

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.

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- ◆ Accommodations Reservations
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- ◆ Local Guides
- ◆ Travel Service (eg. Luggage shuttle)
- ◆ Model Itineraries



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

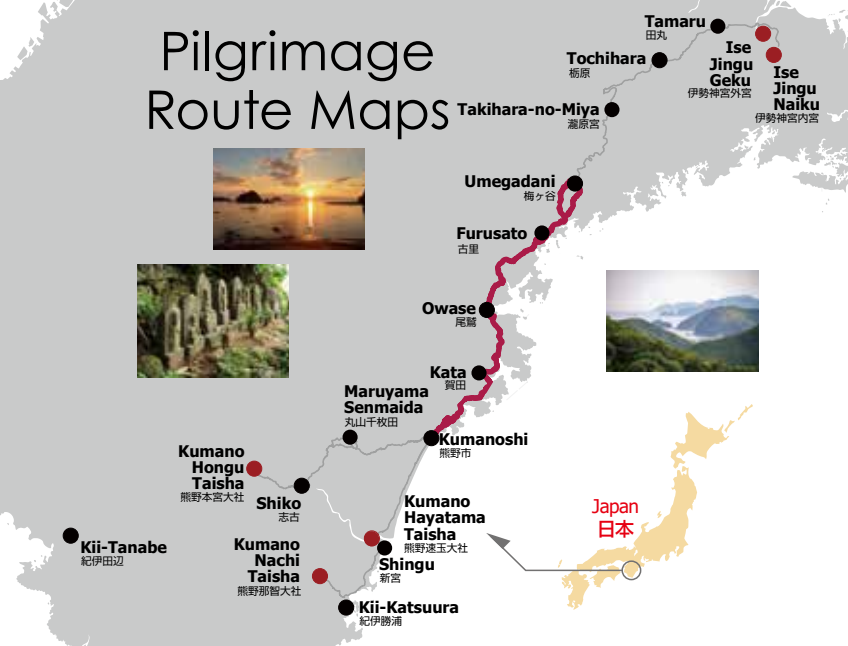
Useful Words and Phrases

Hello Konnichiwa	Goodbye Sayounara
..... こんにちは	..... さようなら
Thank you Arigato	Excuse me sumimasen
..... ありがとう	..... 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 Wakarimasen	..... 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	No iie
..... はい	..... 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 xxxx? xxxx wa doko desu ka?	..... xxxxはどこですか?
Bus stop Basu-tei	Trailhead Tozanguchi
..... バス停	..... 登山口
Help me! Tasuketel!	Toilet O-tearai/toire
..... たすけて!	..... お手洗い/トイレ
I need a doctor Isha ga hitsuyo desu 医者が必要です

KUMANO KODO

ISEJI (Central)

Pilgrimage Route Maps



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03/2024 printed・発行

www.tb-kumano.jp

Mie Prefecture

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!



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.

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.

Iseji Eastern Route

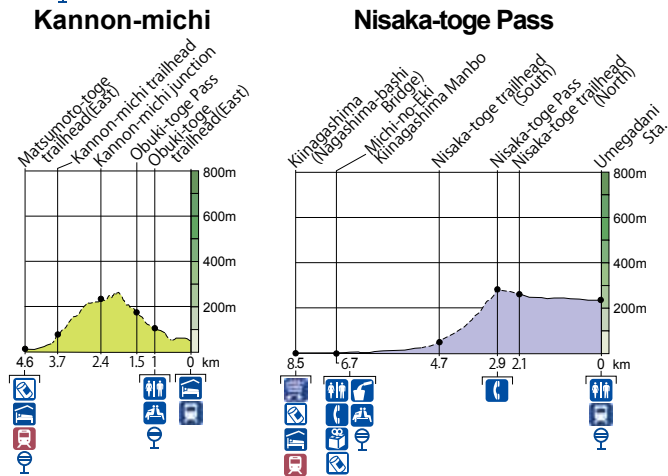
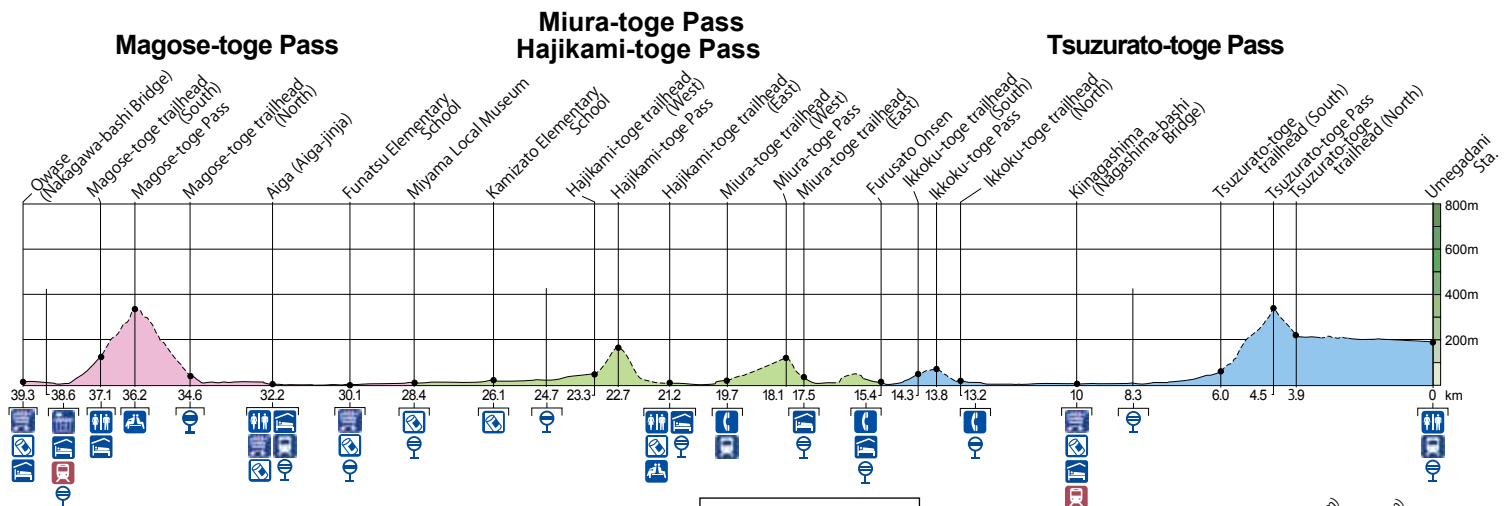
The Iseji route runs along the east coast of the Kii Peninsula between Ise Jingu and the Kumano Sanzan. It was extremely popular in the Edo period (1603-1868) with the increase of pilgrims to the Ise. After paying homage, devotees would continue on the Iseji to Kumano. This route has a diversity of mountain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

Overview

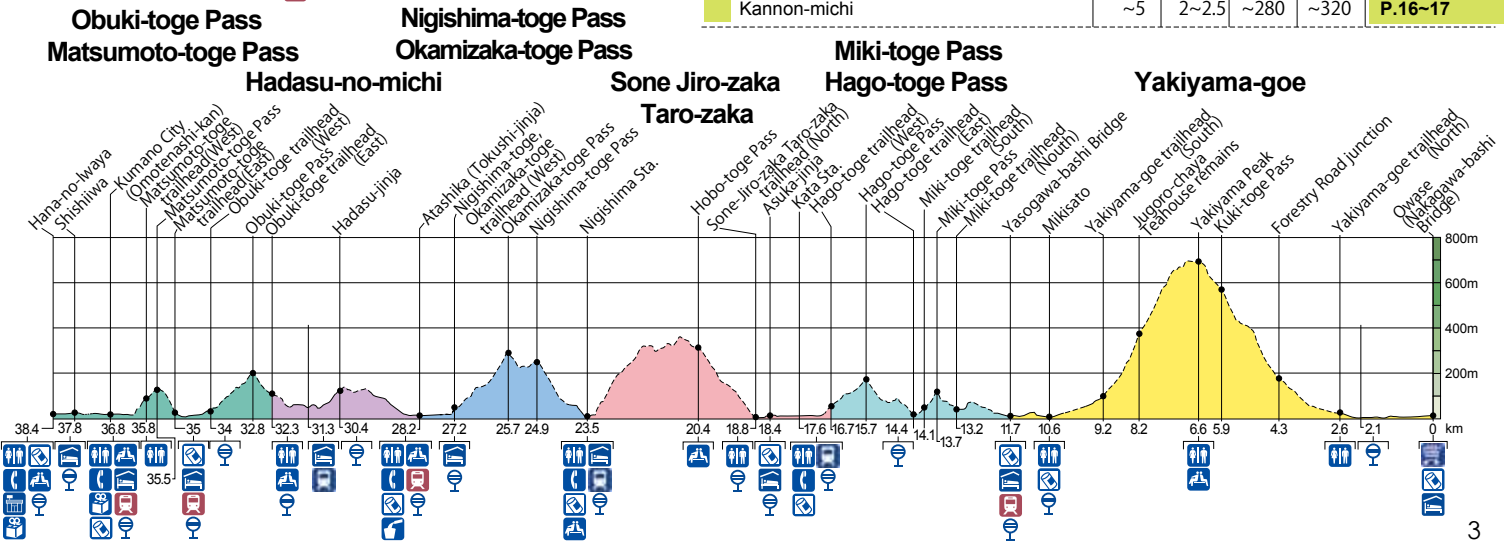


Legend	
	Toilet
	Public phone
	Convenience store
	Grocery store
	Shop/Store
	Vending machine
	Drinking water
	Covered shelter
	Accommodation
	Station
	Station nearby
	Bus stop

