KUMANO TRAVEL

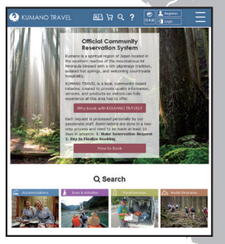
Official Community Reservation System

www.kumano-travel.com

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

SERVICES & PRODUCTS

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



WHY BOOK WITH KUMANO TRAVEL?

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

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

Useful Words and Phrases

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

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

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

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

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

Yes	Hai はい	**No**	Iie いいえ

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

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

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

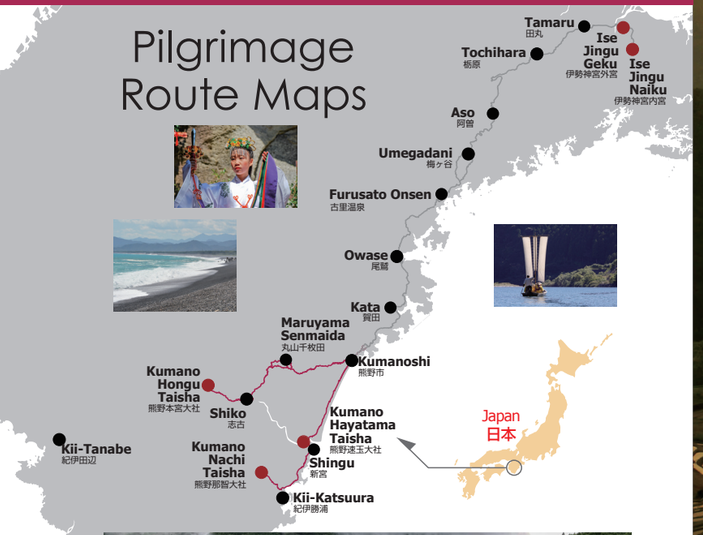
Bus stop	Basu-tei バス停	**Traihead**	Tozanguchi 登山口	**Toilet**	O-tearai/toire お手洗い/トイレ
Help me!	Tasukete! たすけて!	**I need a doctor**	Isha ga hitsuyo desu 医者が必要です		

03/2020 printed・発行

KUMANO KODO

ISEJI (South)

Pilgrimage Route Maps



CONTENTS

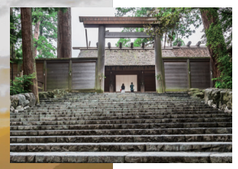
Context	1	Itineraries	30〜31
Overview	2〜3	Access	32〜35
Maps	4〜26	Route Guide	36〜39
Tips	27〜29		

KUMANO熊野

Japan's Spiritual Origins

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

Ise Jingu



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

Kumano Sanzan

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

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

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

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

UNESCO World Heritage

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

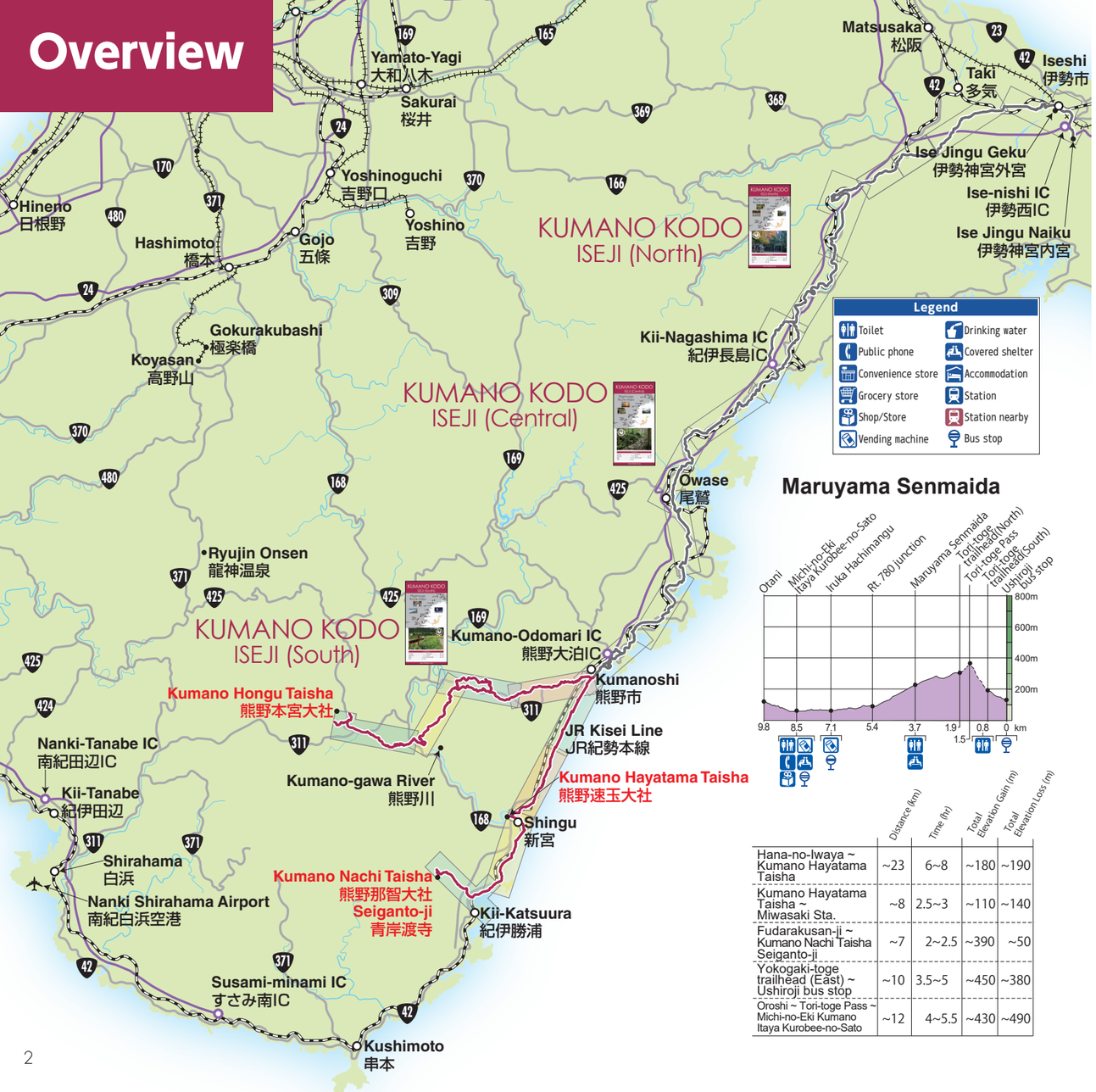
Kumano Kodo Pilgrimage Route

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

Iseji Eastern Route

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

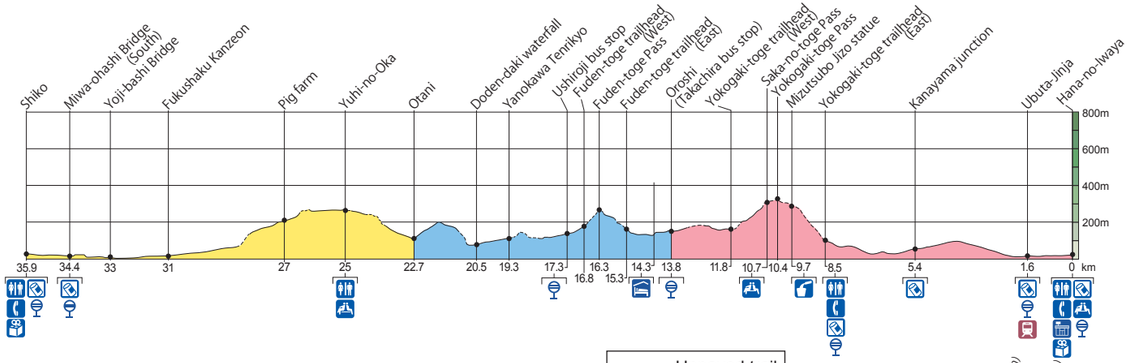
Overview



Maruyama Senmaida

	Distance (km)	Time (hr)	Total Elevation Gain (m)	Total Elevation Loss (m)
Hana-no-Iwaya ~ Kumano Hayatama Taisha	~23	6~8	~180	~190
Kumano Hayatama Taisha ~ Miwasaki Sta.	~8	2.5~3	~110	~140
Fudarakusan-ji ~ Kumano Nachi Taisha Seiganto-ji	~7	2~2.5	~390	~50
Yokogaki-toge trailhead (East) ~ Ushiroji bus stop	~10	3.5~5	~450	~380
Oroshi ~ Tori-toge Pass ~ Michi-no-Eki Kumano Itaya Kurobee-no-Sato	~12	4~5.5	~430	~490

