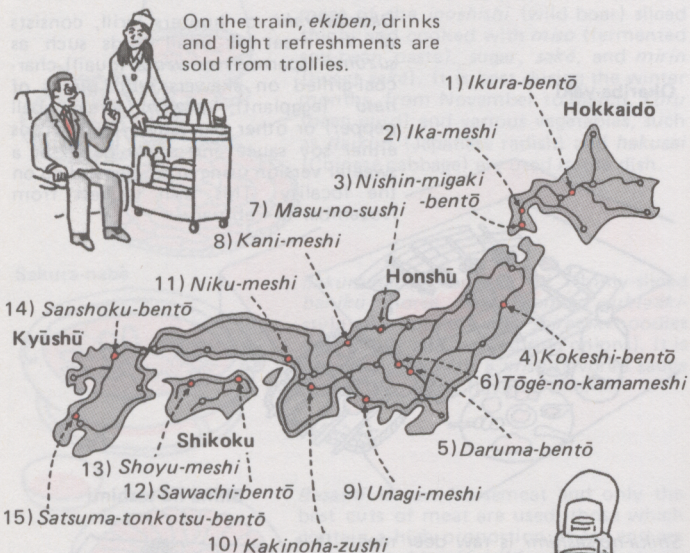


Ekiben

駅弁

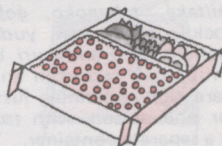
Ekiben are the boxed lunches sold at stations and on trains all over Japan. They are a cheap and convenient way of trying some of the local specialties. The containers in which *ekiben* are sold are often designed to represent the particular regional dish that they feature. *Ocha* (green tea) in plastic containers is always sold to go with *ekiben*.



Ekiben can sometimes be bought without leaving one's seat on the train.

1) *Ikura-bentō*

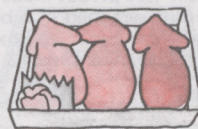
Iwamizawa Station, Hakodate Main Line



This *bentō* consists of *saké* (salmon) and *ikura* (salted salmon roe) on soy sauce-flavored rice.

2) *Ika-meshi*

Mori Station, Hakodate Main Line



Ika-meshi is made by stuffing a whole *ika* (squid) with rice and cooking it in a sweet, spicy sauce. Each *bentō* contains two or three squid.

3) *Nishin-migaki-bentō*

Hakodate Station, Hakodate Main Line



This *bentō* features *nishin* (herring) boiled for a long time in a sweet, spicy sauce until the bones are soft enough to eat.

4) *Kokeshi-bentō*

Morioka Station, Tōhoku Shin-kansen



This *bentō* is sold in a pottery container in the shape of a *kokeshi*, the ubiquitous wooden dolls that are a folk-craft specialty of the Tōhoku region.

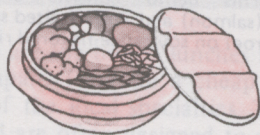
5) *Daruma-bentō*

Takasaki Station, Jōetsu Shin-Kansen



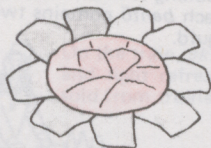
This *bentō*, packed in a plastic container shaped like the *daruma* doll that *Takasaki* is famous for, contains mainly *sansai* (mountain vegetables). The container can be used as a money-box after the *bentō* has been eaten.

6) **Tōgē-no-kamameshi**
Yokokawa Station, Shin-etsu
Line



This *bentō* consists of rice cooked in stock, garnished with chicken, *shiitaké*, *takenoko*, *gobō* (burdock root), *sansai*, *yudé-tamago* (boiled egg), and *kuri* boiled in syrup. It is served in an earthenware pot containing just enough for one person, with *tukemono* in a separate container.

7) **Masu-no-sushi**
Toyama Station, Hokuriku
Main Line



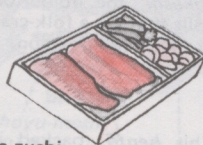
This colorful *bentō* contains *oshi-zushi* (see p.183) made with *masu* (trout) wrapped in a bamboo leaf and packed in a box made of *sugi* (Japanese cedar).

8) **Kani-meshi**
Fukui Station, Hokuriku Main
Line



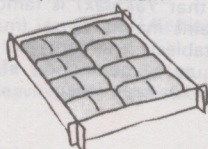
Kani-meshi is an excellent way of enjoying every part of the *zuwai-gani* (a large species of spider crab), a specialty of Fukui. The rice is flavored by cooking it together with the *ransō* (ovary) of the female crab, while the meat of the male crab is used as a garnish.

9) **Unagi-meshi**
Hamamatsu Station, Tōkaidō
Shinkansen



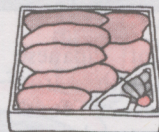
This is a filling *bentō* consisting of a whole eel grilled *kabayaki*-style (see p. 40) on top of rice.

10) **Kakinoha-zushi**
Nara Station, Kansai Main
Line



This *bentō* features five different kinds of *oshizushi* (see p.183) wrapped in a *kaki* (persimmon) leaf. The five kinds of *sushi* used are *shio-saba* (salted mackerel), *hiramé* (flounder), *masu* (trout), *kombu* (kelp) and *tai* (sea bream).

11) **Niku-meshi**
Shin-Kōbē Station, Tōkaidō
Shinkansen



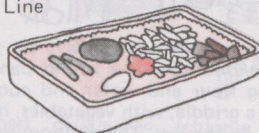
Niku-meshi consists of top-quality beef on rice, garnished with pine-apple, olives, sour-sweet *umé-no-shisomaki* (Japanese apricot wrapped in a beefsteak plant leaf), and *nara-zuké* (vegetables pickled in *saké* lees). The beef is marinated in twelve different spices before being cooked.

12) **Sawachi-bentō**
Takamatsu Station, Yosan
Main Line



This *bentō* is a sumptuous meal including both Japanese and Western delicacies such as *sushi*, chicken and fruit, in a box with four compartments.

13) **Shōyu-meshi**
Matsuyama Station, Yosan
Main Line



This *bentō* consists of *gomoku-gohan* (literally, "five-item rice") prepared by mixing rice with chicken, carrot, *gobō* (burdock root), *shiitaké* (edible fungus), and *takénoko* (bamboo shoot), seasoning with soy sauce and cooking.

14) **Sanshoku-bentō**
Hakata Station, Tōkaidō
Shinkansen



Sanshoku-bentō is a three-tiered *bentō* with a black, a red, and a green layer. Each tier contains rice and accompaniments, and the whole box contains enough for two people.

15) **Satsuma-tonkotsu-bentō**
Nishi-kagoshima Station, Kago-
shima Main Line



This *bentō* contains *tonkotsu*, a Kagoshima specialty made by stewing the ribs of the *kurobuta* (black pig) for a long time in *shō-chū* (see p.142), *miso* (fermented soy-bean paste) and *kurozato* (brown sugar).