

# KUMANO TRAVEL

Official Community Reservation System

[www.kumano-travel.com](http://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

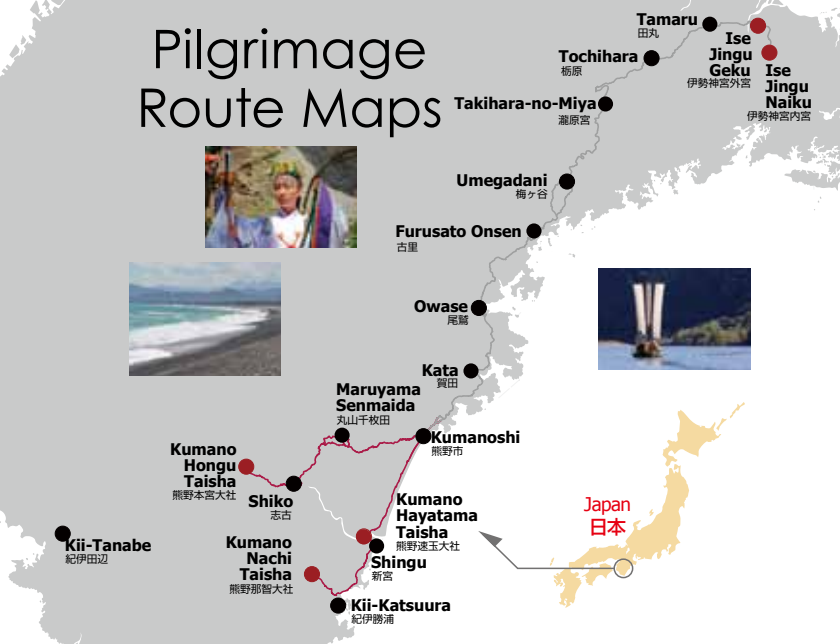
<b>Hello</b> ..... こんにちは	<b>Goodbye</b> ..... さようなら
<b>Thank you</b> ..... ありがとう	<b>Excuse me</b> ..... すみません
<b>Do you speak English?</b> .....	Eigo ga hanasemasu ka?
	英語が話せますか?
<b>I don't understand. / I don't know</b> .....	わかりません
<b>I can't speak Japanese</b> .....	日本語はできません
<b>Is it OK to take a photo?</b> .....	Shasin o totte mo ii desu ka?
	写真を撮ってもいいですか?
<b>Yes</b> ..... はい	<b>No</b> ..... いいえ
<b>Would you please show me on this map where I am right now?</b> .....	Kono chizu de genzaichi o oshiete kudasai.
	この地図で現在地を教えてください
<b>Where is the xxxx?</b> .....	xxxxはどこですか?
<b>Bus stop</b> ..... バス停	<b>Trailhead</b> ..... 登山口
	<b>Toilet</b> ..... お手洗い/トイレ
<b>Help me!</b> ..... たすけて!	<b>I need a doctor</b> ..... 医者が必要です

03/2024 printed・発行

# KUMANO KODO

ISEJI (South)

## Pilgrimage Route Maps



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# 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.

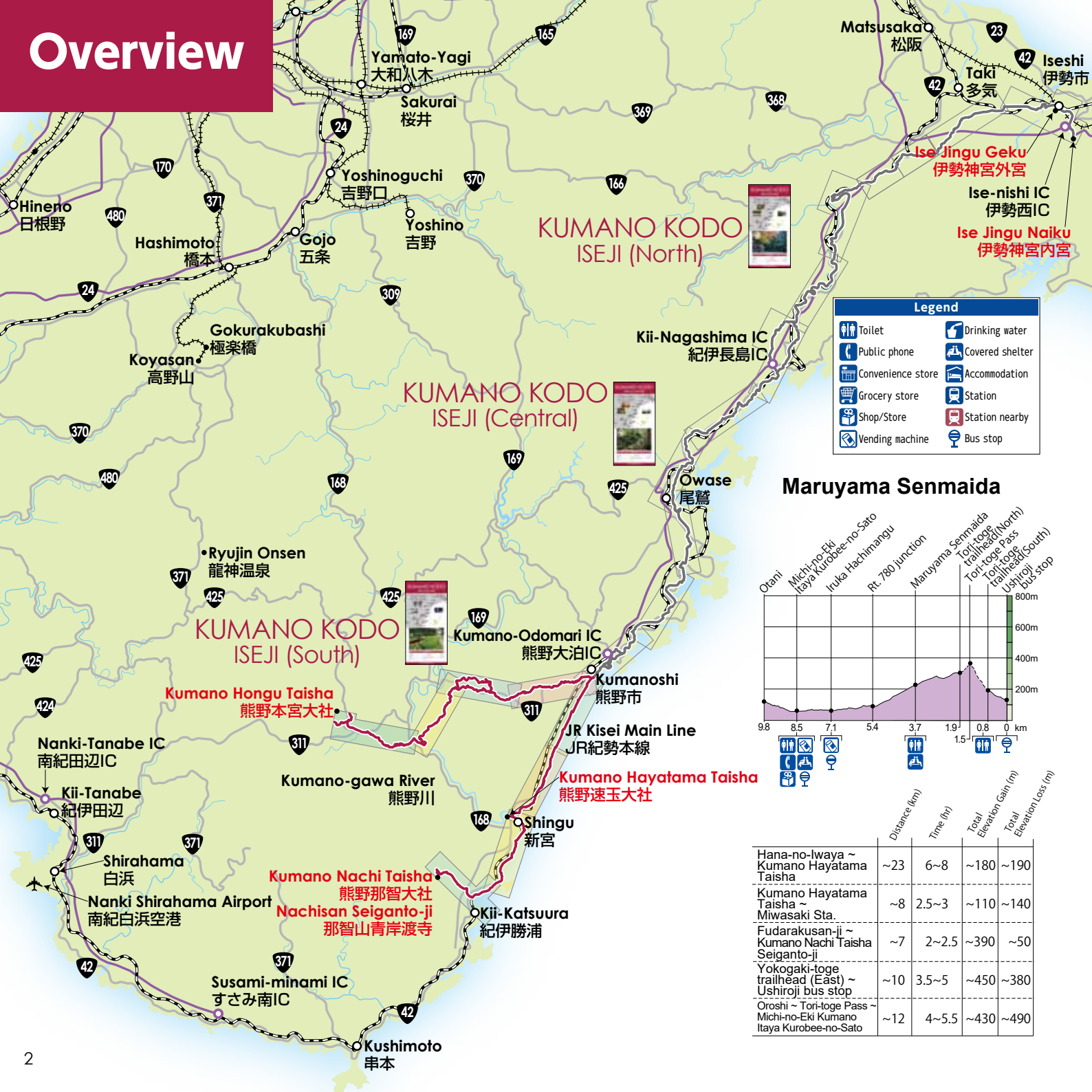


Kumano Nachi Taisha is built on a mountain side facing the inspiring Nachi water fall, which is the tallest in Japan and believed to be a deity.

## Iseji Eastern Route

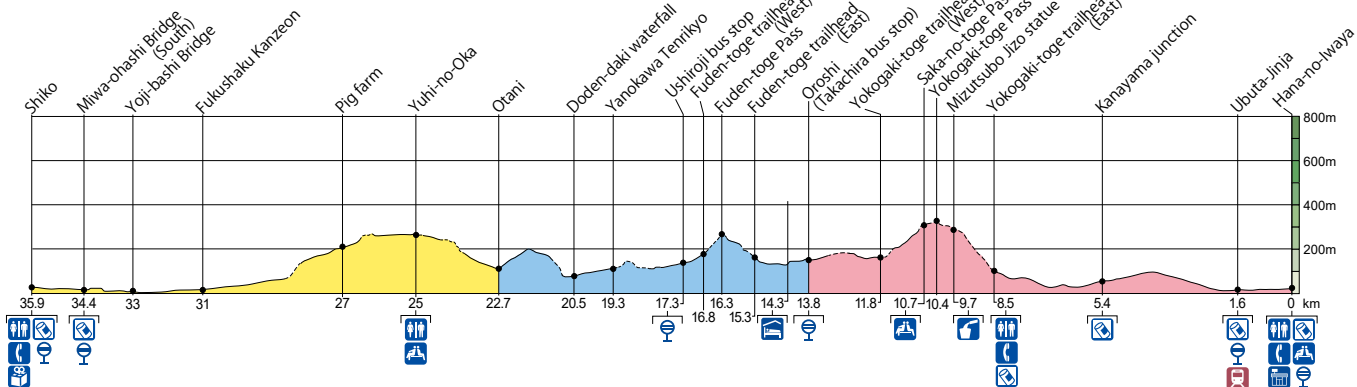
The Iseji route runs along the east coast of the Kii Peninsula between Ise Jingu and the Kumano Sanzan. It was extremely popular in the Edo period (1603-1868) with the increase of pilgrims to the Ise. After paying homage, devotees would continue on the Iseji to Kumano. This route has a diversity of mountain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

# Overview

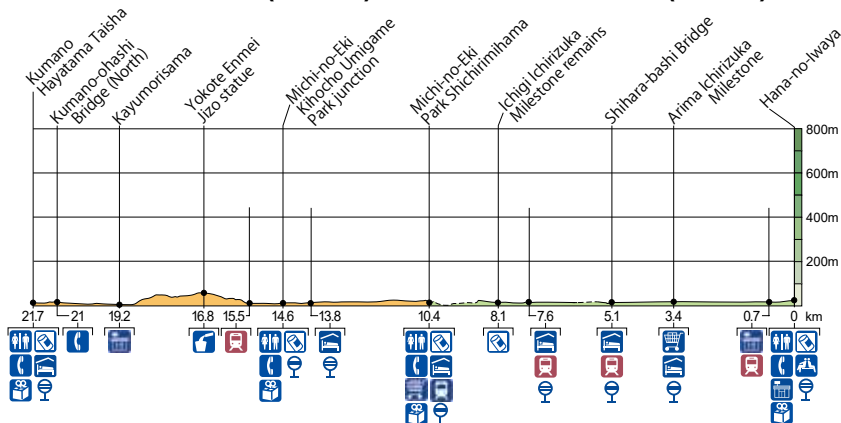




## Hongudo



## Hamakaido (South)

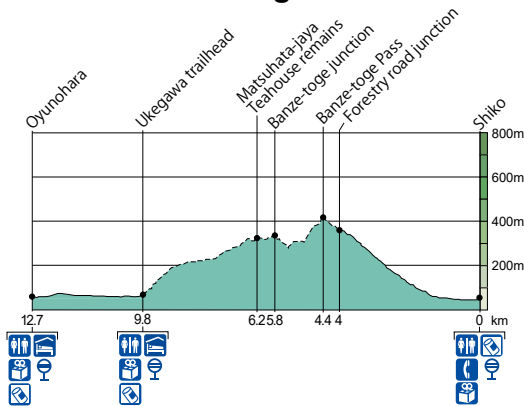


## Hamakaido (North)

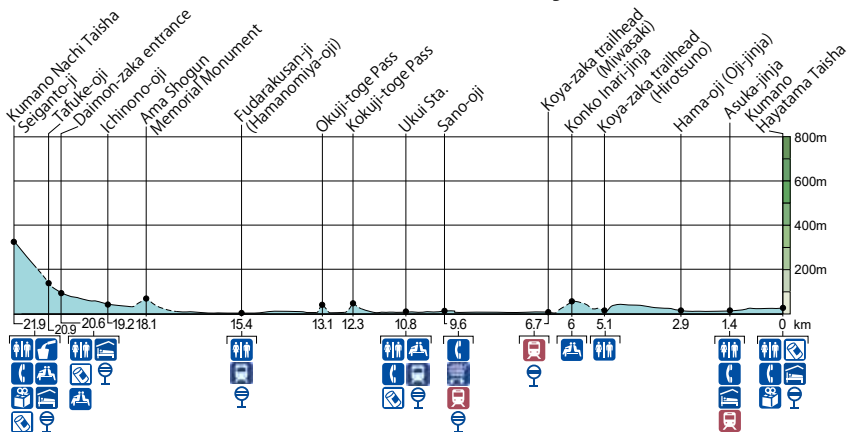
----- Unpaved trail  
—— Paved trail

	Distance (km)	Time (hr)	Total Elevation Gain (m)	Total Elevation Loss (m)	
Hamakaido (North)	~11	3~4	~60	~20	P.6~7
Hamakaido (South)	~12	3~4	~120	~130	P.8~9
Kumano Nachi Taisha~Kumano Hayatama Taisha	~22	6~7.5	~620	~310	P.12~15
Yokogaki-toge Pass	~14	5~6	~450	~320	P.18~19
Fuden-toge Pass	~9	3~4	~310	~330	P.20~21
Hongudo	~14	3.5~4.5	~230	~340	P.22~23
Maruyama Senmaida	~10	3~4	~350	~360	P.20~21
Banze-toge Pass	~13	3.5~4.5	~480	~490	P.24~25

