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HIROSHIMA

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広島
Hiroshima



IN THIS ISSUE

WELCOME TO HIROSHIMA 2-3

SAIJO: SAKE TOWN 4-5

OYSTERS STRAIGHT FROM THE SHELL 6-7

GET OUT OF THE CITY: THREE UNIQUE DAY TRIPS 8-9

DAY TRIP 1: ONOMICHI 10-11

DAY TRIP 2: OKUNOSHIMA & TAKEHARA 12-13

DAY TRIP 3: SANDANKYO 14-15

OKONOMIYAKI 18-19

LOCAL FLAVOR 20-21

CITRUS PARADISE 22-23

A BRUSH WITH TRADITION 24-25

FAMOUS LOCAL PRODUCTS 26-27

ROOMS WITH A DIFFERENCE 28-29

TRAVEL TIPS 30-31

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NAVITIME for Japan Travel



WELCOME TO HIROSHIMA

TOM MIYAGAWA COULTON

Mountainous islands, mild climate, and beautiful seas make Hiroshima the Mediterranean of Japan.

Hiroshima, with its special place in world history, is a must-see destination for visitors to Japan. Its two World Heritage Sites hardly need an introduction. The stark Atomic Bomb Dome and nearby Peace Memorial Museum invite introspection to the effects of war and set the tone for experiencing the city, and first time visitors typically head across the water to Miyajima to view the iconic floating gate of Itsukushima Shrine.

With such significant monuments defining the area, many travellers are unaware that Hiroshima is also a prefecture that extends well beyond the city limits.

Roughly four times the size of Tokyo, with 100 km separating Hiroshima City in the west and Fukuyama City in the east, it features a wonderfully diverse landscape with mountains and forests in the north, and the beautiful islands of the Seto Inland Sea complete with golden sandy beaches in the south. The cities, towns, and villages boast their own distinct cultures, traditions, and festivals.

In 2015, my wife and I relocated from Tokyo to the historic town of Mitarai on Osaki Shimojima Island, one of Hiroshima's islands in the Seto Inland Sea.

Since the move, we are constantly learning and discovering new things - whether it's adjusting to

THE LANDSCAPES, FOOD, AND ACTIVITIES NEVER CEASE TO AMAZE

life inside a close-knit rural community or exploring new corners of the prefecture.

The range of landscapes, food, and activities available in this region never cease to amaze our friends who come to visit. But it's no secret - everything is in plain sight just waiting to be discovered.

In this issue we've highlighted some exciting day trips, focusing on destinations with straightforward access from Hiroshima City. So add a day to your

itinerary and you too can get so much more out of your journey to this beautiful part of the country.

We've also provided information on selected accommodation, travel tips, and food, along with a feature on Hiroshima okonomiyaki - with recommendations from an expert on this much-loved savory pancake.

It has been a privilege to create this booklet along with Hiroshima Prefecture, but the key ingredient has been the expertise of individuals living and working in the places that we have covered. Through their involvement, you now have everything you need to unlock the treasures this remarkable place has to offer.



SAIJO: SAKE TOWN

KAZUO PEÑA

About 35 minutes from Hiroshima City lies Saijo, one of Japan's most famous brewing districts, with plenty of history and craftsmanship to take in.

Once you arrive, it's hard to miss Saijo's sake district. Just come out of the station, find the distinctive red brick chimneys, and you'll know you're headed in the right direction.

As you walk along Sakagura-dori (Sake Brewery Street), you might notice locals filling up their water bottles with fresh water from small fountains. These fountains are tapped into each brewery's *shikomi ido* (brewing water well), with the springwater flowing

down from Mt. Ryuoizan located several kilometers north of Saijo. Each brewery's water tastes slightly different, so feel free to take a bottle and try some for yourself, because it's the water that makes Saijo's sake so well respected.

Although the production facilities of the breweries are closed to the general public, each has a showroom where you can learn about their history and brewing methods, and of course, participate in sake tasting.

Kamotsuru is a great place to start as it boasts one of the neighborhood's largest tasting selections. Visitors arriving in autumn (when the sake is at its freshest) won't want to miss the *hiya-oroshi*, a type of seasonal sake limited in number, with a mellow aroma and well-balanced taste.

