

Practical Travel Guide - 401

NIIGATA and SADO ISLAND



Japan National
Tourism Organization
日本政府観光局



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In collaboration with
Tourist Information Centers in the area



Niigata City (新潟市), the capital of Niigata Prefecture with a population of 789,368 (Sep. 2019), is situated at the estuary of the Shinano River, the longest in Japan. Niigata has long thrived as a port town, the largest on the Japan Sea Coast, and is now a modern industrial city. The city center is divided by the Shinano River into 2 sections—the east side, a developing subcenter, and the west side filled with amusement and shopping districts. Niigata is the gateway to Sado Island by sea.

Sado Island (佐渡ヶ島), about 1 hr. by Jet foil or 2 hrs. 30 min. by ferry from Niigata. It has 2 parallel mountain chains, between which lies an extensive plain with small rice farms. The 855 km² island with a population of 54,438 (Sep. 2019) boasts natural

wonders and historical relics of gold rush days.

Historically, the island was the place of the harshest exile until the Middle Ages, when many anti-government intellectuals were banished there. In the Edo Period (1603–1868), a rich gold mine was found and the island encountered the gold rush age. Sado is the birthplace of **Ondeko** (鬼太鼓), a traditional performing art with Japanese Drums (和太鼓). Performances differ from village to village. It's very exciting to see ogres swinging their hairs as they beat their drums. You can see them in some festivals especially in spring and autumn.

Sado Tourism Association (佐渡観光協会)

URL: <http://www.visitsado.com/en/>

Access to Niigata:

By Rail:

From	To	By	Approx. Travel Time	Price
Tokyo	Niigata	JR Joetsu Shinkansen "Toki"	2 hrs. 15 min.	¥10,760*
Osaka	Kanazawa	JR Limited Express "Thunderbird"	2 hrs. 35 min.	¥16,620*
Kanazawa	Joetsu-Myoko	JR Hokuriku Shinkansen "Hakutaka"	1 hr.	
Joetsu-Myoko	Niigata	JR Limited Express "Shirayuki" **	2 hrs.	

*Fare + express charge (with seat reservation, normal season).

**Additional charges (¥450 total*) are required for nationwide Japan Rail Pass holders between Joetsu-Myoko and Naoetsu on Echigo TOKImeki Railway.

By Air:

From	To	Operated by	Approx. Travel Time	Access to Downtown
Itami (Osaka)	Niigata	ANA, JAL, IBEX	1 hr. 10 min.	[To Niigata Sta.] - By limousine bus 25 min. ¥420
Kansai (Osaka)		APJ	1 hr. 5 min.	
Chubu* (Nagoya)		ANA	50 min.	
Narita (Chiba)		ANA	1 hr. 5 min.	

*Chubu Int'l Airport (Centrair).

By Bus:

From	To	Approx. Travel Time	Price	Ticketing & Operator
Ikebukuro Sta. (Tokyo)	Niigata Sta.	5 hrs. 15 min.	¥3,200 - ¥7,900*	<u>Japan bus online</u> (Seibu Bus)
Shinjuku Sta. (Tokyo)		6 hrs. 15 min.		
Hankyu Umeda (Osaka)		9 hrs. 30 min. (night bus)	¥8,700 - ¥10,200*	Hankyu Highway Bus (06)6866-3147
Meitetsu Bus Center (Nagoya)		7 hrs. 5 min.	¥5,000 - ¥9,700*	<u>Meitetsu Bus</u> (052)582-0489

*The price may vary depending on your departure date & time.

Access to Sado Island from Niigata:

From	To	By	Approx. Travel Time	Price
Niigata Port	Ryotsu Port (Sado)	Ferry	2 hrs. 30 min.	¥2,420 (2nd cl.)
		Jet foil (Hydrofoil)	1 hr. 5 min.	¥6,510

