KUMANO TRAVEL

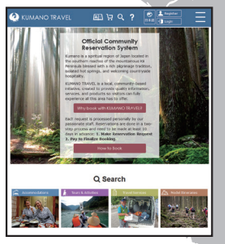
Official Community Reservation System

www.kumano-travel.com

KUMANO TRAVEL is an international award-winning community-based initiative; a bilingual (Japanese & English) online reservation system for the region.

SERVICES & PRODUCTS

- Accommodations Reservations
- Tours & Activities
- Local Guides
- Travel Service (eg. Luggage shuttle)
- Model Itineraries



WHY BOOK WITH KUMANO TRAVEL?

- Locally Owned & Operated
- Intimate Local Knowledge
- Quality Personal Service
- Freedom to Discover
- Responsible & Sustainable
- Secure Online Booking

Note: Reservations are required at least 7~10 days in advance.

Useful Words and Phrases

Hello	Konnichiwa こんにちは	**Goodbye**	Sayounara さようなら
Thank you	Arigato ありがとう	**Excuse me**	sumimasen すみません

Do you speak English? ..... Eigo ga hanasemasu ka? 英語が話せますか?

I don't understand. / I don't know ..... Wkarimasen わかりません

I can't speak Japanese ..... Nihongo wa dekimasen 日本語はできません

Is it OK to take a photo? ..... Shasin o totte mo ii desu ka? 写真を撮ってもいいですか?

Yes	Hai はい	**No**	Iie いいえ

Would you please show me on this map where I am right now?

..... Kono chizu de genzaichi o oshiete kudasai. この地図で現在地を教えてください

Where is the ××××? ..... ×××× wa doko desu ka? ××××はどこですか?

Bus stop	Basu-tei バス停	**Traihead**	Tozanguchi 登山口	**Toilet**	O-tearai/toire お手洗い/トイレ
Help me!	Tasukete! たすけて!	**I need a doctor**	Isha ga hitsuyo desu 医者が必要です		

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KUMANO KODO

ISEJI (Central)

Pilgrimage Route Maps

CONTENTS

Context 1
Overview ..... 2~3
Maps ..... 4~19
Tips ..... 20~22
Itineraries 23
Access ..... 24~27
Route Guide ..... 28~31

KUMANO 熊野

Japan's Spiritual Origins

Kumano is an isolated sacred site of healing and salvation. It embodies the spiritual origins of Japan and has been a pilgrimage destination for centuries. The steep, lush mountains of the Kii Peninsula are blessed with a rich cultural and natural heritage. Walking the Kumano Kodo is an immersive Japanese experience for the intuitive, active traveler. Welcome!

Ise Jingu

Ise Jingu is one of the supreme shrines in Japan with a direct and tangible connection between Japan's mythological origins and the Imperial family.

Kumano Sanzan

The main sites of worship in the Kumano region are the three Grand Shrines of Kumano: Kumano Hongu Taisha, Kumano Hayatama Taisha, and Kumano Nachi Taisha. As a set they are known as the Kumano Sanzan.

Kumano Hongu Taisha is situated in the heart of the kumano. The austere shrine pavilions were originally located at Oyunohara, a sand-bank in the Kumano-gawa River.

Kumano Hayatama Taisha is located in Shingu city, where the impressive Kumano-gawa River empties into the expanse of the Pacific Ocean.

Kumano Nachi Taisha is built on a mountain side facing the inspiring Nachi water fall, which is the tallest in Japan and believed to be a deity.

UNESCO World Heritage

On July 7, 2004 three sacred sites (Kumano Sanzan, Koyasan, and Yoshino/Omine) and the pilgrimage routes that lead to and connect them, were registered on UNESCO's World Heritage list as the *"Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range"*.

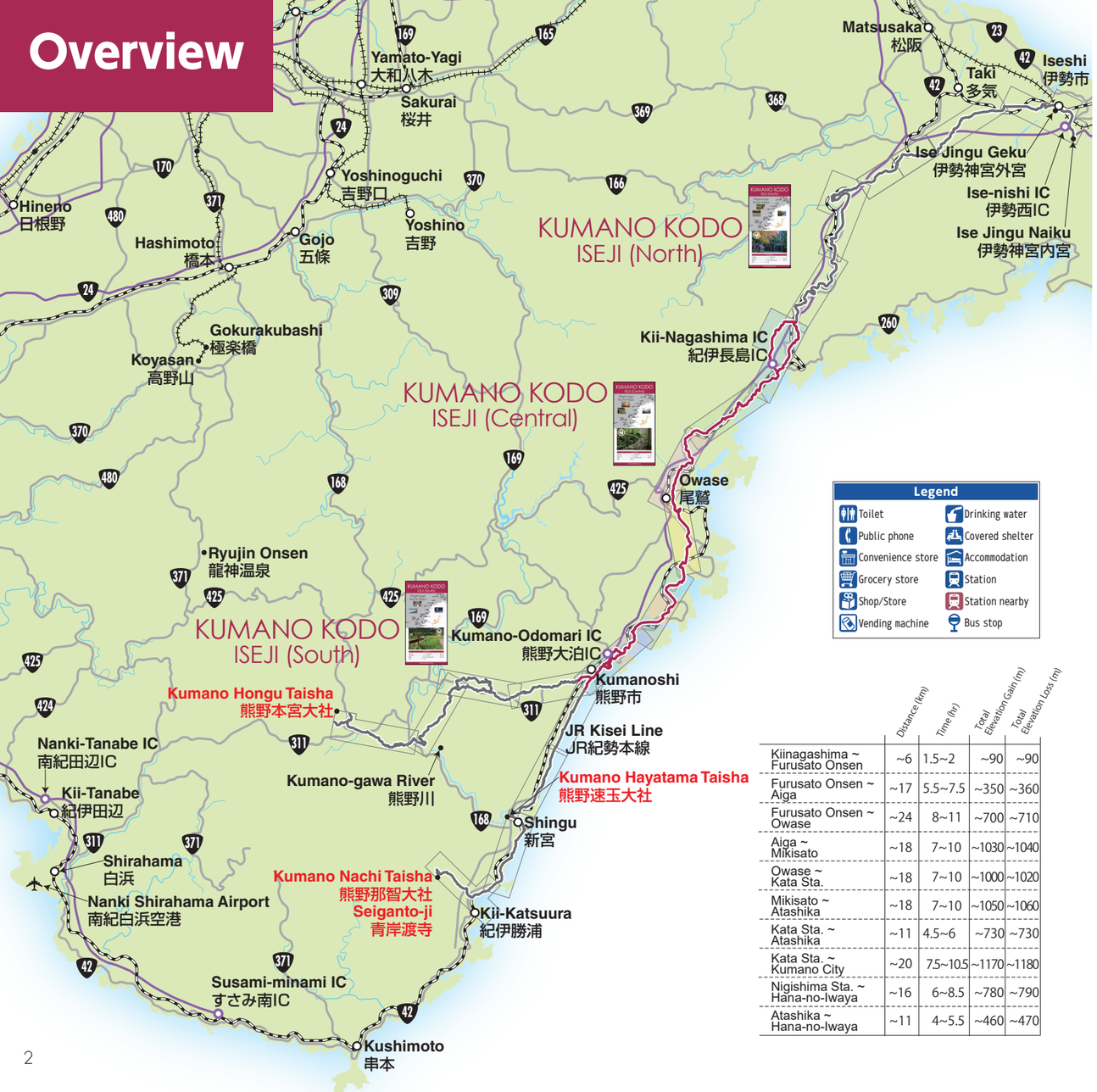
Kumano Kodo Pilgrimage Route

For over 1000 years people from all levels of society, including retired emperors and aristocrats, have made the arduous pilgrimage to Kumano. These pilgrims used a network of routes, now called the Kumano Kodo, which stretch across the mountainous Kii Peninsula.

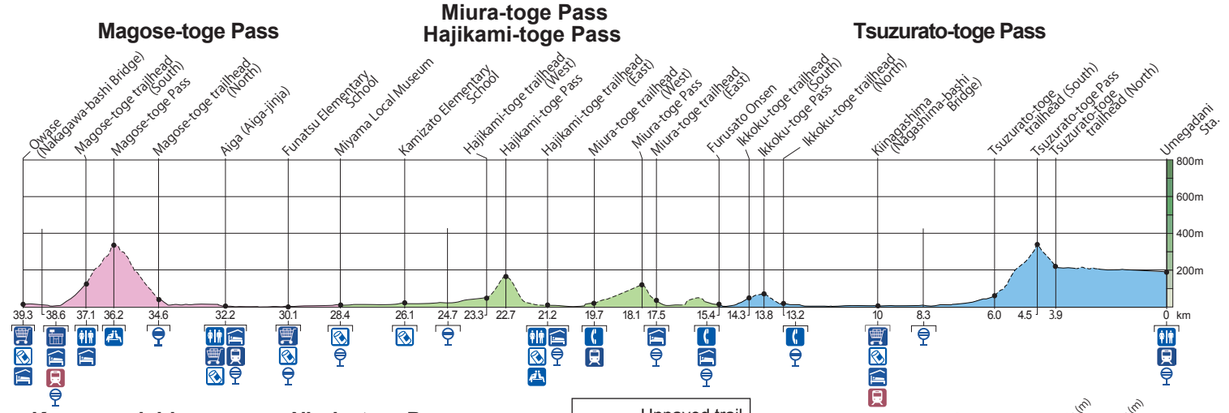
Iseji Eastern Route

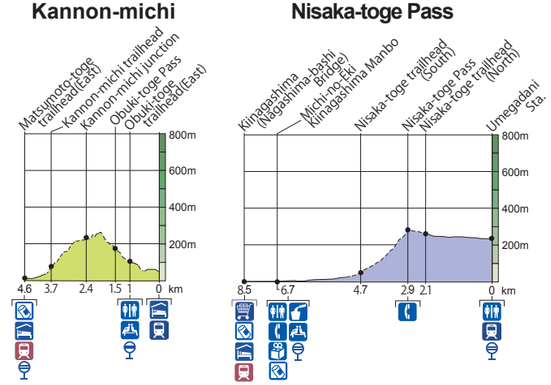
The Iseji route runs along the east coast of the Kii Peninsula between Ise Jingu and the Kumano Sanzan. It was extremely popular in the Edo period (1603-1868) with the increase of pilgrims to the Ise. After paying homage, devotees would continue on the Iseji to Kumano. This route has a diversity of mountain passes, fishing villages, terraced rice fields, and beaches.

