especially popular. These fishing ports provide such fresh and high-quality fish that the average price of fish from Usuki per kg is more than double that from Oita Pref. Tsukinbo-ryo, Usuki's traditional fishing method of spearing fish with a harpoon, started in around 1955 and is still used now.

## Breakdown of fish production

Usuki City produces a wide variety of fish. Among them, its production of scabbard fish is the largest in Oita Prefecture.



Breakdown of Fish Production in Usuki City (2019)

Fish	Production (kg)
Scabbard fish	188,583.8
Yellowtail	127,296.7
Horse mackerel	55,328.8
Turban shell	39,949.0
Blackmouth croaker	28,228.2

## Project for fostering the pillar of the fishing industry

To secure human resources who will lead the next-generation fishing industry amid the aging of fishers and a decrease in the number of successors, Usuki City supports new fishers in the initial phase of their career. The project produces one or two successors in fishing business every year.



# Conservation of the Seabed Environment and Fishery Resources

Usuki City strives to preserve fishing grounds in collaboration with Oita Pref., Usuki Branch of the Oita Fisheries Cooperative Association, and fishers in the city.

## Seabed cultivation (2001–)

Usuki City has cultivated the seabed to remove accumulated trash (e.g., plastics) and sludge.

Cultivation sends oxygen in the ground, improving seawater quality and making the sea more friendly to fish. This project has increased fish catches, helping fishers with management stability.

Cultivated area: **252 ha** (FY 2020)



Seabed cultivation (trash being collected)

## Project for Helping the Fisheries Industry Exercise Multiple Functions (2016–2020)

Fishers and the Oita Fisheries Cooperative Association took a lead mainly in preserving seaweed beds and mudflats, cleaning bedrocks (to remove *Diadema setosum*), and installing mother algae to recover and maintain the environment and the ecosystem.



Project for Helping the Fisheries Industry Exercise Multiple Functions  
(*Diadema setosum* being removed)

## Seedling release

Usuki City releases seedlings of certain species into fishing grounds to preserve and increase resources.

### Seedlings released in 2020

#### Seawater surface

- Prawns
- Red sea urchins
- Marbled soles
- Japanese abalones and disk abalones

#### River

- Ayu
- Chinese softshell turtles
- Eels
- Mitten crabs



# Branding Locally Produced Fish and Promoting Local Food Production and Consumption

In 2014, to expand the consumption of locally produced fishery products and increase fishers' income, Usuki City established the Usuki Umi no Honmamon Fishery Promotion Council, which consists of the Oita Fisheries Cooperative Association and food and beverage establishments. This organization makes various efforts toward the following two major goals: build a brand of fish caught in Usuki and promote local food production and consumption.

## Efforts to build a brand

The council brands fish caught in Usuki City as Usuki's Local Fish in an attempt to enhance their prices.

- ✓ Make "Caught in Usuki" stickers and distribute them so that they are affixed to Usuki's Local Fish sold at supermarkets and fish stores
- ✓ Make banners, posters and other promotional goods and place them at supermarkets
- ✓ Make awareness-raising goods (Usuki's Local Fish plastic file folders) and distribute them to all the elementary schools in the city



"Caught in Usuki" stickers

## Promotion of local food production and consumption

The council promotes local food production and consumption among the citizens of Usuki City and conducts various awareness-raising activities in the city, including the following:

- ✓ Developed the Usuki's Local Fish Restaurant certification system (and certified 33 restaurants in the city where dishes of Usuki's Local Fish are always available)
- ✓ Developed a pamphlet to familiarize tourists and local citizens with certified Usuki's Local Fish Restaurants, helped these restaurants develop new recipes with locally caught fish, held a locally-caught-fish cuisine fair, and provided the stores with promotional goods
- ✓ Conducts the Usuki's Fish Day awareness-raising campaign (an awareness-raising activity at supermarkets on the fourth Friday of every month)
- ✓ Conducts a campaign to encourage the consumption of seafood caught in Usuki
- ✓ Introduces how to enjoy Usuki's Local Fish (dishes) in city reports (six times a year)
- ✓ Holds lectures by fishers on how to cook Usuki's Local Fish and how to cut and trim a fish
- ✓ Holds an early-morning open seafood market at a fish market concurrently with a seafood serving event where Usuki's fresh seafood can be enjoyed (on every Saturday)

## Usuroku Open Lab

The Usuroku Open Lab is a laboratory freely available to citizens. This equipment was established to promote the agricultural and fishing diversification of Usuki City.