	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



	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



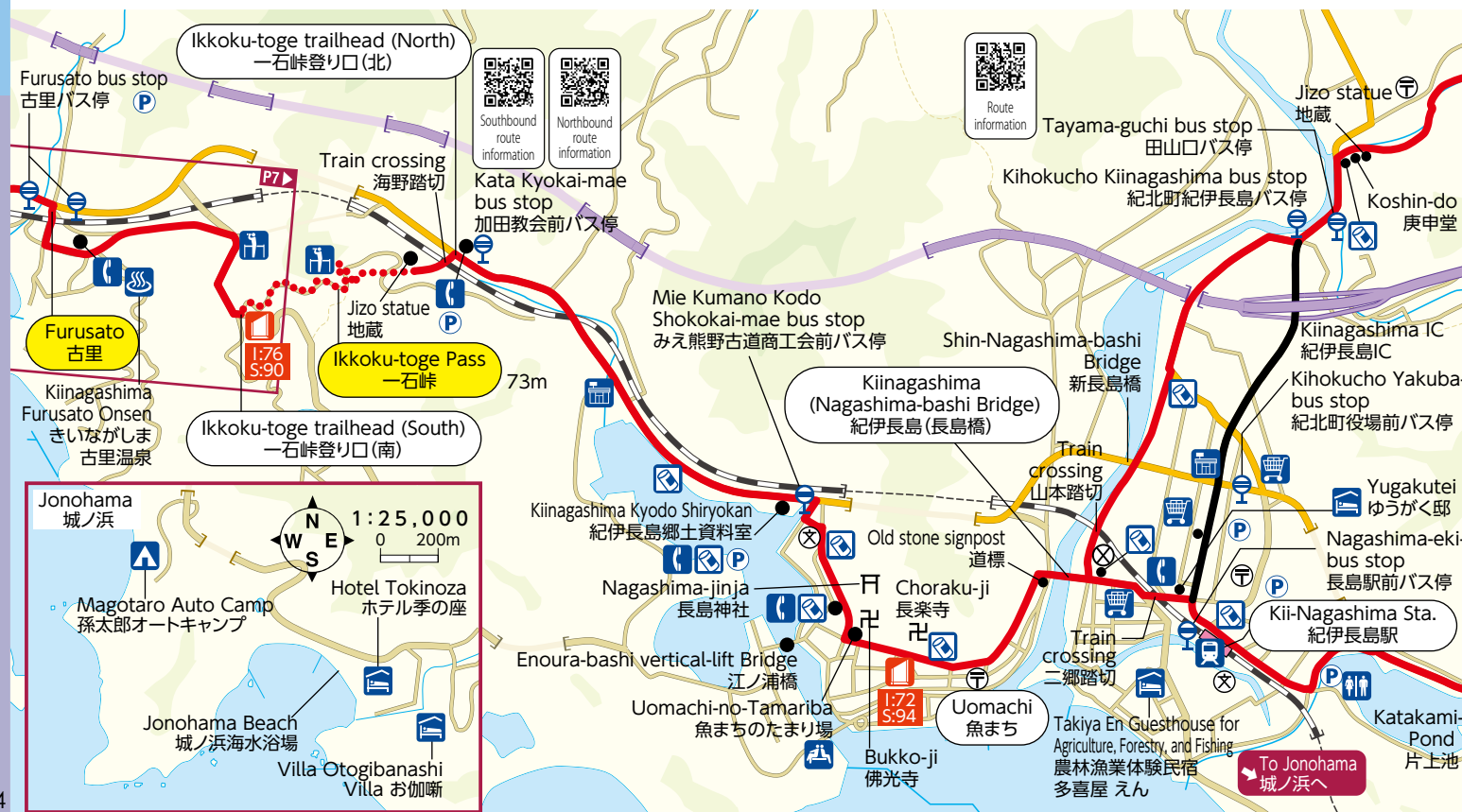
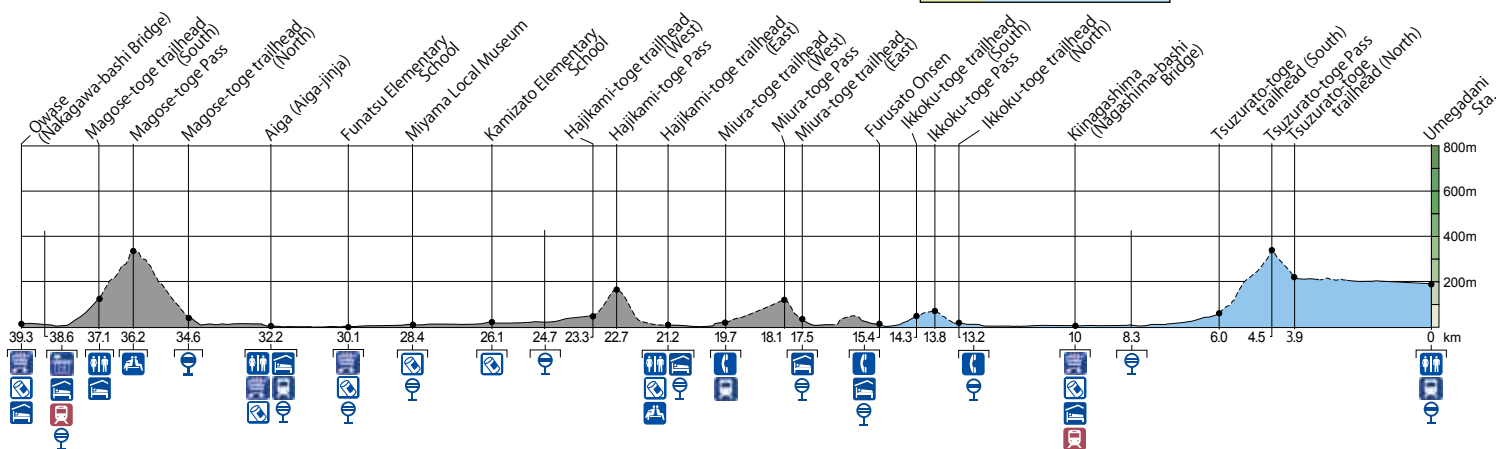
Furusato Onsen~Umegadani

古里温泉~梅ヶ谷



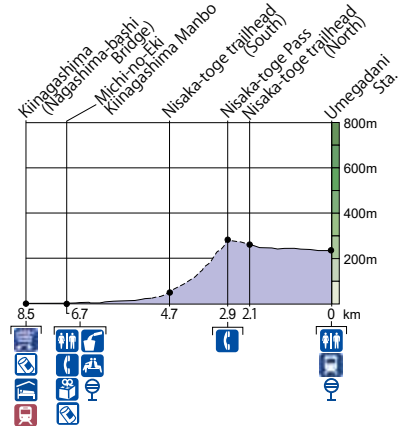
Distance (km) : ~16
Time (hr) : 4.5~6
Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~290
Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~510

----- Unpaved trail
—— Paved trail



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



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



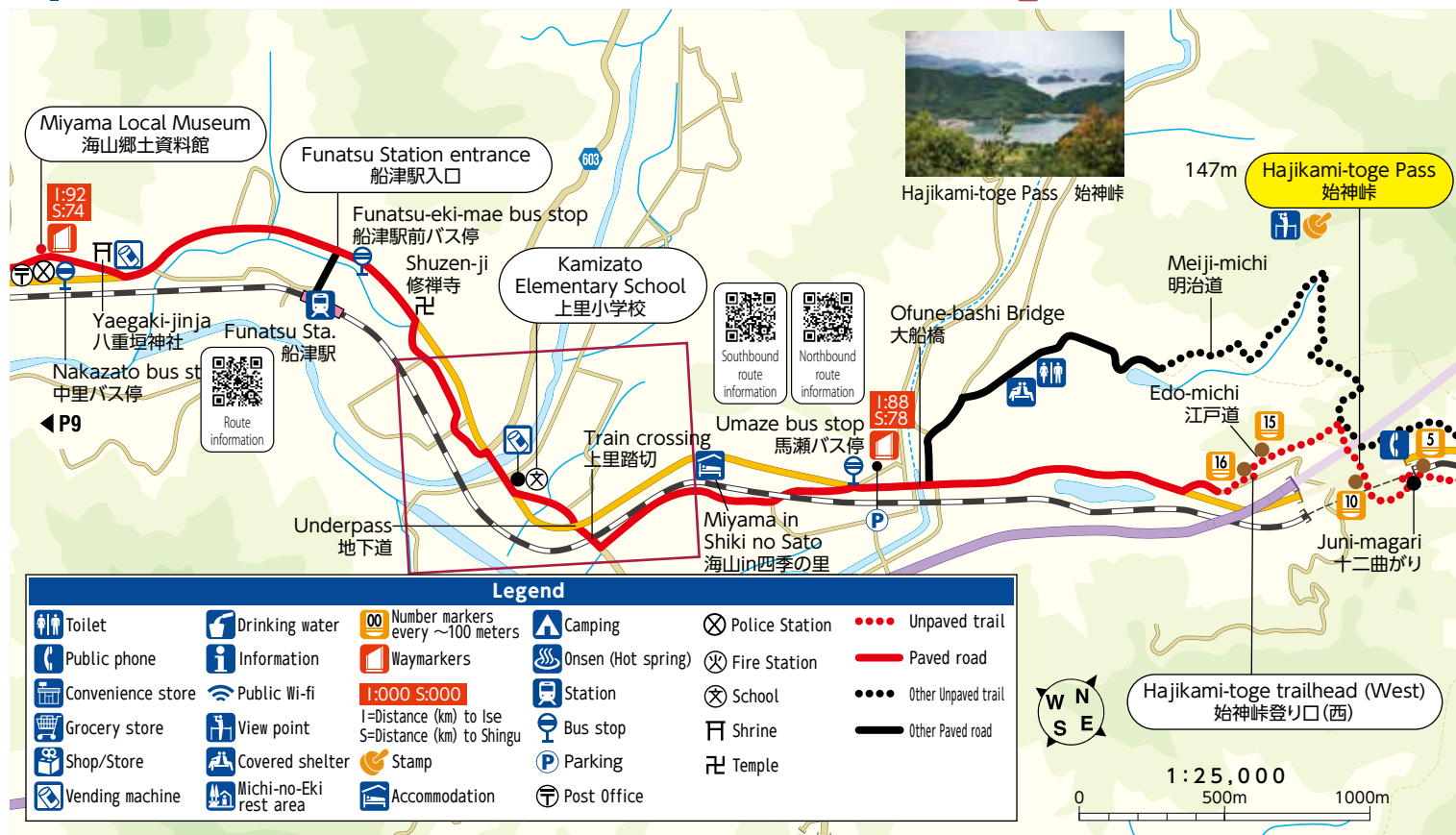
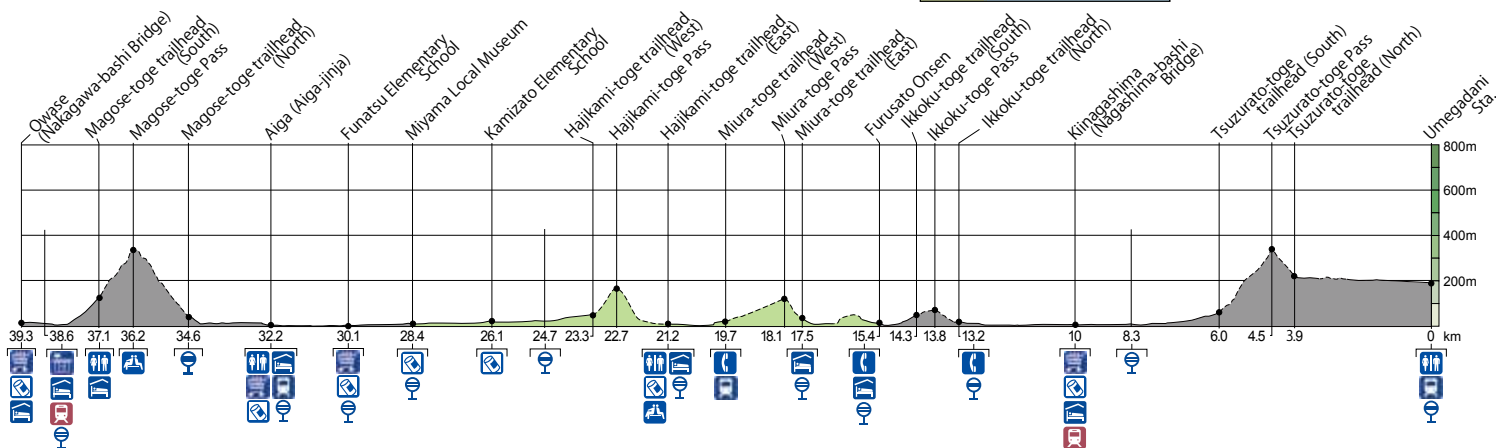
Funatsu~Furusato Onsen