Overview



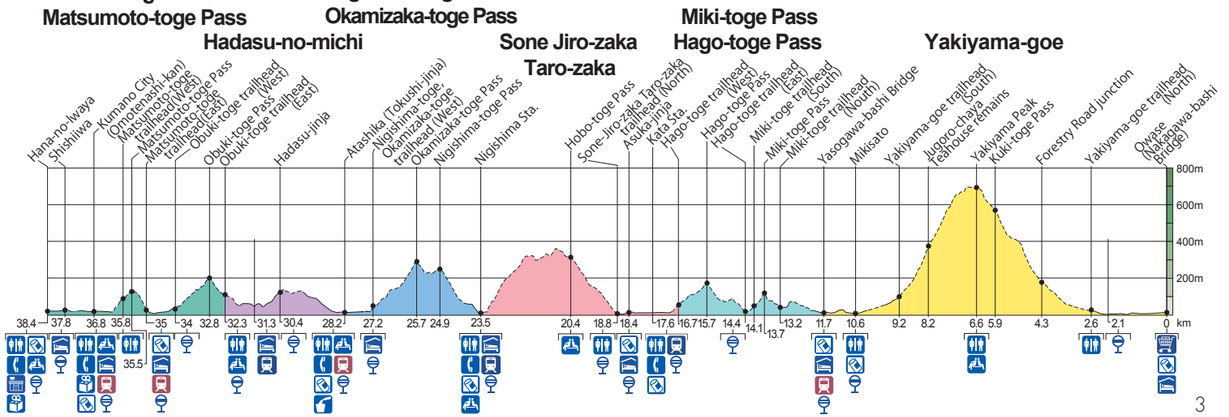
	Distance (km)	Time (hr)	Total Elevation Gain (m)	Total Elevation Loss (m)
Kiinagashima ~ Furusato Onsen	~6	1.5~2	~90	~90
Furusato Onsen ~ Aiga	~17	5.5~7.5	~350	~360
Furusato Onsen ~ Owase	~24	8~11	~700	~710
Aiga ~ Mikisato	~18	7~10	~1030	~1040
Owase ~ Kata Sta.	~18	7~10	~1000	~1020
Mikisato ~ Atashika	~18	7~10	~1050	~1060
Kata Sta. ~ Atashika	~11	4.5~6	~730	~730
Kata Sta. ~ Kumano City	~20	7.5~10.5	~1170	~1180
Nigishima Sta. ~ Hana-no-Iwaya	~16	6~8.5	~780	~790
Atashika ~ Hana-no-Iwaya	~11	4~5.5	~460	~470





--------- Unpaved trail
——— Paved trail

	Distance (km)	Time (hr)	Total Elevation Gain (m)	Total Elevation Loss (m)	
Tsuzurato-toge Pass	~16	4.5~6	~290	~510	P.4~5
Miura-toge Pass, Hajikami-toge Pass	~13	4~6	~330	~340	P.6~7
Magose-toge Pass	~11	3~5	~370	~370	P.8~9
Yakiyama-goe	~12	5.5~7.5	~700	~720	P.12~13
Miki-toge Pass, Hago-toge Pass	~5	2~3	~310	~270	P.14~15
Sone Jiro-zaka Taro-zaka	~7	2.5~3.5	~410	~460	P.14~15
Nigishima-toge Pass, Okamizaka-toge Pass	~5	2~2.5	~320	~320	P.14~15
Hadasu-no-Michi	~4	1.5~2	~230	~140	P.16~17
Odomari-toge Pass, Matsumoto-toge Pass	~7	2.5~3.5	~240	~340	P.16~17
Nisaka-toge Pass	~9	2.5~3.5	~70	~270	P.4~5
Kannon-michi	~5	2~2.5	~280	~320	P.16~17

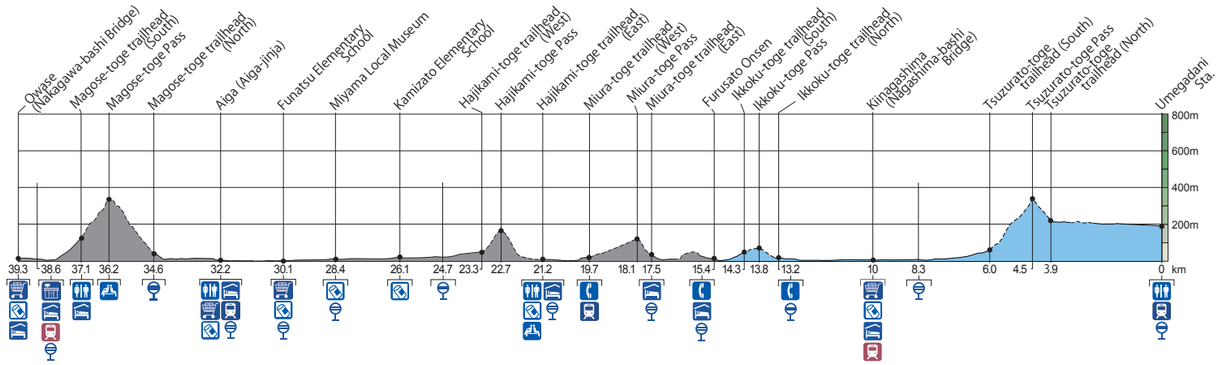


Furusato Onsen~Umegadani

古里温泉～梅ケ谷

Distance (km) : ~16
Time (hr) : 4.5~6
Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~290
Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~510

-------- Unpaved trail
——— Paved trail

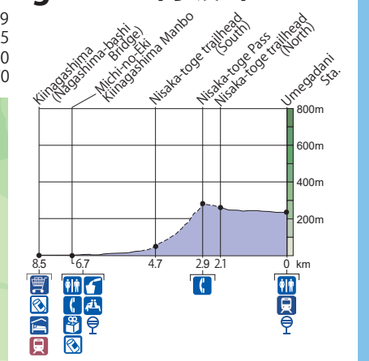


Legend

Toilet	Public Wi-fi	Stamp	Fire Station
Public phone	View point	Accommodation	School
Convenience store	Covered shelter	Camping	Shrine
Grocery store	Michi-no-Eki rest area	Onsen (Hot spring)	Temple
Shop/Store	Number markers every ~100 meters	Station	Unpaved trail
Vending machine	Waymarkers	Bus stop	Paved road
Drinking water	1:000 S:000	Post Office	Other Unpaved trail
Information	I=Distance (km) to Ise S=Distance (km) to Shingu	Police Station	Other Paved road

Nisaka-toge Pass 荷坂峠

Distance (km) : ~9
Time (hr) : 2.5~3.5
Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~70
Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~270



1:25,000
0 500m 1000m

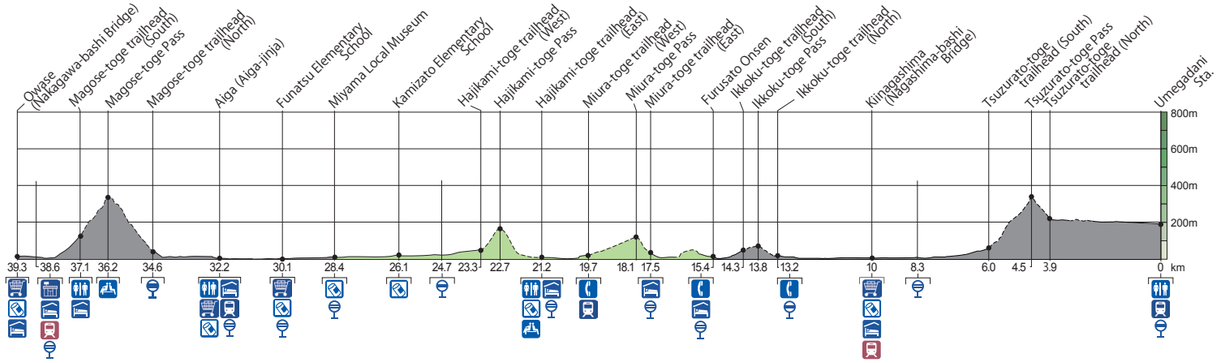
Furusato bus stop 古里バス停
Ikkoku-toge trailhead (North) 一石峠登り口(北)
Train crossing 海野踏切
Kata Kyokai-mae bus stop 加田教会前バス停
P7
I:76 S:90
Ikkoku-toge Pass 一石峠
Ikkoku-toge trailhead (South) 一石峠登り口(南)
Kiinagashima Furusato Onsen きいながしま古里温泉
Ryokan Kinokuni 旅館 紀の國
Minshuku Kitomaru 民宿 紀東丸
Furusato Onsen 古里温泉
P7
Enoura-bashi vertical-lift Bridge 江の浦橋
Uomachi-no-Tamariba 魚まちのたまり場
Bukko-ji 佛光寺
I:72 S:94
Uomachi 魚まち
Nagashima-jinja 長島神社
Choraku-ji 長楽寺
Mie Kumano Kodo Shokokai-mae bus stop みえ熊野古道商工会前バス停
Shin-Nagashima-bashi Bridge 新長島橋
Train crossing 山本踏切
Train crossing 二郷踏切
Yugakutei ゆうがく邸
Kiinagashima (Nagashima-bashi Bridge) 紀伊長島(長島橋)
Tayama-guchi bus stop 田山口バス停
Jizo statue 地蔵
Koshin-do 庚申堂
Kihokucho Kiinagashima bus stop 紀北町紀伊長島バス停
Kiinagashima IC 紀伊長島IC
Kihokucho Yakuba-mae bus stop 紀北町役場前バス停
Nagashima-eki-mae bus stop 長島駅前バス停
Kii-Nagashima Sta. 紀伊長島駅
Katakami-ike Pond 片上池
Michi-no-Eki Kiinagashima Manbo 道の駅紀伊長島マンボウ
Koshin 庚申
Manbo bus stop マンボウバス停
Nisaka-toge trailhead (South) 荷坂峠登り口(南)
Okimi-daira 沖見平
Ichirizuka Stone Buddhist monument 一里塚石仏碑
Nisaka-toge Pass 荷坂峠
Nisaka-toge trailhead (North) 荷坂峠登り口(北)
Santai-hokora 三体祠
Kisei Expressway 紀勢自動車道
Umegadani Sta. 梅ケ谷駅
Umegadani Crossing 梅ケ谷交差点
Umegadani bus stop 梅ケ谷バス停
Yahashira-jinja 八柱神社
Train crossing 朱行谷踏切
Teraura-bashi Bridge 寺浦橋
Nakano-bashi Bridge 中野橋
Tochiko-bashi Bridge 栃古橋
Tsuzurato-toge Pass ツヅラト峠
Tsuzurato-toge trailhead (North) ツヅラト峠登り口(北)
I:64 S:102
Takano-bashi Bridge 高野橋
Nozurazumi stone wall 野面積み
Nozurazumi stone wall 野面
Yama-no-Kami 山の神
Yama-no-Kami 山の神
Tsuzurato-toge trailhead (South) ツヅラト峠登り口(南)
Tsuzurato Hanahiroba ツヅラト花広場
I:68 S:98

Funatsu~Furusato Onsen

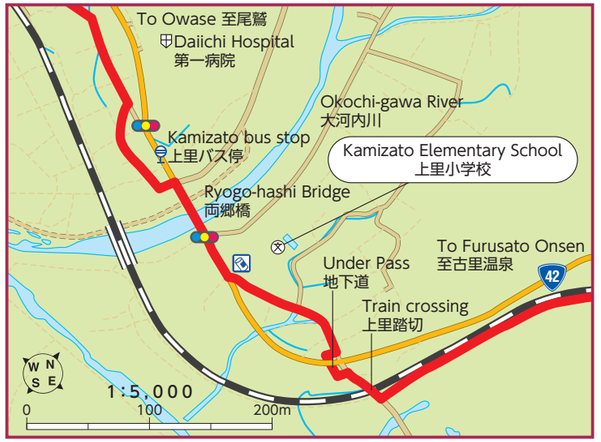
船津～古里温泉

Distance (km) : ~13
Time (hr) : 4~6
Total Elevation Gain (m): ~330
Total Elevation Loss (m): ~340