If you're in town in early October, you can catch the annual Saijo Sake Festival which brings together brewers and sake aficionados from across the country to some of Japan's oldest sake breweries. In addition to the parades and activities held throughout the town, local breweries open up their storehouses for special tasting events, and nearby Saijo Central Park turns into a showcase where you can sample approximately 1,000 varieties for a fixed entry fee. Dedicated sake lovers even book their hotels for the following year before they return home.

For dinner and drinks, head over to nearby Saijo Ekimae Yatai Mura (food stall village), which features small, intimate eateries with a local, traditional aesthetic. The stalls are run by friendly proprietors and frequented by both locals and visitors. Each stall specializes in particular dishes, such as Hiroshima

style okonomiyaki, ramen, oden, sushi, and pizza. But you don't need to choose right away, as you can order items from any of the other stalls and have them delivered to your seat.

SAKAGURA-DORI 酒蔵通り

A SHORT WALK (5 MINS) FROM JR SAIJO STATION

SAIJO EKIMAE YATAI MURA 西条駅前屋台村

2-15 SAIJO HONMACHI, HIGASHI HIROSHIMA
T/ 082 502 2338

KAMOTSURU SAKE BREWING COMPANY

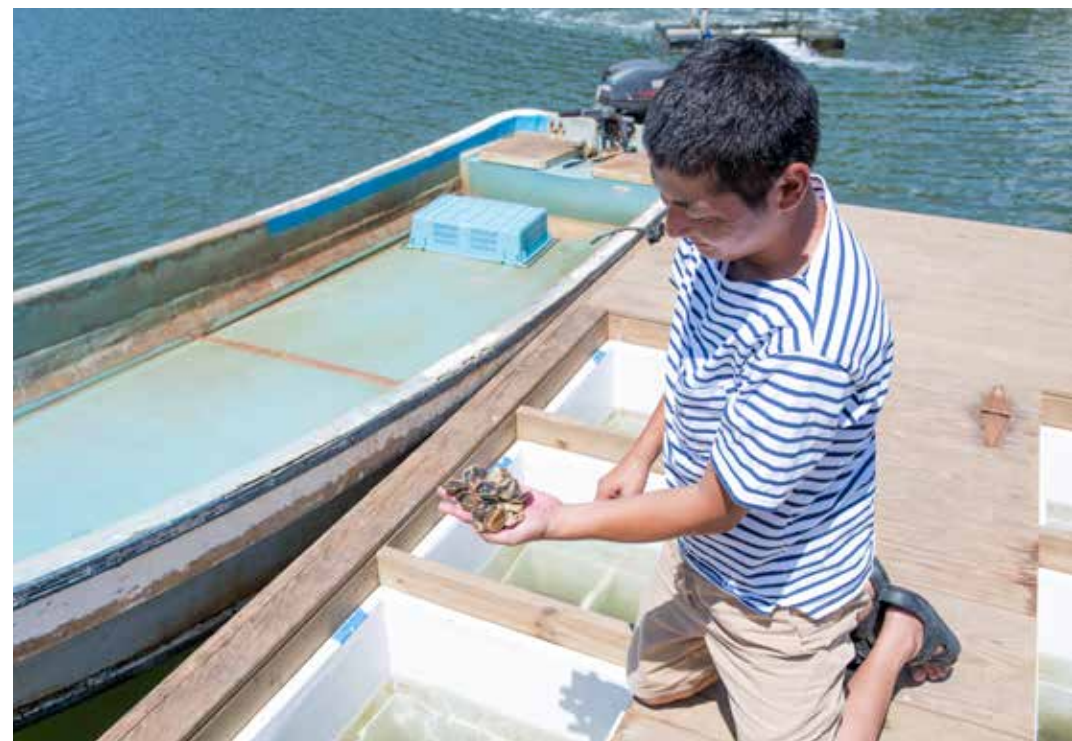
賀茂鶴酒造株式会社

4-31 SAIJO HONMACHI, HIGASHI HIROSHIMA
T/ 082 422 2121

01

02

03



OYSTERS STRAIGHT FROM THE SHELL

No visit to Hiroshima is complete without trying its famous oysters - and the fresher the better.

With its natural inlets and the calm waters of the Seto Inland Sea, Hiroshima Prefecture is blessed with a geography perfectly suited to oyster production. Over 20,000 tons of the shellfish are harvested from Hiroshima's waters every year making the prefecture the nation's largest producer.