船津~古里温泉

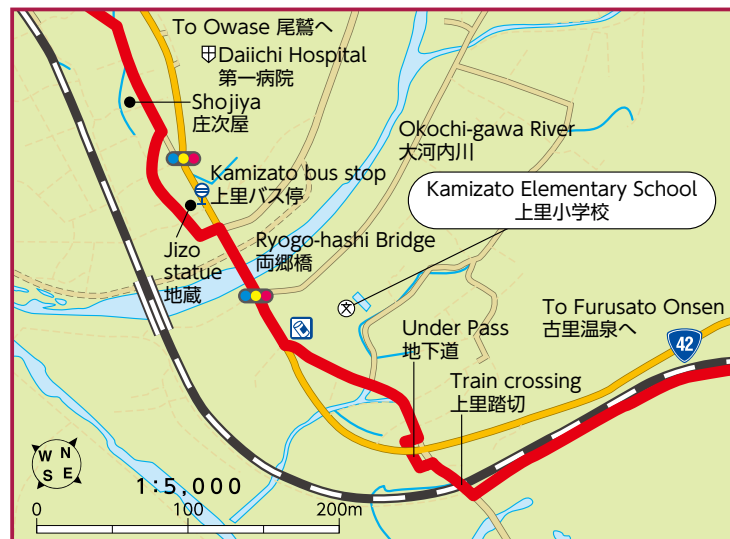


Distance (km) : ~13
Time (hr) : 4~6
Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~330
Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~340

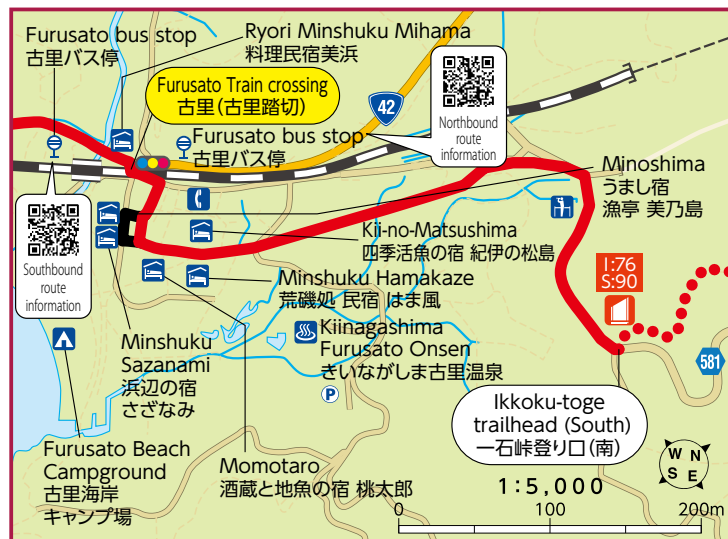
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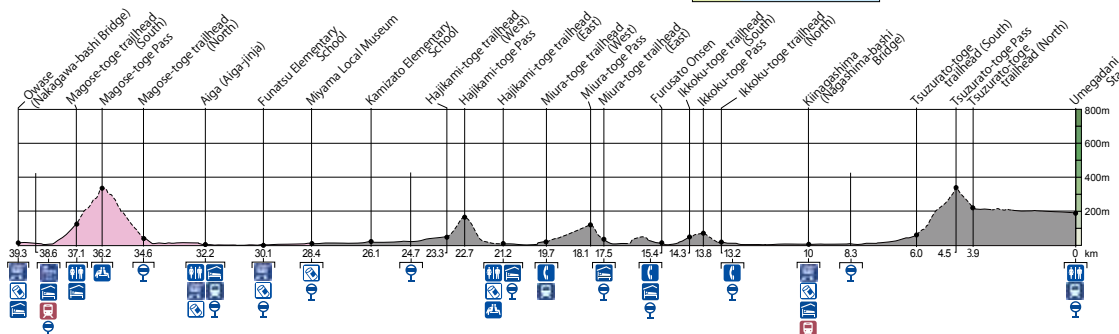
Kamizato



Furusato



尾鷲～船津



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



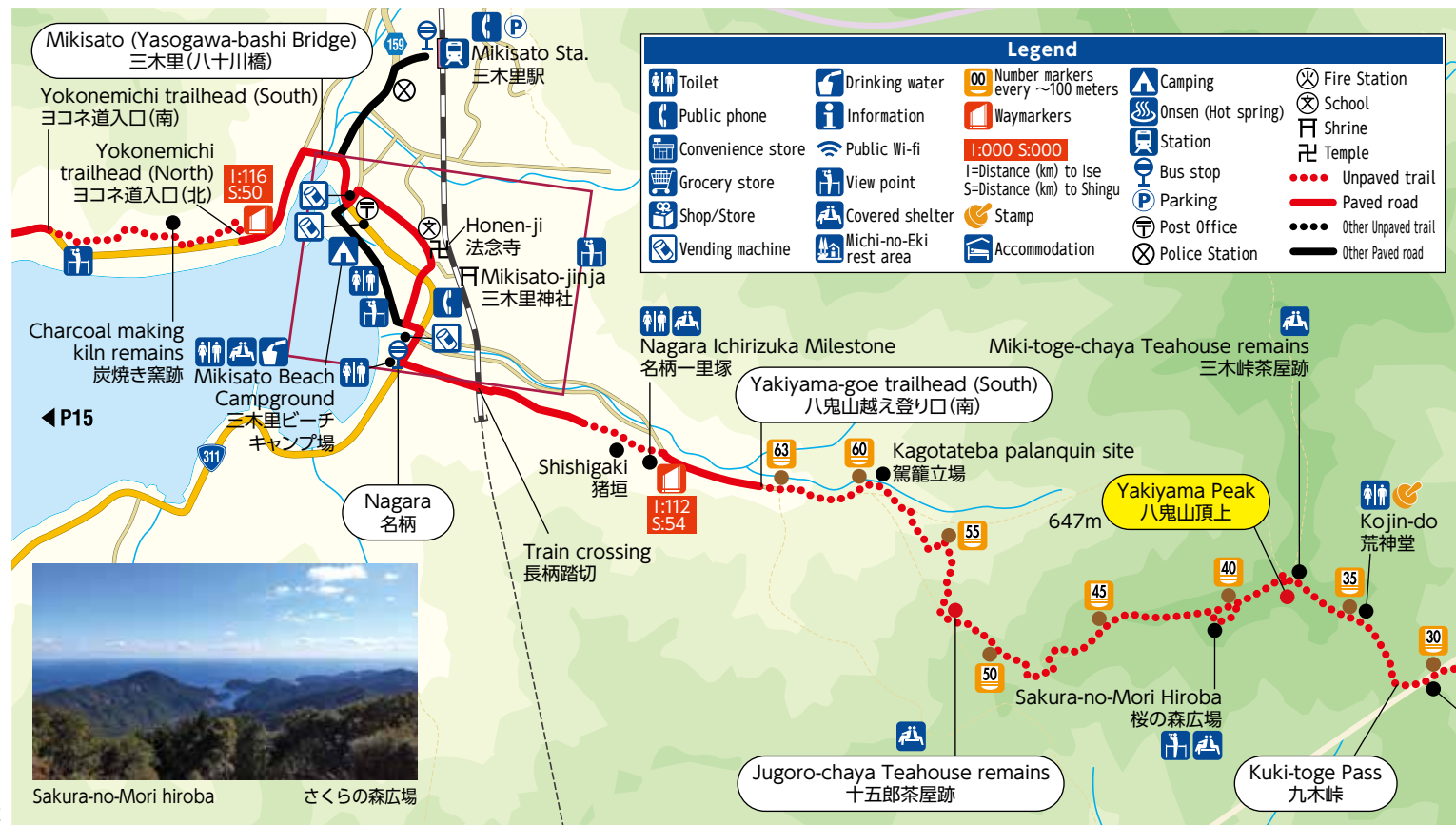
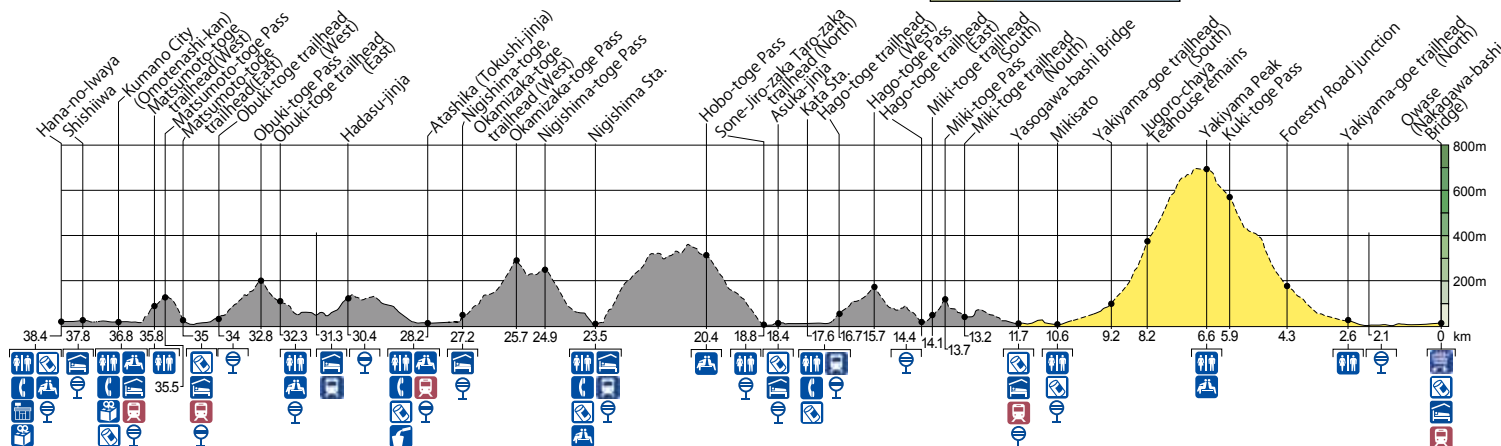
Mikisato~Owase

