Oki Islands

Kuniga Coast

Nicola Jones  New Zealand

Nishinoshima is a wonderful place to take a step back in time, discover life in rural Japan and meet the local people. The Kuniga Coast is a great place to hike, picnic, take photos, kayaking, etc. There are cows and horses grazing happily along the coast too! Stop off at a restaurant near the port to enjoy freshly caught seafood, or buy some locally made bread or Griffin rib balls and have a picnic on top of Sugaya cliff or in front of Hinomisaki Arch.

Candle Island

UNESCO Global Geopark

The Oki Islands are made up of 4 main islands and several more uninhabited ones. Oki’s unique natural environment has led to its being designated as a Global Geopark by UNESCO. Erosion has created several magnificent coastline views, including the Kuniga Coastline on Nishinoshima, which features a stone arch and a sheer cliff face that stands at 257 meters tall. Candle Island off the coast of Dogo Island stands in such a way that if you catch the sunset at the right angle, it looks like a candle’s flame is atop it.

Access: Oki Islands 1.5 hours by high-speed ferry from either Shinkansen Port or Sakaimoto Port 2.5 hours by ferry. Along with the ferries you can also take buses between the islands. Kuniga Coast: 25 minutes by car from Dogo Port Candle Island: 50 minutes by car from Sakai Port

Japan Heritage

Tsuwano

Tsuwano was once the center of a feudal domain and the grand houses of merchants and warriors lined the streets of town. Hundreds of concerted cherry trees in the town’s waterways, adding another touch to Tsuwano’s beautiful scenery.

Access: Take a train to JR Tsuwano Station or the Yamaguchi Line.

National Treasure

Matsue Castle

As one of the 11 remaining original castles in Japan, Matsue Castle has long been a symbol of Matsue City. Constructed over a period of five years from 1607 to 1612, the castle is well-preserved. You can climb the central Keep for panoramic views of the castle grounds and surrounding countryside. The inner and outer citadels are the best for viewing the cherry blossoms.

Access: By train from JR Matsue Station. A sightseeing boat departs from the port.

Taikodani Inari Shrine

This shrine is known as one of the five largest Inari shrines throughout the country, and many people come here to pray for good fortune. The path up the hill is lined with nearly 1,200 vermilion Inari statues which create a brilliantly colored tunnel to the shrine itself.

Access: 5 minutes by car or a 30-minute walk from JR Tsuwano Station.

Horikawa Sightseeing Boat

Mihonoseki

An old little port village in the Shimane Peninsula.

Access: 40 min by JR JR Mihonoseki Station 20 min by car from JR Shimonoseki Station.

Adachi Museum of Art

Adachi Museum of Art houses more than 1,500 Japanese paintings, including masterpieces of Yokoyama Taikan, who contributed greatly to the development of modern Japanese art, and ceramic works by Kazuo Inoue. The museum also boasts beautiful Japanese gardens which have been selected as the best in Japan by a US magazine. The museum is blessed with beautiful scenery surrounding the grounds, which has a cleverly designed elevation and rock formations that change shape with the seasons, such as Japanese maple, azalea, and various kinds of bamboo and grasses. The museum also has a café and gift shop.

Access: 20 min by bus from JR Adachi Station

Dawn Wyrchuckowski  America

Yuzuriha is small enough to feel cozy and yet still big enough to have plenty of quality attractions. The Adachi Museum boasts the best Japanese-style gardens, and pictures simply can’t capture its beauty. There is opportunity both to walk through the landscape and to appreciate it from within the museum’s brilliantly designed viewing rooms.
About Shimane

Shimane Prefecture is located in the western part of Honshu facing the Sea of Japan, with the Oki Islands about 50 kilometers north from the mainland coast. It is an area blessed with natural beauty whose traditions and culture passed down from long ago still have roots in the everyday lives of people today.