## Banze-toge Pass



## Kumano Nachi Taisha~Kumano Hayatama Taisha





# 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)



## 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.



## 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.



## Kumano City Tourist Information Center

Next to the Kumanoshi train station.

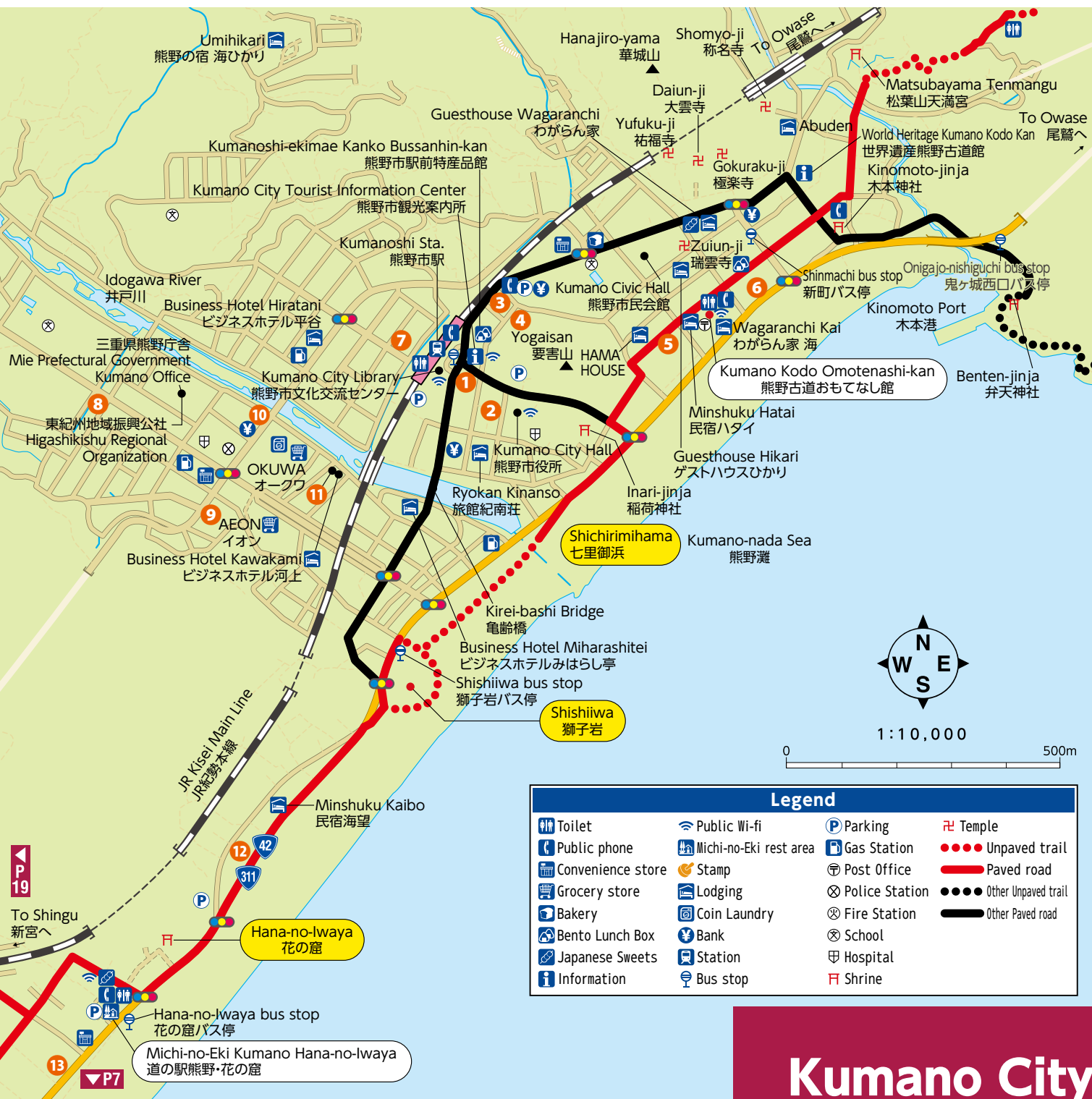
Hours: 9:00-17:00

Open year-round



## Restaurant Guide

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



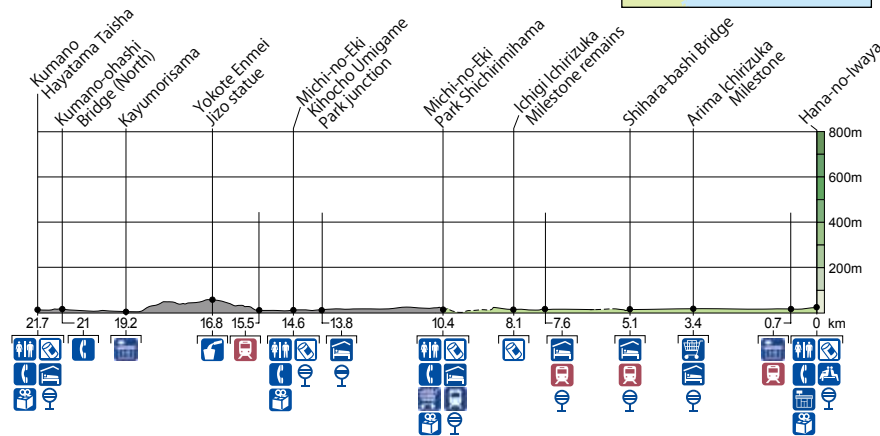
# Hamakaido (North) (Atawa~Hana-no-Iwaya)

## 浜街道(北)(阿田和~花の窟)



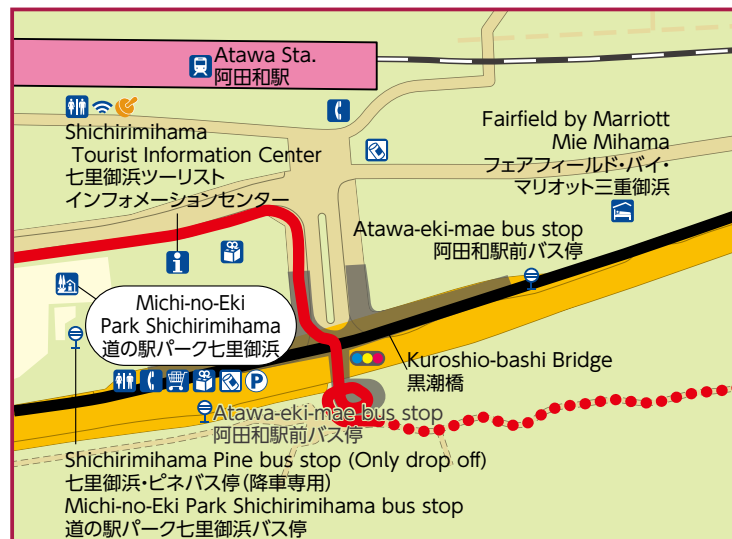
Distance (km) : ~11  
Time (hr) : 3~4  
Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~60  
Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~70

----- Unpaved trail  
—— Paved trail





# Atawa



# Shin-Midori-bashi Bridge (North)



# Hamakaido (South)

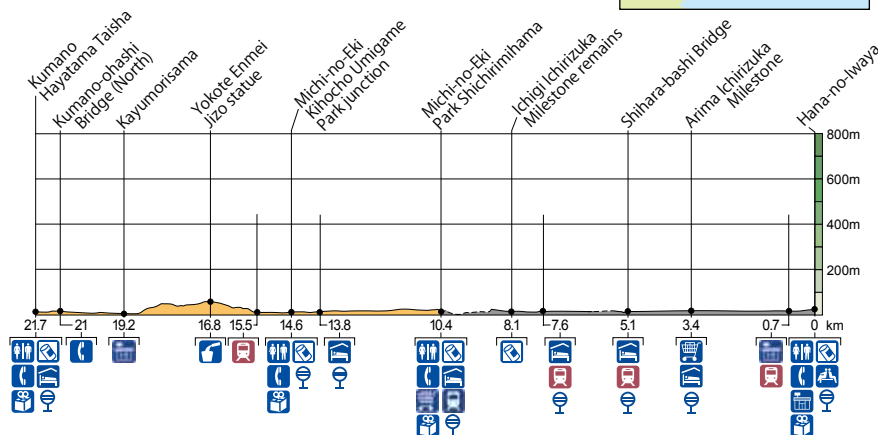
## (Kumano Hayatama Taisha~Atawa)

浜街道(南)(熊野速玉大社~阿田和)



Distance (km) : ~12  
Time (hr) : 3~4  
Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~120  
Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~130

----- Unpaved trail  
—— Paved trail



## Kumano Hayatama Taisha (East)



## Ida





# Shingu Kumano Kodo Hub

Shingu is the town on the west side of the Kumano-gawa river and the site of Kumano Hayatama Taisha and Kamikura-jinja. The Iseji and Nakahechi routes meet here.

Access: JR trains run daily from Osaka (~4 hrs) and Nagoya (3.5 hrs).

## Kumano Hayatama Taisha

Kumano Hayatama Taisha is one of the three Grand Shrines of Kumano. The vermillion colored pavilions stand-out against the green backdrop of the shrine grove.

The ancient 800-year-old Nagi-no-Ki tree (Podocarpus nagi) is one of sacred trees onsite. According to local legend, during the 1159 reconstruction, it was planted as a donation by Taira-no-Shigemori, a powerful feudal lord. The leaves were used as an amulet. They are difficult to tear crossways like a strong, enduring, unbreakable relationship with the deities. It is a symbol of the Kumano faith. It is said that messages from the deities can be seen in the leaves by devoted believers. Pilgrims would return with a Nagi leaf as proof that they had completed the pilgrimage.



