

# BLACKTHROAT SEAPERCH

ノドグロ





# 海深くに散らばる謎多き魚。

## 下関が誇るノドグロという美味

Mysterious fish scattering down deep in the sea.  
Delicious blackthroat seaperch,  
a pride of Shimonoseki.



アカムツの別名であり、口内が黒いことに由来するノドグロ。今や日本屈指の高級魚として知られ、焼いても、煮ても美味。白身でありながら脂の乗りが抜群に良いことから、白身のトロなどとも称されています。2014年にはプロテニスプレイヤーの錦織圭選手が全米オープン準優勝の凱旋時に「ノドグロが食べたい」と発言したことで、一躍時の魚になったこともありました。もうお気づきかもしれませんが、実はこのノドグロも下関漁港で水揚げされているのです。

下関沖、沖合底びき網漁業で水揚げされる下関のノドグロは、ほかの魚種以上に厳重な品質管理が施され、その味も質も国内屈指。漁業関係者を持ってして、ノドグロと言えば下関というのは、周知の事実と言われているのです。では、下関沖のノドグロがなぜにこれほど旨いのか？ 餌であるのか、海域の違いであるのか、それらはまだまだ解明されていない部分が多いと言います。謎多き、下関の美味なる魚。それこそが下関のノドグロなのです。

Blackthroat seaperch is named after its dark color inside of its mouth. It is known as one of the finest fish in Japan, and it is delicious whether it's baked or boiled. Although it is a white-fleshed fish, people often say that it resembles the taste of *toro*, due to its fatty meat. In 2014, upon his triumphant return to Japan as the runner-up of the US Open, professional tennis player Kei Nishikori commented in an interview that he was “craving for blackthroat seaperch”, which made this fish extremely popular overnight. As you may have guessed by now, blackthroat seaperch is yet another fish that can be found at the fishing ports of Shimonoseki.

Blackthroat seaperch in Shimonoseki are caught offshore by bottom trawling net. They are subject to stricter quality control than other fish, and they have some of the best taste and quality in Japan. It is a well-known fact among professional fishermen that Shimonoseki is where to go for the blackthroat seaperch. So why are the blackthroat seaperch from Shimonoseki so delicious? It may be the difference in diet or surrounding environment, but it just has not been clarified yet. Although this fish is still full of mysteries, everyone can agree on its excellent taste and quality.



焼台で上がる火柱は、脂の乗りが良い証拠。焼き切らず、皮目だけをバリッと焼き上げるのがおいしい食べ方だと地元料理店が教えてくれた

Flare-ups from the grill indicates good fatty meat.  
High-reaching flames leaping off the grill are a sign of quality fat. Local restaurants say that crisping the skin without burning it, is the delicious way to prepare the fish.





# JAPANESE SPANISH MACKEREL

サワラ





# 春ではなく、冬が旬。

## 冬に味わい、春を待ちわびる下関のサワラ

Winter is the season, not spring.  
For the Japanese Spanish mackerel of Shimonoseki, spring is the season of anticipation, while winter is the time to feast.

魚偏に春と書いて「鯖」。その文字の印象と異なり、実は脂が乗って一番おいしいのは10月～1月にかけてのシーズンです。ある漁師は、「春に産卵のために近海に集まってくるので、この時期が旬と言われていた」と笑います。また、ある鮭屋は「船にエンジンがなかった時代は、その時期しか近海で獲れなかったから春の魚と言われている」と教えてくれました。そして、ある加工業者は「春を告げる魚。サワラが陸に近づくのが昔は季節の知らせだったのだと思います」と風情あるコメントを。それぞれの解釈はありますが、

しかし誰もが口を揃えるのは、下関のサワラは冬が一番だということ。  
サバ科でありサバにやや似た姿をしていて、歯は驚くほど鋭い。小さい魚を餌として食べる肉食魚であり、その成長とともに名前が変わる出世魚でもあります。全長50cm以下のサゴシにはじまり、70cm以下のヤナギ、そして70cmオーバーのサワラへと呼び名は変わり、冬の時期に獲れる1mを超えた大物は、寒鯖かんざわらと呼ばれ重宝されています。うっすら桜色に輝く淡白な身質に脂が乗り、味わうたびに上品な旨味が口いっぱいに広がるのです。