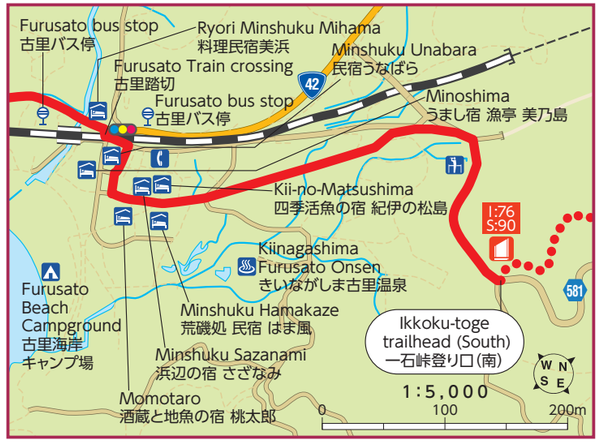
-------- Unpaved trail
——— Paved trail



Kamizato



Furusato Onsen

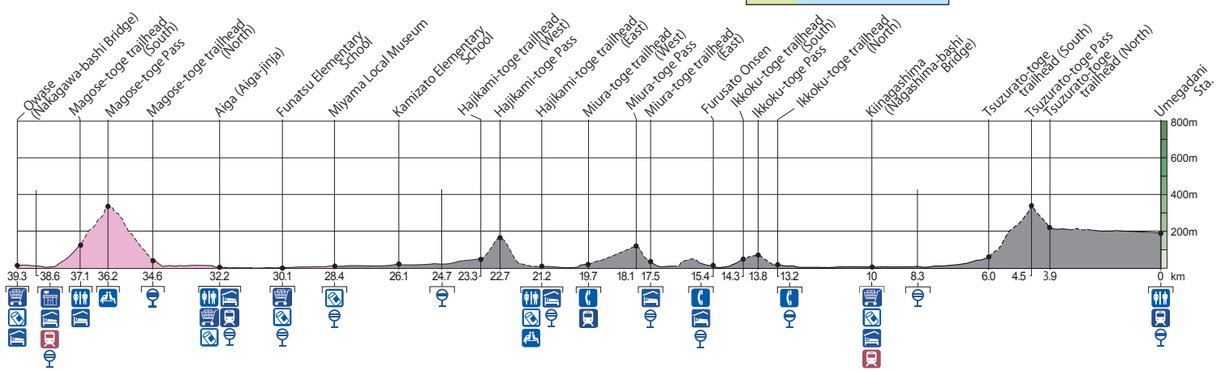


Owase~Funatsu

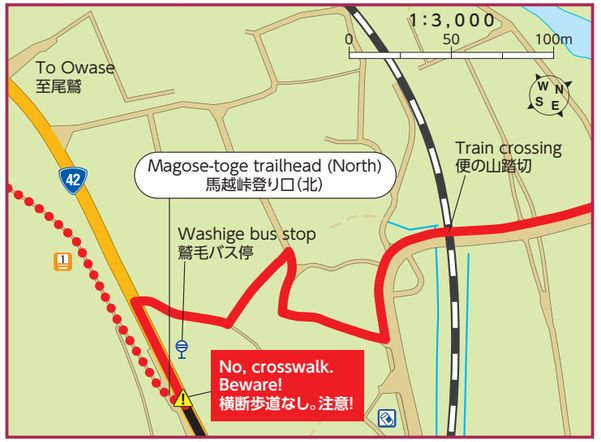
尾鷲~船津

Distance (km) : ~11
Time (hr) : 3~5
Total Elevation Gain (m): ~370
Total Elevation Loss (m): ~370

-------- Unpaved trail
——— Paved trail



Magose-toge trailhead (North)



Aiga

Owase
Bellybutton of Iseji

The coastal city of Owase (population ~18,000) is considered the belly button of the Iseji because of its central location. It is famous for its seafood served fresh at local restaurants.
Access: JR train run daily from Nagoya (~2.5 hrs), Kii-Katsuura (~1 hr), and Shingu (~45 min).

Owase-jinja

At the base of route is Owase-jinja with its giant camphor tree at the entrance, estimated to be ~1000 years old. The shrine dates from the 8th century, but records have been lost to Tsunamis in 1707 and 1854. The religious beliefs are influence by both Ise and Kumano—the deities are similar to Kumano, but the philosophy of repairing buildings ever 20 years is from Ise. The shrine is famous for its Shishimai lion dance purification rite and massive taiko drum. The energetic Ya Ya Matsuri quarrelling festival takes place over the first 5 days of February where teams of men from different neighborhoods push and shove each other into a frenzy. With over 300 years of history it is probably one of the oldest mosh pits in the world!

Kumano Kodo Center

The Kumano Kodo Center is a visitor center located on the outskirts of town. There are both permanent and temporary exhibits about the history and nature of Owase. The building itself is very impressive being made of over 6,500 locally harvested cypress trees.

Hours: 9:00-17:00
Closed New Year's holiday
Free Admission

Yumekodo Owase

Behind the facility is Yumekodo Owase with café, restaurant and hot spring baths. restaurant is open for lunch with a buffet made of local dishes by different groups of Owase "mothers". The unique baths use mineral rich deep-sea water.

Bath Hours: 10:00-21:30 (last entrance 9:00)
Price: Adult 600 yen, Children 300 yen
Restaurant Hours: 11:00-14:00
Cafe Hours: 9:00-17:00 (LO 16:30)

Owase Tourist Information Center

Location: ~10 min walk from Owase station
Hours: 8:30-17:15 (Closed on New Year's holidays)
Rental bicycles available.

Machi-no-Eki

Machi-no-Eki まちの駅 is a network of rest stops and information points around Owase city. These are a diversity of establishments involved, each offering a place to take a quick break and use of toilets.

Owase Itadaki Ichi Market

The popular Owase Itadaki Ichi is a monthly market (every first Saturday) held at the Owase fishing port with stalls selling fresh seafood, dried fish, fruit & vegetables and sweets.

NOTE: Held first and third Saturday in December, no market in January.

Restaurant Guide

Local seafood | Izakaya pub | Full meals | Sushi | Udon&Soba noodles

1	Ofukuro おふくろ	0597-22-9040	11:30〜14:30 17:00〜20:30	不定休 Variable holidays
2	Kaitenzushi Owase 回転寿司おわせ	0597-23-2811	11:00〜14:00 16:30〜21:00	不定休 Variable holidays
3	Ichiju すし処 一重	0597-22-8991	11:30〜14:00 16:30〜21:00	定休(水) Closed on Wed.
4	Akebono Zushi あけぼの鮨	0597-22-0376	11:00〜14:00 16:00〜22:00	定休(月) Closed on Mon.
5	Tenguan 天狗庵	0597-23-2786	11:00〜14:00 17:00〜21:00	定休(水) Closed on Wed.
6	Edokko 江戸っ子	0597-22-2666	17:30〜23:30	不定休(月1回) Variable holidays
7	Mameda 豆狸	0597-22-1166	11:30〜14:00 14:30〜21:00	不定休 Variable holidays
8	Daifuku 大福	0597-22-0237	11:30〜13:30 17:30〜22:00	不定休 Variable holidays
9	Hana Sushi 華すし	0597-22-8861	11:30〜14:00 16:30〜21:30	定休(木) Closed on Thu.
10	On Juan オン・ジュアン	0597-22-4222	18:00〜24:00	定休(水木) Closed on Wed. & Thu.
11	Inaka 割烹 田舎	0597-22-8868	11:00〜14:00 16:00〜22:00	不定休 Variable holidays
12	Kusumoto お晩菜 くすもと	0597-23-2510	17:30〜24:00	定休(月) Closed on Mon.
13	Onigawara 鬼瓦	0597-22-8055	11:00〜14:00 17:00〜21:00	不定休(月4回) Variable holidays

Mikisato~Owase

三木里～尾鷲

Distance (km) : ~12
Time (hr) :5.5~7.5
Total Elevation Gain (m): ~700
Total Elevation Loss (m): ~720

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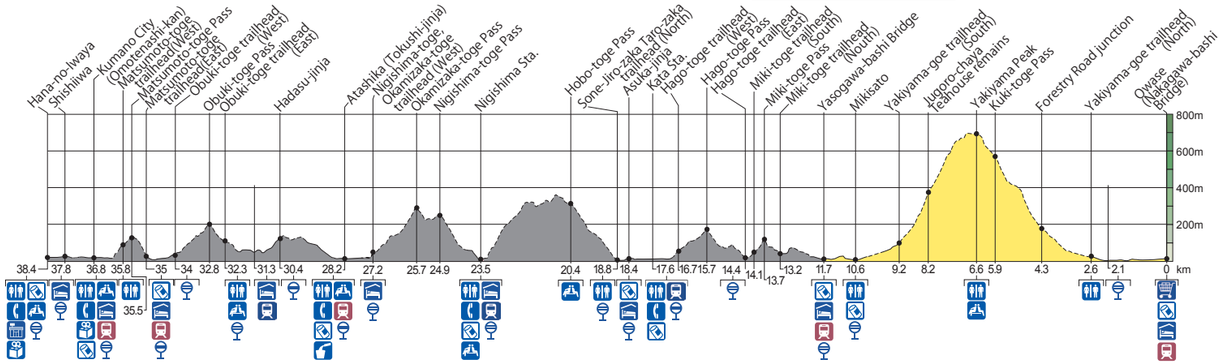
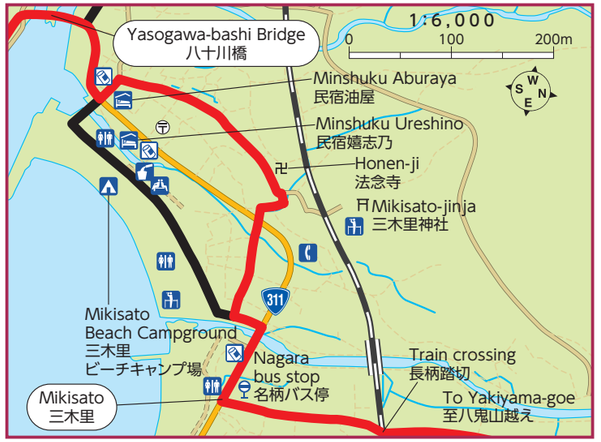
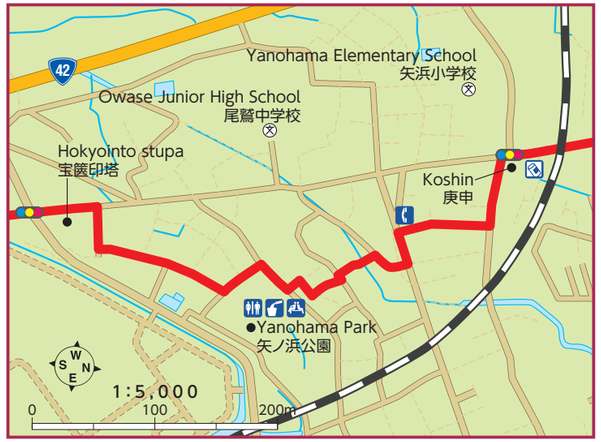
——— Paved trail