In a land famed for its sushi and all things raw, visitors to Japan soon find out its oysters are usually anything but. You are more likely to find them fried, steamed, or grilled rather than eaten straight out of

the shell. However, Takashi Suzuki is trying to go against the grain with his oyster farm and adjoining restaurant on the idyllic island of Osaki Kamijima.

"We grow oysters to be enjoyed raw. They are smaller than oysters you usually find in Japan, making them the perfect size for one mouthful."

Born and raised in Tokyo, Suzuki studied at the National Fisheries University before joining a trading company importing frozen shrimp from Southeast Asia. But he always had a dream to one day produce high quality oysters in Japan and export them around the world.

His dream became a reality in 2011. On the northern tip of Osaki Kamijima in the Seto Inland Sea, he came across a set of disused artificial lakes which were originally salt pans created during the Edo Period and later used for shrimp production.

"I saw oysters being grown in salt pans when I traveled around France. It's the perfect environment for cultivating shellfish."

According to Suzuki, the shallow depth of these lakes means light can penetrate the water creating the perfect environment for phytoplankton - oyster food. In addition, the water running off the surrounding mountains dilutes the salt content of the seawater being pumped into the lakes.

"Usually the salinity of seawater is 3.5% but here it's about 2% less, this is key, because it lets us grow a different type of phytoplankton compared with what you usually find in the sea. The oysters and shrimp eat that plankton and their flavor improves."

With his newly opened restaurant built within the farm complex, travelers to the island can eat fresh oysters straight out of the water.

"The main point is all our oysters can be eaten raw. It's down to the environment on the island and the clean water, plus the oysters are grown within a sheltered and protected lake that reduces the risk of contamination."

The farm currently produces 300,000 oysters a year, exporting half abroad and the rest sold domestically in oyster bars and restaurants in Tokyo, Osaka, and Hiroshima.

FARM SUZUKI ファームスズキ

37-2 HIGASHINO TARUMI, OSAKI KAMIJIMA, TOYOTA
T/ 0846 65 3911

GET OUT OF THE CITY: THREE UNIQUE DAY TRIPS

Beyond the city of Hiroshima lies an entire prefecture mostly unexplored by foreign travelers. Discover the diverse sights and experiences the region has to offer, by checking out these day trips that are all easily accessible from Hiroshima City.

Most first time visitors go to Hiroshima's two World Heritage Sites - the Atomic Bomb Dome and Itsukushima Shrine on Miyajima Island. While these are definitely must see spots, we recommend staying in the area a little longer to take in more of what the prefecture offers. A day trip is the best way to enjoy the people and culture of the countryside.



Hiroshima is actually a great city to use as your base to explore this scenic part of Japan. Even if you don't rent a car, getting around is a breeze because of the comprehensive bus, train, and shinkansen service in and out of Hiroshima Station. This is perfect for travelers with Japan Rail Passes.

To enhance your travel experience we've put together three special day trips. First, we'll go to Onomichi, a quaint port city surrounded by mountains. Then we'll head to Okunoshima, which is teeming with rabbits, and Takehara for picturesque views of the sea and islands.



And lastly, we'll take a trip to the Sandankyo Gorge, a scenic waterway known for its vibrant leaves in autumn.

Be sure to check out pages 16 and 17 of this booklet for our bus and train itineraries to get you to your destination without a hitch.



FEATURED DAY TRIPS

1: ONOMICHI 尾道

PICTURESQUE SEASIDE TOWN WITH STUNNING VIEWS.

2: OKUNOSHIMA & TAKEHARA 大久野島&竹原

COVER TWO AREAS IN ONE DAY, A RABBIT ISLAND AND A HISTORICAL TOWN.

3: SANDANKYO GORGE 三段峡

ONE OF JAPAN'S MOST BEAUTIFUL GORGES AND A PERFECT NATURE TRIP JUST OVER AN HOUR FROM THE CITY.



DAY TRIP 1: ONOMICHI

The small seaside town of Onomichi is the perfect place to enjoy walking around and experiencing the slow life on the Seto Inland Sea, complete with cats and plenty of retro charm.