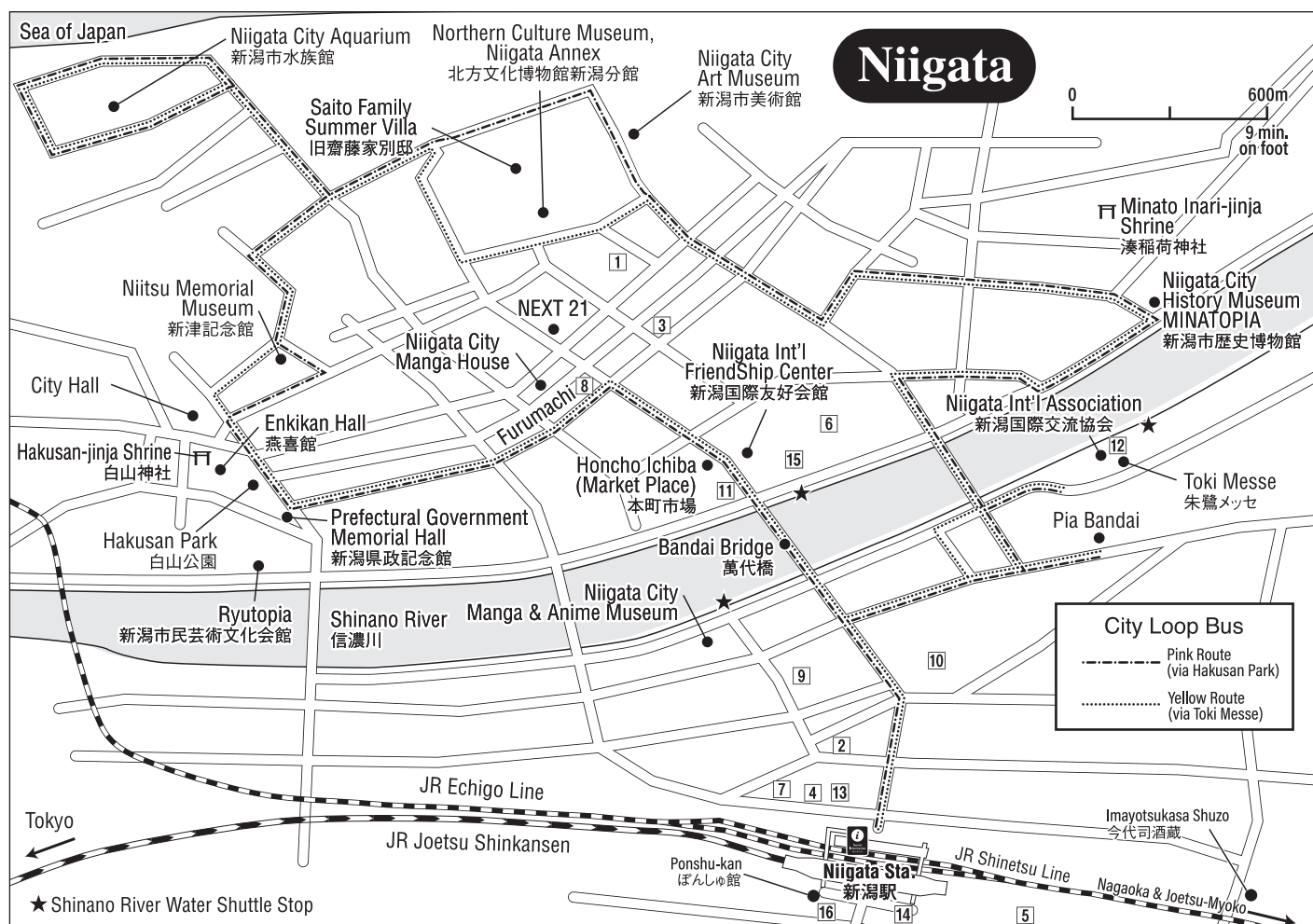
From Niigata Sta. to Niigata Port: 15 min. by bus (¥210).

Guided bus tours in Sado Island:

Some of guided bus tours are operated (in Japanese only), and most are from Ryotsu port.

*See p. 5 for admission and opening times.

NIIGATA CITY



Tourist City Loop Bus

The loop bus stops tourist spots in Niigata City. 2 routes are available. 1-day pass: ¥500 (¥250 for children)

Places of Interest:

Toki Messe (朱鷺メッセ), 15 min. by bus from Niigata Sta. is the tallest building in the city which stands at the mouth of great Shinano river. You can enjoy the beautiful panoramic view of the city from the 31st free observation deck.