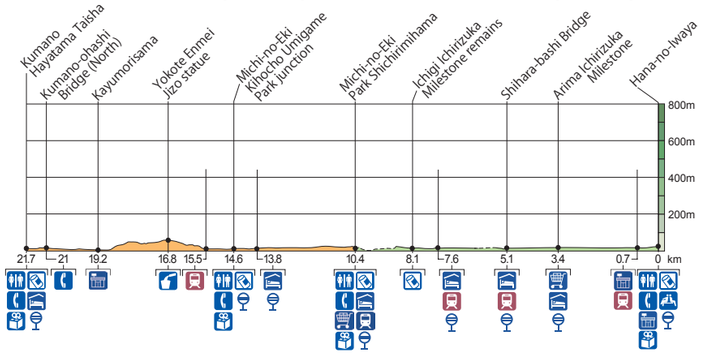
Hongudo



Fuden-toge Pass

Yokogaki-toge Pass

Hamakaido (South)

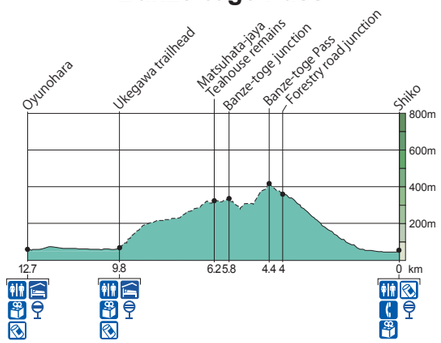


Hamakaido (North)

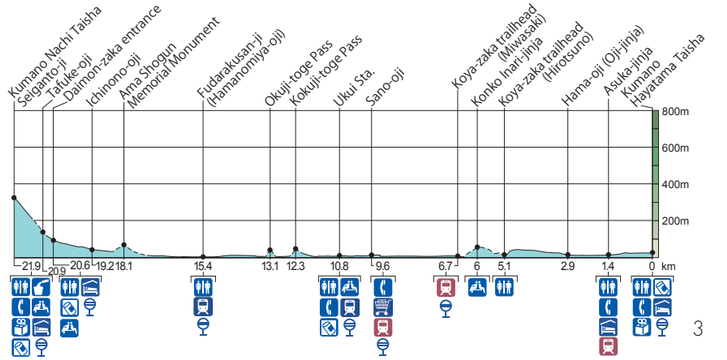
Unpaved trail
Paved trail

	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.

Kinan Tour Design Center

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

Hours: 9:00-17:00
Closed Wednesdays

Kumano Kodo Omotenashi-kan

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

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

Kumano City Tourist Information Center

Next to the Kumanoshi train station.

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

Onigajo

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

Shishiiwa

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

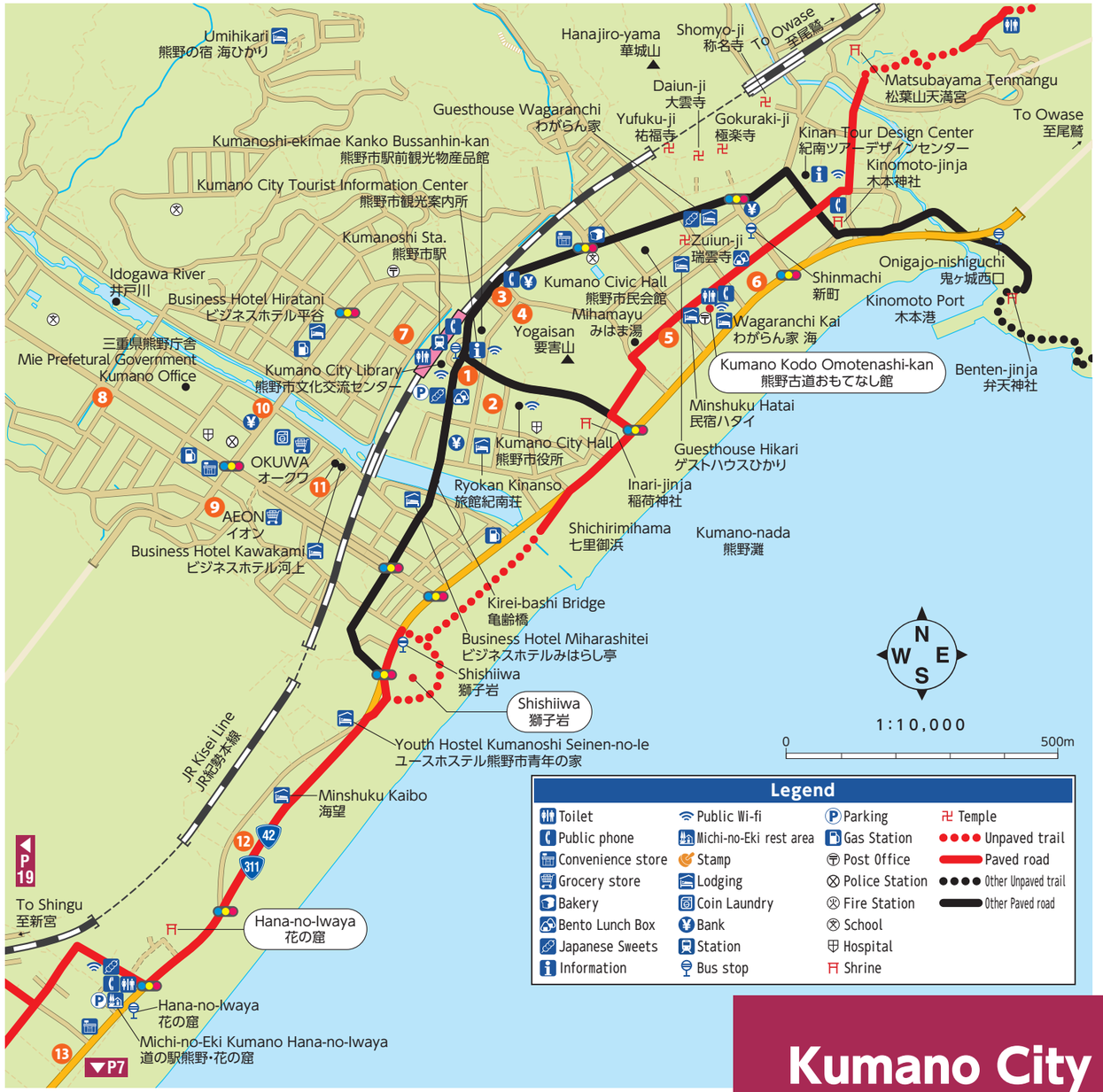
Hana-no-Iwaya

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

Restaurant Guide

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

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

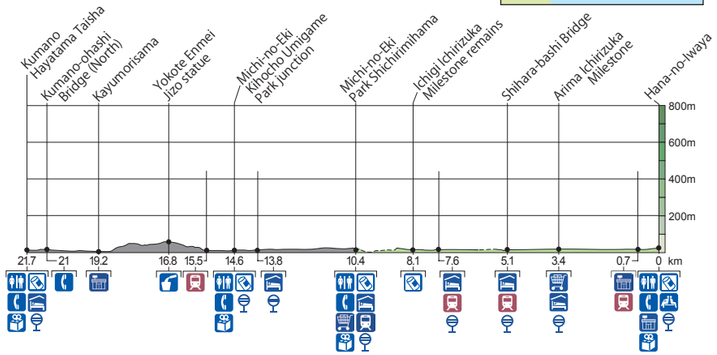


Kumano City

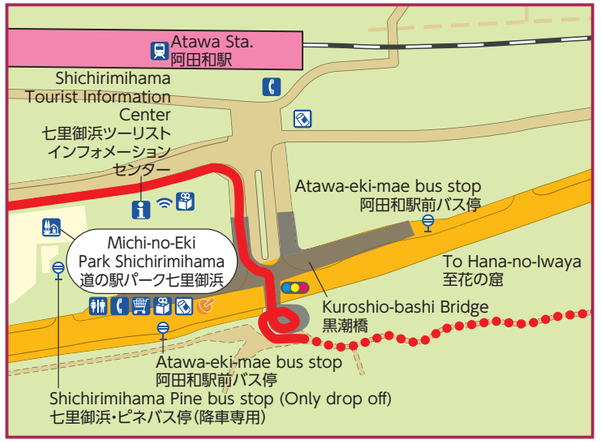
Hamakaido (North)
(Atawa~Hana-no-Iwaya)
浜街道（北）（阿田和～花の窟）