NORIKO KOBAYASHI

After arriving at Onomichi Station, head east to the retro shopping arcade, Onomichi Hondori. It's 1.6 km long but you won't find any chain stores here, only small privately owned businesses. Don't miss Yuyu, a picturesque former public bath that has been converted into a café and souvenir shop.

Experimental Japanese movie director and local native Nobuhiko Obayashi, who filmed a trilogy of movies in the area, said that he wants fans of his movies to explore Onomichi. And there is definitely fun to be had getting lost in Onomichi's maze of narrow alleyways.

For lunch, try the renowned Onomichi style of shoyu ramen, known for its steaming hot, rich broth and pork fat. The most famous restaurant is Shuka-en but there's usually a 15 to 20 minute wait to get in, so if you don't want to wait in line, try the equally good Menya Zohyo down the road.

After lunch, take a short stroll to the ropeway that takes you to the top of Mt. Senkoji. You can see the whole town and the Onomichi Strait from the observation deck at the summit. To return, walk down cat alley filled with lovable strays. If you want to explore more, there are lots of cute cafés, bakeries, and galleries dotting the hillside.

After enjoying the old traditional side of Onomichi, walk along the waterfront towards the city's new U2 complex, a warehouse converted into a cycling-themed hotel complete with a stylish bakery, cafe, bar, and restaurant where you can relax before taking the train back to Hiroshima.

HIGHLIGHTS

- › Explore the retro shopping arcade
- › Wander Onomichi's small meandering alleyways
- › Eat Onomichi Ramen for lunch
- › Take the ropeway up to Senko-ji Temple
- › Walk along cat alley and around the hillside
- › Stroll along the waterfront
- › Relax at the stylish Onomichi U2



YUYU ゆーゆー

1-3-20 TSUCHIDO-CHO, ONOMICHI
T/ 0848 25 5505

01

SHUKA-EN 朱華園

4-12 TOYOHIMOTO-MACHI, ONOMICHI
T/ 0848 37 2077

02

MT. SENKOJI ROPEWAY 千光寺山ロープウェイ

20-1 HIGASHI TSUCHIDO-CHO, ONOMICHI
T/ 0848 22 4900

03





DAY TRIP 2: OKUNOSHIMA & TAKEHARA

VALERIE MILLER

Rabbit cafés are gaining popularity in cities across Japan, but in Okunoshima you're surrounded by cute little bunnies just about everywhere you go.

Okunoshima (known colloquially as Rabbit Island) is an increasingly popular destination on the sea. Just a short ferry ride from Tadanoumi, it is easily accessible from downtown Hiroshima City. It also fits in perfectly with a trip to Takehara to make a leisurely yet varied day trip out of the city.

Before you make your way to the island, it's worth picking up some cabbage and carrots at the ferry terminal at Tadanoumi, so you can spend your time on the island feeding the rabbits.

A good place to start on the island is the visitor center featuring exhibits about the local wildlife, but you'll probably spot plenty of the island's main attraction before you even get there. On Okunoshima there are rabbits all over the place, and no one is exactly sure how they got there.

If you don't feel like hiking around the hills, you can rent a bike at the Kyukamura Hotel and explore the island dotted with dilapidated buildings, remnants of its dark past as a poison gas production facility.

When you return to Tadanoumi, take a 10 minute train ride to Takehara. A short walk from the station brings you to the historical preservation district with old buildings dating back to the Edo Era. There are temples tucked into the hillside and an incredible view of the area from the Fumeikaku veranda of the temple, Saiho-ji.

For lunch, head to Nakazawa, a natural food shop with a vegetarian macrobiotic cafe in the back, and make sure to taste the local sake at the Fujii Brewery. Stick around for dinner and you won't be disappointed, but there's also plenty of time to get a meal back in Hiroshima.

