

A New Kitchen for Japan

Tokyo's ultramodern fish market at Toyosu is open to visitors and has a focus on sustainability.

by **Tim Hornyak**

Japan is the birthplace of sushi, so when one of the world's biggest fish markets moved to a new location, Toyosu, last year, it drew international media attention. Those who visit this Central Wholesale Market will soon notice that it has a lot more going on than just trading in fish.

The storied Tsukiji Market, opened in Tokyo near Ginza in 1935, was one of the largest wholesale seafood markets in the world until it closed in 2018. It was celebrated by generations of Japanese and visitors from abroad for being a unique place where one could not only watch seafood wholesalers in action, but also sample the world's freshest sushi. Opened last October, the market's new spot is about 2.3 kilometers to the southeast on the artificial island of Toyosu in Tokyo Bay, and is easily accessed via Shijo-mae Station on the Yurikamome Line.

One thing you will realize when you set foot here is that it is a thoroughly modern facility with an emphasis on food safety, sanitation, and security. While Tsukiji had an old-school, mid-20th-century atmosphere, it was old and also partly open to the outside world and the elements. Just about anyone and anything, including rats, insects, and dust, could get in. Toyosu, which cost some 570 billion yen (\$5.1 billion), is a walled facility with climate controls suited to the function of each of its parts. In addition to its shutters, the market has air curtains to repel outside air, insects, and dust, as well as support air conditioning. While Tsukiji was originally set up for train shipments



From the tour course, you can see how sushi shops and restaurants buy ingredients at the intermediate wholesale markets.

of goods, trucks later took over and the layout was not ideal for that mode of transport. Toyosu, however, has been designed for truck transport and is located by a major thoroughfare.

All this does not mean the market does not welcome members of the public and tourists. Visitors can learn about the market through a promotional corner, panels, and other displays in the various buildings, as well as QR links to the online Toyosu Market Guide, available in 15 languages.

Fans of the market's famous early-morning tuna auctions can get quite close to the action from the Observation Deck, which is limited to 120 people daily

mediate Wholesale Market Building, home to 490 distributors, and the Fruit and Vegetables Building, where about 100 companies buy and sell produce. An average of 1,200 tuna are auctioned at the market every day; while the sales volume for Toyosu has not been compiled yet, Tsukiji averaged about 1,458 tonnes of seafood daily. Some 15,000 people work at the market every day.

"Toyosu is an essential market for food distribution in Japan," says Takeshi Miyama of Toyosu Market Management Section. "It's the largest fish market in the country, but many tourists visit as well. That's why we think it's important to satisfy the general visitor while fulfilling our market role in food distribution."



If you go up to the Green Roof Plaza, you can see views overlooking Tokyo Bay.

(reservations can be made online). Visitors can also view parts of the wholesale and intermediate wholesale markets for fish from galleries. About 70 shops offer products related to the market, while nearly 40 restaurants serve up platters of market-fresh sushi and sashimi, as well as Italian seafood and other fare.

Toyosu Market looks a bit like an airport on the outside, with many vehicles, goods, and people streaming in and out. By sheer numbers, it is overwhelming: with a lot measuring 40.7 hectares, it is 1.7 times as large as Tsukiji was. Three buildings dominate the lot: the Fisheries Wholesale Market Building, where seven major wholesale companies trade, the Fisheries Inter-

One emphasis of the new market is sustainability. Covering parts of the market are solar panels that supply 2,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity to the facility per day, enough to power nearly 580 households for a year. The Green Roof Plaza is a grassy expanse where visitors can view Tokyo Bay landmarks such as the Rainbow Bridge and Athletes' Village for the Tokyo 2020 Games; the plaza connects with the adjacent Toyosu Gururi Park. Surrounded by greenery, the market is designed to be a tourist-friendly, sustainable hub in Japan's vast logistics network of seafood and produce. Next time you want to try the freshest seafood in the country, check out Japan's new "kitchen" at Toyosu.