The lab is housed in Sala de Usuki, a facility established in 2002 as an information base. When Sala de Usuki was revamped in 2016 into a complex facility featuring food with the concept of Usuki's kitchen, a section of the complex facility turned into the Usuroku Open Lab, a food processing and development facility available for product development to citizens, including people engaged in agriculture, forestry, fishery, and food and beverage businesses.

The lab is equipped with a wide variety of processing equipment, including a sharp freezer and a food dehydrator, helping visitors develop new products and recipes and embark on a new business. The lab also holds food tasting events and opinion exchange meetings through which participants can share and polish their ideas, which has led to the development of many processed products.



Data for FY 2019

Open Lab usage: **55.2%**

## Tsumami Kitchen

Tsumami Kitchen is a conference room that has an adjoining open kitchen. As a place to get together (*tsudou*), learn (*manabu*) about food, and horn (*migaku*) skills, this facility housed in Sala de Usuki is used for dietary education activities, including cooking classes and food tasting events.

## Usuki City branding support project

This project supports the development, commercialization, and sales channel expansion of processed products that use local resources and as few additives as possible, and the introduction of equipment for such purposes.

## Usuki City brand certification system Usuki's Local Produce

Usuki City certifies processed products that use local resources and as few additives as possible and display Usuki's charm as the city's specialty goods. This certification has been granted to 82 items (produced by 20 business operators), and they are used as gifts in return for hometown tax donation and also sold at tourist facilities around the city.



# International Exchange

## Sister city and Friendly city

**Kandy, Sri Lanka**  
(Sister city since 1967)

Buddhist culture, which Usuki and Kandy have in common, has led to a sister city relationship between them: Kandy is a sanctuary of Sri Lanka Buddhism, while Usuki has Usuki Stone Buddhas. In recent years, Usuki sent officials to Kandy to learn about Sri Lankan culinary culture, agriculture and forestry. Kandy also sent theirs to Usuki to learn from its soil preparation activities. Usuki City has provided students with opportunities to be exposed to Sri Lankan culinary culture through school lunch and cooking class.

Both Usuki and Dunhuang have a group of old stone Buddhas and share a stone construction culture, which has caused the cities to form a friendly city relationship between them. They once interacted with each other in the fields of tourism and agriculture. Especially regarding the latter, Usuki admitted trainees in agricultural engineering from Dunhuang and offered training in agriculture of environmental conservation type and soil preparation activities.

**Dunhuang, China**  
(Friendly city since 1994)

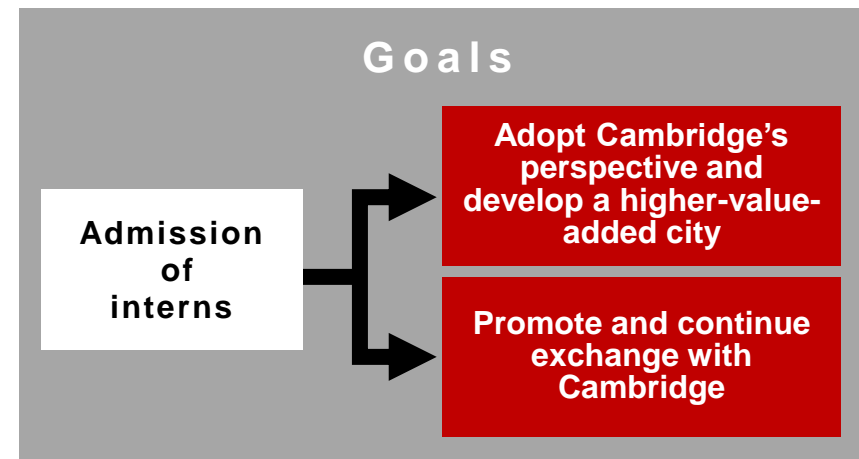
## Internship program

In FY 2019, at the request of the University of Cambridge, Usuki started to offer internship opportunities to its students majoring in Japanese Studies in the Faculty of Asian & Middle Eastern Studies.