HIGHLIGHTS

- › Hop on a ferry from Tadanoumi to Okunoshima
- › Feed the rabbits!
- › Rent bicycles at Kyukamura Hotel and cycle around the island
- › Visit the Takehara Historical District
- › Grab a vegetarian macrobiotic lunch at Nakazawa
- › Sake tasting at Fujii Brewery



KYUKAMURA HOTEL 休暇村ホテル

OKUNOSHIMA, TADANOUMI, TAKEHARA

T/ 0846 26 0321

01

SAIHO-JI TEMPLE 西方寺

3-10-44 HONMACHI, TAKEHARA

T/ 0846 22 7745

02

NAKAZAWA なかざわ

1-9-8 HONMACHI, TAKEHARA

T/ 0846 22 2157

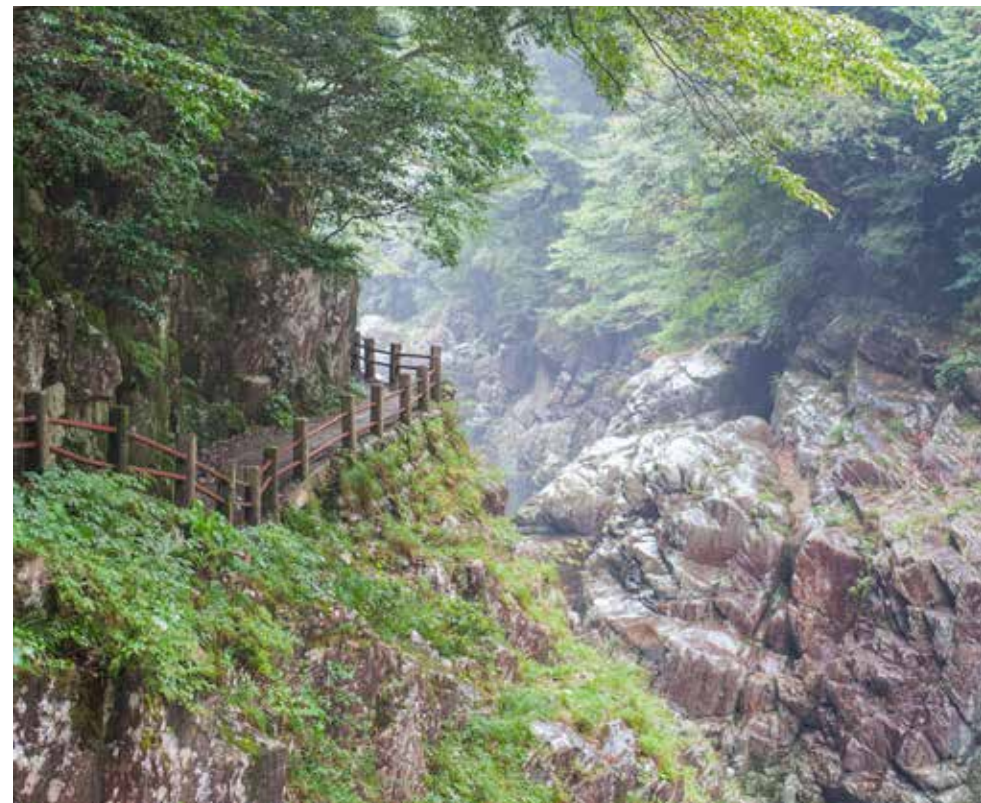
03

FUJII BREWERY 藤井酒蔵

3-4-14 HONMACHI, TAKEHARA

T/ 0846 22 2029

04



DAY TRIP 3: SANDANKYO GORGE

MIKIKO HATTORI AND SHINJI KASHIWAZAKI

One of the most picturesque areas in Japan, with incredible rock formations, crystal clear rivers, and colorful seasonal changes is hidden away in the northern part of Hiroshima.

Once you arrive at the entrance of Sandankyo Gorge, you'll first cross a red bridge with a lovely view of the gorge. Regardless of the season, you'll be amazed at how beautiful the water is and how clean the air feels.

In autumn, hikers searching for adventure in the rolling hills of Hiroshima Prefecture come to this area to take in the colorful leaves. Painted in vibrant yellows, oranges and reds, they peak between the end of October and the first week of November.

When you arrive at Kurobuchi Pool, you may find that there is no boat in sight, but don't worry, just pull the hanging rope and a wooden boat should arrive shortly. From the tranquil waters, enjoy the view of the rocky cliffs, the lush forest, and open sky. It takes about 10 minutes to cross the pool, with the ride finishing at the Kurobuchi-so restaurant.

For lunch at Kurobuchi-so, try the salt baked trout and the somen noodles. If you order rice balls, you can also take them out and picnic by the water.

Once you return to the entrance of the gorge, you can enjoy a rejuvenating bath at the Sandankyo Hotel. Although it's not an open-air bath, the panoramic windows look out across the valley.