Hakusan-jinja Shrine (白山神社), 15 min. by bus from Niigata Sta., has been revered as a local tutelary deity for more than 400 years. It is now worshiped as a god of marriage, drawing large crowds of visitors. Hakusan Park in the shrine precincts has a fine lotus pond surrounded by some 20 literary monuments.

Niigata Prefectural Government Memorial Hall (新潟県政記念館), close to the Hakusan-jinja Shrine, was built in 1883, and was used as a prefectural parliament for some 50 years. This is the only building remaining from among all the prefectural halls built in the Meiji Period (1868–1912). This hall was constructed after the style of the House of Parliament in London, with the Shinano River substituting for the Thames as the setting. It is now a museum. Hours: 9:00–16:30. Closed: Mon. (and the following day after the holiday when Mon. falls on a national holiday), national holidays & New Year holiday.

Enki-kan Hall (燕喜館), A reconstruction of the Saito Mansion, the house of a merchant who flourished from the Meiji to Showa periods. Hours: 9:00–17:00. Closed: 1st & 3rd Mon., New Year holiday.

1 – 16 correspond to those on the accommodations list for Niigata on page 4/5

Furumachi (古町), 8 min. by bus from Niigata Sta., is the oldest part of the city. Unfortunately, a great fire in 1955 destroyed the old time atmosphere. Today this district is a lively shopping quarter.

Saito Family Summer Villa (旧齋藤家別邸), 20 min. by bus from Niigata Sta., was built in 1918 and is preserved as a part of the cultural heritage. Volunteer guides offer English speaking guided tours. (reservations are recommended: post@saitouke.jp) Hours: 9:30–17:00, –18:00 (Apr.–Sep.). Closed: Mon. (or the following day after the holiday when Mon. falls on a national holiday), New Year holiday. Admission: ¥300.

Niigata Science Museum (新潟県立自然科学館), 20 min. by bus from Niigata Sta., was constructed in 1981 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the founding of Niigata Prefecture. There is a fine view of Toyano Lagoon from the top. Hours: 10:00–17:00, 9:30–16:30 (Sat., Sun., national holiday). Closed: Mon. (or the following day after the holiday when Mon. falls on a national holiday), New Year holiday. Admission: ¥580.

Pia Bandai, 20 min. by bus from Niigata Sta. is a food market. You can enjoy fresh Niigata food including Sushi, Sake and flowers.

Niigata City Aquarium (新潟市水族館), Marinepia Nihon-kai is one of the aquariums in the Japan Sea area with the largest scale which exhibits 20,000 marine animals. Hours: 9:00–17:00. Closed: New Year holiday., 1st Thu. & Fri. of Mar. Admission: ¥1,500.

*See p. 5 for admission and opening times.

Niigata City Art Museum (新潟市美術館), Primarily the works of local artists as well as modern and contemporary artists are exhibited. Hours: 9:30–18:00. Closed: Mon. (or the following day after the holiday when Mon. falls on a national holiday), New Year holiday. Admission: ¥200.

Honcho Ichiba (Marketplace) (本町市場), A lively marketplace located in downtown Niigata City. It is considered the kitchen for its citizens. Hours: 10:00–17:00 (depends on shops). Nearest Bus Stop is the Honcho Bus Stop.

Northern Culture Museum (北方文化博物館), 10 min. by taxi from Niitsu Sta. or 40 min. by bus from Bandai City Bus Center (10 min. walk from Niigata Sta.) to Kamisoumi Hakubutsukan-mae Bus Stop, is a spacious wooden house containing 65 rooms built on a site of 29,091m². It was built in the Meiji period (1868–1912) for the Ito Family, a wealthy landowner, and is a good example of traditional Japanese architecture. Hours: 9:00–17:00, –16:30 (Dec.–Mar.). Admission: ¥800.

Niigata Airport (新潟空港), 25 min. by bus from Niigata Sta., services international flights from Seoul, Shanghai, Harbin, Taipei and domestic flights.

Niigata Port (新潟港), 15 min. by bus from Niigata Sta., is a starting point for the boat to Sado Island.