Mikisato



Yanohama



Atashika~Mikisato

新鹿～三木里

Distance (km) : ~17
Time (hr) : 7~9
Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~1040
Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~1050

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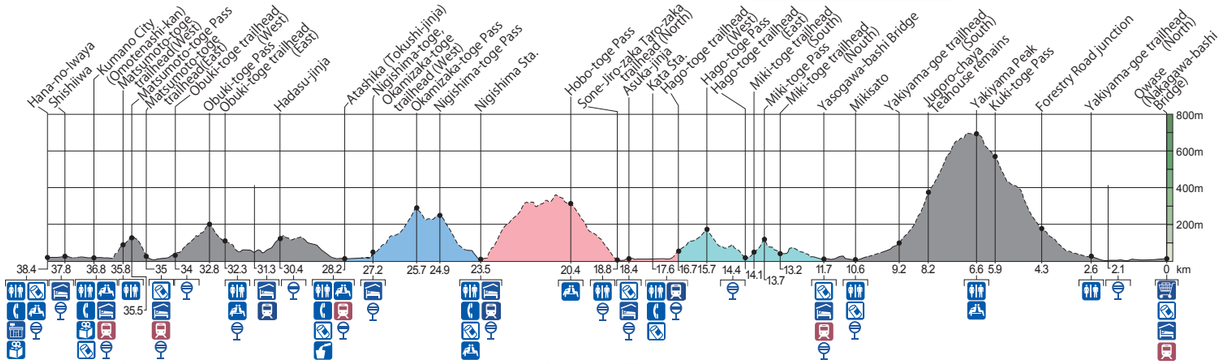
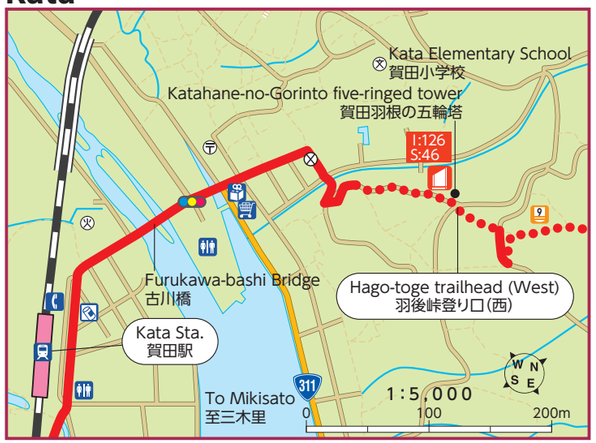
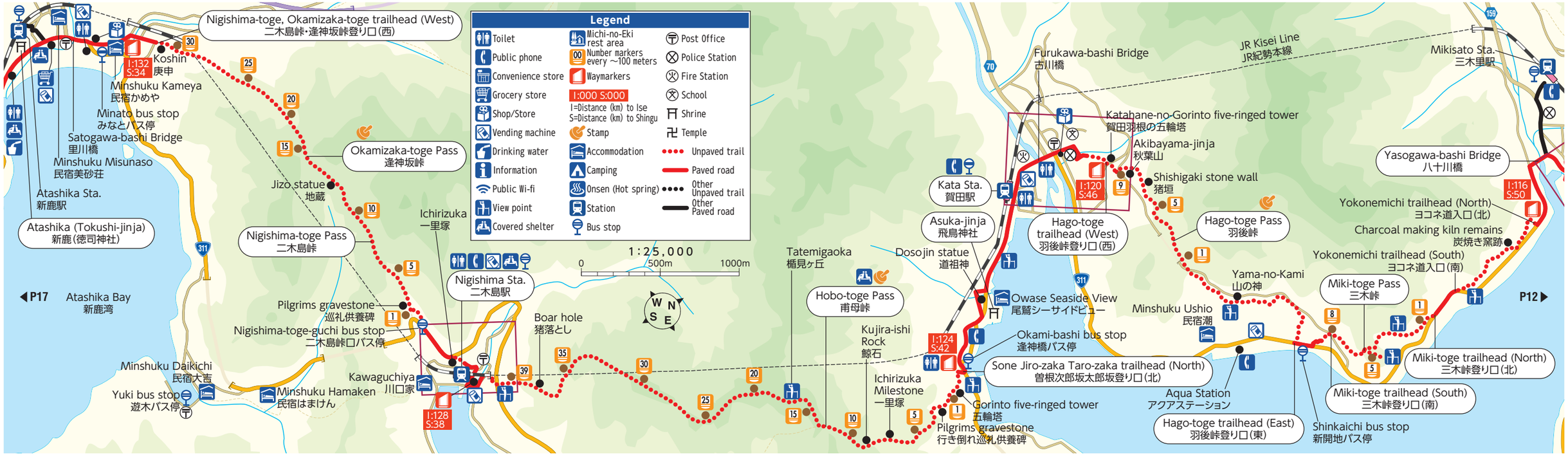
——— Paved trail



Nigishima

Kata



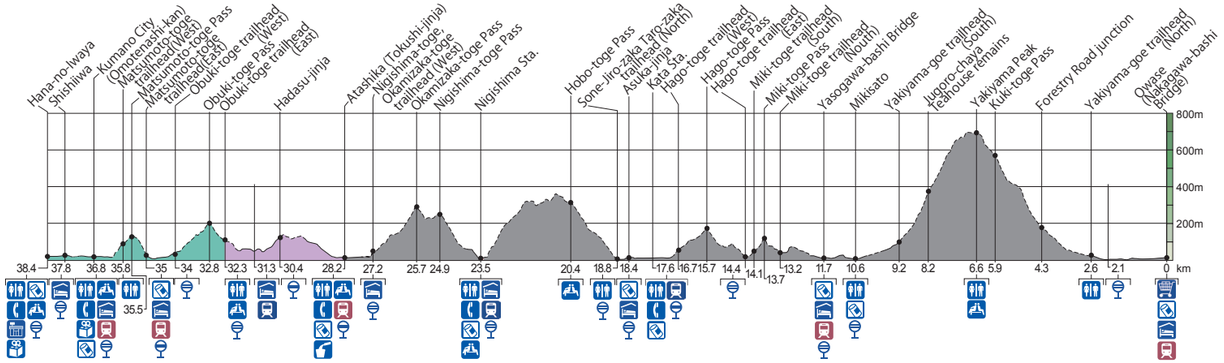


Hana-no-Iwaya~Atashika

花の窟～新鹿

Distance (km) : ~11
Time (hr) : 4~5.5
Total Elevation Gain (m): ~470
Total Elevation Loss (m): ~480

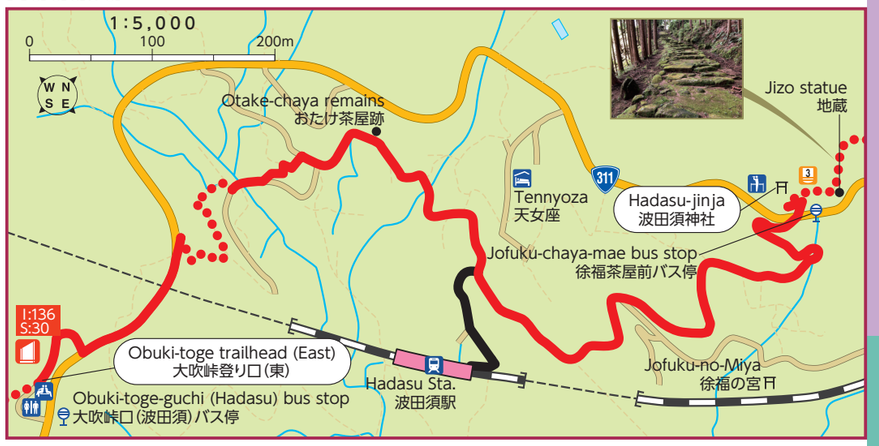
-------- Unpaved trail
——— Paved trail

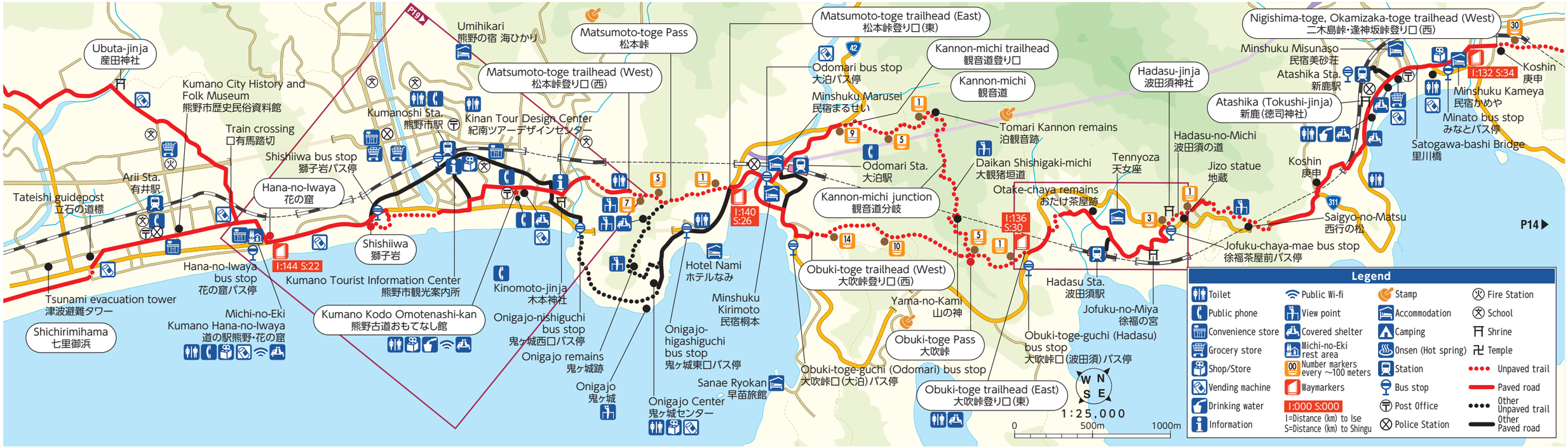


Kannon-michi 観音道

Distance (km) : ~5
Time (hr) : 2~2.5
Total Elevation Gain (m): ~280
Total Elevation Loss (m): ~320

Hadasu





Kumano City Iseji Crossroads

Kumano City (population ~17,400) is a quiet coastal city at the northern end of the long-crescent shaped Shichirimihama beach. There are many interesting sacred sites and shorter walks on the Kumano Kodo accessible from here.

Kinan Tour Design Center

A residence that was built 130 years by one of the regions power timber tycoons has been transformed into the Kinan Tour Design Center, and information office, shop and experience programs. It worth a visit to see inside this beautiful traditional home.

Hours: 9:00-17:00
Closed Wednesdays

Kumano Kodo Omotenashi-kan

On the Iseji in Kumano city is the Kumano Kodo Omotenashi-kan visitor center housed in a beautifully renovated house designated as a National Registered Tangible Cultural Property. There is a rest area, shop, and cafe that serves light meals and snacks.

Hour: 9:30-16:30
Closed Mondays (open on Mondays that are national holidays)

Kumano City Tourist Information Center

Next to the Kumanoshi train station.