三木里~尾鷲

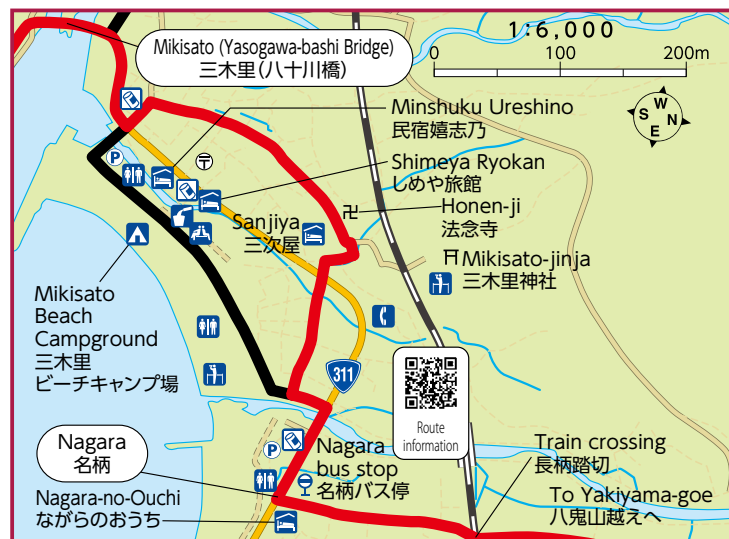


Distance (km) : ~12
Time (hr) : 5.5~7.5
Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~700
Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~720

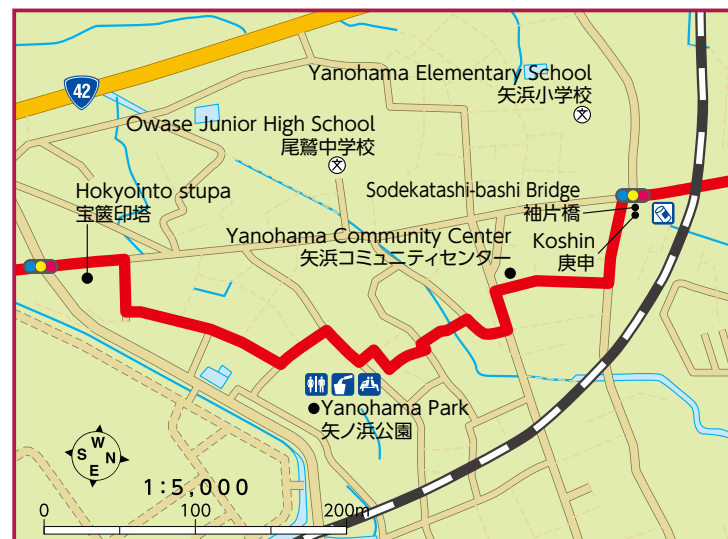
----- Unpaved trail
—— Paved trail



Mikisato



Yanohama



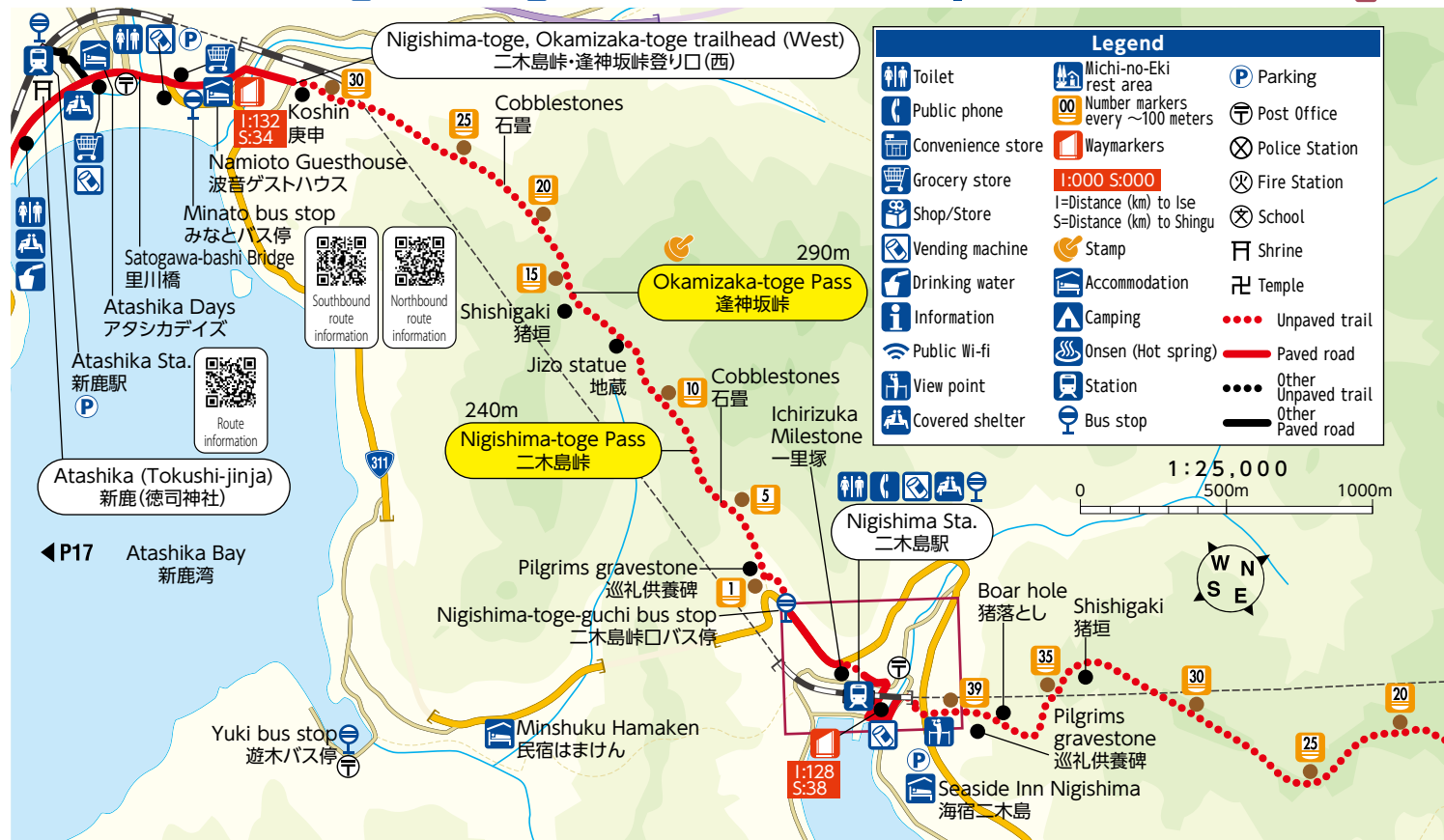
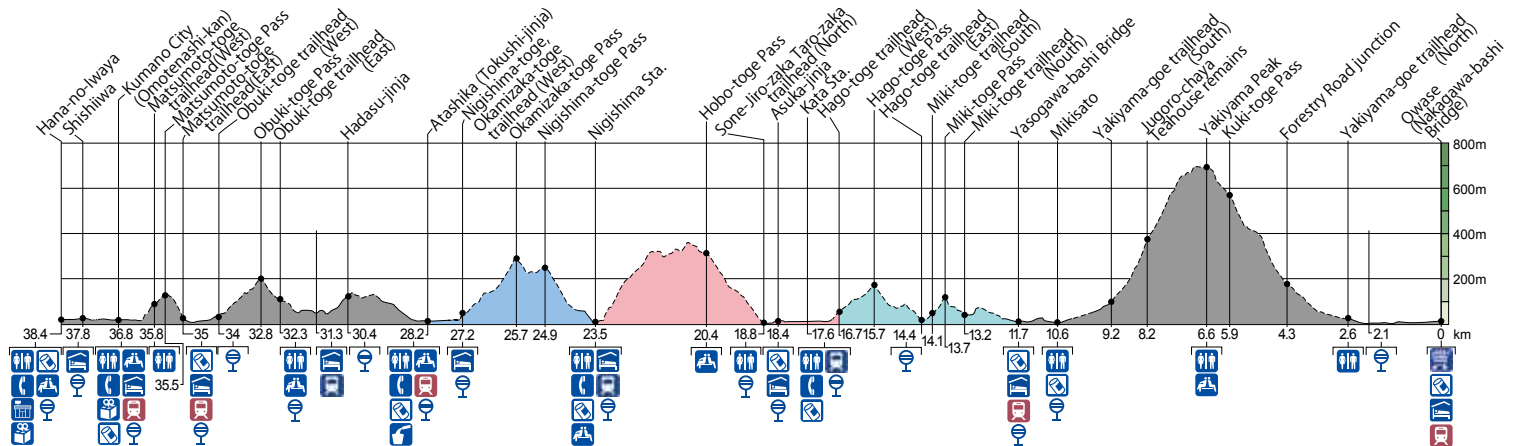
Atashika~Mikisato