Niigata is famous for its prime quality rice and **Sake** (rice wine). You can visit some sake breweries such as **Imayotsukasa Shuzo** (今代司酒造), a 7-min. bus ride (¥210) from Niigata Sta. to “Nuttari Hakusan” (沼垂白山) bus stop, then 3 min. walk. [Factory tour] Starting time: 9:00–16:00 daily (every an hour, about 20 min. per tour) except Dec. 31–Jan. 3. Charge: Free. Note: The tour is held in Japanese with English leaflets. Reservation is not required for groups of 7 or less. Also, you can enjoy tasting almost all kinds of Sake in Niigata Pref. at **Ponshu-kan** (ぽんしゅ館), inside of Niigata Sta. [Tasting area] Hours: 9:30–20:30 (enter by 20:15). Charge: ¥500 for 5 portions.

SADO ISLAND

Suggested Travel Route

Niigata Port — 1 hr. by hydrofoil — Ryotsu Port in Sado Island — 5 min. walk — Lake Kamo — 40 min. by taxi — Mt. Donden — 40 min. by taxi — Ryotsu — 1 hr. 10 min. by bus — Aikawa — 20 min. walk — Aikawa Folk Museum — 40 min. walk or 5 min. by taxi — Sado Gold Mine — Aikawa

Places of Interest in Ryotsu and Vicinity:

Ryotsu (両津), the major gateway to Sado Island, is the island's largest city, and a good base for seeing Sado. A thriving tourist resort, Ryotsu has many well-appointed hotels and Ryokan. The busiest quarter is Yebisu, with many local restaurants and bars.

Lake Kamo (加茂湖), once a freshwater lake, now holds seawater following construction of the canal in 1903. On its eastern shore is **Shiizaki Park** (椎崎公園), commanding a fine view of the lake with the reflection of Mt. Kimpoku.

Ryotsu Onsen (両津温泉) consists of 2 hot springs—Sumiyoshi and Shiizaki. **Sumiyoshi Onsen** (住吉温泉), 10 min. by bus from Ryotsu, was known for a long time, but has only been developed as a resort since 1969. This spring, containing Sodium-chloride, is reputedly good for neuralgia, rheumatism and curing fatigue. It is also popular as a swimming resort. **Shiizaki Onsen** (椎崎温泉), 10 min. by bus from Ryotsu, was constructed quite recently in Suwa Park with hot water piped from Sumiyoshi Onsen. There are several ryokan, or Japanese inn, set in quiet locations, many with fine views of mountain ranges and Lake Kamo.

Mt. Donden (ドンデン山) is the most popular climb in Sado. From the summit are splendid views of Ryotsu Bay, Lake Kamo and rice fields, and you can see as far as Mts. Yahiko and Chokaizan in the Honshu main island on a clear day. The summit is a plateau carpeted with various kinds of wild flowers in season and is a good place to enjoy hiking and camping. 20 min. by car from Ryotsu to the entrance of the climbing trail.

Places of Interest in Aikawa and Vicinity:

Aikawa (相川) can be reached in 1 hr. 10 min. by bus from Ryotsu (1–2 run per hour). Until 1601, there were only 10 houses. A rich gold vein was found in that year, and the town grew at a rapid pace, inhabited by 100,000. The Tokugawa Shogunate placed the town under direct control, and sent a large number of people from Tokyo (then called Edo) to dig gold mines. Mining continued until the end of the Edo Period in 1867. As the mine shut down, the town declined and today has a population of only 6,789 (Nov. 2016). Today, it is a sightseeing resort featuring the relics of the old gold mine.

Walking is the best way to get around the gold mine. Walking up the narrow, paved road leading to the relics from the bus terminal, you can find many small temples on the way. These were built one after another in the early Edo Period, when the gold digging came to its peak. After passing by the **Chomyoji Temple** (長明寺), the oldest one remaining to this day in the town, you can get to the summit in several more minutes. On the summit is a big bell, and 50 steps away to the right, is **Mizukaemushuku-no-haka** (水替無宿の墓), the only formal grave for the enslaved miners. From there, you can look down at **Dooyu-no-wareto** (道遊の割戸), the old gold mine excavated by manpower only. The numerous test holes sunk on the slopes present as unusual picture. The remains can be reached in 40 min. on foot or in 5 min. by taxi from Aikawa bus terminal.