## Gotobiki-iwa, Kamikura-jinja

Halfway up the east side of Mt. Gongen there is a large monolith. It is known as Gotobiki-iwa, and is believed that the Kumano deities first descended here.

Nestled under Gotobiki-iwa is Kamikura-jinja shrine. Perched on the cliff side it offers panoramic views of Shingu city and the Pacific Ocean.

An ancient stone staircase leads from the base of the mountain to Gotobiki-iwa and Kamikura-jinja. The first section has such a steep incline that many people need to use their hands to scramble up.



## Oto Matsuri

The Oto Matsuri 御燈祭 is a fire festival held every year on February 6th. Men of all ages dress in white clothes with a thick straw rope wrapped around their waist.

During the day of the event participants, called noboriko 上り子, only eat white food (white symbolizes purity) and some perform shiogori 潮垢離, a purifying ritual in the ocean, before heading up the steep stone staircase towards a clearing below Gotobiki-iwa (p.31).



Each participant carries a torch which is lit from a sacred fire. As the torches start to burn, the tension rises and finally erupts as the shrine gate bursts open, releasing the fiery dragon to race down the mountain. The sky is illuminated orange as the sacred light reflects off the blooms of rising smoke, carrying their hopes and wishes to heaven.

## Kumano Shingu Tourist Information Center

Hours: 9:00~17:00 (Open year-round)

### Restaurant Guide

	Local seafood	Izakaya pub	Full meals	Sushi	Udon&Soba noodles
1 Shikaroku 鹿六					0735-22-2035 11:00 ~ 14:30 17:00 ~ 20:30 定休 (月) * 祝日・月曜時、翌火曜。 Closed on Mon.
2 Mehari-ya めはりや					0735-21-1238 11:00 ~ 22:00 定休 (水) Closed on Wed.
3 Takamatsu Udon 高松					0735-22-3438 18:00 ~ 2:00 定休 (水) Closed on Wed.
4 Manso 万惣					0735-22-3195 11:00 ~ 14:30 17:00 ~ 20:00 定休 (木) Closed on Thu.
5 Toho-jaya 東宝茶屋					0735-22-2843 11:30 ~ 14:00 17:00 ~ 22:00 不定休 Closed on Tue.
6 Ile de France イル・ド・フランス					0735-22-2365 11:30 ~ 13:00 17:30 ~ 20:00 定休 (月) Closed on Mon.
7 Nagura 魚群					0735-23-0623 17:30 ~ 22:30 定休 (月) Closed on Mon.
8 Masa-ya まさ家					0735-21-6826 11:00 ~ 21:00 定休 (木) * 祝日以外 Closed on Thu.
9 Tensui 天酔					0735-21-3175 11:00 ~ 14:00 17:00 ~ 22:00 不定休 Variable holidays.
10 KAIHAMI CARNE KAIHAMI CARNE					0735-23-0038 11:30 ~ 13:30 18:00 ~ 21:00 定休 (日月) Closed on Sun. & Mon.
11 Kinoshita きのした					0735-22-2069 17:30 ~ 22:00 定休 (木) Closed on Thu.
12 Jofuku-zushi 徐福寿司					0735-23-1313 10:00 ~ 17:00 定休 (木) Closed on Thu.
13 Chobo-ya ちょぼや					0735-21-9071 17:30 ~ 23:00 定休 (日) * 祝日・月曜時、翌月曜。 Closed on Sun.
14 Kiku きく					0735-22-8643 17:30 ~ 22:00 定休 (日) * 祝日不定休 Closed on Sun.
15 Shinraku 心楽					0735-23-9111 17:30 ~ 1:00 定休 (日) * 祝日営業 Closed on Sun.
16 Hige 焼肉ひげ					0735-21-3488 11:30 ~ 14:00 17:00 ~ 22:00 定休 (火) Closed on Tue.

# Shingu



# Kokuji-toge Pass~Kumano Hayatama Taisha

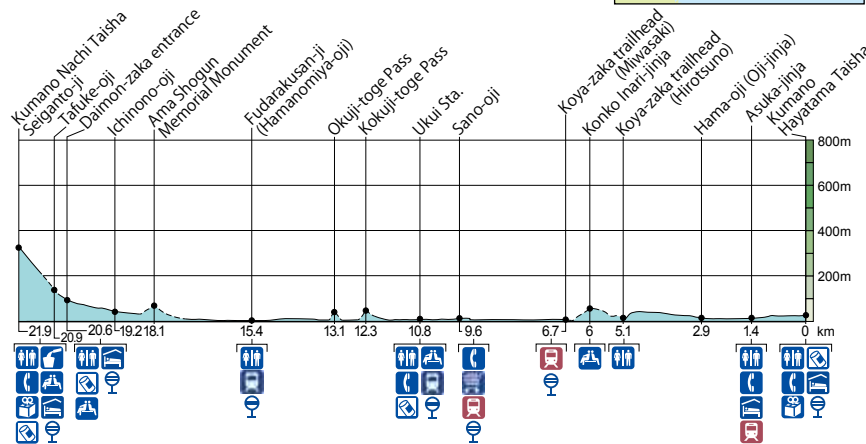
## 小刀子峠~熊野速玉大社



Kumano Nachi Taisha ~  
Kumano Hayatama Taisha

Distance (km) : ~22  
Time (hr) : 6.5~7  
Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~620  
Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~310

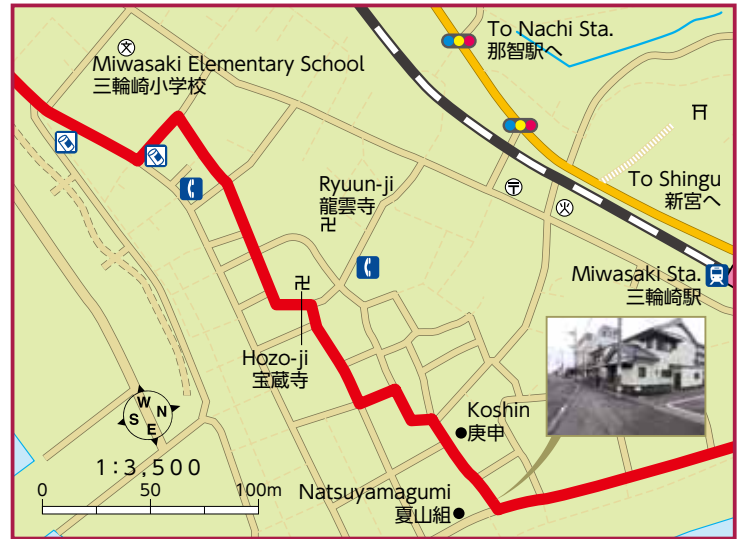
----- Unpaved trail  
—— Paved trail





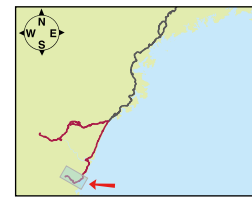
# Miwasaki

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	Oji shrine	Station	Temple
Vending machine	Waymarkers	Bus stop	Unpaved trail
Drinking water	<b>1:000 S:000</b>	Parking	Paved road
Information	I=Distance (km) to Ise S=Distance (km) to Shingu	Post Office	Other Unpaved trail
			Other Paved road



# Nachisan~Kokuji-toge Pass

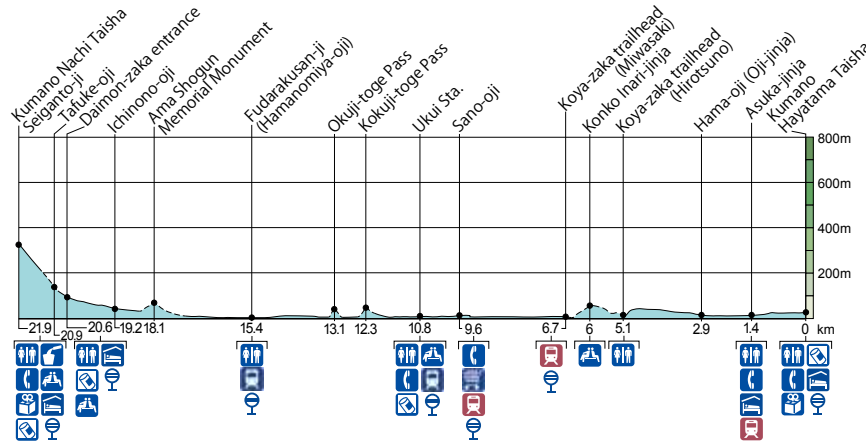
那智山~小獅子峠



Kumano Nachi Taisha ~  
Kumano Hayatama Taisha

Distance (km) : ~22  
Time (hr) : 6.5~7  
Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~620  
Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~310

----- Unpaved trail  
—— Paved trail





Legend		
	Public phone	Convenience store
	Grocery store	Shop/Store
	Vending machine	Drinking water
	Information	Public Wi-fi
	View point	
	Michi-no-Eki rest area	Oji shrine
	Stamp	Accommodation
	Camping	Onsen (Hot spring)
	Station	Bus stop
	Parking	

## Nachisan





# Katsuura Onsen Fishing Port

Katsuura is a seaside village offering glimpses of local life on the edge of the mountainous Kii peninsula where a local fishing port and hot spring resort exist side-by-side.

Access: JR trains run daily from Osaka (~3 hrs, 45 min) and Nagoya (~3 hrs, 45 min).

## Onsen

Katsuura is well-known for its hot mineral waters which feed soothing baths at many of the accommodations including Bokido a hot spring in a cave with ocean views, at Hotel Urashima.

There are also hot spring foot baths called Ashiyu scattered throughout town, near the fishing port and in front of the Kii-Katsuura train station, great to immerse your wear feet in.



## Fish Market

Katsuura is a famous fishing port, especially for tuna. In the main harbor is the commercial fish market held in the morning. There is a viewing room overlooking the sales area. Inquire at the information center for details about market tours.

Hours: Open early  
Closed: Saturdays, variable

NOTE: Please respect the market, do not walk amongst the fish as outside footwear can contaminate the site and your presence can disrupt the activities.



## Nachi Blue Beach

At the base of Nachi Bay is Blue Beach Nachi for those looking for some sand. The wide crescent shaped beach is ~2 km north of Kii-Katsuura station.



## Benten-jima Island

Along the Northern edge of the Katsuura peninsula, which faces onto Nachi Bay, are some unique landmarks such as the photogenic Benten-jima, which links to land a low tide. This small pinnacle island is part of the Nanki Kumano Geopark and features a picturesque red Torii gateway at its foot.