*Kanji* for *sawara*, the Japanese Spanish mackerel, is consisted of the character “Fish” and “Spring”. However, the best season to enjoy this fish is in fact from October to January. There are many stories as to why its *kanji* is written this way. One fisherman laughed and said “People used to think that spring was the season, because that’s when the fish gather around the nearby seas to lay their eggs”. A sushi chef said “When the ship didn’t have an engine, it was said to be a spring fish because that was the only time people were able to catch them in the nearby seas”. On the other hand, a worker from the fish processing plant poetically commented that “The Japanese Spanish mackerel is a herald of spring. Their arrival would signify that the spring has arrived”. While there are many

theories on how the *kanji* was born, everyone agrees that the winter is the best time to catch Japanese Spanish mackerel in Shimonoseki.  
Japanese Spanish mackerel belongs to the Scombridae family and its appearance is somewhat similar to mackerel, with amazingly sharp teeth. They are carnivorous that feed on smaller fish. In Japanese language, they are called by different names depending on their size. They are called *sagoshi* when the length is 50cm or less, *yanagi* from 50-70cm, and finally *sawara* once they are greater than 70cm. Sometimes, massive fish over 100cm can be caught in the winter, and they are worshiped with the name *kanzawara*. Fat shines on the light pink flesh, and the elegant taste melts in your mouth with every bite you take.



下関市内の鮭屋などでは、絶品のサワラ握りのほか、刺身、薫焼き、炙りなどさまざまな料理が楽しめる

At sushi restaurants in Shimonoseki, you can enjoy exquisite taste of Japanese Spanish mackerel sushi, as well as variety of other dishes such as *sashimi*, straw-roasted, and grilled Japanese Spanish mackerel.





LONGTOOTH  
GROUPE

クエ



# 実は庶民の味方。 地元で愛され続ける 下関の冬の味覚

Local’s favorite.  
This winter taste of Shimonoseki continues  
to be loved by their people.

顔はちょっと怖いけど、それとは裏腹に美しいと思えるほど身は淡白。さらに骨周りのゼラチン質は、得も言われぬ旨味と食感を纏い、クエ鍋といえば食通の間では冬鍋の最高の贅沢のひとつ。地元・下関では「アラ」の名で庶民に親しまれている冬の味覚がこのクエです。

「高級魚のクエが庶民に親しまれる？」と、疑問をお持ちの方も多いかと思いますが、そうなのです。東京や福岡の都市部では、驚くほどの高値で取引されるクエですが、ここ下関では、大衆居酒屋やスーパーなどでも、日常的に扱われている魚なのです。ビッグサイズは超高級かつ都市部へ、少し小さめのサイズは地元で消費。とは言え、ハタ類の中では国内では最大の大型魚のクエ。延縄漁で獲られ、2 kg以下のサイズはリリースするというルールがあるため、小さいとは言えど3～4 kgが一般的で、その味わいはやはり一級。食卓でも楽しめる冬の贅沢・クエ。下関では、知られざるクエの魅力に触れることができます。



鍋でおなじみだが、旬のクエの高いポテンシャルはジャンルを問わず多くの料理人を惹きつける。淡白な身だが寝かせて旨味を引き出すと魅力が倍増するという

Hotpot maybe the most popular dish for longtooth grouper, but during the high season, this fish attracts many chefs of various genre due to its unlimited potential. Although its meat is light and simple, the flavor will explode once you let it age and bring out the *umami*.



While the longtooth grouper’s face may be a little scary, it has such a light and delicate flavor that it almost makes the fish seem beautiful. Additionally, the quality of the gelatin around its bones is exceptional with an indescribable taste and texture. Adding longtooth grouper to a winter hotpot dish is a luxury you don’t want to miss. Longtooth grouper, also known as “Ara” , offers a taste of winter that is beloved by the locals of Shimonoseki.

You might be wondering, “How is this premium fish becoming such a common meal for the locals?” In larger metropolitan areas like Tokyo and Fukuoka, longtooth grouper is traded at surprisingly high prices. However in Shimonoseki, it is a fish that can routinely be found in popular izakayas and supermarkets. While the bigger fish are considered premium and sent off to the metropolitan areas, the slightly smaller ones are consumed locally. However, longtooth groupers are still the biggest kind of groupers in Japan. They are fished using longline methods, and there are regulations in place to release them if their sizes are less than 2kg. Even the smaller ones generally weigh 3 to 4kg, and their tastes are exceptional. In Shimonoseki, you too can casually experience this winter luxury.