### Partner companies in the city

- Sake producer: Kuge Honten Co., Ltd.
- Miso and soy sauce producer: Fundokin Shoyu Co., Ltd.
- Organic green tea producer: Takahashi Green Tea Co., Ltd.

**Number of interns admitted (FY 2019):**  
One at Takahashi Green Tea



# Forest Cultivation for Water Source Cultivation

Usuki City is a community where a water cycle completes within itself: when it rains in a forest, the rainwater is absorbed by the forest ground, from which mineral-rich water flows through rivers into the sea, soaking cultivated fields and the sea. Exploiting this advantage, Usuki City aims to build a society where resources are recycled within the area. For that purpose, in 2012, the city developed the Usuki City Forest Maintenance Plan and launched the Project for Developing a Model of Growing Forests for Water Source Cultivation, aiming to have 100-year-old forests.

## History (examples of past activities and incidents)

1986	Enacted the Usuki City Ordinance for Funding Forests as Water Sources → To accumulate funds required for water source cultivation, including afforestation and forest maintenance
2011	Suffered a serious lack of water (drinking and agricultural water) due to scanty rainfall
2012	Established the Usuki City Task Force on Water Resources Survey at the city assembly
	Issued the Recommendation on Business Deployment Toward the Securing of Water Resources
	Developed the Usuki City Forest Maintenance Plan
	Designated a Model Area for Maintaining and Enhancing Water Source Cultivation Functions
2016	Established the Council Concerning Usuki's Honmamon Ingredients and the Regional Circulation of Energy Resources
2018	Conducted a survey to develop the Usuki City Woody Biomass-based Small Cogeneration System Introduction Plan

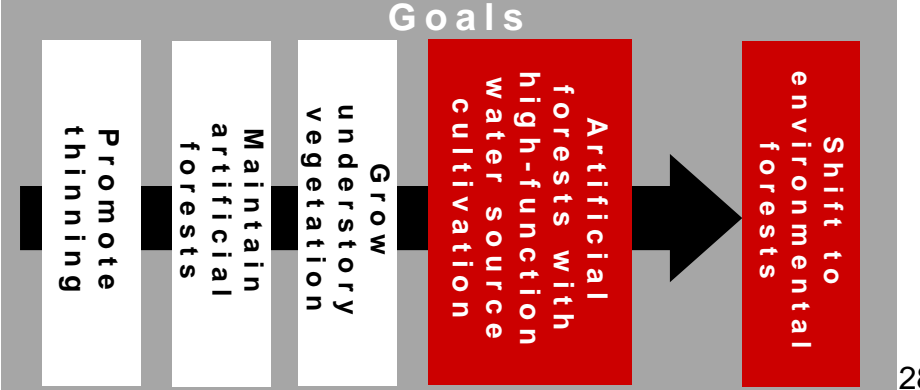
## Project for Developing a Model of Growing Forests for Water Source Cultivation

Objectives

- To maintain 60 ha of forest per year
- To consider an effective use of ligneous resources and guidance toward a shift to environmental forests

▼ To fulfill these objectives...

- Development of a business plan by a regional council consisting of residents in the area
- Subsidy payment for expenses the mayor approves to be covered for the area





# Creative Tourism

Usuki City has a wide variety of old and new cultural resources. Through creative tourism that combines them with the local gastronomic culture, Usuki City will publicize itself as a creative city of gastronomy.

## Usuki Stone Buddhas, a historical resource and national treasure

Researchers say that Usuki Stone Buddhas were carved between the late Heian period and the Kamakura period.(in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries)

Seven to eight out of ten stone Buddhas in Japan, including those carved into rock walls, are in Oita Pref., and five to six out of those in the prefecture are in Usuki City. Usuki Stone Buddhas are a leading group of stone Buddhas in Japan in terms of scale, the number of statues, and carving quality. In 1995, the government designated 59 out of 61 Usuki Stone Buddhas as a national treasure, making them **the first stone Buddhas carved into rock walls to join the ranks of national treasures and also Kyushu's first sculpture to join them**. Today, all the 61 figures are under the designation.



## Usukiyaki, pottery that was once extinct



Usukiyaki pottery, which flourished for only about ten years in the late Edo period, **has been revived by young potters in Usuki City with a modern twist**.

