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**JAPAN  
KANSAI**

**和歌山**

**WAKAYAMA**





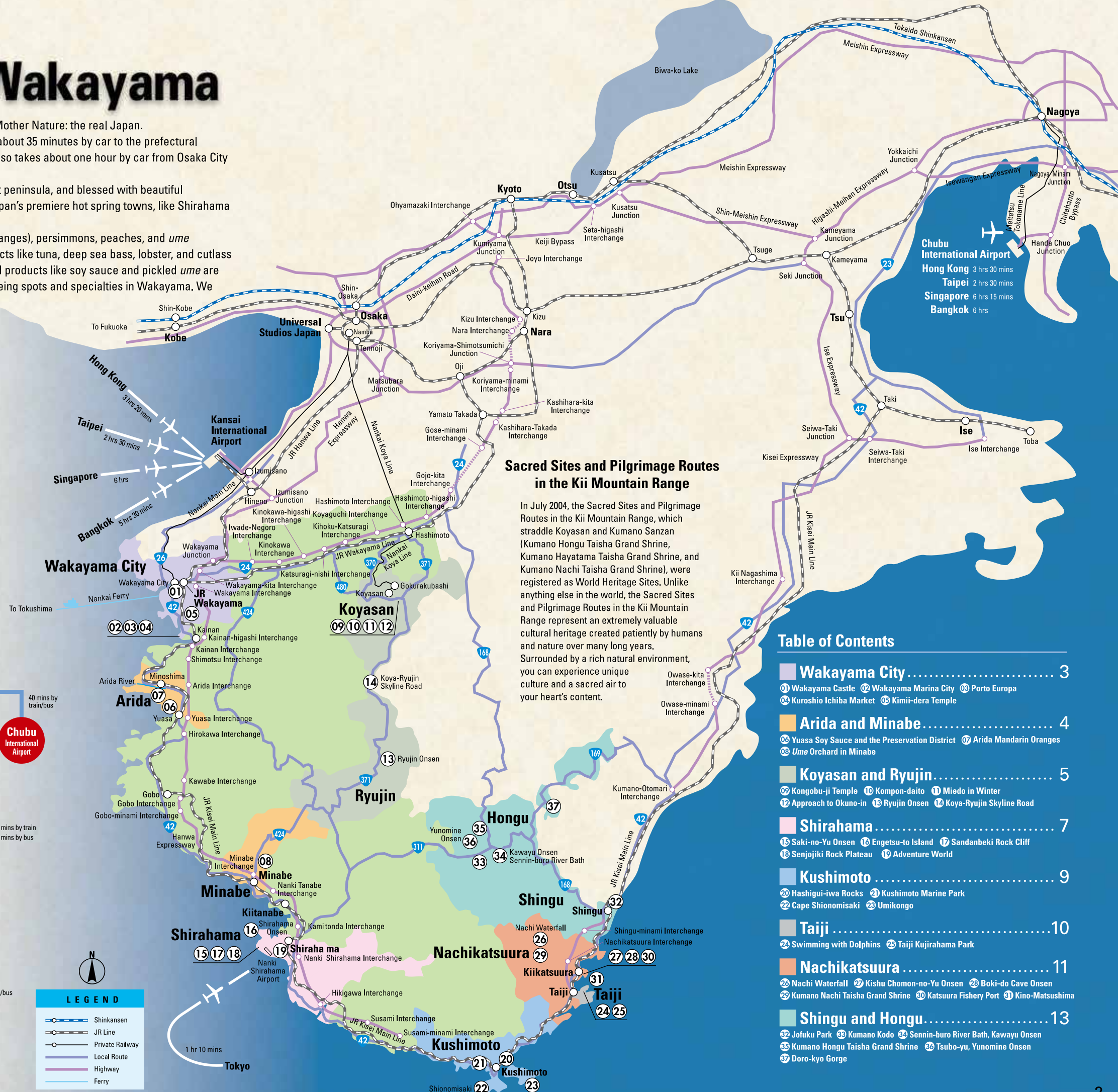
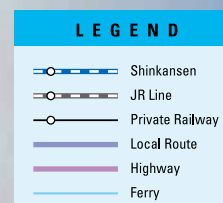
# Welcome to Wakayama

Hot springs steadily gushing forth, and magnificent beautiful Mother Nature: the real Japan.

Wakayama Prefecture is located south of Osaka. It takes about 35 minutes by car to the prefectural capital, Wakayama City, from Kansai International Airport. It also takes about one hour by car from Osaka City and Universal Studios Japan (USJ).

