

## Introduction of Tamago Boro and Iwamoto Seika

It was about 500 years ago that Japan was first exposed to the Western world, mainly through Jesuit missionaries. Japan started importing Western culture and adapted it to the Japanese climate and preferences. One of those hybrid creations is tamago boro (tamago means “egg,” and boro is derived from the Portuguese word bolo, meaning “cake”). These tiny, roughly spherical snacks look more like cake than they do cookies, and they have been loved by Japanese for hundreds of years for their nutritional value, delicate texture, and subtle sweetness.

First of all, tamago boro is made with eggs, sugar, and potato starch and is shaped into a half-inch ball and lightly baked in the oven. Tamago boro melts naturally on your tongue before you even take a bite. Iwamoto Seika has made this sweet for 70 years and has seen the transformation of the product and the ways people enjoy it. When Iwamoto Seika started making tamago boro in the 1950s, Japan had food shortages, so the company tried to increase the caloric value per package while lowering the production cost. After the country recovered, consumers became more conscious of flavors, food allergies, and healthier options, requesting less-sweet options, and even calcium-enriched tamago boro. Iwamoto Seika attempted to make new types of tamago boro that responded to these requests—some successful, some unsuccessful—but it has always been open to consumers’ suggestions and has focused on research and development.

Tamago boro is enjoyed by consumers of all ages and different eating habits, but because of its meltingly soft texture and nutritional value, it is particularly popular with small children who might not have all their teeth yet and who do not have as big an appetite as adults. Iwamoto Seika created small packages with cute animal illustrations that appeal to children while at the same time helping to keep them from overeating. These children’s packages were a big hit, and they are still one of the most popular items among about 20 tamago boro products, which also include a larger package, stick-shaped tamago boro, and a pumpkin-flavored variety.

Tamago boro has been available in the US for about 40 years. Tamago boro contains neither oil nor butter, it is low-calorie, and it melts in your mouth without biting into it. It is perfect as a baby food. We have produced stick-shaped tamago boro that a baby can easily hold while eating. This shape is also convenient for putting into milk or water to soften the tamago boro before giving it to a baby to eat.

As time goes by, people’s lifestyles and preferences change. Japanese consumers today are more health conscious than ever, and they are especially selective about baby foods like tamago boro. Iwamoto Seika’s product line reflects this, and a recent hit is Egg Yolk Pumpkin Boro, made only with domestically sourced ingredients and no preservatives, food coloring, artificial flavoring, or baking powder.