新鹿~三木里



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

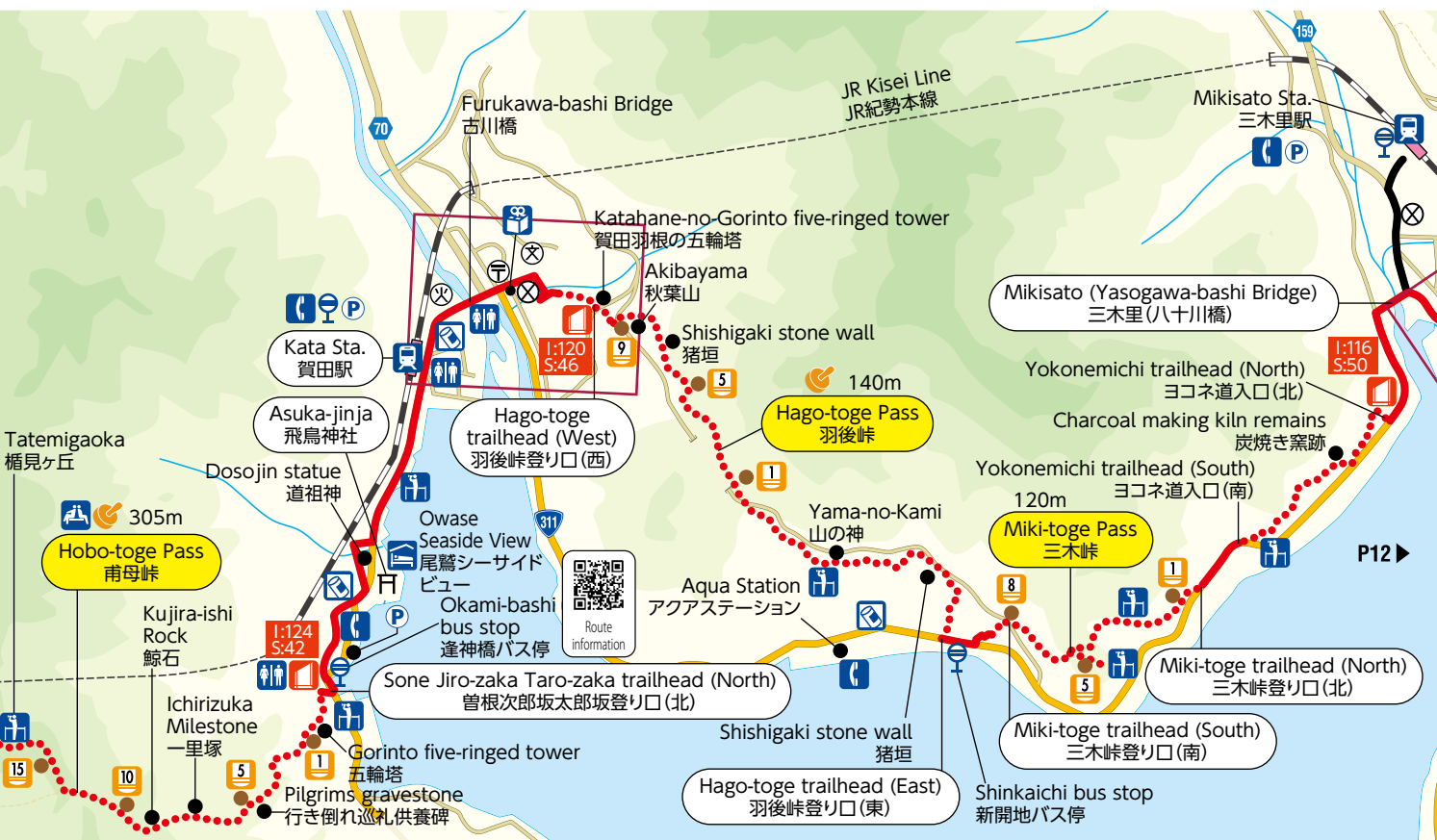
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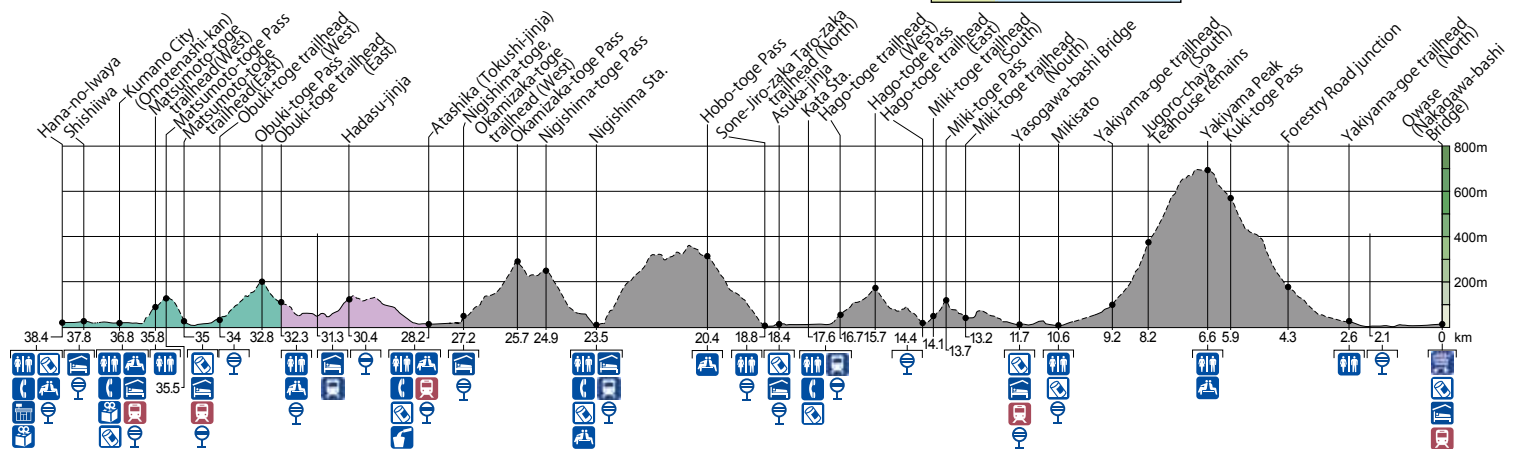
Nigishima



Kata

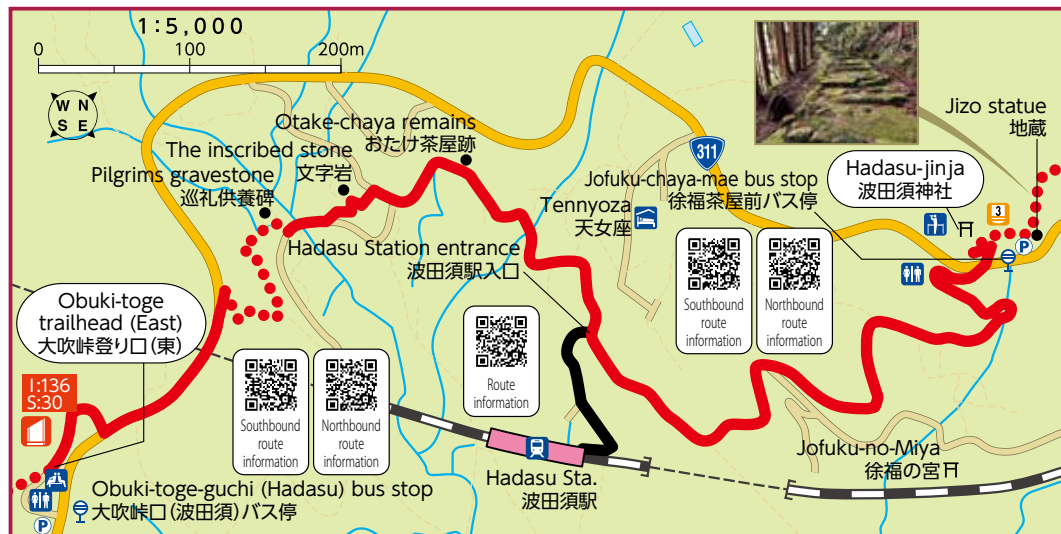
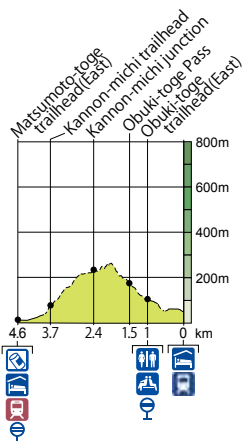


花の窟〜新鹿



Kannon-michi 観音道 Hadasu

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



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.