## Katsuura Information Center

Hours: 8:30~18:00 (Open year-round)



## Restaurant Guide

	Local seafood	Izakaya pub	Full meals	Sushi	Udon&Soba noodles
1	Gosaku 吾作	0735-52-3878		17:00 ~ 23:00	定休 (日) Closed on Sun.
2	Yuya ゆや	0735-52-5577		11:30 ~ 14:00 17:00 ~ 22:00	定休 (月) Closed on Mon.
3	Hageyama はげやま	0735-52-4828		11:00 ~ 13:00 17:00 ~	定休 (日) Closed on Sun.
4	bodai bodai	0735-52-0039		11:00 ~ 14:00 17:00 ~ 23:00	定休 (火) Closed on Tue.
5	Yamato 大和	0735-52-5738		11:00 ~ 17:00	定休(木) *祝日振替 Closed on Thu.
6	Ichirin いちりん	0735-29-7911		11:00 ~ 13:30 17:00 ~ 21:30	定休 (木) Closed on Thu.
7	Takehara 竹原	0735-52-1134		11:00 ~ 14:00 17:00 ~ 21:00	不定休 Variable holidays
8	Nachi まぐろ三味那智	0735-52-1046		11:30 ~ 21:00	不定休 Variable holidays
9	Katsuragi 桂城	0735-52-1845		11:30 ~ 14:00 17:00 ~ 22:00	定休 (月と第4日) Closed on Mon. & every 4th Sun.
10	Morimotoya 森本屋	0735-52-4578		11:00 ~ 14:00 17:00 ~ 20:00	定休 (第2, 第4火) Closed on every 2nd & 4th Tue.



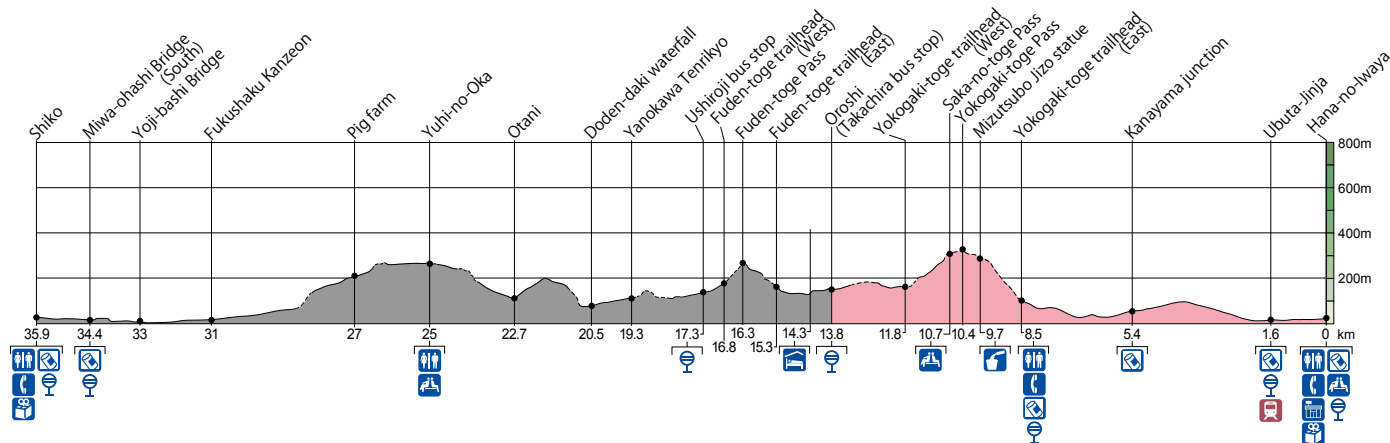
# Yokogaki-toge Pass (Oroshi~Hana-no-Iwaya)

尾呂志~花の窟



Distance (km) : ~14  
Time (hr) : 5~6  
Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~470  
Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~340

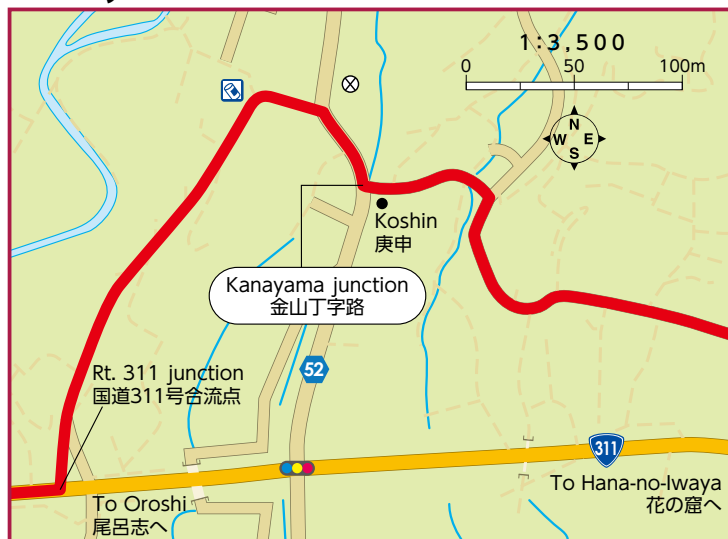
----- Unpaved trail  
—— Paved trail



## Sakamoto



## Kanayama





# Maruyama Senmaida, Fuden-toge Pass

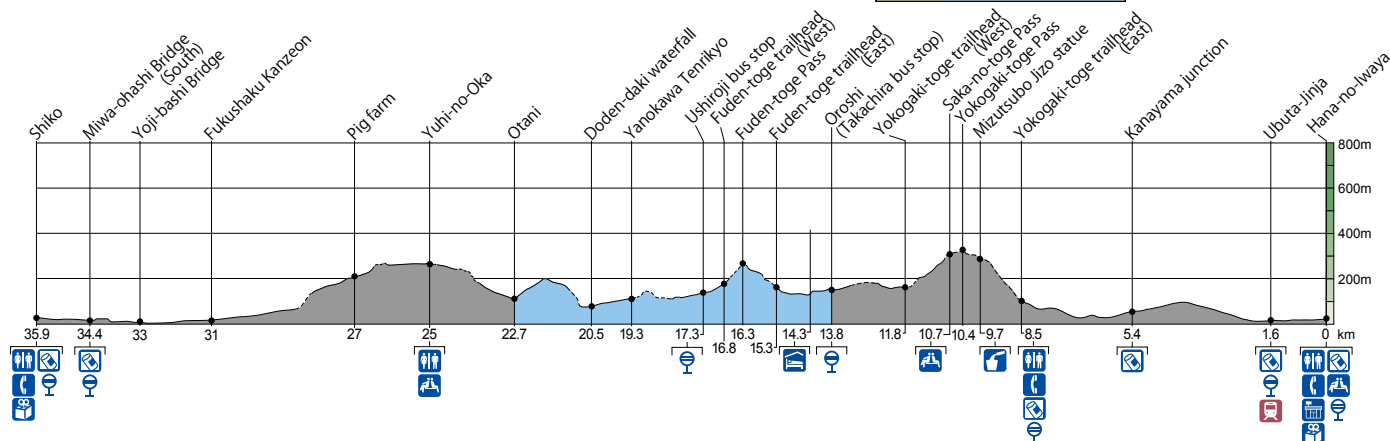
(Seiryuso~Oroshi)

瀬流荘~尾呂志

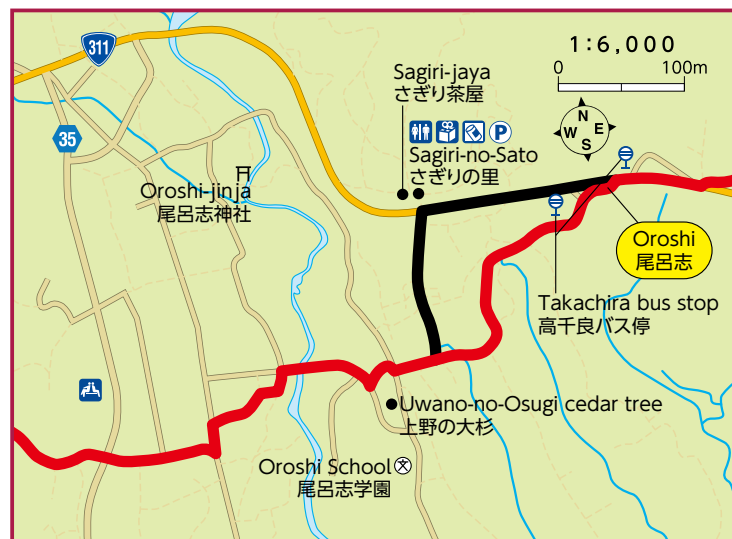


Distance (km) : ~10  
Time (hr) : 3~4  
Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~320  
Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~360

----- Unpaved trail  
—— Paved trail



## Oroshi

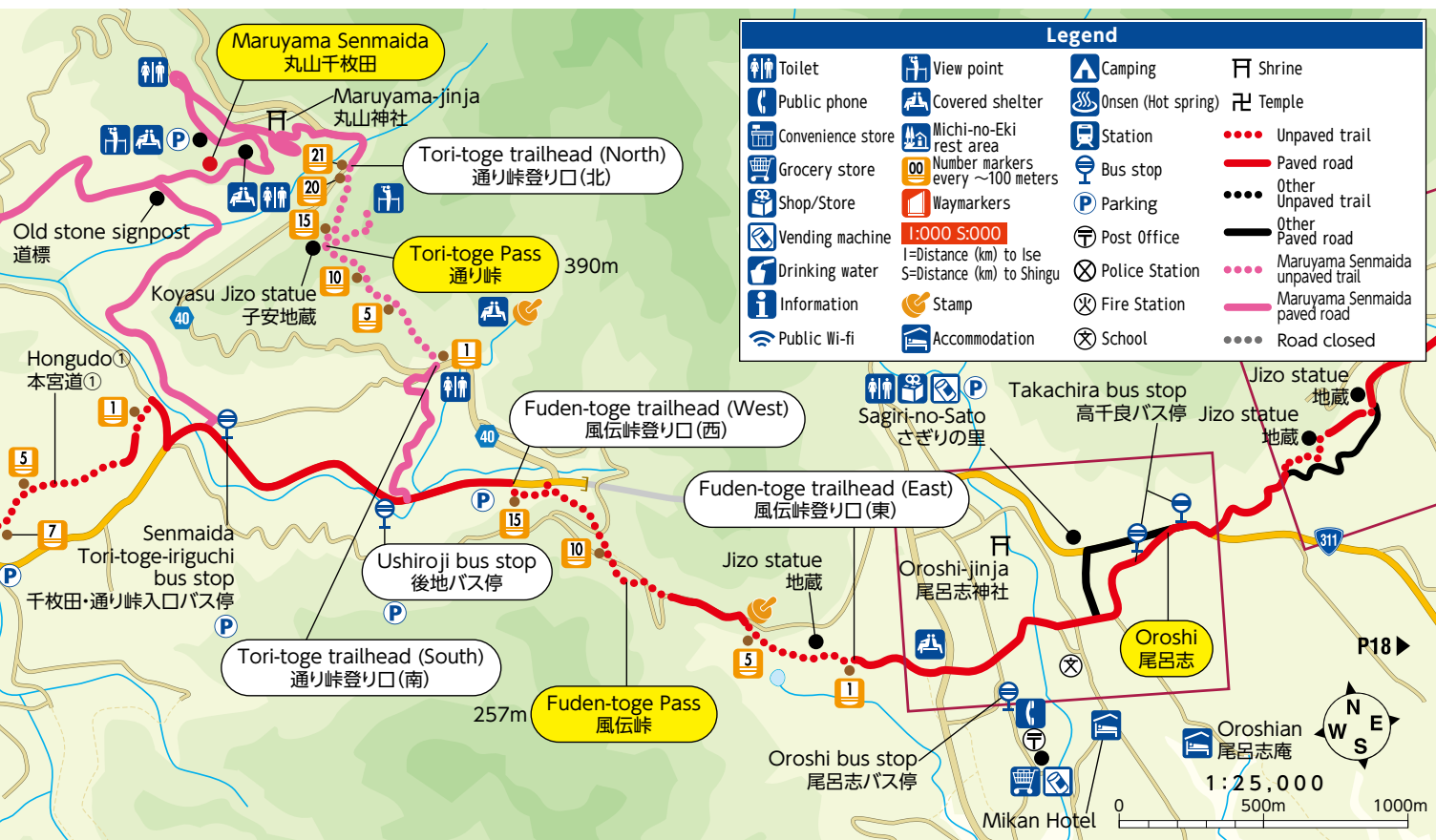
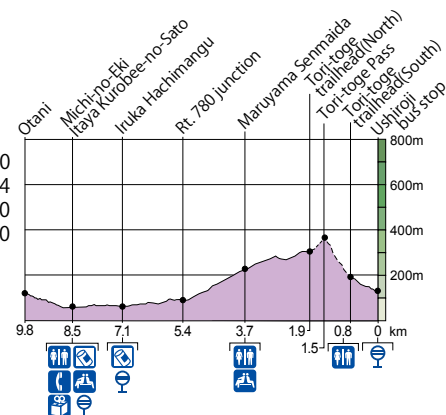


