

# Processed Marine Foods that Evoke Japanese Food Culture – Part 1

## Seasoned Processed Foods

These products are processed from seafood raw materials and taste-enhanced with seasonings and flavorings such as salt, miso, and spices. Among the many varieties is tsukudani, in which seafood is simmered in soy sauce and sugar-based soup. Seasoned processed foods are convenience items that you can use either as main dishes or as side dishes to accompany bowls of rice.

### “Nitsuke”, Simmered Fish (Alfonsino)



In a simmering soup of soy sauce, sugar, mirin (sweet rice wine) and sake, the fish is stewed until thoroughly flavored. Nitsuke made with fatty kimmedai (alfonsino) is an especially popular dish in Japan due to its clean, umami (a base for Japanese cuisine) flavor. Because this fish is also used in special dishes for celebrations, it makes a wonderful gift for occasions such as birthdays.

### “Unagi Kabayaki”, Grilled Freshwater Eel



In preparing this traditional local dish, eel is cut open, the spine is removed, and the flesh is skewered and grilled without sauce. Then, it is dipped in a thick, strong soy sauce. Thanks to improved preparation skills and advances in processing technology, the flavors of freshly grilled eel can now be preserved by vacuum-packing or packaging as frozen food, so that everyone can enjoy them in the comfort of their own homes.

### “Tsukudani”, Preserved Seafood



This is a range of uniquely Japanese specialty items in which small fish, shellfish, and seaweed are simmered in a sweet and savory sauce flavored with soy sauce and sugar. Each of these items has unique characteristics, depending on the particular skills of the craftsmen and the flavoring methods used. Offered in an astonishingly wide variety of flavors, they are frequently used as ingredients in rice balls. Items from famous, long-established shops are also popular as gifts.

### “Tsukeuo”, Marinated Fish



A traditional dish from Kyoto, reputed to have been developed out of the region's elegant dynastic culture, in which sliced fish, such as black cod and Spanish mackerel, are marinated in saikyo miso, a white miso with the sweetness of rice malt and an appealing cream color. There is also a choice of flavors of such fish marinated in sake lees, also known as Sakekasu, (the edible byproduct of sake brewing composed of malted rice, yeast and ethanol, rich with proteins, vitamins and fiber), or soy sauce and mirin.



## Processed Marine Foods that Evoke Japanese Food Culture – Part 2

### Frozen Sashimi Processed Foods

Raw marine products are processed while still fresh and then snap-frozen. This makes it possible to preserve the flavors and textures of these otherwise rapidly perishable items so that we can enjoy delicious sashimi at any time, whatever the season.

#### “Shimesaba”, Marinated Mackerel (Pressed Sushi Stick)



This is a processed food in which mackerel fillets are first preserved in salt, then pickled in vinegar. The vinegar soaks into the fillet to firm the flesh and improve preservability. The resulting fish are used as sashimi or in pressed sushi with marinades. Lately, we have seen new products coming on the market, such as kombu-jime shimesaba (mackerel marinated with kelp), komochi shimesaba (marinated mackerel with roe), and toro shimesaba (marinated fatty mackerel).

#### “Ika Somen”, Squid Noodles



A Japanese dish of fresh, raw squid cut into thin, noodle-like strands and dipped in seasoned soy sauce or noodle soup. Widely known as a specialty of Hokkaido and Aomori, this dish is prized for the natural sweetness of the squid and its unique chewy texture. It can be prepared in a variety of styles, including mixed with vegetables and sauces.

#### “Katsuo Tataki”, Seared Bonito



A local dish from Kochi, the capital of Kochi Prefecture in Shikoku, in which raw katsuo (bonito) is divided into four loins, salted, and then surface-roasted. The fat under the skin is absorbed by the flesh and this is said to taste better than sashimi. It can be served and enjoyed with lavish condiment vegetable toppings and either soy or ponzu sauce, and is also delicious in ochazuke (rice topped with dashi or tea).

#### “Zuke Sashimi”, Marinated Sashimi



To make this dish, slices of raw, dark or white fish meat are marinated in a blend of soy sauce, mirin (sweet rice wine), and sake. Marinating the fish improves preservability and, since it is already flavored, you can eat it on its own or pile slices on top of rice to make a donburi (rice bowl). This item is popular in Japan as a snack to be enjoyed with alcoholic beverages.