Hours: 9:00-17:00
Open year-round

Onigajo

Onigajo is unique landform of hardened volcanic ash that has been eroded by the sea and wind. The name Onigajo is appropriate and means demon castle. There is a walking trail around the coast in and amongst these dramatic formations.

Shishiiwa

Another dramatic rock formation is located south along the coast called Shishiiwa. It is 25 m high and looks like a lion or beast with its mouth open in a roar. This is said to be the guardian deity of the Oma-jinja shrine located inland near the mouth of the river.

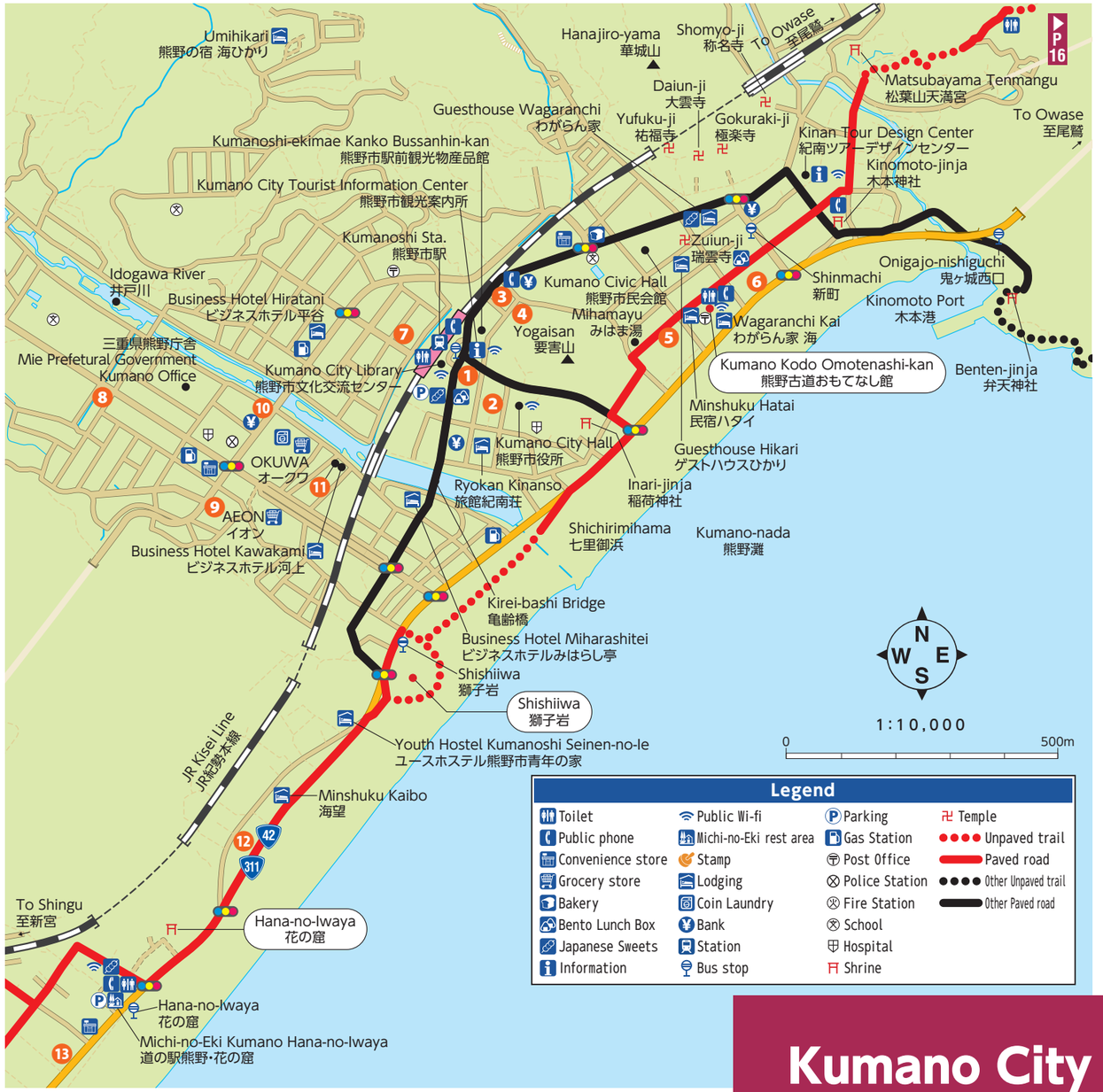
Hana-no-Iwaya

Hana-no-Iwaya is the next site along the coast and the oldest shrine in Japan. This is the gravesite of Izanami-no-Mikoto, the female creative deity in Japanese mythology, who died giving birth to the fire deity. There is no pavilion but the rock face itself is the object of worship. Kumano is believed to be the land of dead where the spirits congregate, a spiritual conduit between this world and the next.

Restaurant Guide

Local seafood | Izakaya pub | Full meals | Sushi | Udon&Soba noodles

1	**Kiraku** 喜楽	0597-85-2336	11:00〜20:00	7、17、27日(日祝時は振替) Closed on 7th, 17th, 27th
2	**Mukai** お食事処むかい	0597-85-2898	11:30〜13:30 17:00〜20:00	定休(日祝) Closed on Sun. & Holiday
3	**Tenmaru** 赤ちょうちん てんまる	0597-70-4190	16:00〜22:00	定休(日祝) Closed on Sun. & Holiday
4	**Kaisen** 味処 海鮮	0597-89-3363	17:00〜22:00	定休(日) Closed on Sun.
5	**Kappa** 居酒屋 かっぱ	0597-85-3515	17:00〜22:00	定休(月、第3日) Closed on Mon. & every 3rd Sun.
6	**IL REGALO** イルレガーロ	0597-89-0300	月〜土11:30〜14:30 木金土17:00〜21:00	定休(日、第2月) Closed on Sun. & every 2nd Mon.
7	**Kokoro** おたべや 心	0597-85-2355	17:00〜22:00	定休(月) Closed on Mon.
8	**Kagetsu** 創作料理 華月	090-5622-5328	11:30〜14:00 17:00〜22:00	定休(日) Closed on Sun.
9	**Yamamoto** やま本	090-7682-5845	17:00〜24:00	定休(火) Closed on Tue.
10	**Shinbashi** しんばし	0597-89-1754	月〜金11:30〜13:30 月〜土17:00〜22:00	定休(日)※月曜が祝日時、日曜営業、月曜休。 Closed on Sun. & Mon. holiday
11	**Shintaku** 肴屋しんたく	050-5570-7457	17:30〜23:00	定休(日と第2月) Closed on Sun. & every 2nd Mon.
12	**Koroku** 小六	0597-85-2856	11:00〜14:00 17:00〜20:00	定休(月) Closed on Mon.
13	**Hana-no-Iwayatei** 花のいわや亭	0597-89-6598	11:00〜14:00 17:00〜22:00	定休なし Open all year



Kumano Kodo Tips

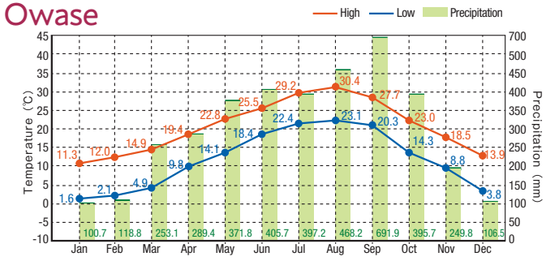
The Kumano Kodo is a diverse mountain route with a mixture of unpaved, uneven trails, ancient cobblestones and stairs, and paved roads through villages. There are some steep climbs and ascents, but the route is not technically difficult. The amount of preparation that is needed will depend greatly on which sections you will walk, the season you visit, and your personal level of experience and fitness. Please plan accordingly to fully, and safely, enjoy your pilgrimage walk. Proper preparation is the essential.

Weather

The Iseji route is open year-round. The weather in the southern portion of the Kii peninsula is generally mild. The winters can see some freezing temperatures but on the coastal Iseji route snow is very rare. Summers can be hot, humid and wet. Be prepared for rain year-round.

LINK
Japan Meteorological Agency: www.jma.go.jp/jma/indexe.html
Tanabe City Kumano Tourism Bureau:
www.tb-kumano.jp/en/kumano-kodo/weather/

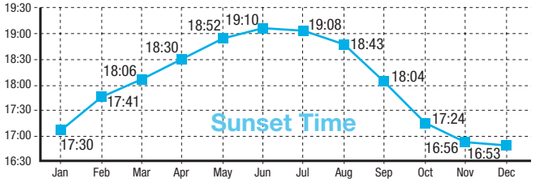
Owase

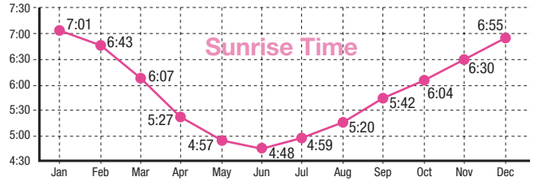


Daylight

Daylight times vary greatly with winter having the shortest days. It is always best to leave early to arrive early, and be aware when sunset is so as not to get stuck in the dark while still on the trail.

NOTE: It gets darker earlier in the valleys where most of the villages are located. The best time to check-in to accommodations is 16:00~ 17:00.





Clothing & Footwear

Proper clothing and footwear are essential, especially if you are planning for a longer, multi-day trek.

Review the average temperatures for the time of your walk and be prepared for seasonal variability.

Dressing in layers in clothes that dry easily is recommended: avoid cotton. Sturdy, worn-in, walking footwear is essential.

Gear

The type of gear that you will need varies with the duration and extent of your walk. The following is a general list of recommended items.

- Day pack
- Rain gear (a foldable umbrella is convenient)
- Hat, sunglasses, sunscreen
- Collapsible walking poles
- Water bottle
- Camera
- Small first aid kit, with Band-Aids, etc.
- Small flashlight
- Maps

Water & Liquids

It is important to carry water or liquids during your trek or walk. Natural water sources along the trail have not been tested. In the villages and settlements are small shops or vending machines where drinks can be purchased. Especially during the hotter season, it is important to keep well hydrated.

HINT: Fill up your water bottles at the accommodations before departure.

Luggage Shuttle

Let us take a load off your back! There are a few local service providers who offer daily luggage shuttle service, perfect for walkers on the Kumano Kodo. ※Some restrictions apply.

LINK
www.tb-kumano.jp/en/kumano-kodo/luggage-shuttle/

Money/ATM

Carry enough Japanese yen in cash, as many facilities and service providers do not accept credit cards, and places to exchange money are limited. If you do need to withdraw money, the ATMs at the post offices are the best option. Hours are limited especially on weekends.

HINT: Check with your credit card company before your visit to confirm if your credit card is OK to use for withdrawals at Japan Post Bank ATMs.

LINK
www.jp-bank-japanpostJp/en/ias/en_ias_index.html

Electricity

The voltage in Japan is 100 Volt. Electrical plugs have two, parallel flat pins: Type A.

HINT: Bring an adapter if needed, as most accommodations do not have them.

Safety

Earthquake & Tsunami

Japan is prone to frequent natural disasters, such as earthquakes. Tsunamis are large waves caused by earthquakes. If you are near the coast and a large earthquake hits, head to higher ground immediately.

NOTE: Tsunami warning sign shown at right.