They open their ateliers to the public not only to promote Usuki City through their ceramics but also to publicize the local gastronomic culture and pass it on to the next generation, exploring new approaches in the field of craft.

## Movies featuring organic farming in Usuki City

Usuki City supported the production of ***A Dialogue: Living Harmony***, a movie (released in 2014) that focuses on organic farming promotional activities, hoping that the citizens of Usuki would share the following vision and make it come true: each citizen sits at the table with their family members to enjoy the taste of homemade dishes cooked with safe and fresh, local ingredients and stays healthy for the rest of their life, creating the future of the city. There is another movie set in Usuki City: ***A Sower of Seeds*** (2012), which features organic tea cultivation there.



## The Way of Gourmet Cooking in USUKI

Usuki City has branded its local cuisine and launched a project to create a wide variety of local gastronomic culture and pass it on to the next generation. The city has produced *The Way of Gourmet Cooking in USUKI*, a set of videos that promote the eight facets of Usuki's gastronomic culture, and has them run on TV as a commercial and posted them on YouTube.

Produced with the catchphrase "A city's local cuisine tells you much about the city's culture," these eight videos on the following topics are viewable: local cuisine, Buddhist vegetarian cuisine, puffer fish, locally brewed sake, soy sauce, miso, vegetables with authentic flavors, and *honzen* cuisine.

*The Way of Gourmet Cooking in USUKI*

Search

(<https://usuki-syokubunka.com/bishokudo.html#english>)



## Green tourism



In Usuki City, about 50 farmers are involved in green tourism mainly by accommodating tourists at their villages. Guests have a hands-on experience unique to a farming village, for example, doing some farming with the farmers, cooking in a group, and enjoying the meal together.

In recent years, over 1,000 guests come every year. They are mainly Japanese students on an educational trip, but overseas guests, including those from Asia and Europe, account for nearly 50% of all the guests.

# A Small Town Young Japanese Want to Live in

## “The Best Rural Areas to Live in” rankings

*Inakigurashi no Hon* (published by Takarajimasha, Inc.), Japan’s only monthly magazine that introduces country living, releases these rankings every year.

This magazine conducts a questionnaire, asking municipal governments that actively encourage people to move into them and settle there 220 questions about relocation assistance measures, healthcare, parenting, the natural environment, job assistance, and the number of people who have moved into their municipalities. Based on answers from over 600 local governments, the magazine quantifies the advantages of living in the countryside and show the questionnaire results in the form of rankings.