Wakayama is located on the Kii Peninsula, Japan's largest peninsula, and blessed with beautiful mountains, ocean, and rivers. Wakayama also has some of Japan's premiere hot spring towns, like Shirahama and Katsuura, as well as numerous famous sightseeing spots.

Fruit produced in Wakayama, such as *mikan* (mandarin oranges), persimmons, peaches, and *ume* (Japanese apricots), are famous all over Japan. Fishery products like tuna, deep sea bass, lobster, and cutlass fish enjoy a superb reputation, while traditional Japanese food products like soy sauce and pickled *ume* are also highly rated. We introduce just a few of the many sightseeing spots and specialties in Wakayama. We look forward to your visit.



## Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range

In July 2004, the Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range, which straddle Koyasan and Kumano Sanzan (Kumano Hongu Taisha Grand Shrine, Kumano Hayatama Taisha Grand Shrine, and Kumano Nachi Taisha Grand Shrine), were registered as World Heritage Sites. Unlike anything else in the world, the Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range represent an extremely valuable cultural heritage created patiently by humans and nature over many long years. Surrounded by a rich natural environment, you can experience unique culture and a sacred air to your heart's content.

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# 和歌山市

## Wakayama City

### Bustling Prefectural Capital, Artificial Floating Island, and Leisure Paradise

Wakayama City, the prefectural capital, is the most populous and vibrant city in Wakayama Prefecture. With the ancient and majestic Wakayama Castle as its center, Wakayama City has become a regional center of food, culture, and fashion. The artificial island Marina City in Wakayama Bay holds many of Wakayama's charms, such as the European port-themed amusement park Porto Europa and the Kuroshio Ichiba Market, where you can find a wide range of local products and food.



**Getting There**

From Kansai International Airport: Take an airport bus for JR Wakayama Station. 35 minutes  
Or, take the JR train and transfer at JR Hineno Station for JR Wakayama Station. 40 minutes

From JR Shin-Osaka Station: Take a limited express on the JR Hanwa Line for JR Wakayama Station. 55 minutes

From JR Tennoji Station: Take a train on the JR Hanwa Line for JR Wakayama Station. 60 minutes



### Wakayama Castle

See Map 01

Constructed in 1585, Wakayama Castle has become the symbol of Wakayama City. During the Edo period, the incredibly wealthy Kishu lords lived in the castle. The castle burnt down twice, but was restored to the original state in 1958. If you want to visit Wakayama Castle, we recommend doing so during the spring cherry blossoms or the fall colors. The top floor of the castle tower provides a panoramic view of Wakayama City. Inside the castle, there are exhibitions of samurai armor and a tea-ceremony room where travelers can experience traditional Japanese tea ceremony.



### Wakayama Marina City

See Map 02

### Porto Europa

See Map 03



Porto Europa in Wakayama Marina City is a European port-themed amusement park. Visitors can enjoy a southern European mood amidst buildings in the style of countries such as France, Spain, and Italy. There are also rides, such as a roller coaster that takes a nosedive from a height of 22 meters and a Ferris wheel.



### Kuroshio Ichiba Market

See Map 04

Adjoining Porto Europa is the Kuroshio Ichiba Market, where seafood and local products are exhibited and sold. The prices are reasonable, too. In the barbecue area, visitors can grill fresh foods like seafood and corn. Also popular with visitors are the demonstrations of fishmongers cutting tuna, held three times a day.

### Wakayama Ramen (Noodles)

See Map 05



The Japanese media have called Wakayama ramen the best in Japan. People stand in line in front of restaurants with ramen boasting an exquisitely tasting soup made from a mixture of soy sauce and pork bones. Once you taste ramen along with mackerel sushi, a local specialty in Wakayama, you'll be a Wakayama expert.



### Kimii-dera Temple

See Map 05

The temple is located on the side of Nagusa-yama mountain and commands a spectacular view of Wakaura Bay. The site is well known as the place of the first cherry blossoms in the Kansai region.

### The Roots of Japanese Food

Soy sauce, or *shoyu* in Japanese, is an essential ingredient of almost all Japanese food, and its origins are in Yuasa Town in Wakayama Prefecture. There isn't a family in Japan that doesn't use soy sauce in boiling, stewing, and baking food—or simply as a condiment. No discussion of Wakayama food would be complete without talking about fruit. Wakayama produces more fruit than any other prefecture in Japan. Two of its products, *mikan* (mandarin oranges) and *ume* (Japanese apricots), are well known across the country. In fact, Minabe has the leading share of the Japanese *ume* market.