Matsue Vogel Park

Matsue Vogel Park is a flower and bird park located in between Izumo Taisha and Matsue Castle. This place boasts one of the largest indoor gardens in the world where customers can enjoy the begonia flowers that fill the gardens and the many different types of birds that inhabit the park.

Access: Take the Ichibata Electric Railway to Matsue Vogel Park Station.

Yuushien Garden

Yuushien Garden is one of the most splendid Japanese gardens with seasonal flowers, trees, ponds, waterfalls, and paving stones creatively organized over 40,000 square meters. Visitors are free to walk around and enjoy the gardens at their leisure.

Access: 25 min by car or by bus from JR Matsue Station; 40 min by bus from Matsue Shinjuku Onsen Station.

Japan Heritage

“Tatara” iron manufacturing

“Tatara” iron manufacturing is an old Japanese process that is still being used to manufacture iron. Iron sand is heated up to extremely high temperatures, and the metal cooled to make Japanese swords is then extracted. In Okayama, where “tatara” iron works are still located, one can experience drawing a sword and watch the swordsmiths create swords using old methods.

National Treasure

Izumo Taisha Grand Shrine

The main hall of this magnificent shrine, 37 meters in height, is the tallest shrine building in Japan. Known for its ancient and unusual architectural and artistic qualities, Izumo Taisha Shrine is visited by many domestic and international tourists. Once a year, it is said that all the gods throughout Japan gather here to discuss what events people should have for the upcoming year.

Aquas

This aquarium houses over 10,000 specimens of marine life including penguins and sharks. The beluga whales are famous for their unique performance known as the bubble rings, which they can blow. Their new performance called magic rings is even more fantastic and can be seen only at Aquas.

Access: 15 min by bus from JR Hamada Station. Cut off at Aquas-main Bus Stop. Or 20 min by foot from JR Hamada Station.
Traditional Performing Art
Iwami Kagura

This is a traditional performance in the western area of Shimane that originated as dances and music based on Japanese mythology that were performed during Shinto religious ceremonies. The extravagant costumes and lively, expressive dances are fascinating, and the Orchid performance in particular should not be missed.

Regular schedule:

Tea Culture of Matsue

Shimane’s Delicacies

Shimane enjoys the bounties of both the mountains and the sea. The natural environment provides delicious seafood as well as seasonal delights.

Izumo Soba

These are Japanese noodles made from buckwheat. The outer shell of the grain is ground up together with the grain itself, making these soba noodles more flavorful, more aromatic, and more nutritious than other types of soba found throughout the country.

Shimane Wagyuu Beef


Onsen

Shimane is known as a region where many people have beautiful hot springs. One of the most scenic and popular hot springs is the Onsen (Hot Spring). The city of Matsue is famous for its hot springs and the city has over 100 of them. It is known for the slope called the Hot Spring Trail, which leads visitors through the town and the hot springs.

Du Chunhong (China)

If you want to ease your tiredness, I recommend visiting an onsen. There are many therapeutic properties within Shimane’s onsen and it is said that there are different effects such as helping with stiff shoulders, stress, burns and more! One can especially look forward to its skin smoothing and restorative effect.

UNESCO Intangible Cultural Treasure

Sekishu Banshi

Sekishu Banshi is traditional Japanese handmade paper that has an over 1300-year history in the Shimane region of Shimane. It is praised for its high quality and durability. It was designated as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Property in 2007. You can try making your own Sekishu Washi at the Sekishu Washi Center in the Shimane area of Shimane.

Sondey Oluseun (Brazil)

There are many places within Shimane that brew sake, and they each have their own distinct taste. I like the sweet taste that sake has, and it goes well with soba. If you come to Shimane, make sure to try some of the local sake!

Kim Morgan (United Kingdom)

I love the beautiful sea and the fresh seafood in Hamada. It’s really interesting to take what is at first mere pulp and follow the process of making it into a red paste. The paper dyeing experience was my favorite though, as it’s a challenge to try and create a variety of different colorful patterns.