Aikawa Folk Museum (相川郷土博物館), 20 min. walk down from the mine, exhibits various materials related to this old mine. Hours: 8:30–17:00. Closed: national holidays, Sat. & Sun. (Dec.–Feb.). Admission: ¥300.

Sado Kinzan or **Sado Gold Mine** (佐渡金山), designated as an National Historic Site, is the largest gold and silver mines in Japan for almost 400 years until 1989. There are two major tunnels open to the public. Sodayu tunnel (宗太夫坑), drifted in the Edo period (1603–1868), exhibits the working conditions replicated by electrically-operated dolls. At Doyu tunnel (道遊

*See p. 5 for admission and opening times.

坑), drifted after the Meiji restoration in 1868, you will see many changes from another tunnel caused by industrialization. You may also visit huge industrial heritage sites, such as **Kitazawa Flotation Plant** (北沢浮遊選鉱場), located on the way to there. [Sado Gold Mine] Hours: 8:00–17:30, 8:30–17:00 (Nov.–Mar.). Admission: From ¥900.

Senkaku Bay (尖閣湾), the most famous stretch of coast in Sado Island, extends for 3 km from Himezu to Kitaebisu, presenting a rugged beauty accented by fantastic sea-eroded rock formations.

Senkaku-wan Agheshima Park (尖閣湾揚島遊園), another attraction in the Senkaku Bay area, faces Agheshima Island which is linked to the land by a 54-m-long bridge. The observatory on the top of the island provides splendid seascape views diversified by fantastic rock formations, varied cliffs and sandy beaches. In the park are an aquarium and sea food restaurants. Hours: 8:00–17:30, 8:30–17:00 (Mar., Apr. & Nov.), 8:30–16:30 (Dec.–Feb.). Admission: ¥550, glass bottomed boat: ¥550.

Annual Events:

Niigata City

Early Mar.: Niigata Sakenojin (Sake Festival)
Apr. 1–30: Toyonoko Sakura Matsuri
(Lake Toyano Cherry Blossom Festival)
Apr. 12–18, & Jul. 12–18:
Hakusan Shrine Annual Festival
1st or 2nd Fri., Sat. and Sun. of Aug.:
Niigata Festival

Sado Island

Jun. 15–16: Ryotsu Festival
Last Sat. & Sun. in Jul:
Kouzan (Gold mine) Festival
Early Aug.: Ryotsu Tanabata or Star Festival
Oct. 19: Aikawa Festival

Accommodations:

Name of Facilities	Tel.	Fax.	Room rate (¥)	Name of Facilities	Tel.	Fax.	Room rate (¥)
Niigata:				Sado Island:	(0259)75-2011	(0259)75-2071	¥
① Hotel Italia-Ken (H)	(025)224-5111	(025)224-7679	¥	① Sado Belle Mer YH (Y)	(0259)75-2226	(0259)75-2278	¥
② Niigata Toei Hotel (H)	(025)244-7101	(025)241-8485	¥	② Senkaku-so (PL)	(0259)78-2911	(0259)78-2931	¥
③ The Hotel Crown Hills Niigata (BH)	(025)229-1695	(025)229-1393	¥	③ Sotokaifu YH (Y)	(0259)74-3300	(0259)74-3219	¥¥
④ Niigata Station Hotel (BH)	(025)243-5151	(025)243-3845	¥	④ Hotel Oosado (H)	(0259)74-3221	(0259)74-3738	¥¥
⑤ Niigata Park Hotel (BH)	(025)245-5571	(025)247-55572	¥	⑤ Sado Royal Hotel Mancho (R)	(0259)27-2151	(0259)23-4488	¥¥
⑥ Ueda Ryokan (R)	(025)225-1111	(025)225-1110	¥	⑥ Kohan-no-yado Yoshidaya (R)	(0259)23-4141	(0259)23-4145	¥
⑦ Comfrot Hotel Niigata (BH)	(025)242-0611	(025)242-0613	¥	⑦ Ryotsu Yamaki Hotel (R)			
⑧ APA Hotel Niigata Furumachi (BH)	(025)229-2211	(025)229-2212	¥				
⑨ Bandai Silver Hotel (H)	(025)243-3711	(025)243-3720	¥¥				
⑩ ANA Crowne Plaza Niigata (H)	(025)245-3333	(025)243-0493	¥¥				
⑪ Hotel Okura Niigata (H)	(025)224-6111	(025)224-7060	¥				
⑫ Hotel Nikko Niigata (H)	(025)246-1888	(025)240-1880	¥¥¥				
⑬ Ramada Hotel Niigata (BH)	(025)244-5151	(025)244-5858	¥				
⑭ ART HOTEL Niigata Station (BH)	(025)240-2111	(025)240-2112	¥				
⑮ Niigata Grand Hotel (H)	(025)228-6111	(025)228-0735	¥¥				
⑯ HOTEL METS NIIGATA (H)	(025)246-2100	(025)246-2114	¥¥				