Extreme Weather & Typhoons

The Kii peninsula is one of the wettest areas in Japan. It juts out into the Pacific Ocean in the path of storms. Heavy rains and winds, especially from typhoons, can cause flash flooding, landslides, and damage from flying debris. Keep up to date with the weather forecast and avoid walking during extreme weather conditions.

Slippery Stones

Most injuries on the Kumano Kodo are from slips and falls on the stone lined trails. The old cobble steps are particularly slippery when wet. Please take your time and be careful where you step.

Mamushi Snake

There is one main species of snake that is venomous in the area, the Japanese Mamushi (*Gloydius blomhoffii*). It has the broader triangle shaped head of a pit viper. It is patterned with pale gray、reddish-brown, or yellow-brown background covered with a irregularly shaped lateral blotches. Its mature length is about 45-80 cm long. They can sun themselves in or around the trail. Use a flash light when walking round in the evening so as not to step on one mistake. If bitten seek medical attention immediately, while keeping the affected area as immobile as possible.

Mukade Centipede

The Mukade is a giant centipede, and its bite can be painful. They are black with yellow-orange legs. They like to hide in] hiking shoes, so check your boots in the morning before putting your feet in. They are active in the hot and humid months.

Suzumebachi Hornet

The Suzumebachi is a giant hornet which can have a painful sting. If you see a nest avoid the area. They can be the most aggressive into the fall season.

In Case of Emergency

Seek the assistance of someone nearby. Even if they do not speak English they will try to understand and help. 119 is the emergency help line and a translation service in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, and Korean is available in most areas.

Shrines

The themes of purification and offerings repeat themselves during a visit to the shrine. The general flow of worship is to:

- Wash hands and rinse mouth at the purification basin (often near the entrance to the shrine).
- Make the bell ring by shaking the rope.
- Offer some coins in the offering box, if you wish.
- Bow twice deeply.
- Clap your hands twice.
- Then bow once deeply.

Omamori

An Omamori is an amulet used for many reasons including warding off evil, for traffic safety, health, etc. The word mamori (お守) means protection, with omamori meaning honorable protector. They often describe on one side the specific area of luck or protection they are intended for and have the name of the shrine or temple they were bought at on the other.

Ema

Ema (絵馬) are votive plaques used to make requests or wishes to the deities. This practice dates back hundreds of years to the 8th century. Ema directly translated means horse picture. Originally horses were given as offerings to shrines and over time this turned into offering images of horses. These days there are many motifs used including zodiac signs.

Goohoin (Goshimpu)

The Kumano Goohoin or Goshimpu (ご奉印) is a powerful amulet distinctive to the Kumano Sanzan Grand Shrines. Its main purpose is to ward off evils, avert calamities and bring good fortune. It is often displayed on house door and in rice fields. Originally the amulet was composed of a red tear drop-shaped stamp, but to distinguish it from others, a background wood-block print with an intricate design of stylized crows and double lined good-fortune jewels was added. Each Kumano Sanzan Grand Shrine has a different version based on the same theme.

Pilgrimage Etiquette

Please abide by the following guidelines while enjoying the Kumano Kodo.

- Preserve the area as "heritage of all humankind".
- Respect the faith of past and present worshipers.
- Keep the routes clean - carry out all waste.
- Protect the local flora and fauna - do not remove or introduce animals or vegetation.
- Stay on the routes.
- Be careful with fire - prevent forest fires.
- Be prepared - plan your trip and equip yourself properly.
- Greet others with a smile and warm heart.

Accommodations

Accommodations along the trail are mostly Japanese style with tatami mat flooring in the guest rooms and dining area. These rooms are versatile with a low table moved to the side to lay down futon mattress to sleep. In the hot spring areas, there is a larger range of standards, from small family run minshuku guesthouses to larger traditional inns. Accommodations are limited in the smaller areas.

Reservations are highly recommended as walking up to lodgings is not custom.

NOTE: Reservations can be made online at the Kumano Travel community reservation system.

LINK
www.kumano-travel.com

Meals

A trek along the Kumano Kodo is a culinary journey. Meals at the guesthouse and inns are Japanese style. Ingredients vary from the coastline to mountain side often featuring fresh, local ingredients. Rice is a staple and eaten at most meals. Open your mind (and mouths!) to try these new and delicious foods.

HINT: Practice with chopsticks before you come.

Bedding (Futons)

Bedding in the Japanese style guesthouses are futon mattresses laid onto the tatami mat flooring.

HINT: Japanese pillows can sometimes be hard, so if you need a soft pillow consider bringing along an inflatable pillow to make your sleep more comfortable.

Yukata

Yukata are cotton gowns to wear in and around a Japanese style accommodation. They are also used as pajamas.

Fold the left side over the right and tie the belt around your waist.

HINT: Wearing something underneath can save yourself from an embarrassing moment if you are not used to sitting down with a gown on!

Tatami

Tatami are straw mats used as flooring in traditional Japanese rooms.

There are a few general rules to follow in a tatami room.

●Do not wear slippers on the tatami.
●Keep the tatami dry, for example do not leave a wet towel or rain soaked gear on the floor.
●Avoid dragging tables or heavy luggage over the tatami, as this may tear the surface.

Slippers

Staying at traditional Japanese accommodations keeps you busy with your footwear.

Basically there are three sets of footwear:

① Your outdoor shoes, which are left at the door;
② your indoor slippers, which you wear around the facility (not on the tatami through!);
③ and toilet slippers, which are only for use in the toilet area.

Baths (Onsen)

Japanese baths are the ultimate place to relax and wind down after a day's walk.

Hot springs are common in the area and baths featuring these mineral waters are called onsen.

How to Bathe

The very essence of the bathing routine is as below for both hot spring and communal baths.

① Take off clothes in change room
② Rinse or wash body
③ Soak in bath
④ Relax and enjoy!

Be observant. Watch (But don't stare!) the people around you so that you know what is going on.

Most places follow these general guidelines but some do differ slightly. The main thing is to remember to keep the bath water separate from the washing water, and be polite and courteous to other bathers.

NOTE: For a full guide to the Japanese bath visit the following page online.

LINK
www.tb-kumano.jp/en/onsen/how-to-take-a-japanese-bath/

Model Itineraries

Below are basic overviews of ways to walk the Kumano kodo Iseji route from a shorter highlight trip to a multi-day trek.

Highlight Walks

Matsumoto-toge Highlight Walk
●Transfer to Odomari area
●Walk to Kumanoshi Sta. (p.16～17, ～3km)

Matsumoto-toge and Onigajo Highlight Walk
●Transfer to Odomari area
●Walk Matsumoto-toge Pass and Onigajo to Kumanoshi Sta. (p.16～17, ～5km)

Obuki-toge Highlight Walk
●Transfer to Hadasu area
●Walk to Odomari area (p.16～17, ～4km)

Day Walks

Tsuzurato-toge Day Walk
●Transfer to Umegadani Sta.
●Walk Tsuzurato-toge Pass to Kii-Nagashima Sta. (p.4～5, ～10km)

Magose-toge Day Walk
●Bus to Washige (or train to Aiga Sta.)
●Walk Magose-toge Pass to Owase Sta. (p.8～9, ～6km)

Yakiyama-goe Day Walk
●Transfer to Owase Sta.
●Walk Yakiyama-goe to Mikisato Sta. (p.12～13, ～13km)

Southen Iseji Pass Day Walk
●Transfer to Hadasu area
●Walk Obuki-toge Pass, Kannon-michi and Matsumoto-toge Pass to Hana-no-Iwaya (p.16～17, ～8km)

Iseji Advanced Complete Trek

Day1:
●Transfer to Ise Jingu Naiku, overnight ❶

Day2:
●Walk to Tochihara (～27km), overnight ❷

Day3:
●Walk to Aso (～25km), overnight ❸

Day4:
●Walk to Furusato Onsen (North p.12～15 and p.4～5, ～29km), overnight ❹

Day5:
●Walk to Owase (p.6～9, ～20km), overnight ❺

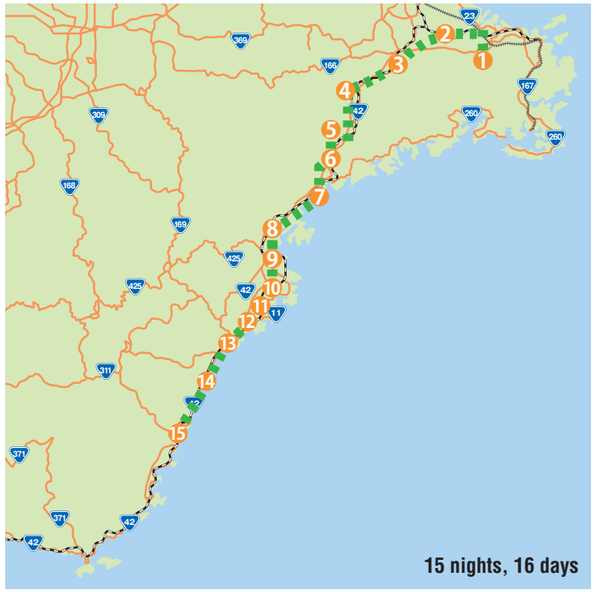
Day6:
●Walk to Kata (p.12～15, ～17km), overnight ❻

Day7:
●Walk to Central Kumano (p.14～17, ～18km), overnight ❼

Day8:
●Walk to Shingu (～23km), overnight ❽

Day9:
●Transfer to next destination

Iseji Intermediate Complete Trek



Day1：
●Transfer to Ise City, overnight ❶

Day2：
●Walk to Tamaru (～12km), overnight ❷

Day3：
●Walk to Tochihara (～15km), overnight ❸

Day4：
●Walk to Misedani (～13km), overnight ❹

Day5：
●Walk to Kashiwazaki (～18km), overnight ❺

Day6：
●Walk to Ouchiyama (～7km), overnight ❻

Day7：
●Walk to Furusato Onsen (North p.14～15 and p.4～5, ～17km), overnight ❼

Day8：
●Walk to Aiga (p.6～9, ～14km), overnight ❽

Day9：
●Walk to Owase (p.8～9, ～6km), overnight ❾

Day10：
●Walk to Mikisato (p.12～13, ～12km), overnight ❿

Day11：
●Walk to Kata (p.14～15, ～5km), overnight ⓫

Day12：
●Walk to Atashika (p.14～15, ～10km), overnight ⓬

Day13：
●Walk to Central Kumano (p.16～17, ～8km), overnight ⓭

Day14：
●Walk to Atawa (～12km), overnight ⓮

Day15：
●Walk to Shingu (～11km), overnight ⓯

Day16：
●Transfer to next destination

Access

Kyoto
Kintetsu Nara
Nagoya
Kanayama
to Tokyo
to Fukuoka
to Himeji
Shin-Kobe
Kobe
Sannomiya
Shin-Osaka
Osaka
Namba
Shin-Imamiya
Tsuruhashi
Yamato-Saidaiji
Nara
Osaka-Abenobashi
Yamato-Yagi
Tennoji
Sakurai
Kansai Airport
Hineno
Hashimoto
Gojo
Wakayamashi
Wakayama
Tsu
Nagisamachi
Chubu Centrair International Airport
Matsusaka
Tamaru
Iseshi
Ujiyamada
Toba
Taki
Tochihara
Ise Jingu Geku
Naiku-mae
Isuzugawa
Ise Jingu Naiku
Misedani
Takihara-no-Miya
Ise-Kashiwazaki
Umegadani
Kashikojima
Kii-Nagashima
Aiga
Owase
Kumano Kodo Center
Mikisato
Kata
Nigishima
Atashika
Odomari
Kumanoshi
Hana-no-Iwaya
Atawa
Shingu
Michi-no-Eki Kumanogawa (Traditional Boat)
Nachi
Kii-Katsuura
Daimonzaka
Nachisan
Kumano Nachi Taisha
Koguchi
Kumano Hayatama Taisha
Seiryuso
Senmaida
Tori-toge-iriguchi
Kanmaru (Transfer for Koguchi)
Shiko (Dorokyo Jet Boat)
Hongu Taisha-mae
Yakio
Totsukawa Onsen
Kumano Hongu Taisha
Hosshinmon-oji
Kurisugawa
Takijiri
Minabe
Kii-Tanabe
Shirahama
Shirahama bus center
Nanki-Shirahama Airport (Daily flights to Haneda, Tokyo)
Kushimoto
Kii-Tahara
Shionomisaki Kanko Tower
Kashino Todai-guchi
Gokurakubashi
Koyasan
Yuasa
Gomadanzan
Kirari-Ryujin
Ryujin Onsen
Gobo

No service December to March.