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

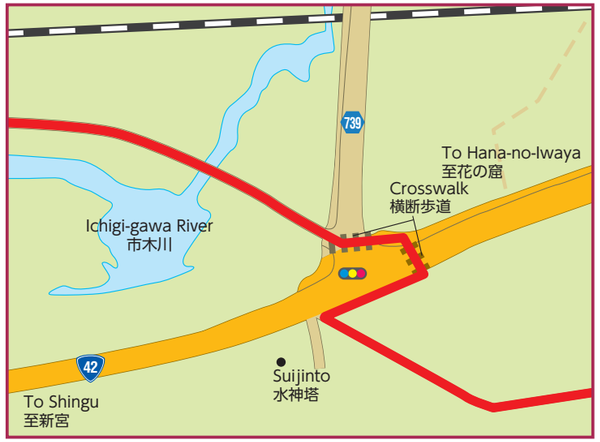
-------- Unpaved trail
——— Paved trail



Atawa



Shin-Midori-bashi Bridge (North)

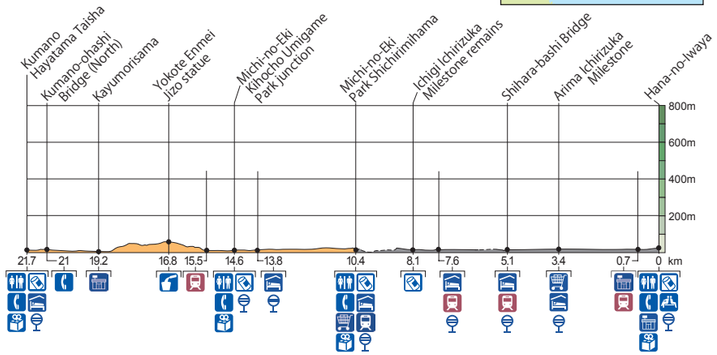


◀ P9

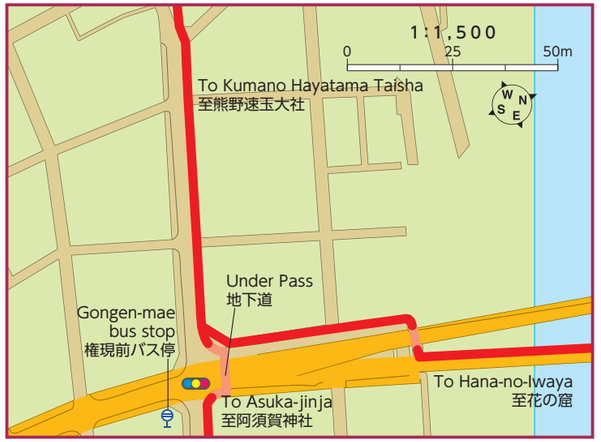
Hamakaido (South)
(Kumano Hayatama Taisha~Atawa)
浜街道（南）（熊野速玉大社～阿田和）

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 thers is a large monolisth. It is known as Gotobiki-iwa, and is 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 is 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.