Remarks: Numbers correspond to those on the maps on 2/5 & 5/5. Rate per person.

H = Hotel
R = Ryokan
BH = Business Hotel
Y = Youth Hostel
PL = People's Lodge (Kokumin Shukusha)

¥¥¥ = more than 15,000 yen
¥¥ = 8,001 yen – 15,000 yen
¥ = 8,000 yen or less
*Standard basis rate
(no meals, taxes included)

Note: There are a lot of minshuku available in Sado Island. (¥7,000 up per person with 2 meals)
Booking can be made through Sado Tourism Information Center at Ryotsu Port.

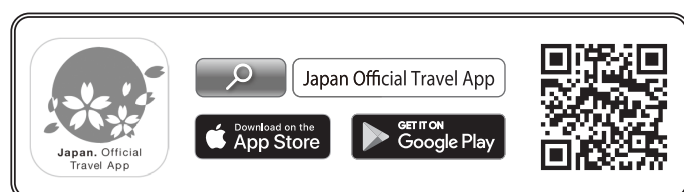
JNTO TIC (Tourist Information Center)

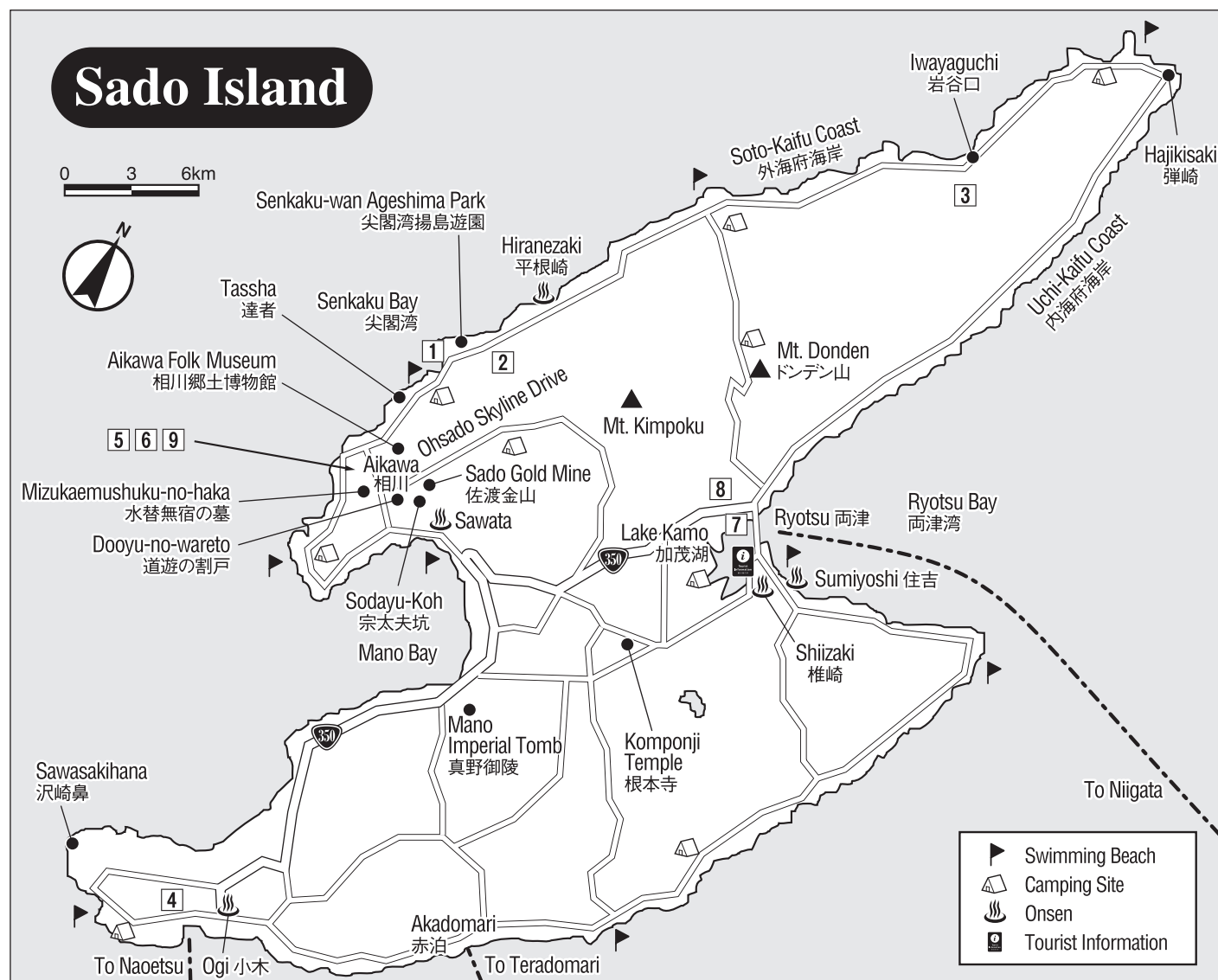
TIC of Japan National Tourism Organization is your helping hand while in Japan. Its main services are providing travel information and free literature on Japan such as tourist spots, transportation, and suggesting tour itineraries, etc.