**Getting There**

**Arida -**  
From JR Wakayama Station: Take a train on the JR Kisei Main Line for JR Minoshima Station. 30 minutes

**Yuasa -**  
From JR Wakayama Station: Take a train on the JR Kisei Main Line for JR Yuasa Station. 40 minutes

**Minabe -**  
From JR Wakayama Station: Take a limited express on the JR Kisei Main Line for JR Minabe Station. 60 minutes

### Yuasa Soy Sauce and the Preservation District

See Map 06

Yuasa once flourished as a lodging town on the Kumano Kodo Pilgrimage Routes, but its greatest claim to fame comes from being the birthplace of soy sauce. Today you can still see traditional soy sauce breweries and old-fashioned townscapes of wooden houses built with latticework and tiled roofs.

Kadocho is the best-known soy sauce business here, run by the same family for seven generations going back to its establishment in 1841. Soy sauce made here still tastes like it did in the Edo period (1603–1867). Of particular note is the *nigori* (strong) soy sauce, which recreates the taste of the Muromachi period (1333–1573). At the warehouse and museum adjoining Kadocho, visitors can see the evolution of soy sauce making tools and methods, starting from more than a century ago up to the present.

Besides Kadocho, there are many other soy sauce-related shops and warehouses in Yuasa that date back to the Edo period. In 2006, an area of town with many old, low-rise commercial buildings was designated for preservation as a historic industrial district.

Though Yuasa is a small town, there is a lot to see. It's fun to walk around the historic district to visit the shops and restaurants, most of them family-run, where you'll come across a variety of interesting goods and people.



### Arida mandarin oranges

### Arida Mandarin Oranges

See Map 07

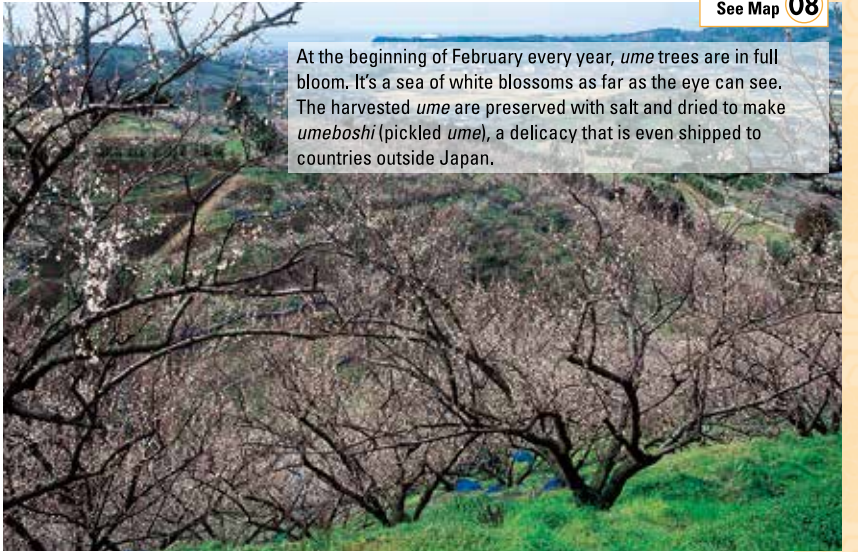
There are orchards all over Wakayama Prefecture but the most famous are in Arida, a town whose name is synonymous with *mikan*, or mandarin oranges. Only *mikan* that meet strict standards for sweetness are given the Arida brand name. During the autumn-to-winter mikan season, you can pick your own at a number of farms.

# 有田南部

## Arida Minabe



### Ume Orchard in Minabe



At the beginning of February every year, *ume* trees are in full bloom. It's a sea of white blossoms as far as the eye can see. The harvested *ume* are preserved with salt and dried to make *umeboshi* (pickled *ume*), a delicacy that is even shipped to countries outside Japan.



# 高野山 Koyasan 龍神 Ryujin

## Sacred Site of Buddhism and Beauty-Enhancing *Onsen* (Hot Springs)

Spread over the top of a 900-meter-high mountain, Koyasan is the birthplace of Shingon esoteric Buddhism in Japan and has flourished as a religious center for 1,200 years. There are 117 temples in the mountains, and in the Okuno-in area, tombstones of every era, including those of famous historical figures, give off an aura of mystery. In the mountains, there are 52 *shukubo* (temple lodging facilities) where visitors can stay and taste *shojin ryori* (vegetarian Buddhist cuisine) and experience the spiritual culture of this area. Koyasan was registered as a World Heritage Site in July 2004.



