

Japanese name

Fugu

Puffer fish has been delicacy in Japan since more than 2000 years ago. It is true that toxic accidents occurred in the past. However, puffer fish is now safe to consume as any other food due to strict rules and regulations. Puffer fish is regarded as extraordinary seafood with delicate taste and rich flavor. Puffer fish sashimi and hot pot dishes are very popular. Not only flesh is consumed, but other parts are also enjoyed, such as skin, which is cooked to prepare aspic, and dried fins soaked in hot sake to enhance flavor. Puffer fish is also very nutritious with rich protein and low calorie.

Improved safety with farmed puffer fish and its processing.

Japanese puffer fish – Its safety and processed products.

Through its long history, the Japanese government established rules and regulations to assure safe consumption of puffer fish. Depending on species, toxic parts and toxicity vary. The Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare established a strict preparation standard based on 21 designated species, and only licensed person is permitted to prepare puffer fish. In recent years, puffer fish completely removed of toxic parts are sold in packages ready to serve or cook, reliability and safety of which attract a wide range of users.



LICENCE OF FUGU PROCESSING

Migaki processing matters to the taste.

Skilled chefs and processing plant workers, who are licensed to prepare puffer fish, separate edible portions and remove toxic parts from the fish after Ike-Jime (known as Spinal Cord Destruction, a Japanese fish killing technique). This process is known as “Migaki.” Taste of puffer fish changes drastically depending on how this process is employed and time after Ike-Jime. Skilled chefs and plant workers are familiar with the timing when taste and flavor reach the best. They also prepare Migaki with the best appearance in mind. Because Migaki puffer fish tale is safe and free of toxin, it is prepared as sashimi and other dishes.



Popular puffer fish species harvested for food around Japan.

【Torafugu or Tiger Puffer (Takifugu rubripes)】

Torafugu is one of the highest valued seafood. It is the only farmed puffer fish species in Japan. A full course menu at restaurants specializing in puffer fish generally offer sashimi, hot-pot dish, grilled, and deep-fried. You can enjoy plump amber colored flesh. Torafugu is the king of puffer fish.



【Mafugu or Purple puffer (Takifugu porphyreus)】

Mafugu is the largest landed wild puffer fish in recent years by the near-shore fisheries in Japan. Flesh is white and you can enjoy mild taste. Flesh is not as firm as that of Torafugu, but it is popular for hot-pot dishes as flesh separates easily from the bones. Dried Mafugu is also good to eat. Mafugu is the queen of puffer fish.



【Shiro-sabafugu or Half-smooth golden pufferfish (Takifugu rubripes)】

Shiro-sabafugu has white flesh with less fat. It is good for sashimi, deep-fried, hot-pot, and other preparations. Shiro-sabafugu is known to be toxic free, but you must pay attention to closely related species found in tropical waters, which is said to be highly toxic.

【Kuro-sabafugu or Dark rough-backed puffer (Takifugu rubripes)】

Kuro-sabafugu is a light tasting fish. It is good for drying or deep-frying as it has high moisture content. It is especially good with hot-pot or as ingredient for miso (soy bean paste) soup.

Popular Puffer fish dishes.

Deep-fried Puffer fish

Big flesh covered with crispy crust matches well with firm texture. Distinct taste, but light flavor, goes well as appetizer with drinks. Children like it as flesh separates easily from the bones.

① Fried Fugu (serving 4 people)

Ingredients:

- Clean tails of Fugu (such as purple puffer) – 500 grams
- Breading mix – 100 grams

Method:

Rinse the tails and cut up to bite sizes. Deep fry breaded flesh in heated oil at 170 degree Celsius for 2-3 minutes. It is cooked when color turned to golden brown. Squeeze lemon or other citrus fruit over fried Fugu as you prefer.



Sashimi

Puffer fish fillet is sliced very thin after ageing for over 24 hours in refrigerator. Skilled chef cuts sashimi slices artistically thin that they are nearly transparent. Sashimi slices with unusually very firm texture, dipped in citrus vinegar, bring unexpected sensation of good taste and flavor.

② Fugu Sashimi (serving 4 people)

Ingredients:

- Tora Fugu or Tiger puffer tails - 250 grams
- Citrus vinegar, Momiji oroshi (grated carrot and daikon radish mixed with chili pepper), and chopped green onion

Method:

Rinse the fish, then prepare boneless fillets. Remove the dark meat and skin from fillets. Wrap cleaned fillet with kitchen paper and place in refrigerator for 24 hours to age.

Prepare sashimi by cutting out very thin slices in about 1.2 grams and place the slices on plate. Dip in mixture of citrus vinegar, Momiji oroshi and chopped green onion to eat.



Fuguchiri

Fugu hot-pot dish served with vinegared miso or citrus vinegar for dipping. Boiling the remains of Fugu after dressing, such as toxin free center bones, with vegetables enhances taste of broth. After enjoyed plump Fugu flesh, porridge with remaining soup and rice makes excellent meal. Fuguchiri has been a traditional winter dish and is very popular particularly in western Japan.

③ Fuguchiri or Tetchiri (serving 4 people)

Ingredients:

- Remains of Fugu after dressing and tail flesh – 600 grams
- Dried kelp for broth – 6 grams
- Water – 900 cc
- Vegetables (Half of Chinese cabbage, white portion of green onion, Shungiku garland chrysanthemum, Enoki mushroom)
- Tofu – one square, Dip sauce (Citrus vinegar, Momiji oroshi, and chopped small green onion)

One egg, chopped green onion, and cooked rice 300 grams for Zosui porridge

Method:

Rinse Fugu flesh and remains, vegetables (Chinese cabbage, white portion of green onions, Shungiku garland chrysanthemum, and Enoki mushroom), and Tofu, and cut them into bite sizes. Put dried kelp and water in a pan for about 3 hours to make broth without heating. Heat up broth and remove kelp just before boiling. Cook Fugu remains, Shungiku and white portion of green onions in the broth. Add Fugu flesh, other vegetables and Tofu immediately before boiling. Once boiled, turn down the heat. It is ready to eat after a few minutes. You may wish to dip cooked Fugu and vegetables in mixture of citrus vinegar, Momiji oroshi, and chopped green onion to eat. Finished with Fugu, vegetables and Tofu, remove small bits and pieces from the broth. Rinse cooked rice in fresh water to wash off sticky starch, then put in the broth to cook. Add small amount of salt to taste. Lastly, pour beaten egg over cooked rice and cover with a lid. You may wish to add chopped green onion and small amount of citrus vinegar to eat.

