

# Misaki Fishing Port & Fish Market: Made by *Maguro*

## - The history of Misaki Fishing Port -

### “Misaki”: a name synonymous with fresh fish

With a large market for its products in close proximity, Misaki’s “naturally good port” has been in use since the Heian Period (9<sup>th</sup> century onwards). During the Edo Period (17<sup>th</sup> century onwards), it grew in scale and importance alongside the nearby capital, Edo (modern-day Tokyo), in its role as a fishing industry village that helped to support the large-scale consumption of the ever-growing capital. Around the time of the Meiji Period (late 19<sup>th</sup> century), ice started to be used in the transportation of fish, and “Misaki” quickly came to be synonymous with fish that was very fresh, and which could command high prices.

#### Basic Data on Misaki Fishing Port: Class 3 Designated Fishing Port

Volume handled: approx. 21,000 tons  
Value handled: approx. 20.5 billion yen  
Main species handled: *maguro* (approx. 12,000 tons; 12.1 billion yen); marlin, mackerel, yellowtail, splendid alfonsino

### Misaki Fishing Port: the home of longline *maguro* fishing vessels (deep-sea fishing industry)

The first fish market in Misaki was opened in 1922, at Kainan in Misaki-machi (the area near modern-day Misaki Park). During that time, fresh *maguro* (tuna) were traded at the market. However, the market was damaged in the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, and consequently in 1929 a new market facility was built on the pier of the main port (the area where the Urari Fish Market is located today) to which the functions and services of the old market were moved. From around this time onwards, trade began to be conducted through an auction system designed to ensure greater fairness.

During the Second World War, market activity fell into decline, but by the early years of the Showa era, when fishing vessels were modernized and grew in size, many longline *maguro* fishing vessels gathered in Misaki port. By the late 1950s and early 1960s, refrigerated vessels, equipped with freezer facilities, became commonplace, enabling such vessels to travel to open seas around the world to catch *maguro*. Consequently, the name of Misaki Fishing Port came to be renowned across Japan as a base for the deep-sea fishing industry.

### Modernizing the market to meet modern needs

In order to respond to the modernization of fishing vessels and fishing methods, as well as the increase in landing volume, in March 1968 the market was rebuilt to create an entirely new fish market for the port, improved in both size and functionality. (This building was demolished in 2000 due to aging). Later, in order to adapt to the move toward the “cold chain” management of fish, where the catch is both transported and shipped frozen, in 1977, a super freezer warehouse and pre-processing plant were built, thereby providing market facilities fully adapted to these new distribution needs.

In 1992, to ensure the market could provide distribution services befitting the modern age, as well as a greater level of freshness, work began on an ice plant and an ultra-low temperature fish market refrigerated warehouse; by 1994, the market as it stands today had been completed.

In the spring of 2018, a new market will open – one which is entirely adapted to the strict hygiene management needs of the modern age. This market will be Japan’s first specialist wholesale market for frozen *maguro*, and will measure 3184m<sup>2</sup> over two floors. Clean, hygienic, and carefully temperature-controlled, this market boasts a number of features and functions designed to both facilitate the efficient trade of frozen *maguro* and ensure the product is kept in top condition.