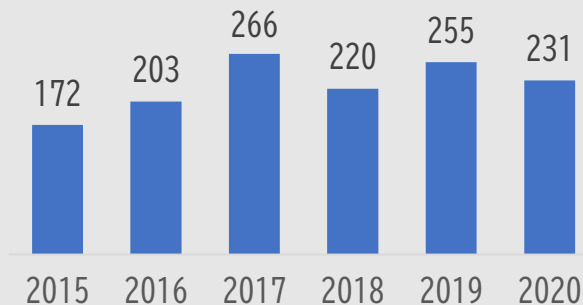
## In first place three years in a row

## In the “Areas the Younger Generation Wants to Live in” category

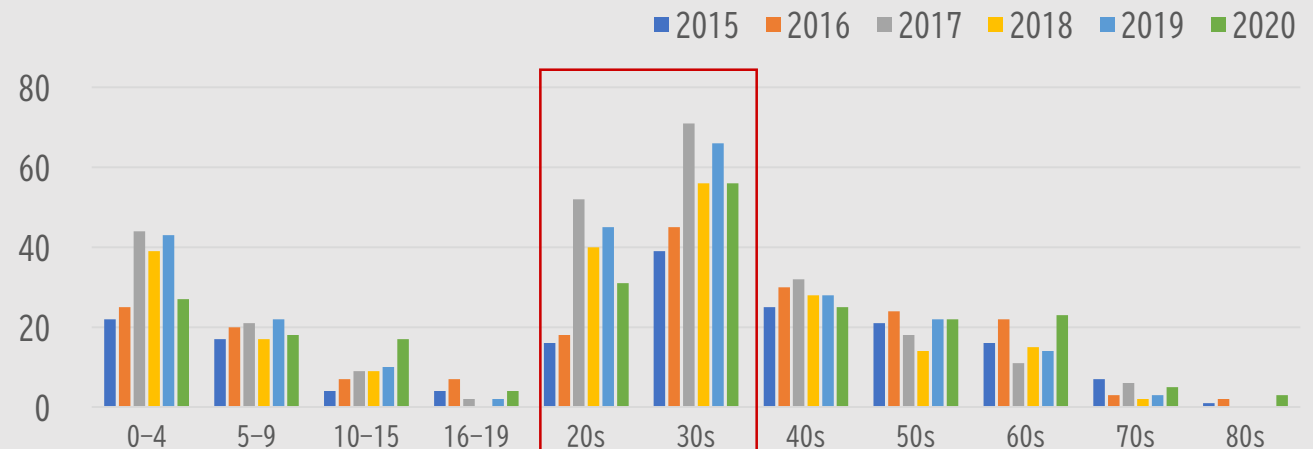
Usuki took first place in the “Areas the Younger Generation Wants to Live in” category three years in a row from 2018 among small municipalities (with a population of less than 100 thousand).

Usuki also took first place in the “Areas the Senior Generation Wants to Live in” category in 2019 and 2020. Rich in resources and relocation-encouraging measures, Usuki enjoys a high reputation.

Changes in the number of those who moved in (all ages)



Changes in the number of those who moved in (age breakdown)





# A Small Town Young Japanese Want to Live in

An increasing number those who have moved into Usuki City are engaged in organic farming or a restaurant business.

## Usuki Farmer's Market “Hyaku-sta”

On the first Sunday of every month, in a park in front of Usuki Stone Buddhas, this early-morning market sells organic agricultural products, processed goods made of them, and breakfast.

This market, led by an organic farmer who has moved into Usuki City, started in 2017 with the concept of “an early-morning market to discover new value like a story of produce going from soil (farmers) to the dining table (customers).”

This early-morning market has grown into a very popular one that attracts many customers from in and outside the city.  
 (“Hyaku-sta” means *hyakusho*’s (“farmers”) standards.)



## French restaurant mikangura



This French restaurant named mikangura is housed in a renovated 50-year-old *mikangura* (“mandarin orange storehouse”) that stands in a farming area of Usuki City.

A family, who has settled there hoping to live in a peaceful village near a forest, opened the restaurant in 2020.

The restaurant serves original dishes cooked with local ingredients, most of which are Honmamon Agricultural Products. It has been so popular since its founding that one cannot readily make a reservation.



# Usuki's Attempt to Become a Creative City of Gastronomy through Fermentation and Circulation

New attempts

Current projects

Historical identity

While strategically integrating projects for water and soil circulation and strongly promoting them, Usuki contributes to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) and the SDGs through international cooperation.



- To strengthen measures toward sustainable development and activate global partnership
- 17.14 To enhance consistency between the policies for sustainable development
  - 17.17 To encourage and promote effective partnership between public organs, between the government and the people, and in civil society.

To be achieved through a membership in the UCCN



- To make urban and inhabited areas inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- 11.3 To promote comprehensive and sustainable urbanization, strengthen plans for participative, inclusive and sustainable habitation, and enhance the capability to control such habitation
  - 11.a To support good connections between urban, suburban and rural areas from economic, social and environmental perspectives