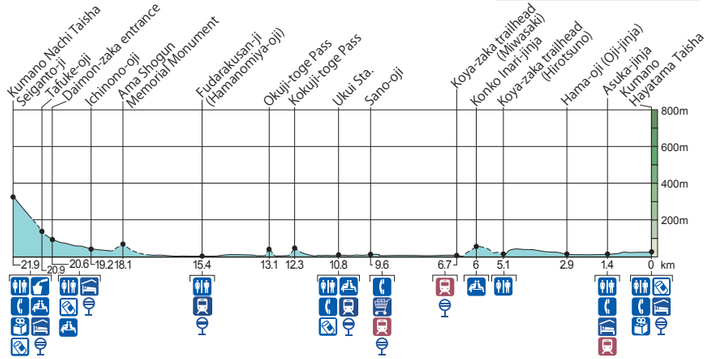
Kokuji-toge Pass~Kumano Hayatama Taisha

小狗子峠～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

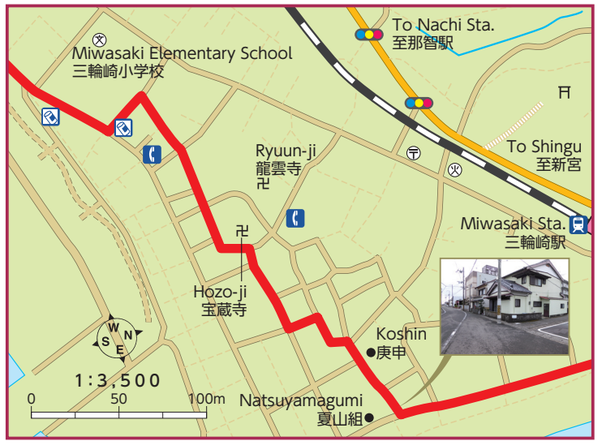
-------- Unpaved trail
——— Paved trail



Legend

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

Miwasaki



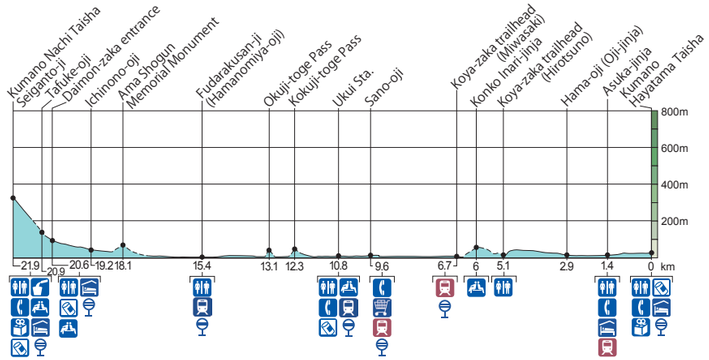
Nachisan~Kokuji-toge Pass

那智山～小狗子峠

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



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

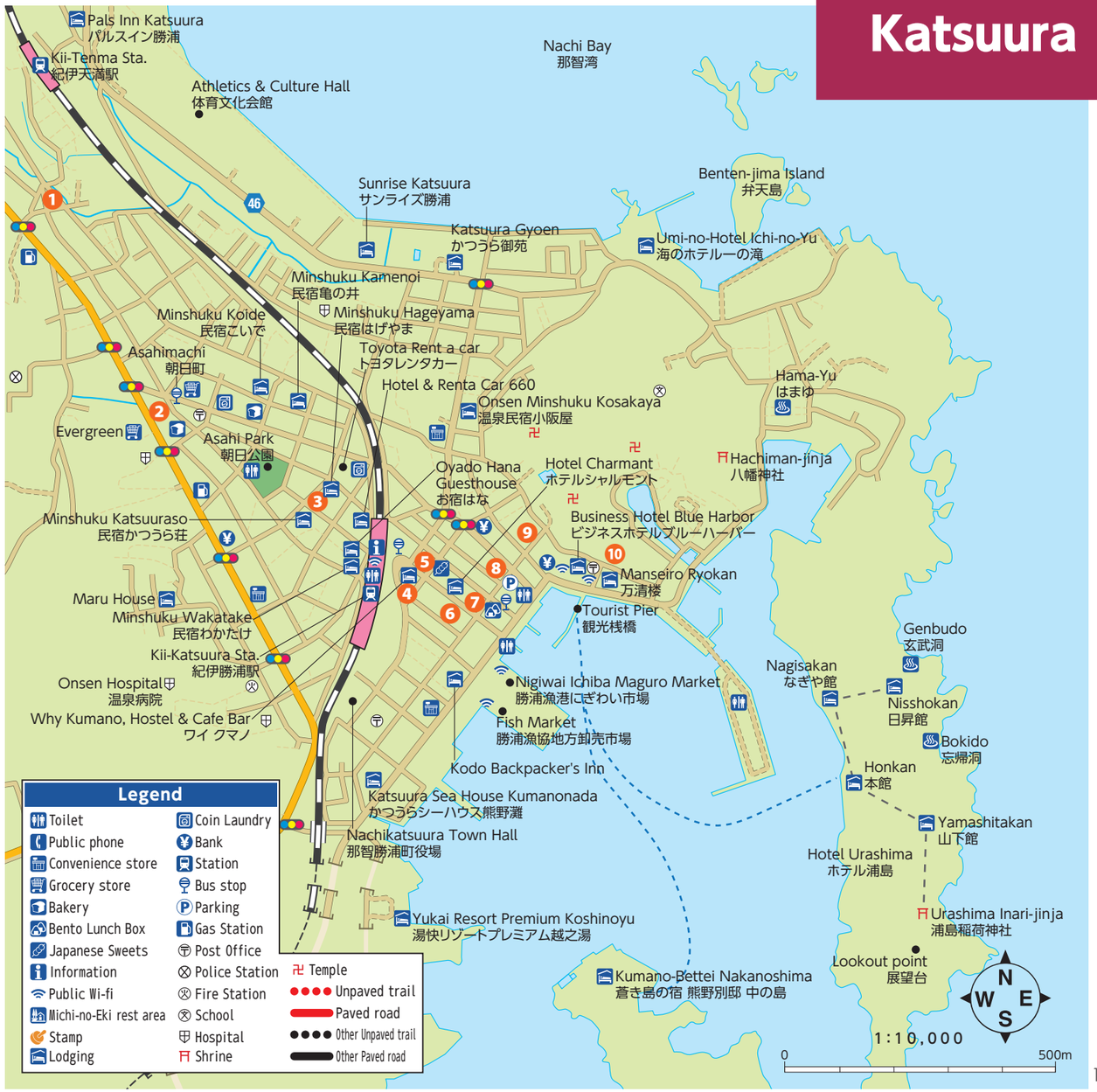
Hours: 8:30~18:00 (Open year-round)

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 まぐろ三昧那智	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.

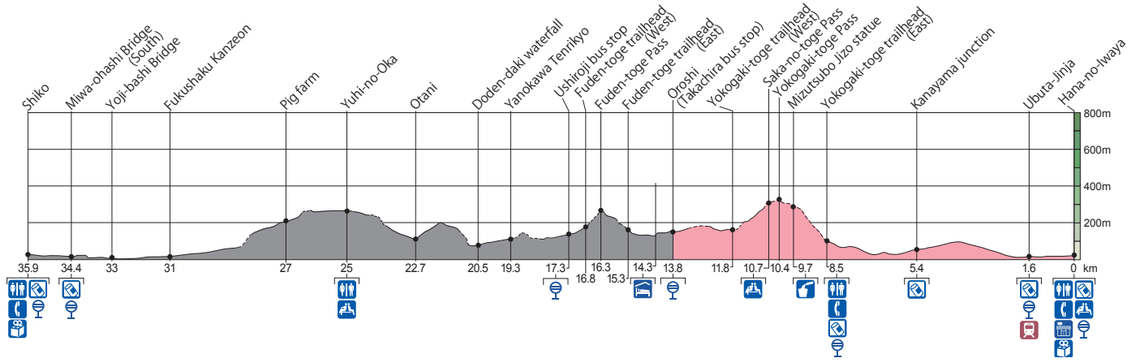
Katsuura



Yokogaki-toge Pass
(Oroshi~Hana-no-Iwaya)
尾呂志~花の窟

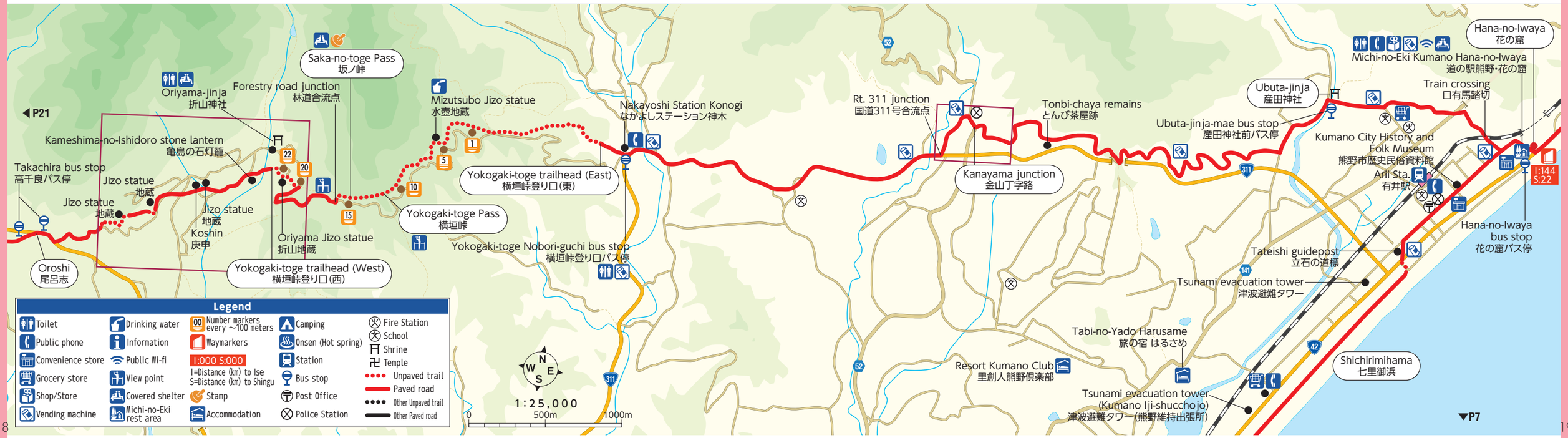
Distance (km) : ~14
Time (hr) : 5~6
Total Elevation Gain (m): ~470
Total Elevation Loss (m): ~340

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



Sakamoto

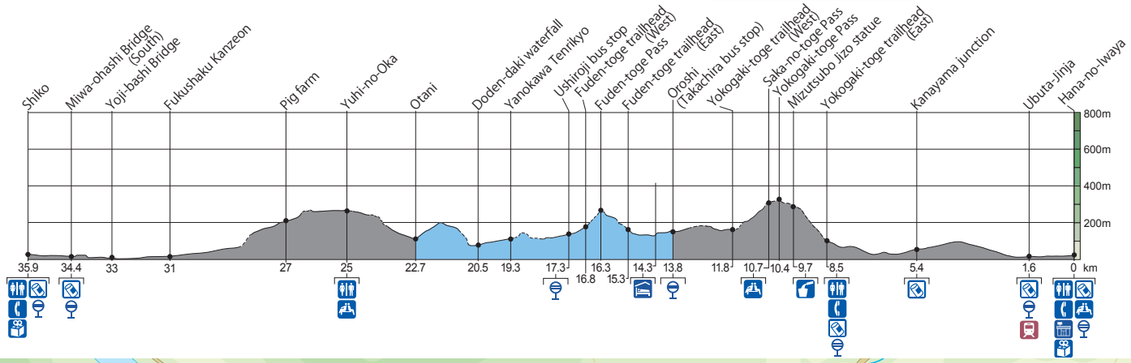
Kanayama



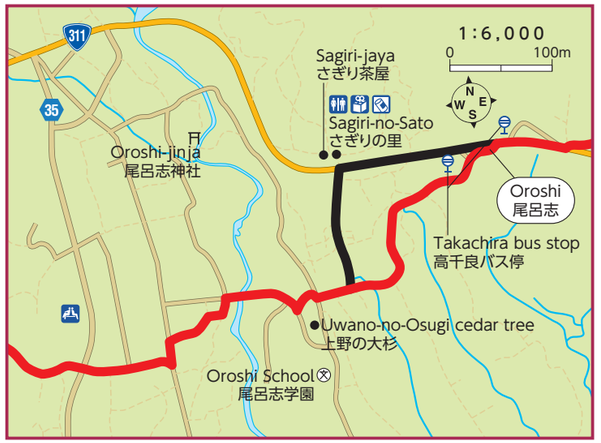
Maruyama Senmaida, Fuden-toge Pass
(Seiryuso~Oroshi)
瀞流荘～尾呂志