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.



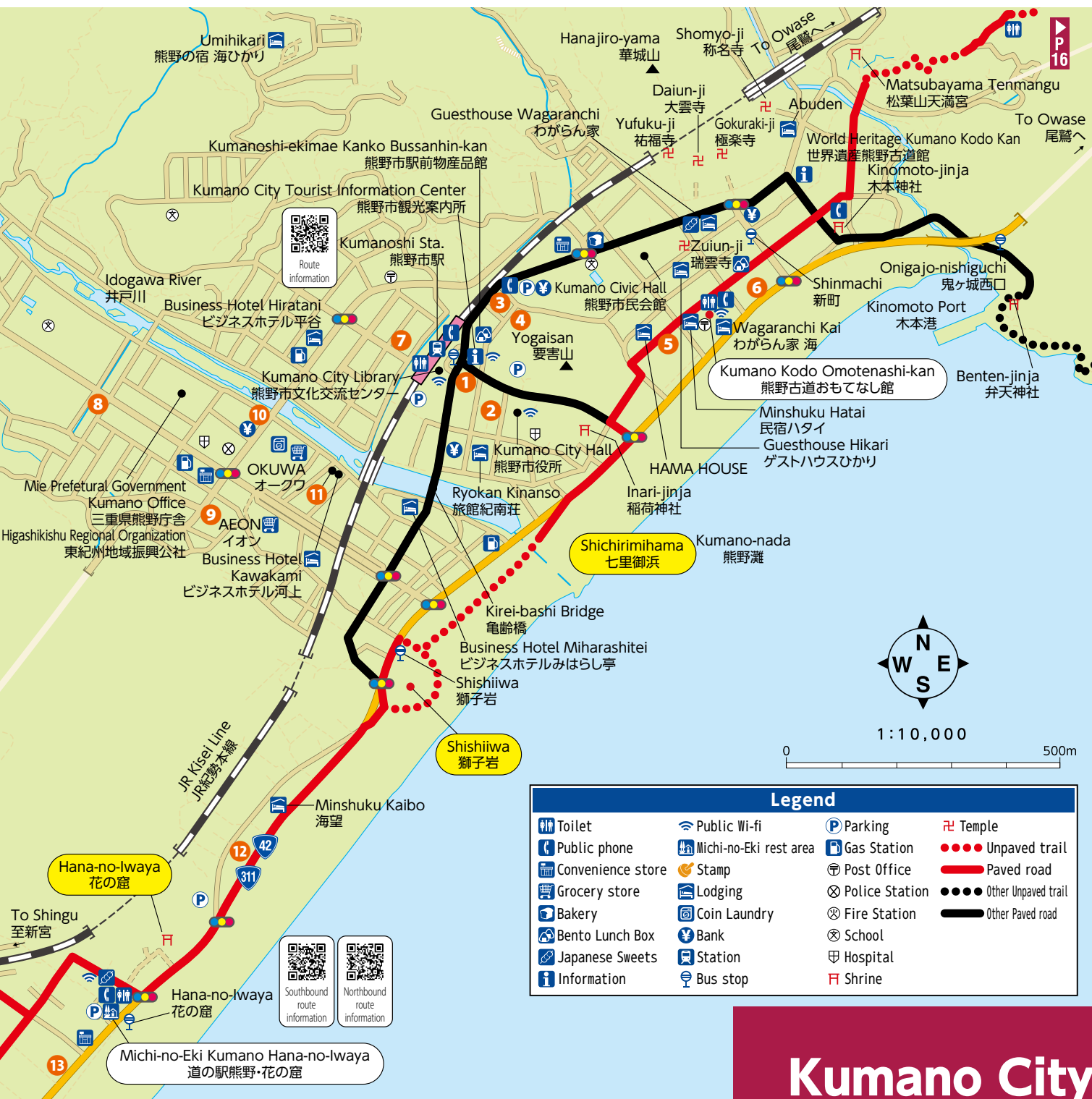
Hana-no-Iwaya

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 かつば		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) 毎月曜が祝日時、 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.

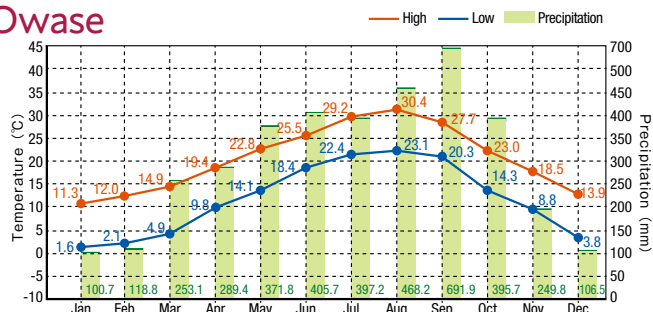
Weather

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/

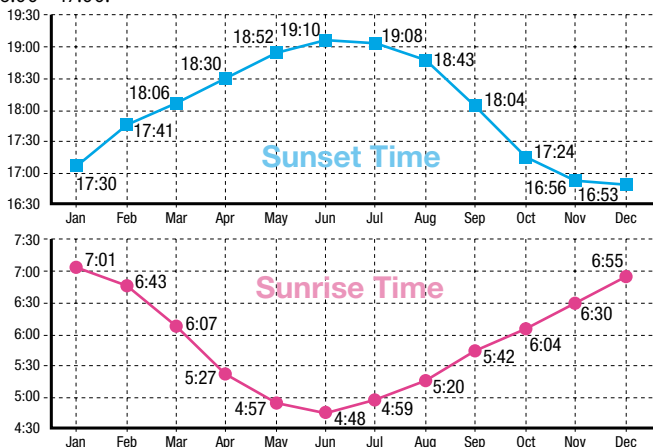
Owase



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-japanpost.jp/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 worshippers.
- 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)

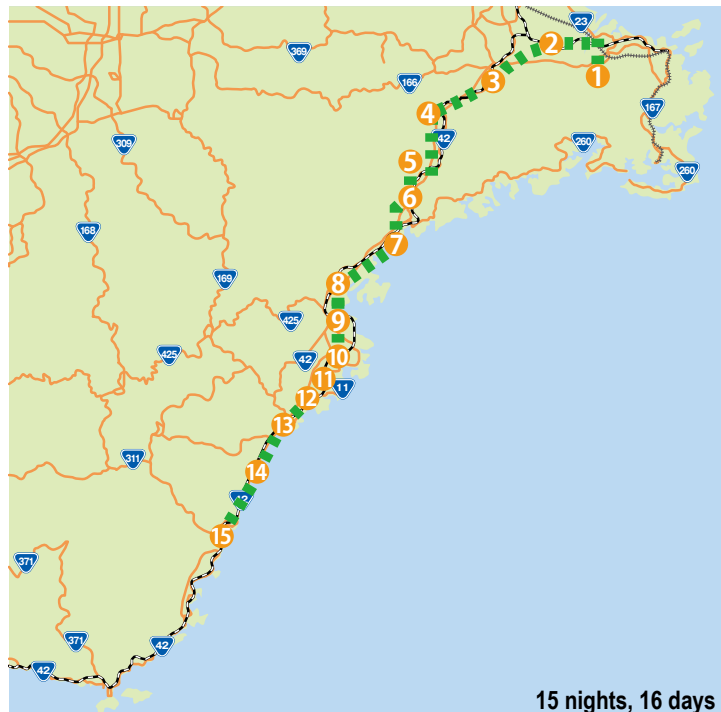
Yakiyama-goe Day Walk

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

Southern 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 Intermediate Complete Trek



15 nights, 16 days

Iseji Advanced Complete Trek

Day1:

- Transfer to Ise Jingu Naiku, overnight ①

Day2:

- Walk to Tochiara (~27km), overnight ②

Day3:

- Walk to Aso (~25km), overnight ③

Day4:

- Walk to Furusato Onsen (North p.12~15 and p.4~5, ~29km), overnight ④

Day5:

- Walk to Owase (p.6~9, ~20km), overnight ⑤

Day6:

- Walk to Kata (p.12~15, ~17km), overnight ⑥

Day7:

- Walk to Central Kumano (p.14~17, ~18km), overnight ⑦

Day8:

- Walk to Shingu (~23km), overnight ⑧

Day9:

- Transfer to next destination



8 nights, 9 days

Day1:

- Transfer to Ise City, overnight ①

Day2:

- Walk to Tamaru (~12km), overnight ②

Day3:

- Walk to Tochiara (~15km), overnight ③

Day4:

- Walk to Misedani (~13km), overnight ④

Day5:

- Walk to Kashiwazaki (~18km), overnight ⑤

Day6:

- Walk to Ouchiya (~7km), overnight ⑥

Day7:

- Walk to Furusato Onsen (North p.14~15 and p.4~5, ~17km), overnight ⑦

Day8:

- Walk to Aiga (p.6~9, ~14km), overnight ⑧

Day9:

- Walk to Owase (p.8~9, ~6km), overnight ⑨

Day10:

- Walk to Mikisato (p.12~13, ~12km), overnight ⑩

Day11:

- Walk to Kata (p.14~15, ~5km), overnight ⑪

Day12:

- Walk to Atashika (p.14~15, ~10km), overnight ⑫

Day13:

- Walk to Central Kumano (p.16~17, ~8km), overnight ⑬

Day14:

- Walk to Atawa (~12km), overnight ⑭

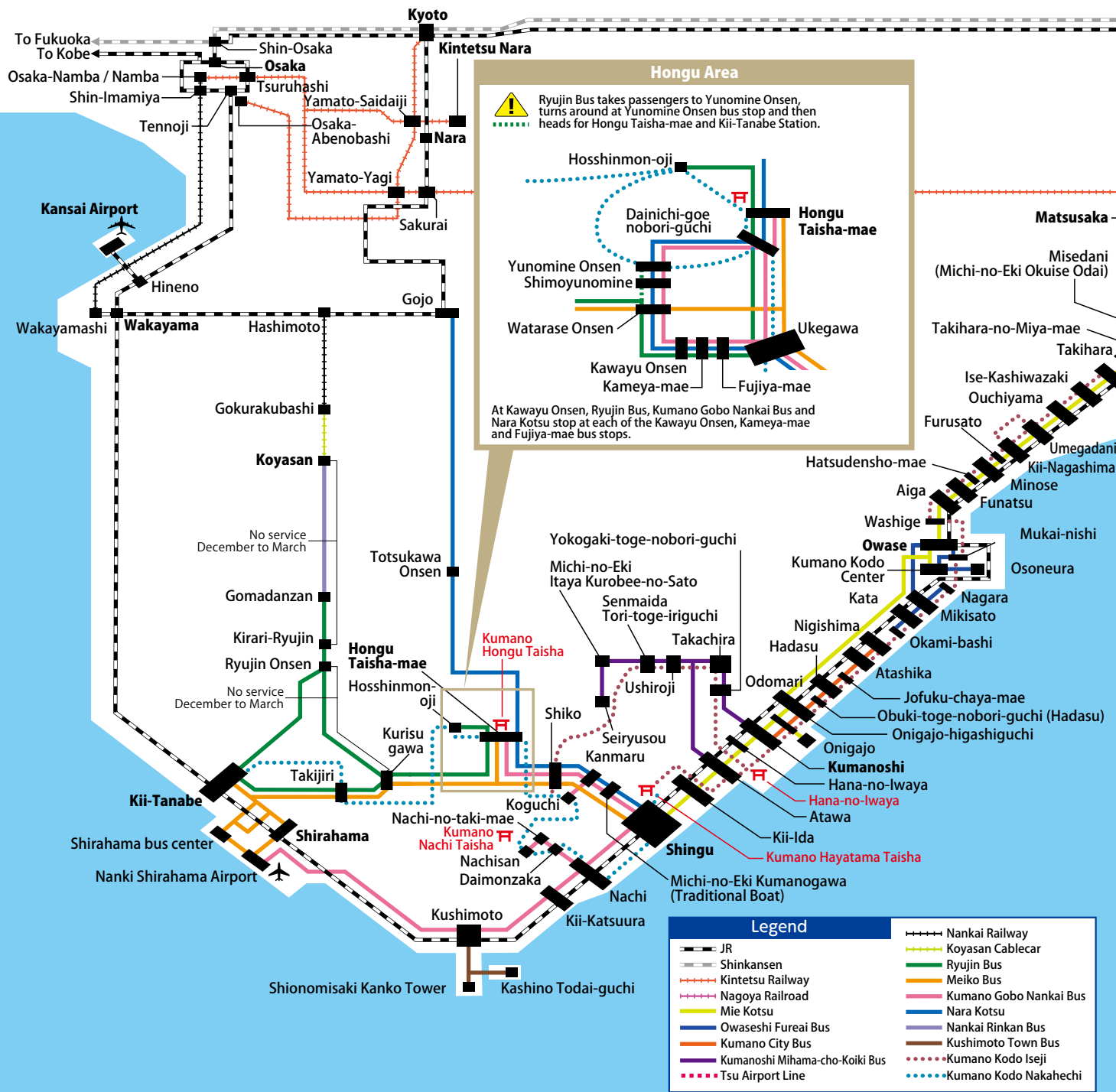
Day15:

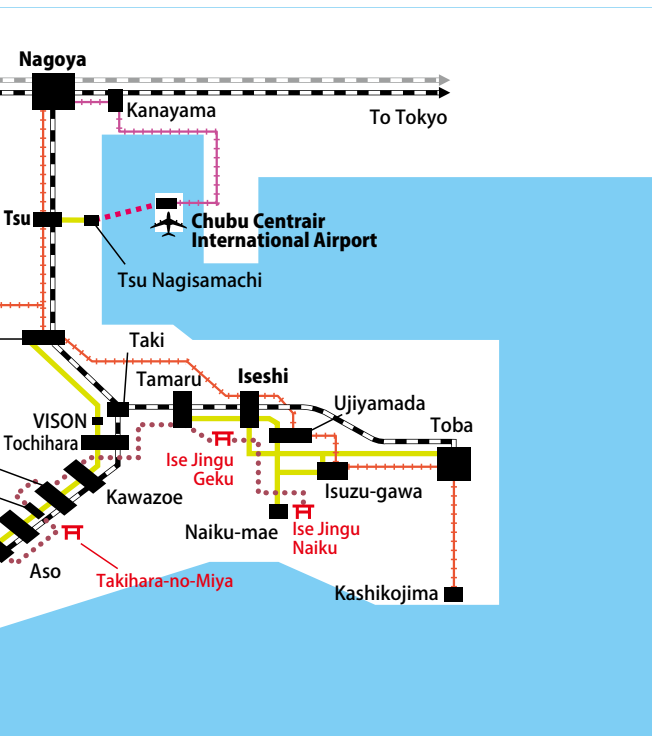
- Walk to Shingu (~11km), overnight ⑮

Day16:

- Transfer to next destination

Access





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 Trains

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

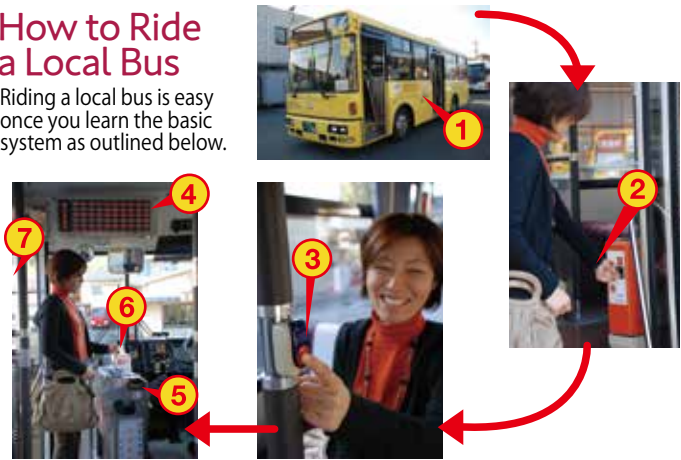
Local Busses are the main form of public transport once you leave the coast and head into the mountains. Busses are limited, so it is best to plan ahead and check the timetables.

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 (プラットフォーム)
- 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	○	○	○	○	○	○

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

伊勢へ七度熊野へ三度

Seven times to Ise, three times to Kumano

The Kumano Kodo Iseji is a network of about 170 km of pilgrimage routes that connect Ise Jingu with the Kumano Sanzan on the east coast of the Kii peninsula. It is made up of north, central and south areas based on changes in topography. To trek the full length can take one to two weeks while staying at accommodation facilities, but many of the shorter passes can be enjoyed as day hikes because the trailheads are often located near train stations and bus stops.

Central / Cobblestone Passes and Small Fishing Villages

Starting from Umegadani, the central area of about 80 km to Hana-no-Iwaya is the core area of UNESCO World Heritage and the most popular section. Pilgrims go over a series of passes that connect small fishing villages and encounter cobblestone trails and stone monuments in places. It is an historic route with an ancient atmosphere. There are many mountains and the rocky coastline features dramatic inlets, sometimes with long finger-like bays lined with scenic beaches. The route turns into authentic mountain passes from Tsuzurato-toge, the headwater area of the Ouchiyama-gawa River, or Nisaka-toge, enters Kii Province from Ise Province under the old geographical boundaries, and pilgrims encounter seascapes for the first time since leaving Ise Jingu Naiku. This area is rich in highlights with many photo spots, including the popular Magose-toge Pass, Matsumoto-toge Pass and Onigajo, and the most difficult place on the Iseji, Yakiyama-goe (elevation 647 m).

Tsuzurato-toge Pass

At 357 m above sea level, Tsuzurato-toge Pass is the pass at the border to Ise Province and Kii Province under the old geographical boundaries, and is the pass where pilgrims aiming for the Kumano Sanzan from Ise see the sea of Kumano for the first time. Even after Nisaka-toge Pass became the official entrance to Kii Province from the Edo Period on, Tsuzurato-toge Pass was used as a community road to the start of the Showa Period. The southern side of the pass faces a valley and rock walls and cobblestones made from natural stones are well preserved. "Tsuzurato" means "meandering."



Number markers every 100 meters

On the World Heritage registered trails and elsewhere, there are numbered signposts every 100 m. Apart from being walking landmarks, these signposts enable rescue operations to be carried out quickly by communicating the name of the pass and the number written on them.

Nisaka-toge Pass

At 241 m above sea level, Nisaka-toge Pass has less difference in elevation compared to Tsuzurato-toge Pass, which it runs parallel to. There is a tea house, which doubled as an inn, on this pass, which was opened in the early Edo Period. From the Taisho Period to the Showa Period, there were usually four to five rickshaws parked here as a stopping point, but the tea house was shut following the opening of the railway in 1930. The gentle Meiji-michi and the steep Edo-michi also remain in parallel.

Okimi-daira

At Okimi-daira, with beautiful views and where pilgrims aiming for the Kumano Sanzan from Ise get their first view of the Kumano sea, there is a wooden board with a two-line poem written by Bokushi Suzuki, a travel writer of the Edo Period. From April to May azaleas bloom, adding a splash of brilliant color to the fresh green leaves.

Shishigaki

Shishigaki are extensive rock walls, built to protect crops from wild boars and deer living in the mountains. Many remain alongside the Kodo. They can also be seen at passes to the south of Nisaka-toge Pass.

Michi-no-Eki Kiinagashima Manbo

Michi-no-Eki Kiinagashima Manbo is a rest area named after the manbo sunfish, a specialty of Kiinagashima, and is located near the scenic Katakami-ike Pond. Apart from having an information center, visitors can enjoy food and shopping, and encounter unusual seafood such as manbo sunfish and utsubo moray eel.