No service December to March.

NOTE: Totsukawa and Nosegawa community busses have very limited schedules and may not run every day. Please check schedules appropriately.

Hongu Area

Ryujin bus drives into Yunomine Onsen, turns around, stops at Yunomine Onsen bus stop and then continues back to route 311 on the same road.

Hosshinmon-oji
Dainichi-goe Nobori-guchi
Hongu Taisha-mae
Yunomine Onsen
Shimoyunomine
Watarase Onsen
Ukegawa
Kawayu Onsen
Kameya-mae
Fujiya-mae

There are three bus stops in Kawayu Onsen: Kawayu Onsen, Kameya-mae and Fujiya-mae.

Chikatsuyu/Nonaka Area

Chikatsuyu-oji
Nakahechi Bijutsukan-mae
Kobiro-oji-guchi
Kakidaira
Gyuba-doji-guchi
Nonaka Ipposugi
Kobiro-toge
Doyukawa-bashi

Legend

- JR
- Shinkansen
- Kintetsu Railway
- Nagoya Railroad
- Mie Kotsu
- Tsu Airport Line
- Nankai Railway
- Koyasan Cablecar
- Ryujin Bus
- Meiko Bus
- Kumano Gobo Nankai Bus
- Nara Kotsu
- Nankai Rinkai Bus
- Kushimoto Town Bus
- Kumano Kodo

Trains

Train lines run along the coast of the Kii Peninsula. One line runs from Osaka on the west coast (JR West), and the other runs from Nagoya on the east coast (JR Central). They overlap between Kii-Katsuura and Shingu on the south east. The JR West express trains are called Kuroshio, after the ocean current that flow off the peninsula. The JR Center express trains are called Nanki Wide View. Trains are an efficient way to access the Iseji route.

Tickets

Tickets can be purchased at the Midori-no-Madoguchi counter at all major stations. An express train is the fastest way to travel to the area. For express trains two tickets are issued, a basic Fare Ticket and a Limited Express Ticket. Keep both tickets for the duration of the trip, as you will need them to exit the station on arrival.

Fare Ticket

Limited Express Ticket

JR Passes

Using transportation passes can be a convenient and reasonable way to get around the area. There are two regional JR passes that cover the Kii Peninsula: Kansai WIDE Area Pass, and Ise-Kumano-Wakayama Area Tourist Pass

NOTE: Not all bus lines are covered by these passes.

LINK: www.tb-kumano.jp/en/transport/#passes

Stations

Train stations serve as access to trailheads on the Iseji. Some are smaller with no permanent staff servicing only local trains, while others are larger where both local and express trains stop.
It is best to check train times in advance and it is not a busy train line.

LINK: Train timetable search engines.
http://www.tb-kumano.jp/en/transport/train/#search

●Umegadani (Local)

●Kii-Nagashima (Local, Express)

Local Trians

At unstaffed stations serviced by local trains, tickets can be paid for on the train with the driver who is stationed at the front of the first carriage near the entrance and exit. These smaller local trains are called "wan-man ワンマン" or "one-man train" as the only staff onboard is the driver.

Bus

Local Busses are the main form of public transport once you leave the coast and head into the mountains. Busses are limited, so it is best to plan ahead and check the timetables.

NOTE: Downloadable timetables are available online.

LINK: www.tb-kumano.jp/en/transport/bus/

How to Ride a Local Bus

Riding a local bus is easy once you learn the basic system as outlined below.

① Enter through rear door (or front door if only one)
② Take number ticket
③ Push button to inform driver that stop is wanted (it is also good practice to tell the driver where you want to get off when you board)
④ Match number ticket to the electronic fare chart at the front of the bus to determine fare (prices change according to distance travelled)
⑤ Change money if needed
⑥ Put money and ticket in fare box (exact fare)
⑦ Exit through front door

NOTE: Only 1000 yen bills can be changed for coins. So make sure that you have enough smaller bills before you get on the bus.

Useful Words & Phrases

- I would like to buy a one way express train ticket to Owase station. (尾鷲駅までの特急切符を買いたいです)
- Reserved Seat (指定席)
- Non-Reserved Seat (自由席)
- Platform (プラットホーム)
- Transfer (のりかえ)
- Station (駅)
- I would like to go to the Washige bus stop. (鷲毛バス停までお願いします。)
- Where is the Kumano Kodo trailhead? (熊野古道登山口はどこですか?)
- Bus stop (バス停)
- Transfer busses (バス乗り換え)
- Change money (両替)
- Number ticket (整理券)
- Bus fare (バス代)

Car Rental

Travelling by car is an option to see and visit the sites with more freedom, as public transportation can be limited in the countryside.

There are Rent-a-Car companies conveniently located at major train stations with a variety of vehicles types and price plans to meet almost everybody's needs. It is also possible to rent the car at one station and return it at another to avoid backtracking to where you started.

	TOYOTA Rent a Car	ORIX Rent a Car	Nippon Rent-a-Car	JR Rent-A-Car	NISSAN Rent a Car	Times CAR RENTAL
①	○	○	○		○	○
②	○	○	○	○	○	○
③	○	○	○		○	○
④	○	○				
⑤	○	○	○			○
⑥	○	○	○	○		
⑦	○		○	○		
⑧	○	○	○	○		
⑨	○	○	○	○	○	
⑩	○	○	○		○	○
⑪	○	○	○	○	○	○
⑫	○	○	○	○	○	
⑬	○	○	○	○	○	○

①Chubu Airport ②Nagoya Sta. ③Tsu Sta. ④Matsusaka Sta.
⑤Iseshi Sta. ⑥Shingu Sta. ⑦Kii-Katsuura Sta. ⑧Kii-Tanabe Sta.
⑨Wakayama Sta. ⑩Kansai Airport ⑪Shin-Osaka Sta. ⑫JR Nara Sta.
⑬Kyoto Sta.

NOTE: If you plan to rent a car in Japan, make sure to have a valid Japanese or International Driver's License. Confirm that a Japanese translation is needed or not before you come.

Drive Guide

Route Guide

一生に一度はお伊勢さん
Head to Ise once in your life.

伊勢へ七度熊野へ三度
Seven times to Ise, three times to Kumano.

The Iseji is ~170 km long trail on the east coast of the Kii peninsula connecting Ise Jingu with the Kumano Sanzan and consists generally of north, central and south sections. To trek the full length can take one to two weeks, but many of the shorter passes can be enjoyed as shorter day hikes because trailheads are often located near train stations.

North | River Plains & Valleys

The ~70 km northern section begins at the Ise shrines and heads west through the fertile Miya-gawa River plain. This section is mostly flat on paved roads through habituated areas. As the mountains approach Meki-toge (a short pass) reconnects the route with the mighty Miya-gawa River. The trail follows the main road network upstream via the Ouchiyama-gawa River valley (a tributary of the Miya-gawa) to its headwaters and the first major mountain passes: Nisaka-toge and Tsuzurato-toge.

Central | Inlets & Passes

Nisaka-toge and Tsuzurato-toge passes mark the beginning of the ~75 km central section, a series of passes (many lined with cobblestones) connecting small coastal fishing villages. It is the core area of Iseji's UNESCO World Heritage property and the most popular section for hikers. The mountainous, rocky coastline features dramatic inlets, sometimes with long finger like bays lined with scenic beaches. Small islands dot the coastline, like they are floating on the ocean waves.

South | Beaches & Rice Paddies

Near Kumano City the coastal mountains give way to the southern section consisting of two trails: the main coastal route (Hama Kaido) and a mountain route (Hongudo). The Hama Kaido is a ~25 km length of gravel beach called Shichirimihama to Kumano Hayatama Taisha, and the inland mountain trail Hongudo leads to Kumano Hongu Taisha via the impressive terraced rice paddies of Maruyama Senmaida.

Iseji Central

Umegadani Train Station

The Umegadani 梅ケ谷 train station is near the junction of the Nisaka-toge and Tsuzurato-toge passes, the beginning of the UNESCO World Heritage registered sections of the Iseji and mark the divide between the historic Ise and Kishu (Kumano) domain. The station is a popular starting point for these walks.

Nisaka-toge Pass

Nisaka-toge is ~8 km long and the easier of the two trails. The first 2.5 km part is along route 42, on the main road and side roads until entering a deciduous forest near the pass. Here a tea house was operating until 1935. Tsuzurato-toge was the original route which shifted here in the early 17th century. From the pass the trail descends on dirt trails.

Period Routes

As with many passes on the Iseji there are roads from different eras, mostly between the Edo era (1603-1868) and Meiji era (1868-1912) as with the Nisaka-toge.

Okimi-daira

This is the first place that pilgrims get a view of the ocean, still thrilling visitors today. The view is especially nice at the Okimi-daira lookout. In April and May azaleas bloom adding a splash of brilliant color to the fresh green leaves.

Shishigaki

Wild boars live in the forest and can cause extensive damage to crops while scavenging for food. To protect villages from them extensive rock walls called Shishigaki were erected throughout the region hundreds of year ago.

They are playfully described as a miniature great wall of China! It must have been backbreaking work done entirely by hand. The Iseji intersects with many of these impressive structures including at the base of Nisaka-toge, which is in excellent condition.

Michi-no-Eki Kiinagashima Manbo

Michi-no-Eki Kiinagashima Manbo 道の駅紀伊長島マンボウ is a rest area with information center, shop selling local goods, and restaurant. The location is near the scenic Katakami-ike Pond, a nice spot to relax before heading towards Kii-Nagashima station.

Manbo

Manbo are sunfish and a delicacy in Japan. Their shape is unique being flat and round with extended dorsal and anal fins. They can grow large and often swim near the surface. A folk tale describes how the locals used to eat them as soon as they were caught because the Feudal Lord, who had a great liking for them, demanded all the catch be surrendered to him.

Kiinagashima town has taken the adorable Manbo as their symbol. The cutest manifestation is their town mascot with Manbo head dress!