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

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



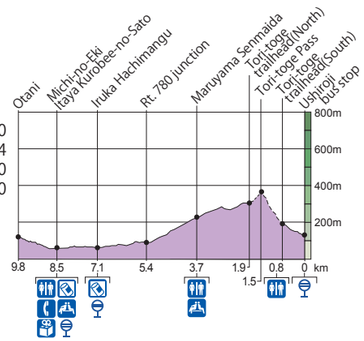
Oroshi

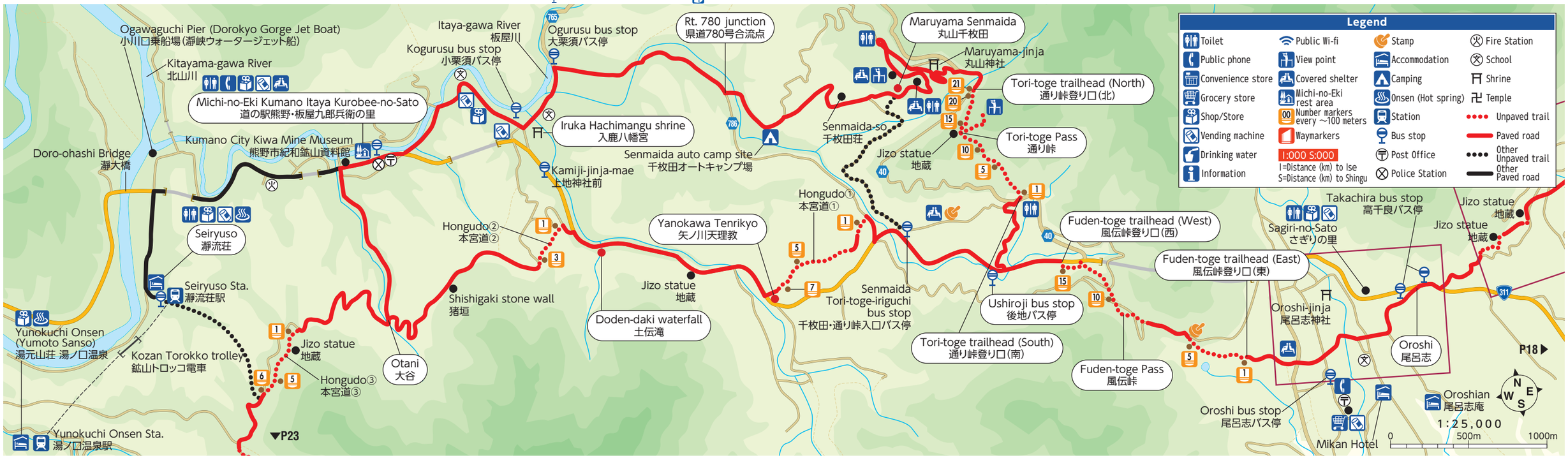


Maruyama Senmaida
丸山千枚田

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

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

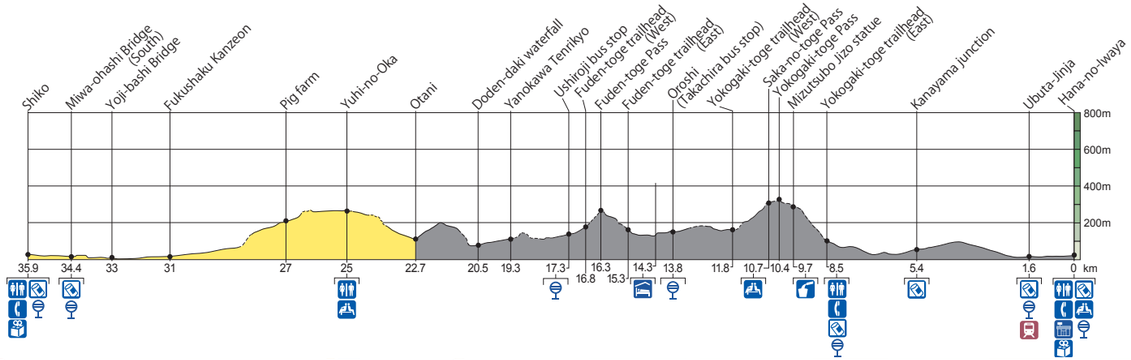




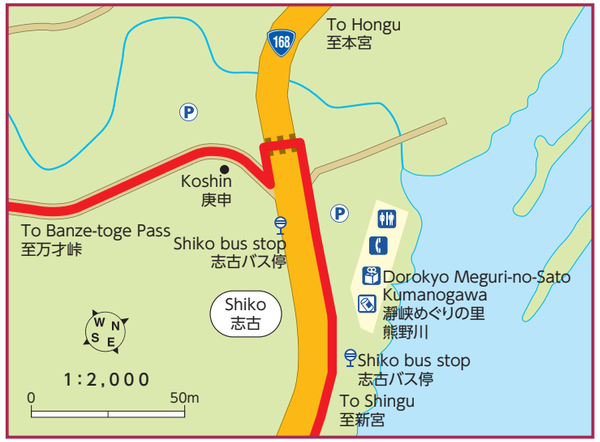
Hongudo
(Shiko~Seiryuso)
志古~瀞流荘

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

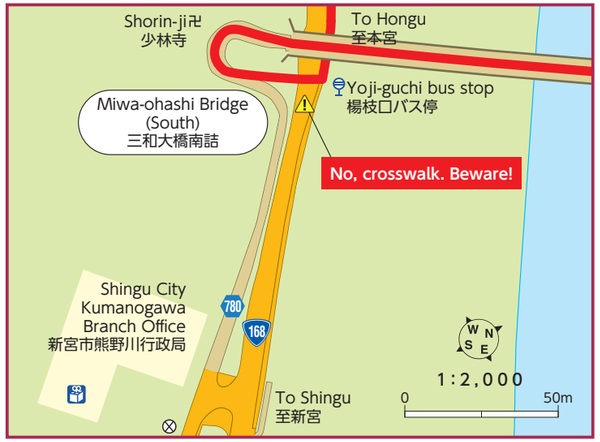
-------- Unpaved trail
——— Paved trail



Shiko



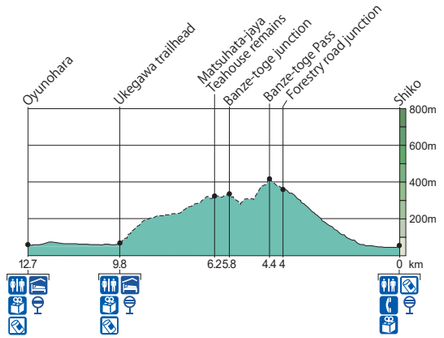
Miwa-obashi Bridge (South)



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



Wataze Onsen (Watarase Onsen)

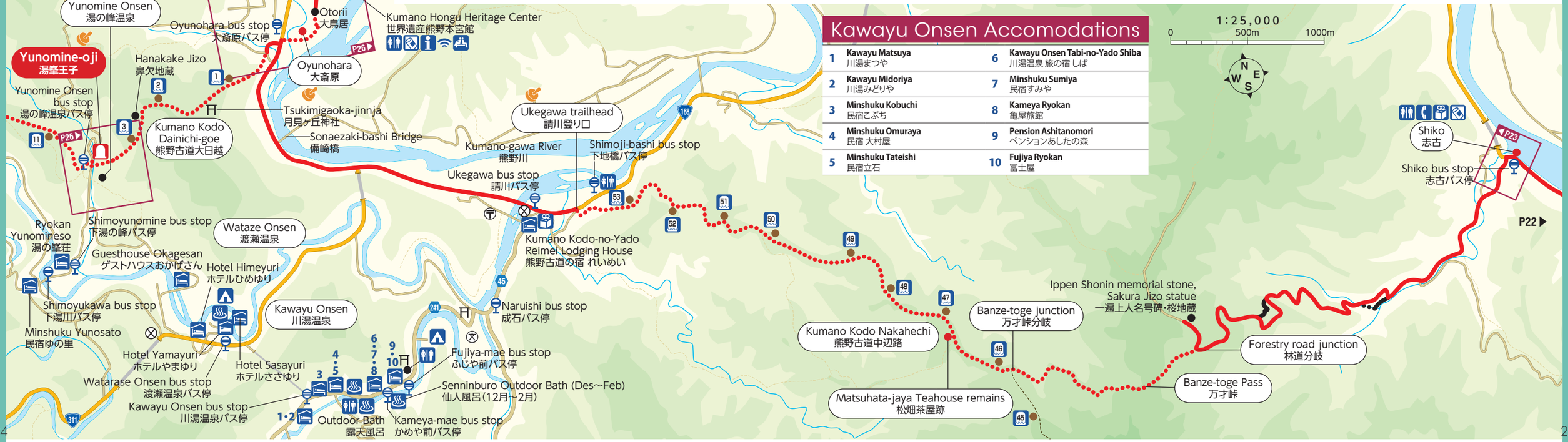
Wataze Onsen (Watarase Onsen) is a hot spring resort with multiple, large open-air hot spring baths.