### Getting There

#### Koyasan -

From JR Wakayama Station: Take the JR Wakayama Line to Hashimoto Station, 60 minutes. Transfer to the Nankai Koya Line and go to Gokurakubashi Station, 33 minutes. Then transfer to the Koyasan cable car and go to Koyasan Station, 5 minutes

#### Ryujin -

From JR Wakayama Station: Take a limited express on the JR Kisei Main Line to JR Kiitanabe Station, 70 minutes. Transfer to the Ryujin bus and go to the terminus, 75 minutes



Kompon-daito

See Map 10



Vegetarian dishes



Kongobu-ji Temple

See Map 09



Approach to Okuno-in

See Map 12



Miedo in Winter

See Map 11



Ryujin Onsen

See Map 13

Ryujin Onsen has a 1,300-year history and was named after a legend that says Kobo Daishi—the founder of the Shingon sect of Buddhism in Koyasan—received a divine message in a dream from Nanda-ryuo, one of the dragon kings of Buddhism. The *onsen* prospered as a special lodging for Kishu lords in the Edo period (1603–1867) and still maintain its traditional flavor. Ryujin Onsen is particularly famous for making skin beautiful and is known as one of the three beauty-enhancing hot springs of Japan.



Ice-glazed trees on Mt. Gomadanzan



Fall colors along the  
Koya-Ryujin Skyline Road



Koya-Ryujin Skyline Road

See Map 14

This 43-kilometer-long road is built on the peaks of mountains as high as 1,000 meters from Koyasan to Ryujin Onsen. The road commands a view of the mountains over a sea of clouds. The seasons bring changing beauty, such as new leaves, fall colors, and ice-glazed trees.



# 白浜

## Shirahama

### One of the Three Oldest *Onsen* (Hot Springs) of Japan

Visited by 3.3 million people a year, Shirahama Onsen is among the oldest springs of Japan along with Dogo Onsen and Arima Onsen. With the number of springs totaling more than 120 and the number of hotels with *onsen* facilities exceeding 90, it is one of the major *onsen* areas of Japan. Also famous for its pure white sandy beach, Shirahama is a mecca of marine sports. There are also splendid landscapes such as Engetsu-to Island, Sandanbeki Rock Cliff, and Senjojiki Rock Plateau, as well as a large amusement park, safari park, and aquarium. The largest sightseeing spot in Wakayama, Shirahama has plenty of things to see and do.



#### Getting There

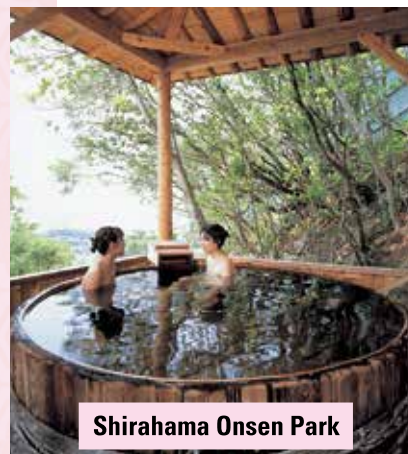
From Kansai International Airport: Take a bus to JR Wakayama Station, then transfer for the Shirahama Bus Terminal. 2 hours 40 minutes  
 From JR Shin-Osaka Station: Take a limited express on the JR Kisei Main Line for JR Shirahama Station. 2 hours 15 minutes  
 From JR Wakayama Station: Take a limited express on the JR Kisei Main Line for JR Shirahama Station. 80 minutes



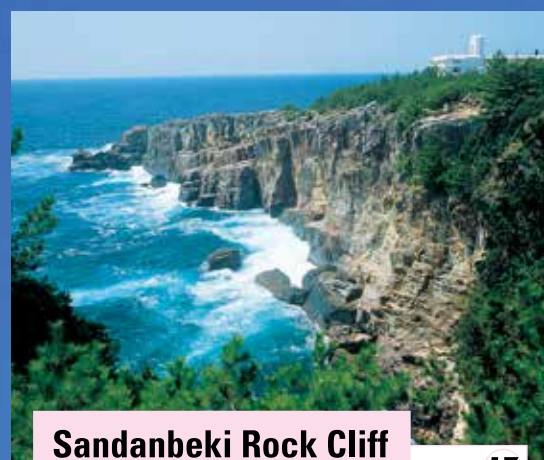
### Saki-no-Yu Public Onsen

See Map 15

Saki-no-Yu has a more than 1,300-year history and is regarded as the leading *onsen* facility in Shirahama. It's an open-air bath that takes advantage of the seashore rocks overhanging the Pacific Ocean. The men's and women's sections are divided only by several pieces of boards, giving bathers an open feeling. You can really feel this openness when you soak in the hot water facing the Pacific Ocean.