## Maruyama Senmaida

### 丸山千枚田

Distance (km) : ~10  
 Time (hr) : 3~4  
 Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~350  
 Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~360

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



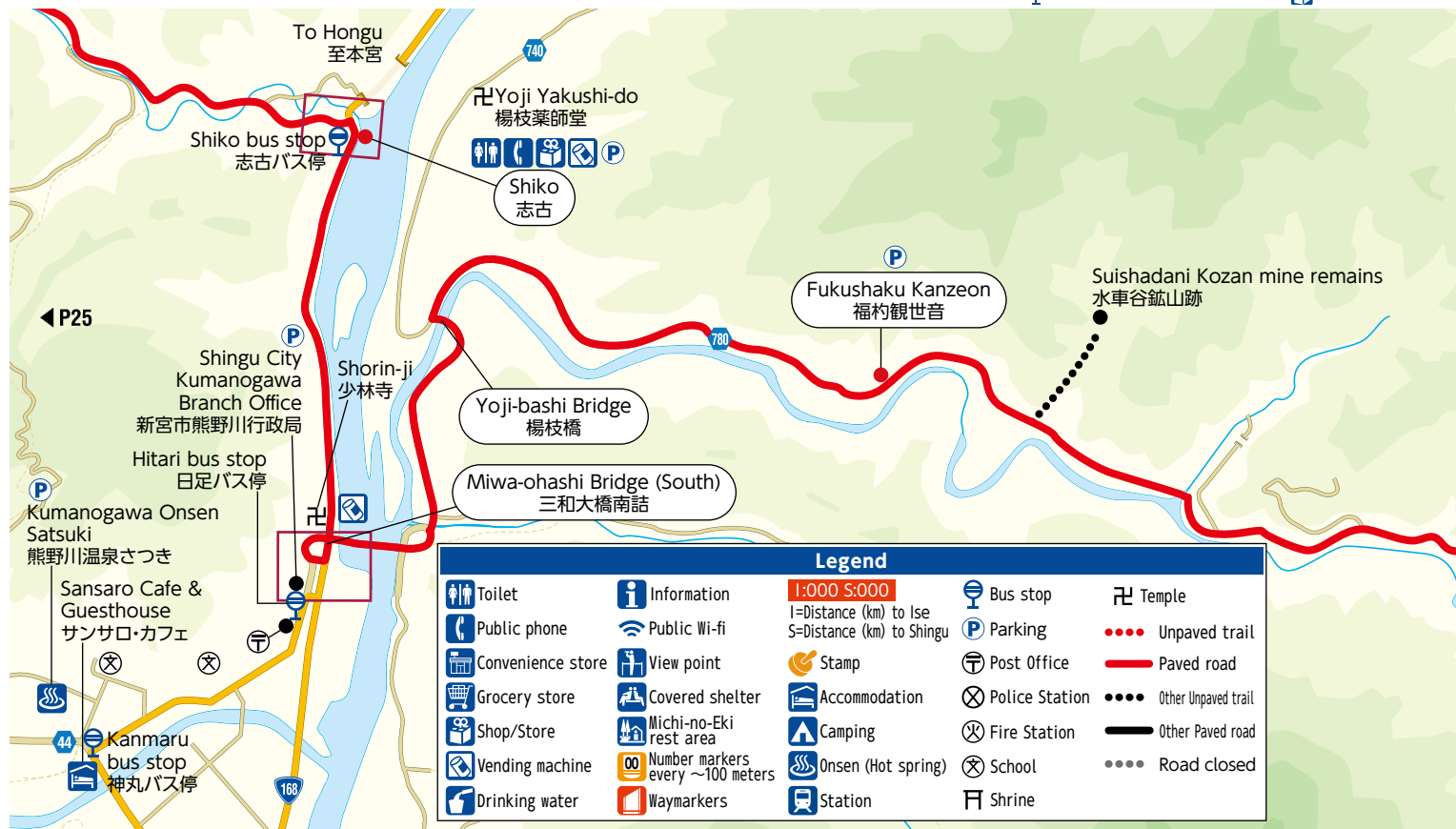
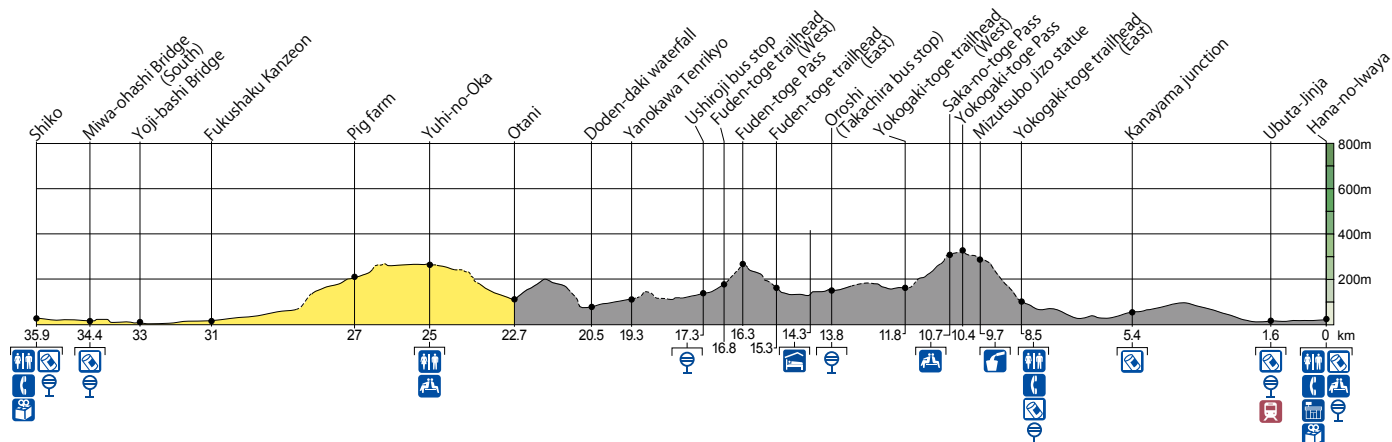
# Hongudo (Shiko~Seiryuso)

志古~瀬流荘



Distance (km) : ~14  
Time (hr) : 3.5~4.5  
Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~230  
Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~340

----- Unpaved trail  
—— Paved trail



## Shiko



## Miwa-obashi Bridge (South)





## Wataze Onsen (Watarase Onsen)

Wataze Onsen (Watarase Onsen) is a hot spring resort with multiple, large open-air hot spring baths.



## Kawayu Onsen

Kawayu Onsen is a geological thermal wonder where hot spring water bubbles to the surface of a crystal-clear river. In the winter the river is transformed into a giant bath called Sennin-buro.



# Banze-toge Pass

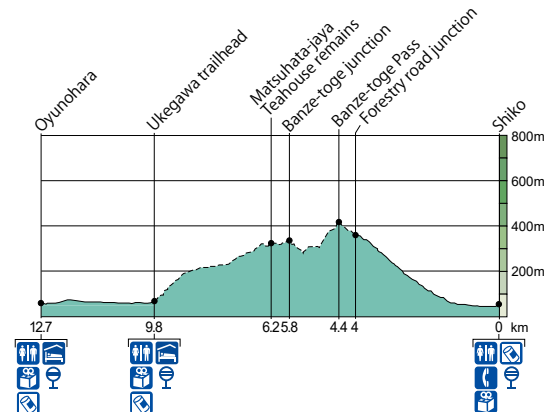
## (Kumano Hongu Taisha~Shiko)

### 熊野本宮大社~志古



Distance (km) : ~13  
 Time (hr) : 3.5~4.5  
 Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~480  
 Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~490  
 ----- Unpaved trail  
 ——— Paved trail

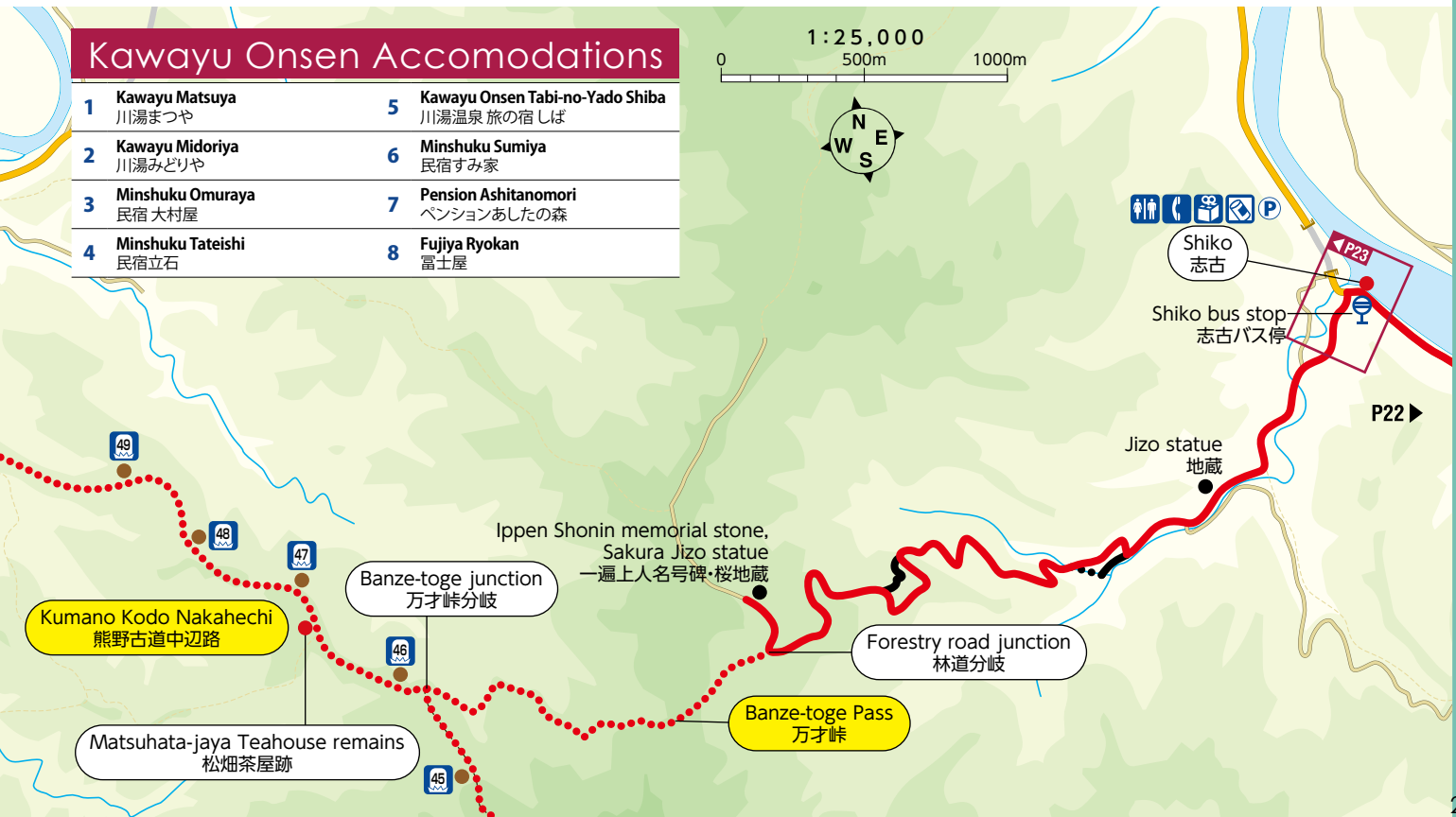
Legend			
Toilet	Public Wi-fi	Camping	School
Public phone	View point	Onsen (Hot spring)	Shrine
Convenience	Covered shelter	Station	Temple
Grocery store	Michi-no-Eki rest area	Bus stop	Unpaved trail
Shop/Store	Number markers every 500 meters	Parking	Paved road
Vending machine	Oji shrine	Post Office	Other Unpaved trail
Drinking water	Stamp	Police Station	Other Paved road
Information	Accommodation	Fire Station	