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.

Legend

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



Kawayu Onsen Accomodations

1	Kawayu Matsuya 川湯まつや	6	Kawayu Onsen Tabi-no-Yado Shiba 川湯温泉 旅の宿 しば
2	Kawayu Midoriya 川湯みどりや	7	Minshuku Sumiya 民宿すみや
3	Minshuku Kobuchi 民宿こぶち	8	Kameya Ryokan 亀屋旅館
4	Minshuku Omuraya 民宿 大村屋	9	Pension Ashitanomori ペンションあしたの森
5	Minshuku Tateishi 民宿立石	10	Fujiya Ryokan 富士屋

Hongu

Yunomine Onsen

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

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 Peaple
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

Kumano Kodo Tips

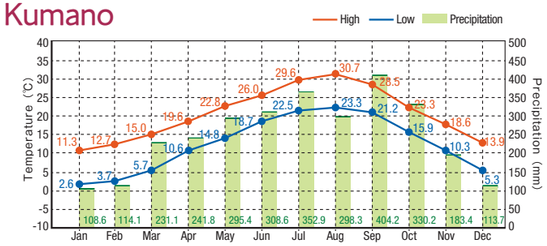
The Kumano Kodo is a diverse mountain route with a mixture of unpaved, uneven trails, ancient cobblestones and stairs, and paved roads through villages. There are some steep climbs and ascents, but the route is not technically difficult. The amount of preparation that is needed will depend greatly on 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/

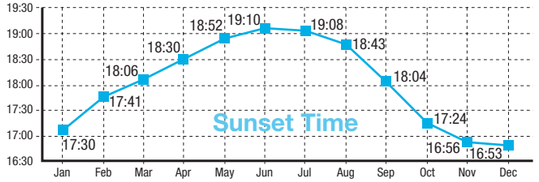
Kumano

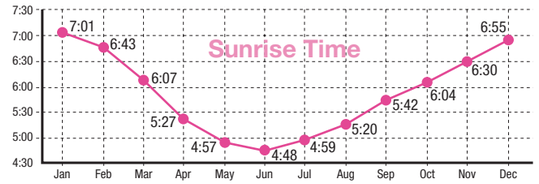


Daylight

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/

Money/ATM

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

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

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

Electricity

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

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

Safety

Earthquake & Tsunami

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

NOTE: Tsunami warning sign shown at right.

Extreme Weather & Typhoons

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

Slippery Stones

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

Mamushi Snake

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

Mukade Centipede

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

Suzumebachi Hornet

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

In Case of Emergency

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

Shrines

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

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

Omamori

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

Ema

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

Goohoin (Goshimpu)

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

Pilgrimage Etiquette

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

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

Accommodations

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

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

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

LINK
www.kumano-travel.com

Meals

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

HINT: Practice with chopsticks before you come.

Bedding (Futons)

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

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

Yukata

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

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

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

Tatami

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

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

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

Slippers

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

Basically there are three sets of footwear:

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

Baths (Onsen)

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

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

How to Bathe

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

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

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

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

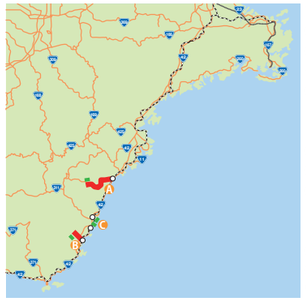
NOTE: For a full guide to the Japanese bath visit the following page online.

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

Model Itineraries

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

Highlight Walks

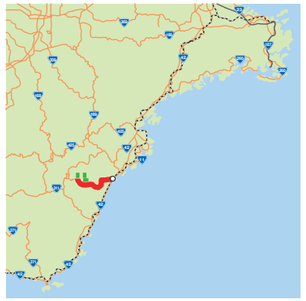


Maruyama Senmaida Highlight Walk
- ●Bus to Senmaida Tori-toge-iriguchi
- ●Walk Maruyama Senmaida (p.20～21, ～3km)
- ●Bus to Kumanoshi Sta. ⊠

Daimon-zaka Highlight Walk
- ●Bus to Daimonzaka
- ●Walk Daimon-zaka (p.14, ～1km)
- ●Bus to Kii-Katsuura Sta. ⊠

Koya-zaka Highlight Walk
- ●Transfer to Kumano Hayatama Taisha
- ●Walk Kumano Hayatama Taisha to Miwasaki Sta. (p.12～13, ～7km) ⊠

Maruyama Senmaida Day Walk

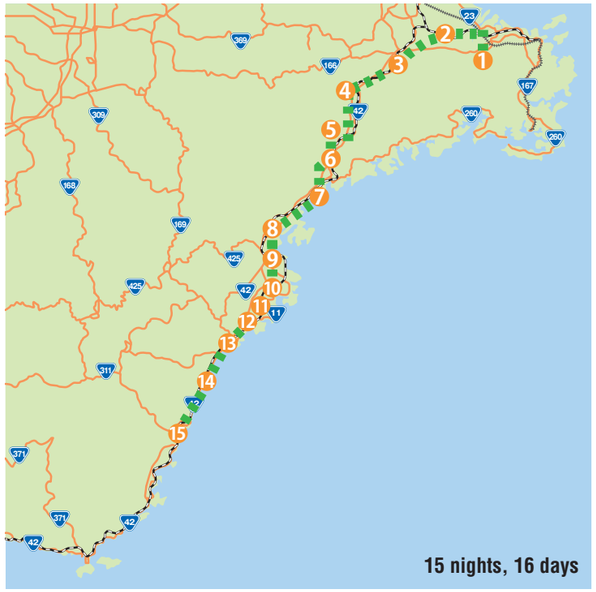


- ●Bus to Ushiroji
- ●Walk Tori-toge Pass and Maruyama Senmaida to Michi-no-Eki Kumano Itaya Kurobee-no-Sato (p.20～21, ～8km)

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



Day1：
- ●Transfer to Ise City, overnight ❶

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

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

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

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

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

Day7：
- ●Walk to Furusato Onsen (～17km), overnight ❼

Day8：
- ●Walk to Aiga (～14km), overnight ❽

Day9：
- ●Walk to Owase (～6km), overnight ❾

Day10：
- ●Walk to Mikisato (～12km), overnight ❿

Day11：
- ●Walk to Kata (～5km), overnight ⓫

Day12：
- ●Walk to Atashika (～10km), overnight ⓬

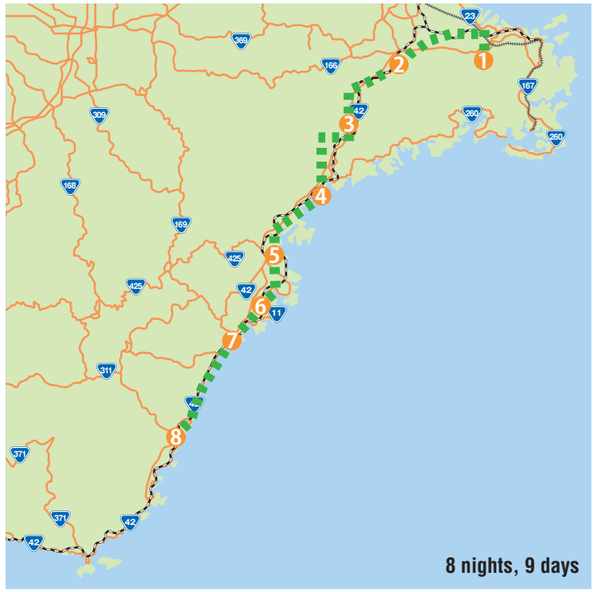
Day13：
- ●Walk to Central Kumano (～8km), overnight ⓭

