

GI Tourism – Visit & Enjoy Hometowns of Japan’s Very Best Local Produces

■ Geographical Indication (GI)



In Japan, there are many agricultural products which have obtained high quality and reputation as a result of unique production methods and natural characteristics such as regional climate and soil conditions. Of these products, "The Geographical Indication (GI) Protection System" protects the name of products as intellectual property whose quality, reputation and other established characteristics are essentially attributable to its geographical origin.

The GI protection system has been implemented based on the Act on Protection of the Names of Specific Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Products and Foodstuffs Act (the GI Act) which was passed on June 18, 2014 and entered into force on June 1, 2015. For more information of Japan's GI Protection System, please visit the official website of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

■ Akebono Daizu Soybean

Akebono Daizu is a soybean of large grain size, which has been cultivated in the production area – *Minobu Town’s “Akebono” district* for more than 100 years. Compared to general soybeans, it is about ***twice as heavy***. Its sweetness is also manifested by the fact that its ***sugar and sucrose contents*** are around ***20% and 40% higher*** compared to other varieties, respectively. Sucrose is the main constituent of sugar.



It is ***highly rated*** by processors of ***miso and tofu*** because its high sugar enhances the sweetness of final products. Due to its ***scarcity and high quality***, Akebono Daizu is sold at a high price. Its ***Edamame***^{*1}, which is immature soybean, is also large and very sweet.

Only seeds of a ***native variety cultivated in Akebono district*** in the production area are used. Shipping standards require that soybeans have no pests and insects, not be too immature, not wet, and clean for edamame. For ripe soybean, standards require that not more than 20% of the beans have prominent insect or other damage and that there are no grains of other species

or foreign matter.

The production area has *well-draining soil* and receives proper *moisture supply from morning mist*, thus making it appropriate for soybean cultivation. The daily *temperature difference* between day and night is at least 10 degrees Celsius from October, when edamame matures, until December, when ripe soybeans are harvested. The difference produces the characteristic sweetness.

To *prevent the soybean from crossing with other varieties*, producers have carefully isolated the fields, selected seeds for generations and maintained the large grain size of Akebono Daizu.

**1: Edamame is an immature soybean harvested together with twigs when the soybean is still green. The beans in the pods are boiled, and the beans are eaten. It is one of the typical ways of eating soybeans in Japan.*

■ Savor GI Soybean *Akebono Daizu* In Historic Temple Town

Mt. Minobu (Minobusan) has been counted as one of the three greatest Buddhism holly mountains in Japan along with *Mt. Koya (Koyasan)* and *Mt. Hiei (Hieizan)*. Over 750 years, the monasteries at *Mt. Minobu* have been warm heartedly accepting worshippers and visitors.

The temple town fostered unique tradition of vegetarian cuisine influenced by Buddhism philosophy – *Shojin-Ryori*. Dietary restrictions have rather stimulated culinary creativity, and have developed wide variety of dishes which are meticulously made from vegetable ingredients.

Here at *Kakurinbo* Temple and its private villa *Ebisuya's* café *Zencho*, you can enjoy different types of dishes creatively made from the GI registered indigenous soybean *Akebono Daizu* such as:

- *Akenobo Daizu Edamame* (boiled young beans)
 - *Akebono Daizu Natto* (fermented soybeans) with deep fired *Yuba* (thin layer of soybean curd)
 - Fried *Akebono Daizu Natto* (fermented soybeans)
 - Vegie Curry & Rice with *Akebono Daizu*
 - Vegie Houtou Noodle Lasagna with *Akebono Daizu*
 - *Akebono Daizu Kinako* (roasted soybean flour) flavored food and sweets – bread, bagel, pancake, canelé, galette, maritozzo, and ice cream
- and much more to come !