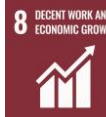
Sustainable forest management



Sustainable management of water and hygiene



Promotion of sustainable agriculture



Sustainable economic growth and the promotion of decent work



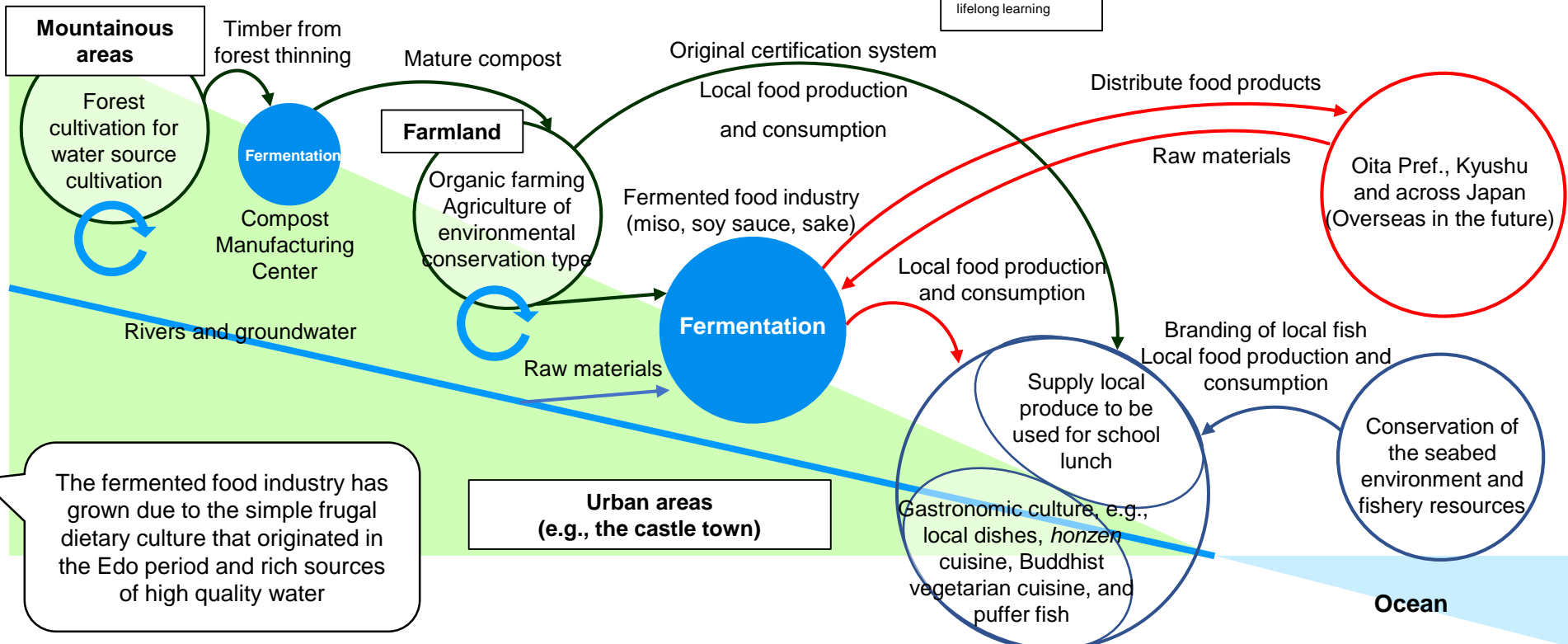
Securing opportunities for inclusive, fair and high-quality education, and the promotion of opportunities for lifelong learning



Resilient infrastructure development, sustainable industry, and innovation expansion



Preservation and use of the ocean and marine resources



# Usuki Creative City of Gastronomy Promotion Council

## Council overview

Established	February 24, 2021		
President	Goro Nakano (Usuki City Mayor)	Vice President	Kyoji Kotegawa (President of the Usuki Chamber of Commerce and Industry)
Secretariats	The Usuki Creative City of Gastronomy Promotion Office and other relevant departments		
Members	Usuki City, business communities in Usuki City, food and beverage establishments, breweries, agriculture- and fishery-related organizations, educational institutions, and tourism-related organizations [20 organizations in total]		
Advisors	The Oita Association of Corporate Executives, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Beppu University, a historical culinary researcher, a product advisor, and (two departments of) Oita Prefecture [Seven people in total]		
Working group	Those engaged in the fields of brewing (miso, soy sauce, and sake); organic farming; fishery; research in creative cities; a food and beverage business; culture; industry and commerce; and gastronomy [10 people in total]		

Goal	For the promotion of Usuki City as a creative city of gastronomy, develop Usuki City’s basic policies and plans and, through a membership in the UCCN, build creative industries by creating a wide variety of gastronomic culture and passing it on to the next generation, and partner with cities in and outside Japan, thereby attempting to promote and develop local economy, academia and culture.
Activities	(1) Handle affairs concerning an application for joining the UCCN (2) Develop the Usuki Creative City of Gastronomy Promotion Plan (3) Conduct the Usuki Creative City of Gastronomy Project (4) Conduct promotional projects