Day14：
- ●Walk to Atawa (p.6～7, ～12km), overnight ⓮

Day15：
- ●Walk to Shingu (p.8～9, ～11km), overnight ⓯

Day16：
- ●Transfer to next destination

Iseji Advanced Complete Trek



Day1：
- ●Transfer to Ise Jingu Naiku, overnight ❶

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

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

Day4：
- ●Walk to Furusato Onsen (～29km), overnight ❹

Day5：
- ●Walk to Owase (～20km), overnight ❺

Day6：
- ●Walk to Kata (～17km), overnight ❻

Day7：
- ●Walk to Central Kumano (～18km), overnight ❼

Day8：
- ●Walk to Shingu (p.6～9, ～23km), overnight ❽

Day9：
- ●Transfer to next destination

KUMANO KODO

Pilgrimage Route Maps Series

ISEJI (North)

ISEJI (Central)

ISEJI (South)

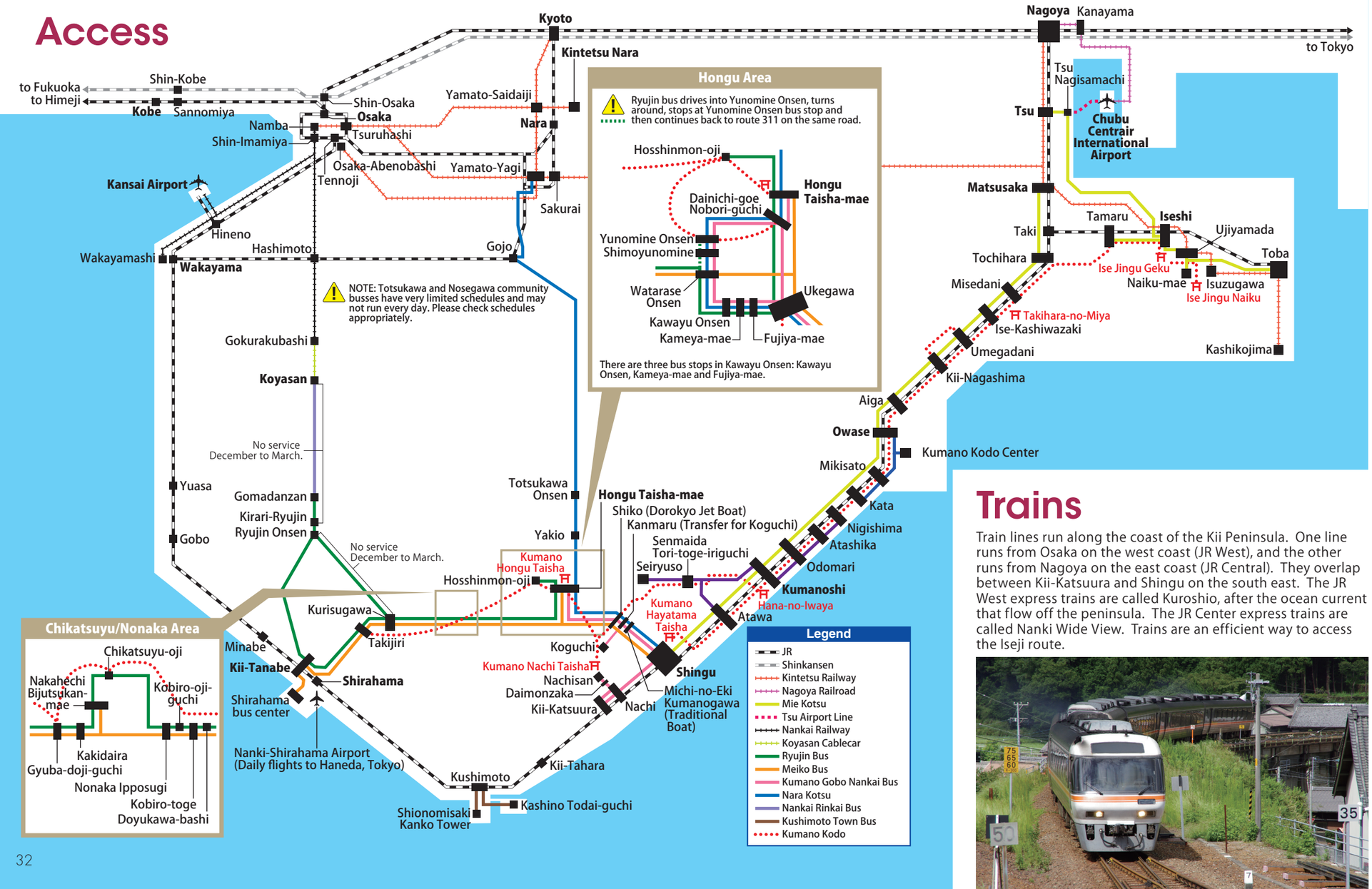
NAKAHECHI

KOHECHI

OHECHI

Download Maps
www.tb-kumano.jp

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

● Shingu (Local, Express) ● Nachi (Local)

Local Trians

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

Bus

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

NOTE: Downloadable timetables are available online.

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

How to Ride a Local Bus

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

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

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

Useful Words & Phrases

- I would like to buy a one way express train ticket to Kumanoshi 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 (プラットホーム)
- 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	○	○	○	○	○	○

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

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

Drive Guide

Route Guide

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

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

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

North | River Plains & Valleys

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

Central | Inlets & Passes

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

South | Beaches & Rice Paddies

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

Iseji South

Hana-no-Iwaya

Hana-no-Iwaya is one of the oldest shrines in Japan—the gravesite of Izanami-no-Mikoto, the female creative deity in Japanese mythology, who died giving birth to the fire deity.

Hongudo Junction

At Hana-no-Iwaya the Iseji splits into the Hamakaido which continues along the beach until Kumano Hayatama Taisha and the Hongudo, which heads inland towards Kumano Hongu Taisha.

Michi-no-Eki Kumano Hana-no-Iwaya

This Michi-no-Eki is a welcoming collection of low wooden buildings serving light meals and selling local souvenirs, such as carvings with the rich black Nachiguro rock.

Hamakaido

Shichirimihama is ~25 km in length, the longest beach in Japan. It is composed of gravel and rocks, battered by the Pacific Ocean and not suitable for swimming because of swift currents. The trail is a mixture of paved road, pine forested trail, and concrete embankments. Historically it was a dangerous section with many river crossings. The Japanese black pines were planted in the early 17th century as a windbreak.

Santanbo

To get across the Kumano-gawa River, the last major waterway, pilgrims used a variety of boats including the Santanbo 三反帆. This is a flat bottom wooden boat with three sails the same width as a kimono sash because that was the size of the looms that were available. It is possible to ride on one of these traditional boats partway up the river.

Shingu

Shingu is the town on the west side of the Kumano-gawa River and the site of Kumano Hayatama Taisha.

Kawaramachi

There was a very bustling community living on the riverbank before modern times. But because of the high risk of flooding the buildings were made to be dismantled quickly and moved to higher ground.

At its peak until around 1920 there were up to 300 shops including, shipping agents, restaurants, bars, hotels, blacksmith, barbers, and a public bath. All of this could be dismantled and moved within 30 minutes and reconstructed in an hour or two. No nails were used, only joint work. Amazing!

Shingu Castle remains

The Shingu castle was completed in 1633 after 32 years of construction and called Tankaku-jo. The hilltop position had a good view out to sea to monitor the shipping routes along the coast. It was dismantled in 1871 but the stone foundation is still in good condition. This is a popular site for cherry blossom viewing in the spring.

Asuka-jinja

Asuka-jinja shrine is an ancient sacred site believe to protect the river mouth from storms and floods.

Koya-zaka

The Koya-zaka is the next section of the Kumano Kodo that leads along the coast to Nachi station. Ojigahama is the name for beach on the Shingu side of the Kumano-gawa River. A road leads to the trailhead of this coastal trail. Along the way are side trails to lookout points that whalers traditionally used.