The waters around here are called *bijin-no-yu*, or "beautifying waters", said to make your skin look and feel younger. It's the perfect way to feel refreshed before heading back to Hiroshima.

The shops in Sandankyo are closed from the end of November to the end of March due to snow.

The boat service may not run due to inclement weather.

HIGHLIGHTS

- › Arrive at the entrance of Sandankyo by bus
- › Trek for one hour to Kurobuchi Pool
- › Board a small boat that takes you to Kurobuchi-so restaurant
- › Try the salted trout and somen noodles at Kurobuchi-so
- › Cross the rope bridge spanning the gorge
- › Relax in the onsen at Sandankyo Hotel
- › Grab dinner at the Sandankyo Senryu restaurant
- › Head back to Hiroshima or stay the night if you can!

KUROBUCHI-SO 黒淵荘

1729 SHIWAGI, AKIOTA-CHO, YAMAGATA
T/ 0826 28 2719

SANDANKYO SENRYU 三段峡 川流

1727 SHIWAGI, AKIOTA-CHO, YAMAGATA
T/ 0826 28 2203

TIP

TIP

01

02

BY TRAIN
¥2,460

HIROSHIMA

Shinkansen Kodama
27 MINS

MIHARA

JR San'yō Main Line
20 MINS

ONOMICHI

HIROSHIMA BUS CENTER

Flower Liner
1HR 34MINS

ONOMICHI EKIMAE

BY BUS
¥1,750



BY TRAIN

HIROSHIMA ~ OKUNOSHIMA | ¥2,770
OKUNOSHIMA ~ TAKEHARA | ¥510

BY BUS

BUS CENTER ~ TADANOUMI | ¥1,490

HIROSHIMA

Shinkansen Kodama
27 MINS

MIHARA

JR Kure Line
22 MINS

TADANOUMI

JR Kure Line
12 MINS

TAKEHARA

HIROSHIMA BUS CENTER

Geiyo Bus
1 HR 42 MINS

Walk
5 MINS

TADANOUMI PORT

Ferry
15 MINS

OKUNOSHIMA



BY BUS

DEPARTS 8:18AM | ¥1,440

HIROSHIMA BUS CENTER

Hiroden Sandankyo Line
1 HR 15 MINS

SANDANKYO



BY TRAIN
¥580

HIROSHIMA

JR San'yō Main Line
35 MINS

SAIJO





PROFESSOR KENICHI HOSOI

Centered around a bed of noodles, and layered rather than mixed,
Hiroshima's take on the dish is a source of local pride.
Cooked in front of you, it's more than dinner, it's an experience.

Hiroshima okonomiyaki is a savory pancake-style dish made of flour, cabbage, noodles, and varied ingredients layered one on top of the other, smothered in sauce, and cooked on an iron grill. We spoke to Professor Hosoi of Hiroshima University of Economics and member of the Okonomiyaki Academy, which is dedicated to

promoting Hiroshima and its unique style of okonomiyaki around the world. Here are four restaurants recommended by Professor Hosoi for those seeking some of the best the city has to offer. You'll find okonomiyaki all over the city, and each shop has its own unique style. Pull a chair up to the grill and start picking your toppings!



ICCHAN いっちゃん

2-37 MATSUBARA-CHO, MINAMI-KU, HIROSHIMA
T/ 082 261 0680

Icchan focuses on their ingredients and are experts at bringing out the natural flavors of the okonomiyaki, as such they are honored with a listing in the prestigious Michelin Guide. Their okonomiyaki has a refined and delicate taste, so it might be better for people who have eaten Hiroshima okonomiyaki before, rather than first-timers. The Japanese have a tendency to crave basic, simple flavors such as white rice and miso soup, and this is the okonomiyaki version of that.

01



LOPEZ ロペズ

1-7-13 KUSUNOKI-CHO, NISHI-KU, HIROSHIMA
T/ 082 232 5277

Lopez insists on using the best ingredients, and the way he cooks the noodles is very unique - taking care to fry each individual noodle rather than frying them all together in order to bring out more flavor. Though not a Japanese native (Lopez hails from Guatemala), he's highly respected in Hiroshima not only for his okonomiyaki, but also because he's very active in training other okonomiyaki chefs. Many former apprentices have started their own popular restaurants, which is a great source of pride for him.