1F, Shin-Tokyo Bldg., 3-3-1 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
100-0005 Tel. 03-3201-3331 (in Japan)

Open daily from 9:00 to 18:00 (Closed on Jan. 1)

<https://www.japan.travel/en/plan/tic/>





1 - 7 correspond to those on the Accommodations list for Sado Island on page 4/5

[Good to know] Admission and opening times at tourist attractions:

- Last entry to the most of attractions is 30 min. before the closing time.
- In general, if their weekly closing day (most are on Mon.) falls on a national holiday, they are open on the day and are closed on the following day after the holiday(s).
- Most are closed throughout / a part of New Year holiday period (especially Dec. 29-Jan. 3).
- Please visit the official website of each place / your nearest tourist information center for the updates.



Goodwill Guide Groups offer tourists from overseas local tours guided in English or other languages. The guides are registered with JNTO and display the badge shown. As they are volunteers, there is no charge for their service. You are only expected to pay for their transportation, admission to tourist facilities if you visit any and their meals if you eat with them.

JNTO Website

<https://www.japan.travel/en/plan/list-of-volunteer-guides/>

JNTO Website: <https://www.jnto.go.jp>

All information, including transportation schedules, fares, prices and accommodation charges which is contained in this leaflet is based on data as of November 2019, and is subject to change without notice. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of all information, regrettably errors do occasionally occur. Therefore, you should check with organizations concerned for updated and accurate information on your chosen destination. JNTO shall not be liable for any loss or damage of whatever nature that may arise as a result, directly or indirectly, from the use of any of the information or material contained in this leaflet.

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TOURIST INFORMATION in the area

Niigata Station Bandai Guchi Tourist Information Center:

1-1-1 Hanazono, Chuo-ku, Niigata city, Niigata

Hours: 9:00-19:00

Closed: Dec. 31 & Jan. 1

Tel.: 025-241-7914

Sado Tourism Association (Ryotsu Port):

353 Ryotsu-minato, Sado city, Niigata

Hours: 8:30-17:30

Tel.: 0259-27-5000

To find
other Tourist Information Centers,
visit <https://tic.jnto.go.jp/>