### Shirahama Onsen Park



### Sandanbeki Rock Cliff

See Map 17

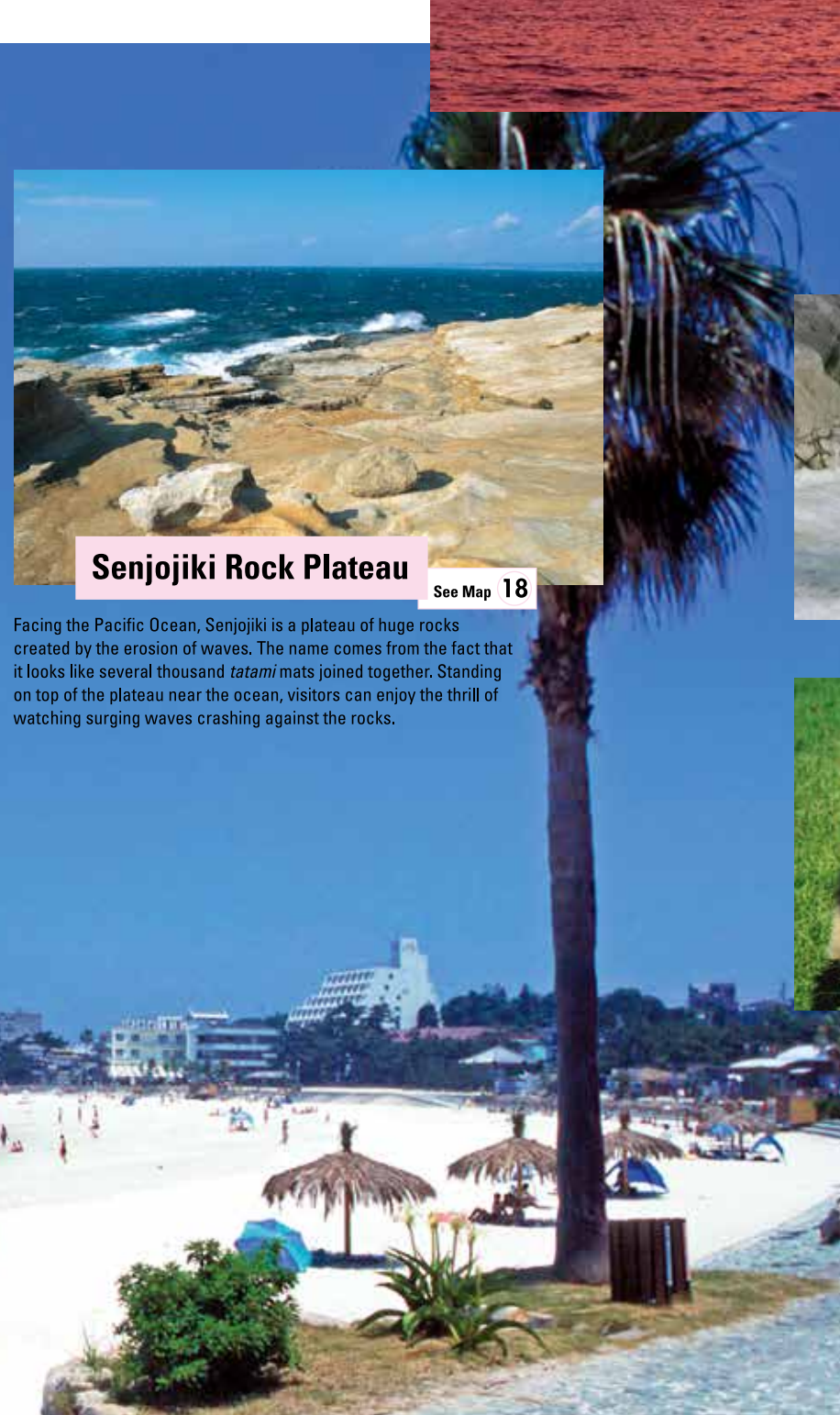
Rising to a height of 50 meters along a 2-kilometer stretch of the Pacific Ocean, Sandanbeki has been created by the erosion of waves and offers spectacular views. You can take an elevator down to a cave located 36 meters below. When you stand at the edge of the cliff, you can hear the ocean roar.



### Senjojiki Rock Plateau

See Map 18

Facing the Pacific Ocean, Senjojiki is a plateau of huge rocks created by the erosion of waves. The name comes from the fact that it looks like several thousand *tatami* mats joined together. Standing on top of the plateau near the ocean, visitors can enjoy the thrill of watching surging waves crashing against the rocks.



### Engetsu-to Island

See Map 16

Engetsu-to is a famous island that symbolizes Shirahama. Measuring 130 meters north-south, 35 meters east-west, and 25 meters in height, the island, whose name means "round," was named after the opening created in its center by the erosion of waves over many years. It is especially beautiful at sunset when you can see the sun through the opening.