02



GOKU 悟空

8-7 HATCHOBORI, NAKA-KU, HIROSHIMA
T/ 082 224 5901

Goku's specialty is using very thin noodles, so the finished okonomiyaki is relatively thin but still delicious, and the texture is different when compared to other okonomiyaki you usually find. Along with their standard offerings, they have an extensive side menu and even feature a spicy version made with habanero-infused noodles and covered in habanero chili powder. This comes highly recommended for fans of spicy food, but they also offer plenty of other options for the milder palate.

03



HIDEYA ひで家

1-14-3 KOIHONMACHI, NISHI-KU, HIROSHIMA
T/ 082 274 1101

Hideya's noodles are fried thoroughly, so their okonomiyaki has a rather crispy texture. So much so, you can hear the crunch when you cut into it with the spatula. Hideya is in Nishi Hiroshima, and as there are some guesthouses in the area they're used to serving foreign customers. Although the staff don't speak English, communication is never a problem and they've become a local mainstay for their unique style.

04



LOCAL FLAVOR

Okonomiyaki is Hiroshima's specialty, but there are plenty of other local dishes to enjoy from the prefecture.

Anago Meshi Ueno

The secret for any good grilled *anago* (conger eel) dish is in the glaze - and Anago Meshi Ueno has been perfecting theirs for four generations.

The anago fillets are dipped in the glaze, grilled, dipped again, and grilled yet again. This careful repetition and timing create subtle layers of flavor that make Ueno the best in class when it comes

to its signature dish. The unused glaze forms the base of the next batch, creating an unbroken chain stretching back over 100 years.

Originally started as a *bento* (lunchbox) shop at the newly opened Miyajima Station in 1897, the cut pieces of anago are placed on top of a bed of specially flavored rice. Anago are plentiful in the waters around Miyajima and this dish is a local delicacy.

Anago Meshi Ueno is still a family run business with Junichi Ueno being its fourth generation owner. Conveniently located near the ferry terminal, you can still buy the famous anago bento or eat at the restaurant. If you prefer to have



your meal in the restaurant, get there early or be prepared to wait in line for a seat, as a visit to Ueno has long been a staple of any visit to Miyajima and waiting times can reach one hour.

Onomichi Ramen

A signature dish of Onomichi, fans of this shoyu and fish broth noodle dish travel far and wide to enjoy it. One characteristic of Onomichi Ramen is the *se-abura* - small pieces of pork fat in the soup. It might not sound too enticing, but it makes all the difference in this delicious variety of Japanese ramen.

You can find shops specializing in this style of ramen throughout Onomichi. Shuka-en is the undisputed favorite, but two other famous shops are Menya Zohyo and Kuukai.

Musubi Musashi

These bento have long been a favorite among Hiroshima residents. There are different types of bento on offer, each featuring Musubi Musashi's signature *musubi* (onigiri).

A popular chain with locals, there are shops located in the main train stations around Hiroshima City. You can often see fans of the Hiroshima Carp baseball team buying their favorite Musashi bento



before continuing on to the stadium for the big game.

In the Musubi Musashi restaurants, you can sit and enjoy the store's original udon noodles that for some are just as popular as its musubi.

FEATURED SPOTS

ANAGO MESHI UENO あなごめし うえの

1-5-11 MIYAJIMAGUCHI, HATSUKAICHI
T/ 0829 56 0006

MENYA ZOHYO 麺や 雑兵

3-23 TOYOHI MOTOMACHI, ONOMICHI
T/ 0848 37 6755

KUUKAI 喰海

1-12-11 TSUCHIDO, ONOMICHI
T/ 0848 24 8133

MUSUBI MUSASHI むすび むさし

1-2 MATSUBARA-CHO, HIGASHI-KU, HIROSHIMA
T/ 082 261 0634



CITRUS PARADISE

With its Mediterranean climate, Hiroshima's islands in the Seto Inland Sea have a long history of growing citrus fruits. We met with a woman carrying on the family tradition.



While the Setouchi Lemon is now getting plenty of attention by foodies, the first fruit from this region to gain recognition was the Ocho Orange, grown on the mountains surrounding the small town of Ocho on Osaki Shimojima Island.