## Kawayu Onsen Accomodations

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1 Kawayu Matsuya<br>川湯まつや    | 5 Kawayu Onsen Tabi-no-Yado Shiba<br>川湯温泉 旅の宿しば |
| 2 Kawayu Midoriya<br>川湯みどりや  | 6 Minshuku Sumiya<br>民宿すみ家                      |
| 3 Minshuku Omuraya<br>民宿 大村屋 | 7 Pension Ashitanomori<br>ペンションあしたの森            |
| 4 Minshuku Tateishi<br>民宿立石  | 8 Fujiya Ryokan<br>富士屋                          |

1:25,000  
 0 500m 1000m



## Hongu



## Kumano Hongu Heritage Center

The Kumano Hongu Heritage Center is the focal point for visitor information in Hongu. There are two halls: North and South.

In the South hall is the tourist information center and permanent exhibitions about the World Heritage property "Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range".

The North hall features permanent exhibitions about the Hongu area, a multi-purpose hall and temporary exhibition space. Permanent exhibitions are bilingual Japanese and English.

This center is a must visit for those interest in learning more about the region's unique cultural landscape.

Hours: 9:00~17:00  
(Open year round)

Free Admission



## Yunomine Onsen



## Japan's Spiritual Hot Spring

Yunomine Onsen is an isolated hot spring tucked into a small valley. It is one of the oldest hot springs in Japan and intimately connected to the Kumano Kodo as pilgrims used the hot mineral waters for purification rites.



## Tsuboyu Bath

Tsuboyu is a historic bath in the creek near the center of Yunomine Onsen.

Capacity: 1~2 People  
Time: up to 30 minutes private use  
Price: 780yen, 12 and under 470 yen  
Hours: 6:00~21:30

First come, first serve. Buy tickets at the Counter near Toko-ji temple.

\* No swimming suits, soup or shampoo allowed.

LINK: [www.tb-tanabe.jp/en/onsen/yunomine/#tsuboyu](http://www.tb-tanabe.jp/en/onsen/yunomine/#tsuboyu)





# 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.

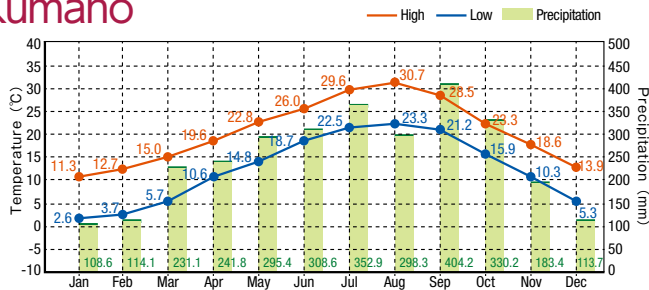
## Weather

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](http://www.jma.go.jp/jma/indexe.html)  
Tanabe City Kumano Tourism Bureau:  
[www.tb-kumano.jp/en/kumano-kodo/weather/](http://www.tb-kumano.jp/en/kumano-kodo/weather/)

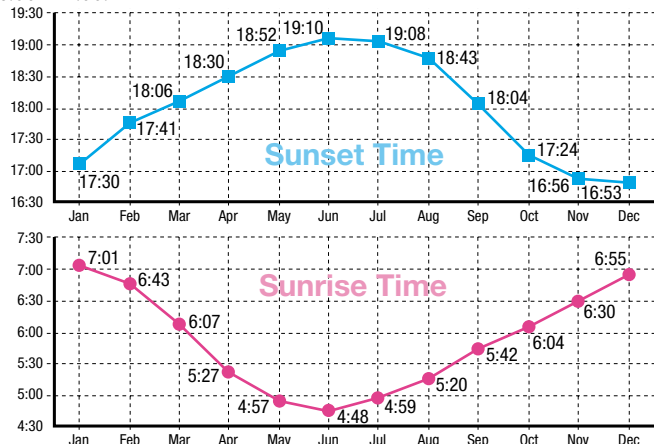
## Kumano



## 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/](http://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](http://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](http://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.

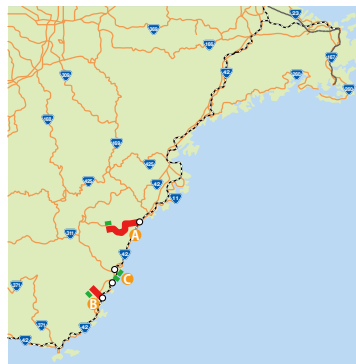
## LINK

[www.tb-kumano.jp/en/onsen/how-to-take-a-japanese-bath/](http://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



### Maruyama Senmaida Highlight Walk

- Bus to Senmaida Tori-toge-iriguchi
- Walk Maruyama Senmaida (p.20~21, ~3km)
- Bus to Kumanoshi Sta. **A**

### Daimon-zaka Highlight Walk

- Bus to Daimonzaka
- Walk Daimon-zaka (p.14, ~1km)
- Bus to Kii-Katsuura Sta. **B**

### Koya-zaka Highlight Walk

- Transfer to Kumano Hayatama Taisha
- Walk Kumano Hayatama Taisha to Miwasaki Sta. (p.12~13, ~7km) **C**

## Maruyama Senmaida Day Walk



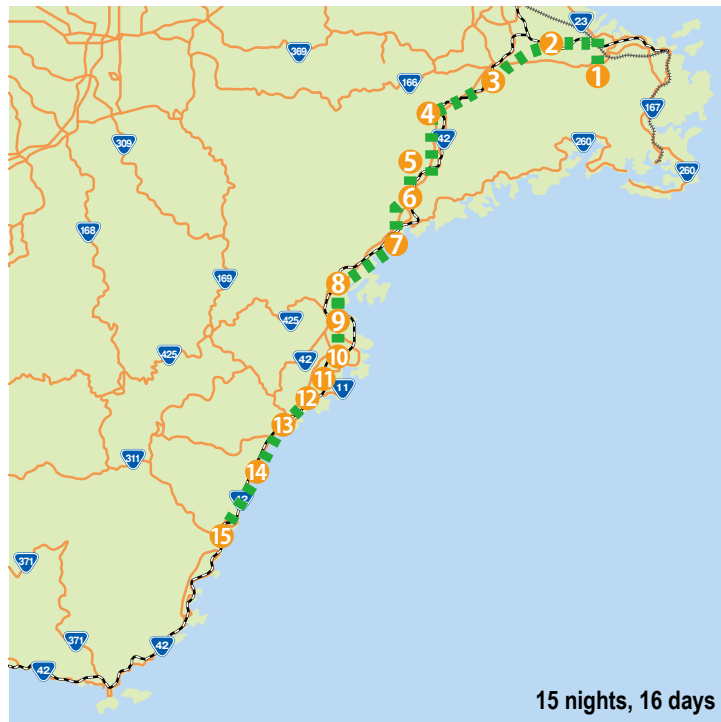
- Bus to Ushiroji
- Walk Tori-toge Pass and Maruyama Senmaida to Michi-no-Eki Kumano Itaya Kurobee-no-Sato (p.20~21, ~8km)

## Maruyama Senmaida and Fuden-toge Day Walk



- Bus to Senmaida Tori-toge-iriguchi
- Walk Maruyama Senmaida, Tori-toge Pass and Fuden-toge Pass to Takachira bus stop (p.20~21, ~8km)

## Iseji Intermediate Complete Trek



15 nights, 16 days

### Day1:

- Transfer to Ise City, overnight **1**

### Day2:

- Walk to Tamaru (~12km), overnight **2**

### Day3:

- Walk to Tochihara (~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 (~17km), overnight **7**

### Day8:

- Walk to Aiga (~14km), overnight **8**

### Day9:

- Walk to Owase (~6km), overnight **9**

### Day10:

- Walk to Mikisato (~12km), overnight **10**

### Day11:

- Walk to Kata (~5km), overnight **11**

### Day12:

- Walk to Atashika (~10km), overnight **12**

### Day13:

- Walk to Central Kumano (~8km), overnight **13**

### Day14:

- Walk to Atawa (p.6~7, ~12km), overnight **14**

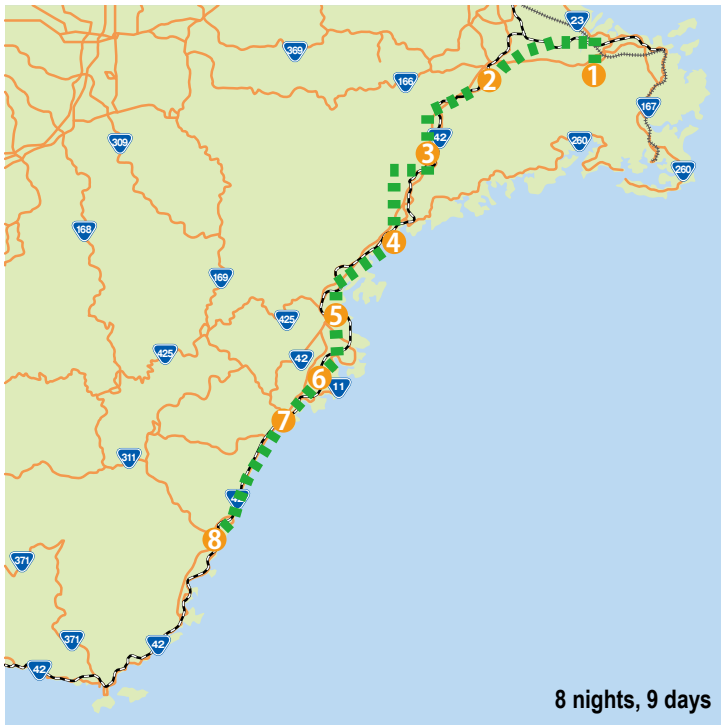
### Day15:

- Walk to Shingu (p.8~9, ~11km), overnight **15**

### Day16:

- Transfer to next destination

## Iseji Advanced Complete Trek



8 nights, 9 days

### Day1:

- Transfer to Ise Jingu Naiku, overnight ①

### Day2:

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

### Day3:

- Walk to Aso (~25km), overnight ③

### Day4:

- Walk to Furusato Onsen (~29km), overnight ④

### Day5:

- Walk to Owase (~20km), overnight ⑤

### Day6:

- Walk to Kata (~17km), overnight ⑥

### Day7:

- Walk to Central Kumano (~18km), overnight ⑦

### Day8:

- Walk to Shingu (p.6~9, ~23km), overnight ⑧

### Day9:

- Transfer to next destination

# KUMANO KODO

## Pilgrimage Route Maps Series



ISEJI  
(North)



ISEJI  
(Central)



ISEJI  
(South)



NAKAHECHI



KOHECHI



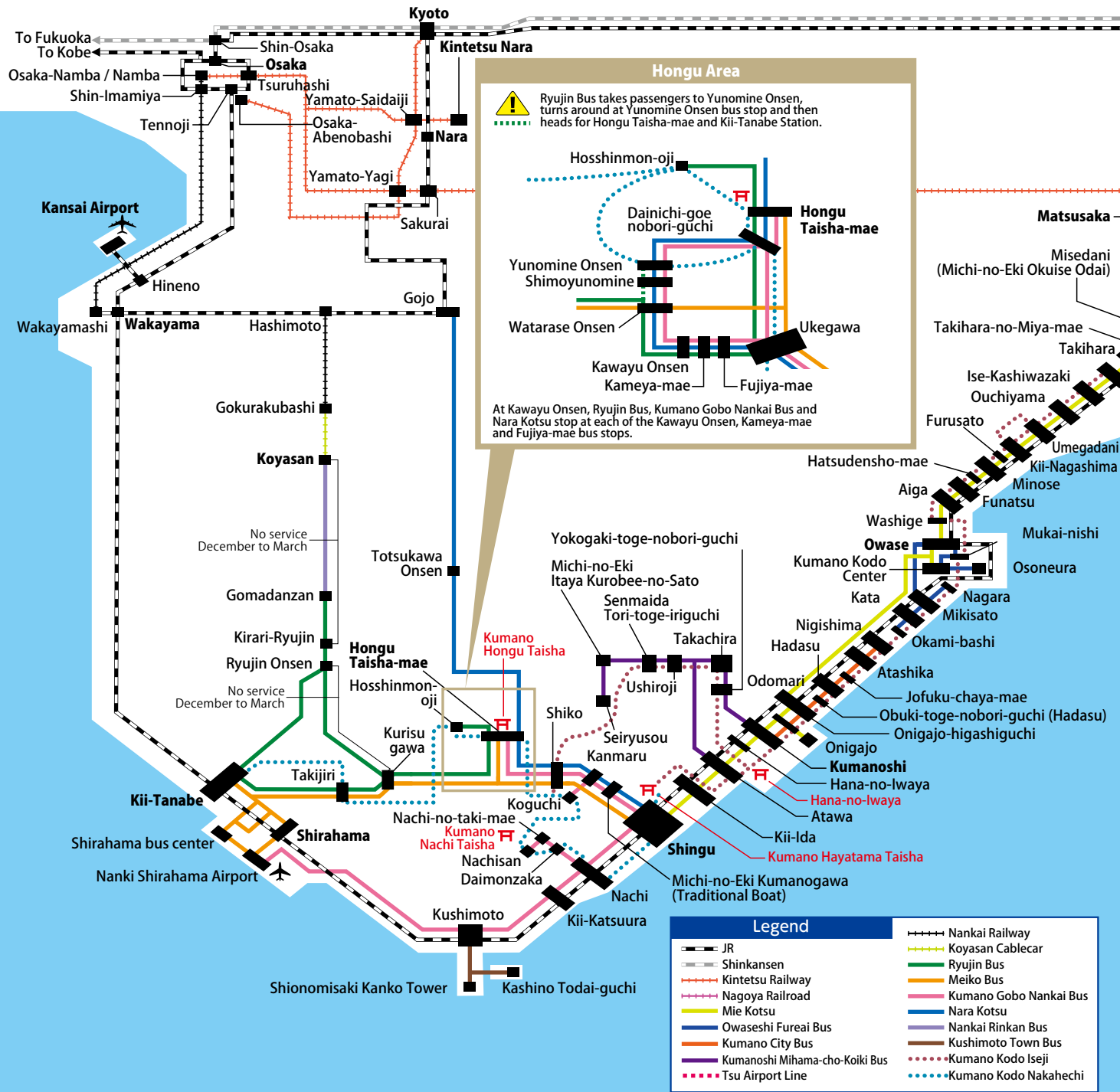
OHECHI

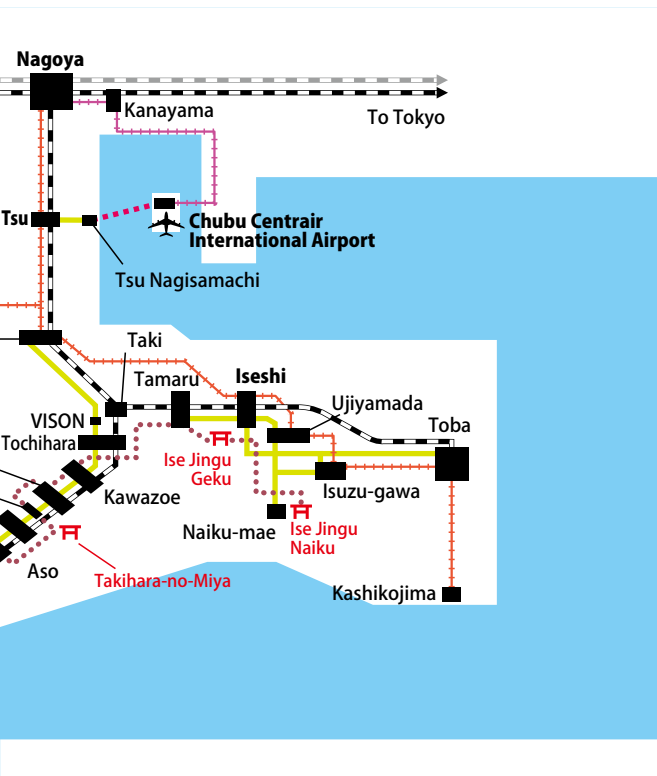
Download Maps  
[www.tb-kumano.jp](http://www.tb-kumano.jp)





# Access





## 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](http://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>

● Shingu (Local, Express)

● Nachi (Local)



## 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.



## 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/](http://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 Kumanojishi station. (熊野市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 Ushiroji bus stop. (後地/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 Isejishi 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.

## Southern Area ; Hamakaido and Hongudo

From Hana-no-Iwaya, the route divides into one that goes south along the coast known as the Hamakaido, and a mountain route that connects Kumano Hongu Taisha in the shortest way known as the Hongudo. On the Hamakaido, pilgrims walk along Shichirimihama (the longest gravel beach in Japan), which continues to the mouth of the Kumano-gawa River, and aim for Kumano Hayatama Taisha. After that, from Kumano Hayatama Taisha, the route is the Nakahechi, and after crossing the small Koyazaka and Kokuji-toge, they visit Fudarakusan-ji before going around the highlights, Daimonzaka, Kumano Nachi Taisha, Seiganto-ji, Nachi-no-Otaki Falls and Nachisan. With a single trail, the Hongudo heads towards Kumano Hongu Taisha, located in the heart of the Kii Peninsula. After crossing Yokogaki-toge, Fuden-toge and Tori-toge as though weaving through the mountains, pilgrims encounter the beautiful landscapes of Maruyama Senmaida, which are among the top 100 terraced rice fields of Japan. After crossing the Kumano-gawa River and Banze-toge (elevation 415 m), one of the difficult places in the southern area, the route joins the Nakahechi at Kogumotori-goe and arrives at Kumano Hongu Taisha.

### Hana-no-Iwaya

This is said to be the oldest shrine in Japan and the gravesite of Izanami-no-Mikoto, a female deity of Japanese mythology. It communicates the face of nature worship in Kumano to the present day. From here, the Iseji splits into the Hamakaido, which follows Shichirimihama to Kumano Hayatama Taisha, and the Hongudo, which heads to Kumano Hongu Taisha inland. You can enjoy local specialties, mochi rice cakes made using ancient rice varieties, udon noodles and other goods at the adjacent Michi-no-Eki rest area.

### Shichirimihama

From Onigajo, Shichirimihama continues about 22 km to the mouth of the Kumano-gawa River, making it Japan's longest gravel beach. The unique scenery incorporating the majestic Kumano-nada Sea, the sandy beach and rows of pine trees is a highlight. Caution is required when walking along the beach as the waves of the Pacific Ocean strike hard when they break on the beach and the current is strong.



### Santanbo and Kawaramachi

A Santanbo is a flat bottom wooden boat that advances by catching the wind in three sails a little less than 1 m in width that are raised on its mast. Pilgrims used various boats, including the Santanbo, to cross the Kumano-gawa River, the last waterway as they progressed along the Hamakaido. And, the lively town of Kawaramachi formed on the Shingu side of the river to which they crossed, but it was moved to higher ground due to the risk of flooding. At its peak until around 1920, there were about 300 shops here.



### Shingu

This is the central town of this region where the estuary of the Kumano-gawa River spreads out. It developed as a timber distribution and trading center using the boat transport of the Kumano-gawa River and as the shrine town of Kumano Hayatama Taisha.

### Kumano Hayatama Taisha

One of the Kumano Sanzan, Kumano Hayatama Taisha is located at the mouth of the Kumano-gawa River. The main enshrined deities are Izanagi-no-Mikoto and Izanami-no-Mikoto. An ancient Nagi-no-Ki tree (Podocarpus nagi) estimated to be 1,000 years old is one of the sacred trees growing on the grounds of the shrine.



Its leaves were used as amulets, symbols of the Kumano faith, because they are difficult to tear and are like a strong, enduring, unbreakable relationship with the deities. Pilgrims would return with a Nagi leaf as proof that they had completed the pilgrimage. In addition, more than 1,200 ancient national treasures and important cultural properties are exhibited in the Sacred Treasure Museum.

### Kamikura-jinja

This is a shrine located on Mt. Kamikura-san at the top of a steep stone staircase of 538 steps. It is said that the Kumano deities first descended from the heavens at Gotobiki-iwa, the object of worship of the shrine. Subsequently, they transferred to the current Kumano Hayatama Taisha in 128, and their new residence came to be known as Shingu, or new palace, in contrast to their original palace of Mt. Kamikura-san. The Oto Matsuri is held on February 6th each year, with men known as noboriko carrying torches racing down the mountain together.