# Usuki Creative City of Gastronomy Promotion Council organizational chart

## Usuki Creative City of Gastronomy Promotion Council

### Business communities

- Usuki Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Notsu-machi Commercial and Industrial Association
- Usuki City Shopping Street Federation
- Junior Chamber International Usuki

### Agriculture- and fishery-related organizations

- South Div., JA Oita
- Usuki Branch, the Oita Fisheries Cooperative Association
- Usuki City Liaison Council of Women's Organizations in Fishing and Agricultural Villages
- *Honmamon* Agricultural Products Promotion Network

### Food and beverage establishments

- Usuki City Restaurant and Bar Union
- Food and beverage establishments in the city

### Fermenting/Brewing industries

- Miso and soy sauce producers in the city
- Sake breweries in the city

### Educational institutions

- Oita Prefectural Marine Science Senior High School
- Oita Prefectural Usuki High School

### Tourism-related organizations

- Usuki Tourism Association
- Machidzukuri Usuki Co., Ltd.

### Others

- Usuki Dietary Habit Improvement Promotion Council
- Council Concerning Usuki's Honmamon Ingredients and the Regional Circulation of Energy Resources

### Usuki City

- Usuki City Hall
- Usuki City Municipal Administration Advisor

### Advisors

- Oita Association of Corporate Executives
- Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University
- Beppu University
- FUKUO Ltd.
- Hitoneru Academy
- Oita Prefecture Central Promotion Bureau
- Oita Prefecture Art, Culture and Sports Promotion Div.



## Working group

Those engaged in the following fields (one person each):

- |                          |                               |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Fermenting (miso)      | • Research in creative cities |
| • Fermenting (soy sauce) | • Food and beverage business  |
| • Brewing (sake)         | • Culture                     |
| • organic farming        | • Industry and commerce       |
| • Fishery                | • Gastronomy                  |

## Secretariats (Usuki City Hall)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| • Deputy Mayor   | • Secretary and General Policy Div        |
| • Policy Supervisor (responsible for the promotion of the Creative City of Gastronomy project) | • Hospitality and Tourism Div.            |
| • Policy Supervisor (in charge of general affairs and planning)                                | • Agriculture and Forestry Promotion Div. |
| • Creative City of Gastronomy Promotion Office, the Industrial Promotion Div.                  | • Culture and Cultural Properties Div.    |
|  | • School Education Div.                   |

# Usuki Creative City of Gastronomy Promotion Council FY 2021 Action Plan

Aiming to promote Usuki City as a creative city of gastronomy by making use of its wide variety of gastronomic culture, the council plans to conduct pioneering projects in collaboration with agricultural, forestry and fishery workers, food processing companies, food and beverage establishments, tourism organizations, and educational research institutions.

## 1 **The Usuki Gastronomic Culture Archives project**

To organize information about Usuki's fermenting/brewing culture, local dishes, and *honzen* cuisine into archives and widely disseminate the information through brochures, webpages, and exhibition

## 2 **The Expanded Consumption of Honmamon Agricultural Products and Usuki's Local Fish project**

To hold fairs and hands-on tours to expand the consumption of agricultural, forestry and fishery products produced in the city at food and beverage establishments

## 3 **The Usuki Gastronomic Culture Hands-on Experience Program project**

To develop and conduct hands-on programs on the themes of gastronomic culture, the SDGs, and organic farming

## 4 **The Usuki Gastronomic Culture Film Festival project**

To hold screenings of a movie themed on Yamagata's heirloom vegetables and a movie featuring Usuki City's activities centered on food; and related events

## 5 **The Promotion of the Use of Usuki Local Pottery project**

To develop a leaflet that contains information about the pottery industry in the city and provide its copies for food and beverage establishments

## 6 **The Organic School Lunch project**

To have all the schools in the city use 100% Honmamon Agricultural Products for school lunch and promote dietary education

## 7 **The Marriage of Food and Local Sake project**

To organize information about Usuki's brewing culture, local dishes, and *honzen* cuisine into archives and widely disseminate the information through brochures, webpages, and exhibition

## 8 **The Usuki's Stories of Gastronomic Culture project**

To develop guides who can speak a tempting gastronomy of Usuki City to its citizen, tourists, and so on.

## 9 **Symposiums in the city and promotional activities in the Tokyo metropolitan area**