### Adventure World

See Map 19

Adventure World is one of the largest amusement parks in Japan. The park provides thrilling attractions, a safari park, and an aquarium. Adventure World has over 200 species of animals such as giant pandas, white tigers, giant tortoises, and hippopotamus. Popular among visitors is the sightseeing car around Safari World to observe animals in their natural habitat. You can also spend the day at Marine World, watching the dolphin show, observing polar bears and penguins, and interacting with tame animals.



# 串本

## Kushimoto

## Southernmost Tip of Honshu

Located on the southernmost tip of Wakayama Prefecture, Kushimoto faces the vast Pacific Ocean and is known for dramatic seashore landscapes and marine leisure. The main attractions are the oddly shaped Hashigui-iwa Rocks, Kushimoto Marine Park, where visitors can learn about the ecology of marine life, and popular scuba-diving areas.



### Getting There

From JR Shin-Osaka Station: Take a limited express on the JR Kisei Main Line for JR Kushimoto Station.  
3 hours  
From JR Wakayama Station: Take a limited express on the JR Kisei Main Line for JR Kushimoto Station.  
2 hours 10 minutes

## Hashigui-iwa Rocks

See Map 20

The Hashigui-iwa Rocks are oddly shaped rock outcroppings that stretch for about 850 meters along the ocean. The more than 40 oddly shaped rocks rise up in a row like piles of a bridge. The rocks offer a unique spectacle unlike any other.



## Kushimoto Marine Park

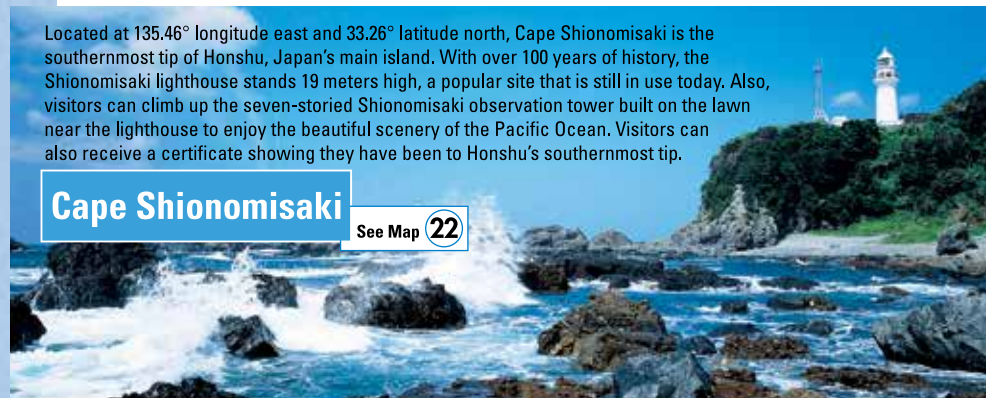
See Map 21

Kushimoto Marine Park has a 24-meter-long underwater tunnel and numerous underwater exhibition rooms where visitors can get a close-up look at the ecology of marine life such as sharks and anglers. From the underwater observation tower 140 meters off the coast, visitors can watch beautiful migratory fish and coral reefs at the bottom of the sea 6.3 meters below the surface at close range. Visitors can also take a sightseeing boat with a transparent bottom to see what lies beneath the ocean.



## Scuba Diving

The sea along the coast of Kushimoto, which became a designated site under the Ramsar Convention in 2005, is one of the most famous diving spots in Japan. The water is extremely clear and divers can see about 80 species of coral and 300 species of fish. Under the guidance of qualified instructors, even beginners can enjoy the wonders of diving.



## Cape Shionomisaki

See Map 22

Located at 135.46° longitude east and 33.26° latitude north, Cape Shionomisaki is the southernmost tip of Honshu, Japan's main island. With over 100 years of history, the Shionomisaki lighthouse stands 19 meters high, a popular site that is still in use today. Also, visitors can climb up the seven-storied Shionomisaki observation tower built on the lawn near the lighthouse to enjoy the beautiful scenery of the Pacific Ocean. Visitors can also receive a certificate showing they have been to Honshu's southernmost tip.

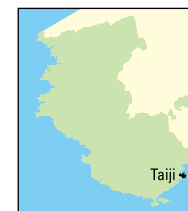


## Umikongo

See Map 23

## Whaling Village and Swimming with Dolphins

Because Taiji has a warm ocean current, whales appear frequently in the ocean nearby. Locals have been whaling for about 700 years, and there are still many whale-related facilities today. Inside Kujirahama Park, the cute, clever whales perform shows. In addition, Taiji is famous for dolphin training. Visitors can watch exciting dolphin shows and enjoy the unique experience of swimming with dolphins, too.