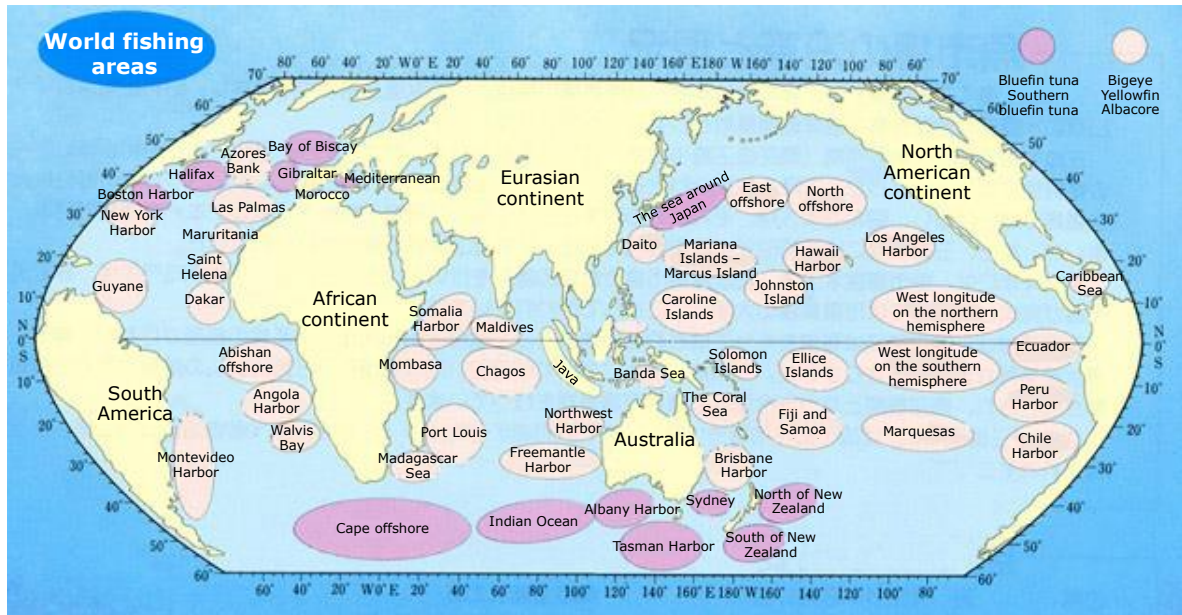
For example, to make certain that *maguro* frozen at ultra-low temperatures (“super-frozen *maguro*”) is not damaged in any way, floors have been coated to achieve surfaces which are as smooth and even as possible, while all staff will be required to wear boots with specially designed soles. Swing doors and double shutters are employed to maintain the temperature controlled environment, while air conditioning is set to low wind speed in order to ensure that the air around the super-frozen *maguro* is left undisturbed. The lighting under which products are displayed can have a major impact on the *mekiki* (“judging by eye”, product assessment) process followed by the *maguro* brokers, so decisions about lighting have been made jointly—and very carefully—by developers, wholesalers, and brokers.

In this way, every care has been taken to build a market space that is both perfectly adapted to *maguro* and meets the demands of the modern age.

Misaki Fishing Port has grown and thrived in parallel with its efforts to develop technologies and techniques to ensure that it can select and deliver fish that is fresh and of superlative quality. In this way, the port’s fortunes seem indelibly intertwined with the *maguro* for which it is known – it is surely a port that has been made by *maguro*.

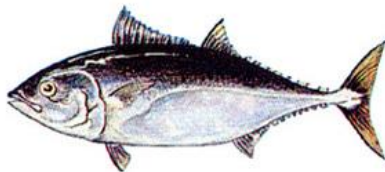
Reference information

■ Tuna fishing areas around the world



■ Types of tuna

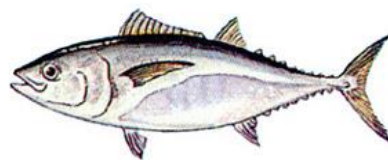
Bluefin Tuna (*kuro maguro*)



Up to 3m in length

Caught in the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, and around the coasts of Japan. Bluefin tuna caught in Japan's coastal waters have been particularly prized for many years. This type of tuna is also known as *hon-maguro* in Japanese. It is considered the highest grade of tuna.

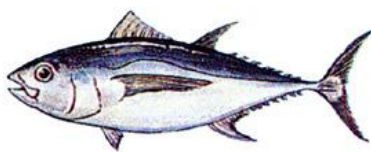
Southern Bluefin Tuna (*minami maguro*)



2m in length

Caught in low temperature areas off the coasts of Australia, New Zealand, South Africa (Cape Town). Its rich fat makes it a top quality tuna, highly prized by sushi restaurant and traditional Japanese restaurants. Also known as *indo-maguro* in Japanese.

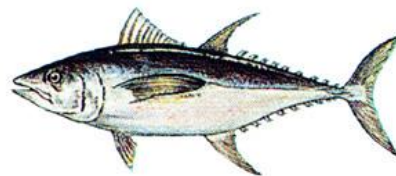
Bigeye Tuna (*mebachi*)



2.5m in length

Caught across a wide area that stretches from the 35<sup>th</sup> parallel north across the Equator to the 35<sup>th</sup> parallel south. This species of tuna is caught in the greatest volumes. It has distinctively wide-open eyes, hence the name "bigeye".

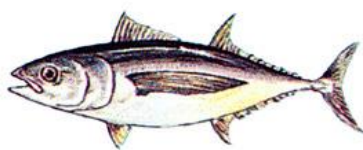
Yellowfin Tuna (*kihada maguro*)



2m in length

Caught in roughly the same areas as bigeye tuna. It is distinguished by its sleek body shape, while its flesh has a reddish tinge and fresh flavor. Its skin is has a yellowish hue in parts, hence the name "yellowfin".

Albacore Tuna (*binnaga maguro*)



1m in length

A small tuna with a wide-ranging habitat, encompassing bays worldwide. It has distinctively long, sword-like pectoral fins, and is the main source for canned tuna. It is also known as *tonbo* and *bincho* in Japanese.