Kokuji-toge Pass & Okuji-toge Pass

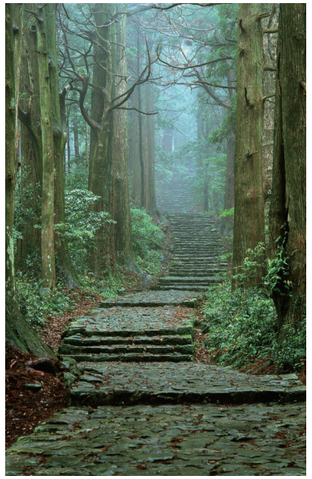
After the Koya-zaka the trail follows highway 42 going over two small passes: Kokuji-toge and Okuji-toge.

CAUTION: There are sections along this highway with no sidewalk and heavy traffic. Please be careful.

Fudarakusan-ji

Fudarakusan-ji 補陀洛山寺 is a Tendai Buddhist temple located ~6 km downstream from Nachi-no-Otaki near the coast. It is from here that Buddhist priests performed Fudaraku Tokai 補陀落 渡海, a type of ritual martyrdom involving sailing out into the southern sea in search of the Kannon's southern Pure Land Paradise called Fudarakusan. This ritual was repeated around 20 times between the 9th and 18th century.

The gravestones of the monks who performed the Fudaraku Tokai are located behind the Fudarakusan-ji Temple. In the Edo period (1603-1868), this suicidal religious ritual underwent a change: the bodies of deceased monks were sent out to sea, instead of living devotees.



Daimon-zaka

Daimon-zaka 大門坂 is an impressive cobblestone staircase (600 m long with 267 stairs). It is lined with centuries old trees and runs from the valley bottom to the Kumano Nachi Taisha shrine sanctuary. Daimon-zaka means "large gate slope" referring to a shrine-gate that once stood nearby. At the base of the staircase are two 800-year-old Japanese cedar trees called the Meoto-sugi 夫婦杉 or "married couple cedar trees". Nearby is a shop where visitors can rent Heian period Kimonos called Daimon-zaka Chaya.

Hours: 9:00~ 16:00
Price: 2,000~ 3,000 yen

Kumano Nachi Taisha

The Nachi-no-Otaki is 133 meters high and 13 meters wide, the tallest waterfall in Japan. It is a sanctuary of Kumano Nachi Taisha and thus has been protected since ancient times and is used for ascetic training by mountain monks who practice Shugendo, a mixed religion of foreign and indigenous beliefs. You can walk down to near the base past the three-storied pagoda after visiting the shrine grounds.

Seiganto-ji

The wonderful wooden Seiganto-ji is a Tendai Buddhist temple founded in the early 5th century. Legend holds that a Buddhist priest from India drifted ashore and experienced a revelation of Kannon, the Buddhist deity of mercy. Seiganto-ji Temple is also the first sacred place of "Saigokujunrei", or pilgrimage to 33 Kannons in Western Japan which started in 1161. Many pilgrims in the Edo era would link the Ise Jingu, 33 Kannon and the Kumano Sanzan pilgrimage in the same trip.

Hongudo

Hongudo is the mountain trail shortcut to Kumano Hongu Taisha that joins up with the Nakahechi route partway on the Kogumotori-goe via the Banze-toge pass.

Ubata-jinja

The Ubata-jinja is believed to be were Izanami gave birth to the fire deity. It is a site of ceremonies for safe childbearing. Sanma-zushi is used during religious rites at the shrine and it is believed that this is originally where this local dish derived from.

Orchards

The trail follows roads gradually further inland passing through settlements and orange orchards. Orange are a famous product with many species harvested year-round.

Yokogaki-toge Pass

The trailhead for the Yokogaki-toge is ~8 km from Hana-no-Iwaya. The highest point is 305 m above sea level. There sections of volcanic stones used for steps.

Mizutsubo Jizo

Kukai (774–835) was a very influential monk and founder of the Shingon esoteric school of Buddhism with its base in Koyasan. There are many legends associated with him across the country, especially concerning water and wells. This is another of those locations where it is believed that he pushed his walking stick into the ground and well water sprang up.

Kameshima-no-Ishidoro stone lantern

The trail opens onto terraced rice paddies. There are often fences to keep animals out so you may need to open and close these to get through. On top of a 5-meter-tall rock called Kameshima (turtle island) is a stone lantern which stands out in its surroundings.

Oroshi

The next hamlet is called Oroshi and the site of another awe-inspiring natural phenomenon called Fuden-oroshi. The mountains to the north are steep and make a large basin where fog is trapped. When the conditions are right the fog rolls down the mountain through the lowest place, Fuden-toge. It is an eerie site to see the slow flow of thick mist like a phantom river.

Fuden-toge Pass

Fuden-toge has been a major pass until recent history. It is an important trail linking the isolated village to the north with the coastal community to the south.

Tori-toge Pass

Tori-toge is a side-trail that leads to Maruyama Senmaida, an architectural wonder of terraced rice paddies. There is a steep side trail partway to get the highest birds-eye view of the valley.

Maruyama Senmaida

Maruyama Senmaida is one of the top 100 terraced rice fields in Japan with 1,340 paddies dramatically cascading down the mountainside. It has a long history with the first records in 1590. By 1601 there were 2,240 paddies and peaked in 1898 at 2,483. The Senmaida were well-preserved until the late 1960s, but changes to farming regulations along with an ageing and dwindling population resulted in abandonment of many rice farms, and by the early 1990s fewer than 530 terraces (4.6 hectares) remained, because of the declining population and number of farmers. So, the local people banned together and created a preservation society.

They have a unique ownership program where people can donate 30,000 and have their own paddy for the year. One can join in the planting and harvesting, and the volunteers take care of the fields the rest of the year. They also get to take home the rice!

Historically there was a rite called mushiokuri where farmers walked in a procession at night with torches, drums, and bells to ward off insects. Present day this is more of an event with candles lite through the paddies. This takes place annual at the beginning of June.

Watch for the giant boulder in the middle of the paddies—easy to find—and possibly the world's smallest rice paddy—a little more difficult to see!

Former Mining Town

Kiwa is the region north of Senmaida bordering the Kitayama-gawa River. The mines at Kiwa have a very long history, and records indicate that copper (and then later gold and silver), were mined since at least the Nara period (710-794). In fact, huge amounts of copper required to build the Daibutsu of the Todai-ji in Nara was originally mined here.

The former Kishu Mine stands on this same site, and from 1934 until 1978 it developed various new and pioneering technologies in the mining industry to improve productivity. It was one of the most prolific domestic producers of copper during this time.

The electric rail cars once used to transport materials have been repurposed for tourism, and visitors can now ride the tram between two different onsen facilities: Iruka Onsen Hotel Seiryuso and Yunokuchi Onsen.

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

The trail follows roads to the next town and Michi-no-Eki Kumano Itaya Kurobee-no-Sato which draws its name from the legend of Kurobee and Okiku.

Dorokyo Gorge

Upriver on the Kitayama-gawa River is the steep Dorokyo Gorge. There are jet boat trips which depart from the Kiwa area.

Hongudo

The main trail does not follow the Tori-toge pass but heads west. It mainly follows forestry roads but have a few sections on mountain trails. Please note that there are not many facilities on this minor section.

Bouldering Anybody?

Near the Yuhi-no-Oka viewpoint are a scattering of monoliths in the forest which have become the focus of climbing enthusiasts who banded together to create the Kumano Boulding Area. From there it is mostly downhill to the valley bottom where the trail follows the road to the Kumano-gawa River.

Shiko

Cross the large bridge to the far side of the river and turn north on route 168 to arrive at Shiko. This is the jet boat center for trips up the Kitayama-gawa River.

Banze-toge Pass

A windy forestry road climbs ~4 km to the trailhead of the Banze-toge which joins the Kogumotori-goe section of the Nakahechi route at signpost number 46. Descend to Ukegawa and follow the road to Hongu.

Kumano Hongu Taisha

Across the road from the Kumano Hongu Heritage Center stairs lined with offering flags lead to Kumano Hongu Taisha, one of the three grand shrines of Kumano. The pavilions have gone through periodic rebuilding after damage from fires and floods, but the architectural style has remained consistent for over 800 years. Notice the graceful cypress bark roof and distinctive bronze ornaments on the roof top.

Oyunohara

Oyuohara is the original site of the Kumano Hongu Taisha. In 1889 a flood destroyed the shrine and it was moved to its current location. In the clearing the expansive, raised earthen platform still exists. A massive Torii gate marks the entrance at almost 34 meters tall and 42 meters wide. It is built of steel and erected in the year 2000.