### Getting There

From JR Wakayama Station: Take a limited express on the JR Kisei Main Line for JR Taiji Station.  
2 hours 30 minutes

# 太地

## Taiji

## Swimming with Dolphins

See Map 24

The town of Taiji is famous for dolphin training and visitors can play and swim with dolphins. You don't even have to be good at swimming. Under the guidance of a qualified instructor, you enter the water with a wet suit, fins, goggles, and an oxygen tank. You can enjoy communication with dolphins by brushing and feeding them, having them kiss you, and hitching a ride on their back. It's a once-in-a-lifetime thrill.



## Taiji Kujirahama Park

See Map 25

A large treasure house of marine life, Taiji Kujirahama Park has a whale museum, whale hunting boat museum, Marinarium (marine aquarium), and more. In the world's largest whale museum, a real 15-meter skeleton of a whale and a model of a whale are exhibited, and about 1,000 rare items related to whales are also displayed. Visitors can also enjoy exciting whale and dolphin shows at the Marinarium.



Whale clay bells





# 那智 勝浦

## Nachikatsuura

### Hot Spring Heaven

Nachikatsuura is one of the main fishing ports in Japan. The town boasts one of the largest catches of fresh tuna in Japan and offers a variety of seafood for hungry visitors. Nachi Waterfall, the highest in Japan, and the Kino-Matsushima islands are the most famous sightseeing spots. Along with Shirahama, the town is one of the most famous *onsen* areas in Japan. There are hot springs lining the entire bay.



#### Getting There

From JR Shin-Osaka Station: Take a limited express on the JR Kisei Main Line for JR Kii-Katsuura Station.  
3 hours 30 minutes  
From JR Nagoya Station: Take a limited express on the JR Kisei Main Line for JR Kii-Katsuura Station.  
3 hours 30 minutes  
From JR Wakayama Station: Take a limited express on the JR Kisei Main Line for JR Kii-Katsuura Station.  
2 hours 30 minutes

### Nachi Waterfall

See Map 26

Known as the highest waterfall in Japan, the magnificent Nachi Waterfall is 133 meters high, 13 meters wide, and has a water flow of one ton per second. There are two places for the best view of the waterfall. One is Hiro-jinja Shrine, which sits near the bottom of the waterfall and affords a magnificent view of the falls and is close enough that you can hear the roaring sounds of the falling water. The other is in front of the three-storied tower of Nachisan Seiganto-ji Temple on the side of Nachisan mountain, from where you can see water falling straight down. This is also the perfect spot to take photographs with the three-storied tower in the background.

<World Heritage>



### Daimon-zaka Slope

Daimon-zaka is a stepped cobblestone path on the slope leading to Kumano Nachi Taisha Grand Shrine, Nachisan Seiganto-ji Temple, and Nachi Waterfall. This impressive pathway is lined with centuries-old Japanese cedar trees (cryptomeria), camphor trees, and bamboo groves. Daimon-zaka means "large gate slope," referring to a gate that once stood nearby. Near the top of the slope, you can catch your first glimpse of the awe-inspiring Nachi Waterfall.

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### Kishu Chomon-no-Yu Onsen

See Map 27

Kishu Chomon-no-Yu Onsen is located inside Hotel Nakanoshima, which is built on a small island in Kino-Matsushima. With waves washing against the shore at close range, this *onsen* gives you a sense of unity with the ocean.



### Kumano Nachi Taisha Grand Shrine

See Map 29

Along with Kumano Hayatama Taisha Grand Shrine and Kumano Hongu Taisha Grand Shrine, this is one of the sacred sites of Kumano Sanzan. The main shrine pavilion was built in an original architectural style called *Kumano-zukuri*. Nationally important cultural properties, such as Kumano Nachi Taisha documents and ancient pictures called mandala, are stored here.

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### Kino-Matsushima

See Map 31

Kino-Matsushima is the general name for the approximately 130 small islands scattered around a 17-kilometer area in Katsuura Bay. The name is derived from the fact that Kino-Matsushima compares favorably with Matsushima Bay, one of the three most scenic spots in Japan. Among the small islands in Kino-Matsushima are lion-shaped and camel-shaped islands. From the Katsuura sightseeing pier, visitors can sail out on the ocean on board a sightseeing boat and take in the beautiful landscape. One cruise takes about 40 minutes.



### Boki-do Cave Onsen

See Map 28

Located in Hotel Urashima, one of the largest hotels in Japan, Boki-do is a natural cave with an *onsen*. This 15-meter high, 1,000-square-meter cave opens on to the Pacific Ocean. This open view allows you to enjoy magnificent scenery while soaking in the *onsen*. The name Boki-do, which means "forget-to-return cave," originated when Kishu lord Tokugawa Yorimichi visited this *onsen* and was so fascinated with the scenery that he almost forgot to go back home.