### Shingu Castle remains

The castle built by the Horiuchi clan who ruled the Kumano region in the Azuchi-Momoyama Period was the first, and it was later rebuilt by the Asano clan and then the Mizuno clan who replaced them, but the castle here was demolished under the ordinance to abolish castles at the time of the Meiji Restoration and only stone walls remain now. It was also known as Tankaku Castle.



### Asuka-jinja

This shrine is located at the foot of Mt. Horai-san at the mouth of the Kumano-gawa River, and the main enshrined deity is Kotosakanoo-no-Mikoto. The deities of the Kumano Sanzan have been worshipped here since ancient times and Asuka-jinja was treated as Asuka oji shrine on the Kumano pilgrimage in the Heian Period.

### Hama-oji (Oji-jinja)

Hama-oji is on the way to Koya-zaka from Asuka-jinja and is one of the 99 Oji-jinja shrines of Kumano. Oji-jinja in Kita-ku, Tokyo originated from the ceremonial transfer of the divided tutelary deity from this Hama-oji.

### Ojigahama Beach

Ojigahama Beach is about 4 km long and is made from gravel deposited from the mouth of the Kumano-gawa River. It is also known as a loggerhead turtle spawning ground.

### Koya-zaka

This is a coastal pass trail that leads from Ojigahama to Miwasaki. It was opened as the Nakahechi connecting Kumano Hayatama Taisha and Kumano Nachi Taisha, and there are highlights along its route including the Magohachi-jizo statue and Konko Inari-jinja.

### Kokuji-toge Pass and Okuji-toge Pass

After passing Ukui, the trail follows route 42 and crosses two small passes, Kokuji-toge Pass and Okuji-toge Pass. "Kuji" is said to mean kujira, or whale, and there are thought to be whalers' lookouts on these passes.

### Hamanomiya-oji

Adjacent to Fudarakusan-ji Temple, this is one of the 99 Oji-jinja shrines of Kumano and shows the remnants of Shinto-Buddhist syncretism. The shrine is currently known as Kumano Sansho Omiwasha.

### Fudarakusan-ji

This is a temple of the Tendai sect and from the Heian Period to the Edo Period was a place where the Fudaraku-tokai, crossing the sea to the southern pure land, took place. Priests and devotees headed out in small boats to the southern sea, aiming for Fudarakusan, a pure land far away presided over by Kannon, bodhisattva of compassion. These journeys were carried out about twenty times from the 9th century to the 18th century. There are tombstones on the grounds for priests who went out on the Fudaraku-tokai.



### Daimonzaka

Daimonzaka is the approach path to Kumano Nachi Taisha and Nachisan Seiganto-ji. It is about 640 m long and has 267 mossy stone steps. At the base of the staircase are two 800-year-old Japanese cedar trees called the Meoto-sugi or "married couple cedar trees." The path is also surrounded by camphor and other trees and provides a representative image of the Kumano Kodo. Its name means "large gate slope" and has its origins in the large shrine-gate that once stood at Kumano Nachi Taisha.

At the teahouse partway up Daimonzaka, you can experience a pilgrimage dressed in a Heian Period costume.

#### Daimonzaka Chaya teahouse

Tel: 0735-55-0244 Price: 3,000 yen ~

Hours: 9:00 – 16:00 (Open year round)

### Kumano Nachi Taisha

One of the Kumano Sanzan, Kumano Nachi Taisha is located halfway up Mt. Nachisan and its object of worship is the Nachi-no-Otaki Falls. The main enshrined deity is Izanami-no-Mikoto. There is a sacred camphor tree about 850 years old on the grounds and visitors can pass through the hollowed out trunk in an act symbolic of rebirth.



### Nachisan Seiganto-ji

In the past, this temple was unified with the adjacent Kumano Nachi Taisha as a place for Buddhist-Shinto syncretic mountain asceticism, but it became an independent Tendai sect temple in the Meiji Period under the impact of the government order separating Buddhism and Shintoism. Nachisan Seiganto-ji was also the first temple on the "Saikokujunrei," or pilgrimage to the 33 Kannon images in Western Japan, which began in 1161. In the Edo Period, many pilgrims visited Ise Jingu and completed the Kumano Sanzan pilgrimage and Saigokujunrei pilgrimage at the same time.





## Nachi-no-Otaki Falls

At 133 meters high and 13 meters wide, Nachi-no-Otaki boasts the greatest drop of any one-tier waterfall in Japan. It has been worshipped since ancient times as a divine object of Kumano Nachi Taisha, and Hiro-jinja stands next to the waterfall basin. Also, the entire area surrounding the waterfall is protected as primeval forest of Nachi. The place for ascetic training by mountain monks who practice Shugendo, made up of large and small waterfalls known collectively as the 48 waterfalls of Nachi, is upstream.

## Hongudo

Hongudo is the mountain trail shortcut from Hana-no-Iwaya to Kumano Hongu Taisha, that joins up with the Nakahechi route after passing the Yokogaki-toge Pass, Fuden-toge Pass and Banze-toge pass.



## Ubuta-jinja

Ubuta-jinja is believed to be where Izanami gave birth to Kagutsuchi, the fire deity, and is worshipped as the shrine for safe childbirth. Also, because sanmazushi has been used at festivals here since ancient times, this is believed to be the birthplace of this local dish.

## Orchards

If you walk the Hongudo, you will see many citrus fields. High quality citrus fruit are cultivated widely here thanks to the warm, rainy climate and well-drained soil. Many varieties are harvested throughout the year and have become major specialty products.



## Yokogaki-toge Pass

From this pass at 305 m above sea level, you can have a panoramic view of the Kumano-nada Sea. There is a legend that when Kukai, founder of the Shingon esoteric school of Buddhism, made a hole in the ground with his cane where the Mizutsubo Jizo statue stands on the way to the pass, water sprang up. The Oriyama Jizo statue stands at the western trailhead and mossy cobblestones remain in that area.



## Kameshima-no-Ishidoro stone lantern

A conspicuous stone lantern has been placed on a 5 meter-tall rock in the terraced rice fields of the hamlet of Sakamoto. The lantern was donated in 1813 and is the place for worship of Mt. Myoken-san. This hamlet of Sakamoto is known as the birthplace of the Kishu dog breed.

## Oroshi

This is a hamlet with expansive views of tranquil countryside. A rare natural phenomenon known as Fuden-oroshi occurs here from spring to late autumn, with huge swathes of morning mist flowing down the mountains like a river. Oroshi is about 14 km from Hana-no-Iwaya so this is a place to aim for when walking the Hongudo in one day.



## Fuden-toge Pass

At 257 m above sea level, Fuden-toge Pass goes through the mountains from Oroshi to Yanokawa. It is lined with cobblestones from the eastern side. It is the only place on the Iseji where a tea shop is operated at the pass.

## Tori-toge Pass

This is a pass on the Kitasando, which splits with the Hongudo at the hamlet of Ushiroji at the foot of Fuden-toge Pass and heads for Yoshino. The trail with cobblestones continues to Maruyama Senmaida. From the lookout point a little up from the pass, which is 390 m above sea level, you can get a bird's eye view of Maruyama Senmaida.

## Maruyama Senmaida

Maruyama Senmaida is one of the top 100 terraced rice field spots in Japan, with 1,340 large and small paddies lying on top of each other on the mountainside. There were more than 2,000



paddies here in 1601, but that number had declined to 530 in 1992 due to depopulation. Consequently, local people started conservation activities and restored the rice paddies to the current number. There is a unique ownership system that allows people who donate 30,000 yen a year to have their own rice paddy for that year, and it is also possible to participate in planting and harvesting. In addition, there is an event known as mushiokuri that takes place in June each year to drive away crop-eating insects. Farmers walk through the rice terraces carrying torches, drums and bells to drive away insects and because those lights are so fantastical, it has become a seasonal summer tradition, with many people coming to visit.

## Michi-no-Eki Kumano Itaya Kurobee-no-Sato

You can use this Michi-no-Eki as a base when walking the Hongudo, and this is also where buses to and from Kumanoshi Station, Atawa Station and Seiryuso arrive and depart. In addition, there are demand-responsive taxis that you can use by contacting the providers in advance by telephone from the adjacent Kumano City Hall Kiwa General Branch Office. You can also go to Shingu City Kumanogawa Branch Office near Shiko.

## Kishu Kozan mine remains

Copper was mined at the Kishu Kozan mine from at least the Nara Period and it is recorded that the copper used in the Daibutsu Great Buddha Statue at Todai-ji was mined here. Modern mining facilities were established here on a big scale from 1934 and 3,000 tons of copper were produced here each year during its peak period, making this Japan's leading mine. Subsequently, profitability deteriorated due to declining international copper market prices and the mine closed in 1978. Currently, you can see exhibits including the mining tools used at the time at the Kumano City Kiwa Mine Museum.

## Kozan Torokko trolley (service suspended)

The Torokko trolleys actually used at the Kishu mine run through a tunnel of about 1 km and connect Seiryuso Station and Yunokuchi Onsen Station in about 10 minutes.



## Yunokuchi Onsen

It is said that the spring-water gushed out when Emperor Godaigo worked on the excavation of a gold mine in 1337. After that, the onsen withered due to the development of mines, but when the area was bored after the mines closed, the water gushed out again and the area recovered as Yunokuchi Onsen in 1979.

## Ushiroji bus stop ~ Shiko

If walking from the west trailhead of Fuden-toge Pass, continue along the World Heritage-registered Hongudo ① to Hongudo ② via Doden-daki waterfall. Beyond Hongudo ③, there is a mountain road that goes down to the Hotel Seiryuso. If you proceed along Hongudo ④, near Yuhi-no-Oka, you will see the Kumano bouldering field. If you then proceed to Hongudo ⑥ via Hongudo ⑤ and Kobune junction, you will come out at Sobo and join the Yoji-gawa River. After that, the trail heads for Shiko via Suishadani Kozan mine remains and Miwa-ohashi Bridge.

## Yuhi-no-Oka

This is the site where Meirin Elementary School, abolished in 1970, used to stand. It is currently maintained as a park and is one of the few spots to rest on the trail from the Hotel Seiryuso to Miwa-ohashi Bridge.

## Yoji Yakushi-do

It is said that Yoji Yakushi-do was built in 1411, and its official name is Joyaku-ji. It is a temple with ties to Cloistered Emperor Goshirakawa and the Sanjusangendo temple in Kyoto. Many worshippers visit as it is supposed to be beneficial for head illnesses. In addition, there was a place for crossing the Kumano-gawa River at Yoji in the Edo Period, but people currently cross using the Miwa-ohashi Bridge.

## Banze-toge Pass

At 415 m above sea level, this is the last path that pilgrims cross who have walked from Ise Jingu to Kumano Hongu Taisha. A long slope up continues from Shiko and after 5.8 km, the trail joins the Kogumotori-goe section of the Nakahechi route.

## Oyunohara

This is where the Kumano Hongu Taisha used to stand, but it was transferred to its current location on higher ground after the shrine complex was destroyed by flooding in 1889. The Otorii, Japan's largest torii shrine gateway at a height of 33.9 m and a width of 42 m, stands at the entrance.



## Kumano Hongu Taisha

This is one of the Kumano Sanzan and the main enshrined deity is Ketsumimiko-no-Okami. The majestic shrine buildings were spared being swept away in the flood of 1889 and were relocated from Oyunohara. It is known formally as Kumanonimasu-jinja after a deity who lived in Kumano.