Kiinagashima

Located at the mouth of the Akaba-gawa River, Kiinagashima is a fishing village lined with shops and houses centered on Kii-nagashima Station. The trails to Tsuzurato-toge Pass and Nisaka-toge Pass separate at the north end of Nagashima-bashi Bridge.

Uomachi

Uomachi faces the calm Enoura Bay and has been a fishing town since long ago. It prospered in the past as a place of accommodation for pilgrims and as a harbor for ships sheltering from the wind. In the town, which has shops selling dried fish and other seafood, there are historical temples and shrines such as Nagashima-jinja, Choraku-ji and Bukko-ji, and also the unusual vertical lift-style Enoura-bashi Bridge, and the looping Enoura-ohashi Bridge, so visitors can touch the history, culture and scenery of this area.



Nagashima-jinja

Nagashima-jinja shrine is worshipped by locals for safety at sea and productive fishing. There are large old-growth trees on the grounds, including an estimated 1,000-year-old camphor.

Ikkoku-toge Pass

At 73 m above sea level, Ikkoku-toge Pass is a gentle pass covered with cedar and cypress trees. A Jizo statue stands at the northern trailhead, and there is a small pass also known as Hirakata-toge Pass on the southern side of the trailhead.

Furusato

Furusato is a hot spring town with day-trip hot spring facilities and hot spring hotels. The spring water contains sodium and hydrogen carbonate, and is said to contribute to beautiful skin.

Sabohanamichi

This is a dirt trail that follows the coastline from Furusato to Doze, and was opened in the Meiji Period. From the lookout point, you can see the beautiful islands of Kii-no-Matsushima floating in the Kumano-nada Sea. In the Edo Period, Nokogiri-zaka, which is above the current Kaino Tunnel of the JR Kisei Main Line, was the route over the mountain, but it is no longer used due to the construction of the railway.

Doze Beach

Maruyamajima Island floats in front of the beach and Wakamiya-jinja is on the coast to the north. The beach follows on from a 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

This is a low pass at 113 m above sea level, but there is a steep slope from the eastern trailhead to the pass. The southern side is a gentle trail and part-way down, there is a bridge, Kumagaya-bashi, made entirely of cypress, which was restored when the route was registered as World Heritage.

Hajikami-toge Pass

Hajikami-toge Pass is 147 m above sea level. If you climb up from Hajikami Sakura-hiroba, you proceed alongside a creek that runs next to Miyagawa daini hydroelectric power station. You reach the pass after climbing a meandering steep slope with short switchbacks for about 1 km. Hajikami-toge Pass is known



for having some of the best views on the Iseji. From the western side of the pass, the trail splits into the World Heritage-listed Edo-michi and the wide and gentle Meiji-michi. The routes rejoin at Ofuna-bashi Bridge and the trail enters Umaze.

Miyama Local Museum

Built in 1910 as a wedding reception venue for foresters, the building was subsequently used as a holiday house. It is currently registered as a National Tangible Cultural Property. Inside are displayed everyday items, documents and other objects that tell the history of Miyama.

Aiga

Aiga is located at the back of Owase Bay on a ria coast and has Shiraishiko, a brackish lake formed by the accumulation of sediment between Funatsu-gawa River and Choshi-gawa River. A unique environment has developed in Shiraishiko that is perfect for raising Watarikaki oysters, a local specialty. If you have walked from Furusato, it is now about 17 km, so you should stay a night before crossing Magose-toge Pass.



Magose-toge Pass

At 325 m above sea level, this is one of the most popular passes on the Iseji. From the northern trailhead, it is a steep uphill slope of about 1.6 km to the pass. Solid cobblestones continue to the pass, protecting the Kodo from erosion caused by the large amount of rain that falls in the area.

Mt. Tengurasan

522 m above sea level, hikers walk a steep ridge road from Magose-toge Pass. This was a training site for mountain ascetics and you can get a panoramic view of Owase from the huge Tengu-iwa rock. It is about 30 minutes one-way from Magose-toge Pass.

Mt. Binshiyama

599 m above sea level, Mt. Binshiyama can be accessed in about 1.5 hours one-way to the west of Magose-toge Pass along the ridge line. There is a rock shaped like the back of an elephant, and if you stand on top of this monolith, you feel like you are standing on top of the world.

Owase

Owase is a port town located at the center of the Iseji. It prospered during the Edo Period due to the production of Owase cypress timber, as a harbor for ships sheltering from the wind and also as a place of accommodation for pilgrims on the Kumano Kodo. The seafood served fresh at local restaurants is popular.

Yakiyama-goe

This is the trail that links Owase with the small fishing village of Mikisato. The pass is 647 m above sea level and was known in the past as the most difficult trail in the west of Japan. It is the most difficult pass on the Iseji, and bandits and wolves came out to haunt pilgrims and make them suffer. There are many pilgrims gravestones along the trail, marking the graves of pilgrims who passed away during their trip.



Yakiyama Choseki Stone

Placed at regular intervals of 1 cho (about 109 m) up to the pass are Jizo statues that watch quietly over and protect pilgrims. Originally there were 50, but only 35 remain now. They are said to have been put there in the Azuchi-Momoyama Period.

Sakura-no-Mori hiroba

Sakura-no-Mori Hiroba is an open area near the top of Mt. Yakiyama where you can enjoy the views. If the weather is good, you can see from Shima to Nachisan.

Mikisato

Mikisato has a beautiful beach and bustles with beachgoers in summer. In the Honen-ji area, which is slightly elevated, a nostalgic townscape remains.

Miki-toge Pass

This is a pass 120 m above sea level at the end of the Yokonemichi from Mikisato. At the lookout point a little way up, you can see Kata Bay and the settlement of Mikiura on the opposite shore.



Hago-toge Pass

At 140 m above sea level, this pass is between Miki-toge Pass and the settlement of Kata. Although it is low, you climb a steep slope to the pass. Some of the largest shishigaki on the Iseji remain here.

Asuka-jinja

There is a large camphor tree said to be more than 1,000 years old on the grounds of Asuka-jinja, and it has a sacred forest where academically important plants grow. There was a wharf here in the Edo Period, which pilgrims are thought to have used for round-trips with Mikisato.



Sone Jiro-zaka Taro-zaka

At 305 m above sea level, this is a steep trail that crosses Hobo-toge Pass. In the old days, this pass was the border between the territories of Shima Province and Kii Province. It is said that the origins of the name lie in the words "jiryō," meaning our territory, and "taryō," meaning another's territory, which were corrupted into the common Japanese boys' names "Jiro" and "Taro." There are many highlights along the way, including the remains of a quarry where stone used in the construction of Edo Castle was taken, Kujira-ishi Rock, which looks like a whale, and Tatemigaoka, which looks out over the beautiful Kumano-nada Sea. In addition, there are the remains of the Hoji-chaya tea house at the pass, whose name is said to derive from the hoji signposts that indicated the border between territories.

Nigishima-toge Pass

Nigishima-toge Pass is 240 m above sea level and reached by climbing a mossy, cobblestone trail from the small fishing village of Nigishima. A Christian lantern and pilgrims gravestones stand around the ichirizuka milestone remains above the village.

Okamizaka-toge Pass

Okamizaka-toge Pass is 290 m above sea level, located across the valley from Nigishima-toge Pass. As for the origin of its name, there is a theory that this was the place where the kami, or gods, of Ise and Kumano would meet, and a theory that it was so named because this was a place where okami, or wolves, appeared.

Atashika

Atashika has a wide beach with striking clear blue water and white sand. It is a large settlement with a train station, supermarkets and accommodation facilities. From here, it is about 10 km to Hana-no-Iwaya.

Hadasu-no-Michi

Cobblestones said to remain from the Kamakura Period remain on Hadasu-no-Michi, each one large and heavy. In the settlement of Hadasu is a shrine where large camphor trees grow thickly known as Jofuku-no-Miya. It is said that in ancient times, Jofuku came here from China in search of the elixir of life, and transferred technologies including pottery.



Obuki-toge Pass

A shishigaki built in the Edo Period remains near this pass at 205 m above sea level, and the Obuki-chaya tea house was run here until about 1950. Rare on the Kumano Kodo, there is a bamboo forest here.

Daikan Shishigaki-michi

This is a ridge trail that leads to the Kannon-michi to the north from Obuki-toge Pass. It has a lookout point with views of Matsumoto-toge Pass and Shichirimihama, and a large shishigaki wall.

Kannon-michi

This is the trail that heads to Odomari from Hadasu, and the Tomari Kannon statue that was at Seisui-ji is thought to be the origin of its name. Seisui-ji Temple was closed in 1964 and the statue was moved to Seitai-ji at the foot of the mountain. 33 Kannon statues line the trail climbed from the foot of the mountain. This trail was also used along with Obuki-toge Pass in the Edo Period.

Matsumoto-toge Pass

In addition to the ease of climbing to 135 m above sea level, beautiful cobblestones remain on this pass and you can also get a panoramic view of Shichirimihama from the lookout point so this is one of the most popular passes on the Iseji. A large 1.8 m tall Jizo statue stands at the pass. It is said that a hunter mistook it for a monster and shot it. This pass was known in the Edo Period as Kinomoto-toge Pass.



Kumanoshi

Kumano is at the border between the central and southern areas of the Iseji and is where the Hongudo, the mountain route to Kumano Hongu Taisha, and the Hamakaido, the coastal route to Kumano Hayatama Taisha, separate. Kumano is rich in tourism resources, including Shichirimihama, the scenic Onigajo, Shishiwa, Hana-no-Iwaya and Maruyama Senmaida. As agriculture and fishing flourish here, please make sure to try cuisine made using local produce.



step1 Go to an AR spot

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step2 Read the QR code

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step3 Enjoy the AR content

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* There are also characters whose designs change with the seasons!

See here for details



KUMANO KODO



ISEJI
(North)



ISEJI
(Central)



ISEJI
(South)



NAKAHECHI



KOHECHI



OHECHI

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