### Katsuura Fishery Port

See Map 30

Katsuura Fishery Port boasts one of the largest catches of fresh tuna in Japan. From early in the morning, large tuna are spread out on the floor of the fish market and fish dealers hold their auctions, an exciting sight well worth seeing.





# 新宮 Shingu 本宮 Hongu

## Hidden Treasures and Serenity

This area is located in the southeast of Wakayama Prefecture. Shingu is the center of this area, with the Chinese-style Jofuku Park being the most prominent place. The whole area of Hongu is rich with natural beauty, and ancient trees along the Kumano Kodo Pilgrimage Routes appear to grow to the sky. Kawayu Onsen is a large open-air bath dug in the center of the river where men and women can bath together. The grand Doro-kyo Gorge resembles the Three Gorges of the Yangtze River in China.



### Getting There

#### Shingu -

From JR Shin-Osaka Station: Take a limited express on the JR Kisei Main Line for JR Shingu Station.  
3 hours 50 minutes

From JR Wakayama Station: Take a limited express on the JR Kisei Main Line for JR Shingu Station.  
2 hours 50 minutes

#### Hongu -

From JR Shingu Station: Take a bus to Kumano Hongu-Totsugawa and get off at Hongu-taisha-mae stop.  
60 minutes

## Jofuku Park

See Map **32**

Shingu is said to be the place where Jofuku, who was visiting Japan to search for the elixir of immortality with some 3,000 little boys and girls on orders from the first Qin Emperor, made a landing 2,200 years ago. After finding the Tendai-uyaku (a kind of camphor tree) to be effective, however, Jofuku settled and spent the rest of his life here. In memory of him, local people constructed this Chinese-style park. When you enter the park by passing through the majestic gate, you can see the statue and tombstone of Jofuku, the “Pond of Immortality,” and the Tendai-uyaku, the tree known as the elixir of immortality.



## Kumano Kodo

See Map **33**

For over 1,000 years, people from all levels of society, including emperors and aristocrats, made the arduous pilgrimage to Kumano, the ancient name for the southern part of the Kii Peninsula. Those pilgrims used a network of routes—now called the Kumano Kodo—stretching across the mountainous Kii Peninsula. The walk itself was an integral part of the pilgrimage process as the pilgrims undertook rigorous religious rites of worship and purification along the way.

Walking the ancient Kumano Kodo is a fantastic way to experience the unique cultural and spiritual landscape of the Kumano countryside.

In July 2004, the Kumano Kodo Pilgrimage Routes were registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site as part of the “Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range” property.  
<World Heritage>



## Sennin-buro River Bath, Kawayu Onsen

See Map **34**

Kawayu Onsen is a famous hot spring in the Hongu area, and the temperature of the source of the spring in the Oto River reaches 73°C. In winter, when the water level of the Oto River falls, cold water on the riverside mixes with the hot spring to produce a suitable temperature for visitors to enjoy an open-air bath. Because this open-air spring is so large that about 1,000 people can be in at the same time, it is also called “Sennin (1,000 person) Buro.” The Sennin-buro River Bath is free from December to February. Visitors wear swimsuits since both men and women go in at the same time.



## Kumano Hongu Taisha Grand Shrine

See Map **35**

Along with Kumano Hayatama Taisha Grand Shrine and Kumano Nachi Taisha Grand Shrine, this shrine is one of three that are collectively known as Kumano Sanzan. Climbing up the stone-step approach shrouded in the grove of cedars, you can see the main shrine pavilion, which is designated as a nationally important cultural property.  
<World Heritage>



## Tsubo-yu, Yunomine Onsen

See Map **36**

This *onsen* was created by hollowing out a natural rock and is only big enough for two or three people at a time. It is said that a couple soaking in this hot spring will have a healthy baby. It changes its color seven times a day, ranging in tones from blue to milky white to transparent.  
<World Heritage>



### Local cuisine

Made using hot spring water, this cuisine is soft and pleasant to the taste, and enjoys a superb reputation.

## Doro-kyo Gorge

See Map **37**

This ravine in the tributary of the Kumano River offers a variety of natural landscapes, such as dense virgin forests, cliffs, and oddly shaped rocks of various sizes. The landscapes are particularly splendid in summer when flowers bloom on the rock face, and in late autumn when colored leaves cover the mountains.



### Mehari-zushi, sanma-zushi

*Mehari-zushi* is rice wrapped in the leaves of mustard greens. *Sanma-zushi* is made of vinegar-soaked saury on rice. Both of these sushi are said to be the origin of Japanese food.