

World Heritage

Kumano Kodo Iseji

English
Take free

熊野古道 伊勢路

*—Pilgrimage to Holy Sanctuaries
through the Paths of Prayer*

Mie Prefecture



Japan.
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Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range

There are three sacred sites, namely the “Kumano Sanzan (Three Grand Shrines of Kumano),” “Koyasan” and “Yoshino and Omine,” in the Kii Mountain Range located roughly in the center of Japan, and different types of religion, such as Shinto based on nature worship, Buddhism introduced from China and developed in a unique way in Japan and Shugendo spread as a mixture of Shinto and Buddhism, have been fostered there.

In July 2004, the three sacred sites and the pilgrimage routes connecting them as well as their traditional cultures developed in harmony between nature and human beings over time were finally recognized by UNESCO as shared properties of all humankind and registered on its World Heritage List as “Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range.”



Introduction of the Kumano Kodo Iseji



- 1 Meki-toge Pass
- 2 Misesaka-toge Pass
- 3 Nisaka-toge Pass
- 4 Tsuzurato-toge Pass
- 5 Ikkoku-toge Pass, Hirakata-toge Pass and Kumagaya-michi
- 6 Hajikami-toge Pass
- 7 Magose-toge Pass (on page 4)
- 8 Yakiyama-goe
- 9 Miki-toge Pass and Hago-toge Pass
- 10 Sone Jiro-zaka Taro-zaka
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- 12 Hadasu-no-Michi
- 13 Obuki-toge Pass
- 14 Kannon-michi
- 15 Matsumoto-toge Pass (on page 5)
- 16 Yokogaki-toge Pass
- 17 Fuden-toge Pass
- 18 Tori-toge Pass
- 19 Hamakaido
- 20 Kumano-gawa River

※Note: not all the passes, paths, etc. shown here are registered as UNESCO World Heritage sites.



“Kumano Kodo” as the Paths of Prayer that lead to Kumano Sanzan

Kumano Sanzan, which is known as one of the sacred sites in the Kii Mountain Range, consists of three grand shrines of Kumano, namely “Kumano Hongu Taisha” “Kumano Hayatama Taisha” and “Kumano Nachi Taisha” The origins of those shrines have something to do with nature worship respectively, but they came to enshrine the same deities called “Kumano Sansho Gongen,” which have been widely venerated by the public. Since ancient times, many people have made a pilgrimage to Kumano Sanzan from all over Japan, and the major pilgrimage routes, such as the “Nakahechi” from Tanabe to those shrines (through mountains), the “Ohechi” along the coast, the “Kohechi” connecting Koyasan and those shrines and the “Iseji” from Ise Jingu to those shrines, have been gradually formed as a result. The pilgrimage routes connecting those shrines and many different places are generally known as the “Kumano Kodo.”

“Kumano Kodo Iseji” as the Path to Connect the Two Major Sacred Sites

The “Kumano Kodo Iseji” is the path to connect Kumano Sanzan (Three Grand Shrines of Kumano) and Ise Jingu that is a very special sacred site for Japanese people. As the old proverb “Seven times to Ise, three times to Kumano” says, people in the Edo Period (1603 to 1868) generally had a strong desire to visit them in their lifetime. It is said that pilgrims in pilgrimage costume crossed a lot of steep mountains to get to Kumano to give a prayer to the deities enshrined there after they had visited Ise Jingu. Today, you can still enjoy the traditional landscapes and feel the rich history and culture of each area along the “Kumano Kodo Iseji”



Kumano Hongu Taisha



Kumano Hayatama Taisha



Kumano Nachi Taisha

Magose-toge Pass

Location: Kihoku Town and Owase City, Mie Prefecture

Walking route: approx. 7 km (approx. 3 hours on foot)

The Magose-toge Pass is a very popular site on the Iseji since it is relatively easy to cross. Its stone-paved path and forest of hinoki (Japanese cypress) are definitely worth seeing because they are said to be the most beautiful part of the Kumano Kodo.

Must-See Sites



1 Yonaki Jizo

"Jizo" is a guardian deity of children. The statue of Jizo enshrined here is believed to have mystical power to prevent children from crying at night.



2 Stone-paved path

The path here is paved with heavy natural stones as if they were lying over one another.



3 Magose Fudosen statue

This small temple, which enshrines the Buddhist deity "Fudo Myo-o" and the founder of Shugendo "En-no-Gyoja," is situated right by a beautiful waterfall with a height of about 20 meters.



Forest of Owase Hinoki (one of the Three Most Beautiful Artificial Forests in Japan)

The forest of Owase Hinoki (Japanese cypress in Owase) looks magical with a thick bunch of tall dark-green trees and sunlight filtering through their leaves.



Scenic Sites



A Mt. Tengurasan

(30 minutes from the Magose-toge Pass)

Climbing the ladder on the top of the mountain, you can fully enjoy a fantastic scenery from the huge rock that is located on the top of the mountain and looks like the back of an elephant.