Tsuzurato-toge Pass

Tsuzurato-toge Pass rises to ~360 m above sea level offering a clear view of the village in the valley below and Pacific Ocean beyond. It is a steeper climb to the pass but worth the effort.

Stone-lined Stiches

The name of the pass derives from its zig-zag stone path which resembles stitching by a seamstress. The steep sections of trail are built up with impressive stone walls. The trail follows a small residential valley to the Kii-Nagashima station area.

Numbered Signposts

On the World Heritage registered passes there are numbered signposted every ~100 m which include the emergency phone number for Police 110, and for the fire department/ambulance services 119.

Kiinagashima

Kiinagashima (population ~10,000) is the first coastal settlement on the Iseji. It is well-known for its coastal scenery including beaches, onsen, and fresh seafood.

Uomachi

Past Kii-Nagashima station across the Akaba-gawa River is the quaint fishing village called Uomachi. The old houses are built close together creating a nostalgic atmosphere. Elderly fishermen are often seen preparing to head out to set their spiny lobster nets in the winter months. There are small shops that sell dried fish near the port.

Nagashima-jinja

The Nagashima-jinja shrine is worshipped by locals often for safety at sea and productive fishing. There is a collection of massive old-growth trees on the grounds including an estimated 1000-year-old camphor.

Ikkoku-toge Pass

The route follows highway 42 to a short set of two passes that are difficult to distinguish where one ends and the other begins. The forest is a plantation of cedar and cypress. They follow the road into Furusato village.

Furusato Onsen

Furusato Onsen is an isolated hot spring beach town with a collection of accommodations. It is a popular stopover for walkers.

Point Sabohana

Further along from Furusato Onsen is a short trail that follows the coastline offering a beautiful view of the bay. The forested path passes by Wakamiya-jinja shrine arriving at the shore embankment of the next fishing village.

Doze Beach

Follow the embankment along the coastline to enjoy the views of nearby islands. Feel free to walk on the beach after passing the small fishing port. To get to the trailhead for Miura-toge pass follow the paved road up from the end of the beach.

Miura-toge Pass

The trail climbs up through the forest to where it traverses back and forth along the same elevation, hugging the contours of the slope until Kumagaya-bashi.

Here a sign explains that over many decades there was no bridge but with the registration of the route as World Heritage this new structure was built in 2005. They used high quality lumber and traditional methods which cost 22,000,000 yen. The trail descends to Minose, another scenic, sleepy coastal village.

Hajikami-toge Pass

The trail follows a creek which runs beside a power station. It gradually climbs the slope until a steeper section with short switchbacks. The view at the pass is rewarding. The trail splits into the Edo and Meiji routes, the later being easier to walk. Once back on the highway the trail follows the road and railway line south for ~9 km until the village of Aiga.

Aiga

Aiga is set in the back of one of the larger and more complex inlets. Here is Shiraishiko a body of water with saltwater on its lower level and fresh on its top, creating a unique environment perfect for raising oysters called Watarikaki, a local specialty.

Magose-toge Pass

Magose-toge is one of the most popular passes on the Iseji. The trailhead is ~2.5 km from Aiga village. Picturesque cobblestones line the trail called Ishidatami, which prevent erosion from the large amount of rain that falls in the area.

Yonaki Jizo

Jizo is a Bodhisattva, or a being that compassionately refrains from entering nirvana in order save others and is one of the most popular deities in Japan. Jizo is the savior and protector of children and travelers, but also takes on other forms of folk belief.

A good example of this duality is Yonaki Jizo 夜泣き地蔵 said to help children to stop crying throughout the night.

Poetic Pass

Erected at the pass by disciples of Karyoen Toitsu, a famous poet who visited the area in the mid-19th century, is a rock engraved with one of his poems.

夜は花の
上に音あり
山の水
Just as a flower
Night has a sound about it
Ahh, mountain water

Mt. Tengurasan

There is a side trail that leads east up the ridge to Mt. Tengurasan 天狗倉山 (522 m about sea level). This was a training site of mountain ascetics. There is a steel ladder to scale the large boulder for wonderful views. It is ~30 minutes each way.

Mt. Binshiyama

Mt. Binshiyama 便石山 can be accessed to the west of Magose-toge pass along the ridge line ~2 hours each way, where a rock is shaped like the back of an elephant. Standing on top of this monolith feels like you are standing on top of the world.

Owase Viewpoint
Descending the path to the south partway down on the right is a short side trail to Magose Park viewpoint where there is a covered shelter.

Owase
Owase (p.10-11) is considered the belly button of the Iseji because of its central location. It is the largest city in the region and is famous for its seafood served fresh at local restaurants. The Kumano Kodo Center is a little off of the Iseji trail but offers information about the area in a beautiful wooden building.

Yakiyama-goe
Yakiyama is considered to be the most difficult pass on the Iseji, linking Owase city with the small fishing village of Mikisato.

Pilgrims Gravestones
In the past pilgrims travelled long distances often at their peril. Along the Iseji there are many gravesites of pilgrims that have passed away during their trip. Some had come a long distance like those remembered near signpost 8 who came from Ibaraki, Nagasaki, and Hiroshima.

Choishi-Jizo
Placed at regular intervals of 1 cho (109 m) are statues of Jizo which quietly watch over and protect pilgrims. There were original 50 but only 35 remain now.

Owase Hinoki
The trail is lined in tall Hinoki cypress plantations in the lower reaches. The forestry industry has been in existence since the mid-1600s. Because the mountains are so steep with high precipitation, special techniques for planting and thinning the trees are used to get a high-quality product with dense growth rings and minimal knots. Owase Hinoki cypress trees are in high demand all over Japan.

Sakura-no-Mori Hiroba
The Sakura-no-Mori Hiroba is an open area at the top of the pass. There is a covered sitting area to rest and enjoy the panoramic views. On the north side of the trail there is the Edo and Meiji route. Please take the Edo trail as the Meiji is closed.

Mikisato
The trail drops into a valley and levels out for a pleasant walk to reach the settlement of Mikisato popular for its beach.

Miki-toge Pass & Hago-toge Pass
The trail follows the coastline rising and falling over two small passes: Miki-toge and Hago-toge before reaching Sone, the next settlement in a neighboring bay. There are some nice viewpoints, shishigaki fences, and a Yama-no-Kami pavilion.

Ocean Route
In the past in is recorded that pilgrims when by boat from Mikisato to Sone. A local outdoor company called E-gumi now offers sea kayaking journeys along the same ocean Kumano Kodo route.

Asuka-jinja
Asuka-jinja is one of the main shrines in the area and is blessed with an impressive shrine grove boasting a variety of old-growth species. In the main sanctuary is a camphor tree with a hole in it base used as Tainaikuguri passage through nature's womb to be ritually reborn.

Sone Jiro-zaka Taro-zaka
This next pass has a unique name which can be a little confusing. The Sone part comes from the name of the village. The suffix "zaka" means slope. "Jiro" means "our land" and "Taro" means your land. This was a border between the Shima domain to the north and Kii domain to the south. Hobo-toge is a pass for a separate trail that extends south from the ridge and is not the true highest point of the Sone Jiro-zaka Taro-zaka.

Stone Quarry
In the Edo era the Shogun had all regions donate goods and products as taxes. This was a quarry where stones were taken to send to the capital for castle construction. If you look closely you can see the chisel marks. If you listen closely you may be able to hear the workers long ago toiling away at the rocks.

Kujira-ishi Rock
Take a close look at a protruding bolder from the side of the mountain and you may see why it is colloquially referred to as Kujira-ishi, or whale rock.

Nigishima-toge Pass & Okamizaka-toge Pass
Sone Jiro-zaka Taro-zaka descends into the compact settlement of Nigishima at the base of another inlet and then quickly climbs out to cross-over the neck of a peninsula.

The trail rises and falls over a mixture of moss-covered stone stairs and dirt trail arriving at Atashika, another small fishing village famous for its beach.

Meeting Place of the Gods
The name Okamizaka alludes to the idea that this is where the deities from Ise and Kumano meet.

Hadasu-no-Michi
The trail to Hadasu-no-Michi runs through some beautiful coastal scenery with scenic settlements. Rising out of Atashika look back to see the nice curved beach with the lush green mountains rising into the background. The trail follows sections of paved road and dirt trail before arriving at the terraced Hadasu settlement near the short cobblestone section of Hadasu-no-Michi.

Hadasu Cobblestones
The flagstone steps in Hadasu stretch along ~80 meters and are some of the oldest on the Kumano Kodo, having been placed during the Kamakura period (1185-1333). Subsequent Edo period construction features advanced drainage ditches that are still effective in preventing erosion today. The views from the top of the tranquil bay are impressive.

Elusive Elixir
In 210 B.C the explorer and scholar Jofuku was sent from China in search of the fountain of youth under orders by Xi Huangdi, the first emperor of the Qin dynasty. He sailed eastward with a fleet of large ships in search of such an elixir of life. It is said that Jofuku's ships docked in this area.

Fragments of ceramics possibly created by Jofuku along with Qin coins have been excavated in the Hadasu area, and the place where Jofuku's furnaces once stood still retains the name of Kamayashiki, meaning 'Kiln District.'

A small shrine to Jofuku stands on a small hill called Houraisan where great camphor trees grow thickly, and it is inside here that his grave lies.

Obuki-toge Pass
A break in a Shishigaki fence opens onto the Obuki-toge pass there was a teahouse operation until 1950. The trail descends down through an area traditionally of bamboo, but the wild boar enjoys the roots and have dug most of them up in recent times. A paved road leads to a view of the Odomari coast, a popular location for surfing.

Kannon-michi, Daikan Shishigaki-michi
From the top of Obuki-toge pass a side trail leads to the Kannon-michi trail. The trail follows a closely an ancient Shishigaki fence. Along the way one can catch glimpses of the distance arch of Shichirimihama and the goal of Kumano Hayatama Taisha at its far side.

Tomari Kannon remains (Seisui-ji Temple remains)
Descending from the ridge line the trail arrives at the site of Tomari Kannon remains (Seisui-ji Temple remains). The main object of worship was moved down the mountain in 1964 because the grounds were falling into disrepair. The trail below is lined with 33 statues of Kannon.

Matsumoto-toge Pass
Matsumoto-toge is another popular pass. It is shorter than other passes but has well preserved stonework.

Jizo
A tall, elongated Jizo statue stands guard at the pass. Long ago, a hunter set out early in the morning just before this guardian statue was erected. On returning at dusk, he saw it in the waning light and mistook it for a phantom and shot it. You can see the hole where the bullet hit.

Lookout Point
Approximately a 10 minute walk south on a side trail is a look out point of the Shichirimihama beach. The large, elegant curve is very photogenic. This trail continues down to Onigajo.

Kumano
The trail descends into Kumano (p18-19), the next major city on the trail and has a variety of services and facilities including some unique information centers such as the Kinan Tour Design Center and Kumano Kodo Omotenashi-kan. The unique and sacred rock formations of Onigajo, Shishiiwa, and Hana-no-Iwaya, Japan's oldest shrine, are nearby.

KUMANO KODO

ISEJI (North)

ISEJI (Central)

ISEJI (South)

NAKAHECHI

KOHECHI

OHECHI

Download Maps
www.tb-kumano.jp