B Mt. Binshiyama

(120 minutes from the Magose-toge Pass)

You can fully enjoy fantastic scenery from the huge rock that is located on the top of the mountain and looks like the back of an elephant!

Tourist Sites Around



Choshi-gawa River and Uotobikei Ravine

The Choshi-gawa River is a river with remarkably clear water. The Uotobikei Ravine, which has a natural stone slide with a height of 3 meters, is located upstream of the river.



Camp inn Miyama

Camp inn Miyama is a camping site situated along the Choshi-gawa River. You can enjoy a barbecue, play at the riverside and refresh yourself in the middle of nature!



Owase Fish Market "Ototo"

This fish market sells fresh fish at reasonable prices! You can see different types of fish from day to day. There are also a restaurant and a local product booth in the market.



Matsumoto-toge Pass

Location: Kumano City, Mie Prefecture

Walking route: approx. 5 km (approx. 2 hours on foot)

It is easy even for beginners of mountain climbing to cross the Matsumoto-toge Pass since it is located at a relatively low altitude. You can surely enjoy walking along the pass with a beautiful stone-paved path surrounded by bamboo forest.

Must-See Sites



1 Stone-paved path Constructed in the Edo Period

This stair-like stone-paved path was constructed back in the Edo Period (1603 to 1868), and its sides are reinforced with well-built stone walls.



2 Jizo of the Matsumoto-toge Pass

According to legend, this statue of Jizo, a guardian deity of children, was wrongly shot by a sharp shooter because he mistook it for a specter. You can still see a scar in the lower left part of the statue.



3 Shishiwa

The Shishiwa (literally "Lion Rock") is a huge uniquely-shaped rock with a height of 25 meters. It looks like a lion roaring at the Kumano Sea.



4 Hana-no-Iwaya Shrine

Hana-no-Iwaya Shrine is the tomb of Izanami-no-Mikoto known as the mother of Japanese deities. It is also said to be the oldest Shinto shrine in Japan.

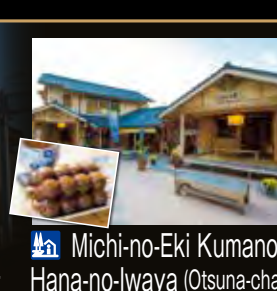


Tourist Sites Around



Kumano City Tourist Information Center

In addition to tourist information, rental bicycle and luggage storage are also available.



Michi-no-Eki Kumano Hana-no-Iwaya (Otsuna-chaya)

Otsuna-chaya is a shopping and restaurant complex that offers Hana-no-Iwaya-related products as well as delicious local specialties. You can also visit the Hana-no-Iwaya shrine Museum located on the same site.

Scenic Sites



A Onigajo

Onigajo (literally "Demon's Castle"), which extends for a distance of about 1.2 kilometers along the coast, consists of uniquely-shaped rocks created by wave erosion and rapid ground uplift.



B Oni-no-Miharashidai Lookout

It takes about 35 minutes from the Matsumoto-toge Pass to this lookout, where you can fully enjoy a panoramic view of the Kumano Sea for refreshment.

Besides the Magose-toge Pass and Matsumoto-toge Pass, there are also many other recommended sites on the Kumano Kodo Iseji. Please be sure to visit them as well.



Yakiyama-goe

(Course ⑧ on page 2)

Tsuzurato-toge Pass

(Course ④ on page 2)

— Information to Support Your Trip —



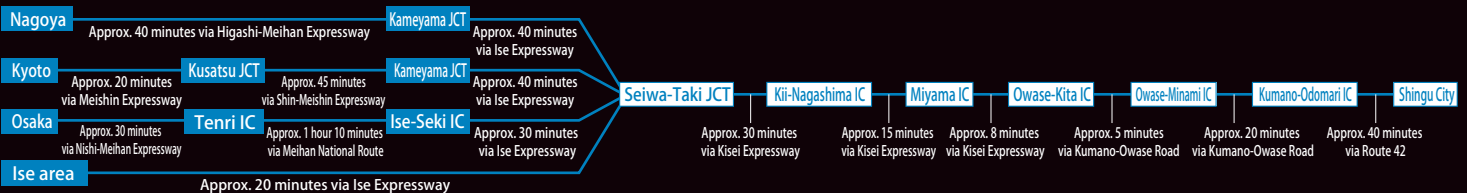
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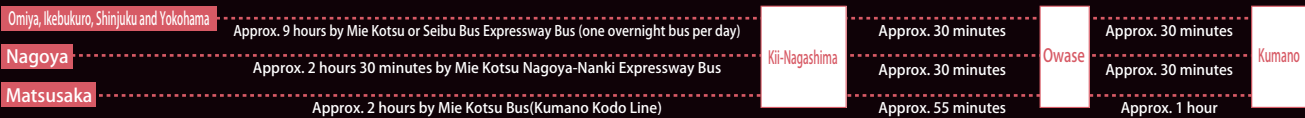
Access by Train



Access by Car



Access by Bus



Access by Air



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