Although the number of citrus farmers is decreasing, Japanese demand for local produce is on the rise, and the groves are still being cultivated. We visited Toshiko Hida, one of the few female farmers in the area, who returned to Ocho to run her family citrus farm.

Oranges weren't always a mainstay of the area. "Originally people in Ocho grew small peaches, but after orange saplings from Kyushu were introduced in 1904, orange production took off and by 1935, 40% of all oranges sold in Tokyo came from this small island and were even shipped abroad."

The golden era of the Ocho Orange lasted until 1955, when import tariffs were lifted on citrus fruits. Combined with the growth of citrus producers within Japan, the market swelled and prices dropped. Nonetheless, farmers on the island persevered and diversified by creating new strains of oranges, keeping the Ocho brand alive.

Toshiko's parents were citrus farmers in Ocho, but she was living and working as a camera assistant

and editor in Hiroshima City. "I always loved this area, and when my father got older I wanted to come back and help him on the farm. That was 23 years ago."

Typically in Japan the eldest son takes over the family business, but for citrus farmers in Ocho the youngest child is expected to continue the family farm. "In the past, the older children were sent out as pioneers to establish their own citrus farms on neighboring islands and the mainland. I'm the youngest of six siblings, so it worked out just right."

If you visit Osaki Shimojima Island you'll find tiny unmanned roadside stalls with locally grown citrus for sale throughout most of the year.

Toshiko's seasonal favorites are:

➤Feb-Mar: Navel Orange, Harumi Orange

➤Mar-April: Dekopon Orange

➤Oct-June: Ocho Lemon

➤Nov-Dec: Wase Mikan (Ocho Orange)

YUTAKAMACHI TOURISM ASSOCIATION

豊町観光協会

187-1 YUTAKAMACHI MITARAI, KURE

T/ 0823 67 2278



A BRUSH WITH TRADITION

ADAM FULFORD

Once a cottage industry, now Kumano's makeup and calligraphy brushes are considered the best in the world.

Chances are, you haven't heard of the town of Kumano in Hiroshima Prefecture, but if you have purchased any high-end cosmetic brushes in the past, they were probably manufactured here. For at least a century before their makeup brushes began to win global acclaim, hundreds of people here were producing brushes for writing and painting.

Following in his father's footsteps, Hiroshi Minato began making brushes at the age of 15.

"My father never taught me a thing. I had to 'steal' his techniques," he says, using the word *nusumu* that you often hear when people talk about traditional crafts in Japan. The student has to observe very carefully and gradually pick up skills over time.

Apprentices can expect precious little praise. It's no wonder so many of them simply drop out. Minato himself was tempted to quit. "I didn't really enjoy brush-making in my younger days." So how old were you when you finally started to enjoy your work?

"About fifty!"

Though the early years were trying, he persevered and began to receive recognition for his work. One milestone was his designation as a Master of Traditional Crafts, a prestigious title only granted to artisans of the highest tier in the country.

These days you'll find Minato working away on his brushes in Fudenosato Kobo, a facility showcasing brush culture and craftsmanship in the town where the vast majority of Japan's brushes are made - 15 million of them each year, in fact.

While the production of ordinary brushes may involve the use of machines and synthetic fibers, the type of brush that Minato continues to produce are entirely handmade from animal hair.

Minato also makes strategic use of different fibers as



the delicate nuance of Japanese calligraphy would be impossible without his ability to select and combine hair from animals as varied as goat, badger, squirrel, and weasel.

Inscribed on the plaque that Minato received from the government as a Master of Traditional Crafts is his professional name, Gosetsu, written using characters meaning "strength" and "snow", which allude to the dynamic power of his brushes and to their pristine beauty.

He only completes about 25 brushes a day, but that doesn't seem such a small number when you see how

carefully he tackles just one of the 12 brush-making steps illustrated in the photographs displayed behind him.

Which step are you up to? Minato glances over his shoulder at the photos. "Step number three: *ke-soroe*," he replies. "The hair is combed thoroughly and any loose fluff is taken out. Then the hair is stacked flat in layers, one small cluster at a time, and combed many times in order to enhance its quality."

For a moment, Minato's gaze lingers on the photos. "I see that what I was doing when you came along isn't listed up there," he says. So there are one or two other processes. How many altogether?

"Seventy-three."

FUDENOSATO KOBO 筆の里工房

5-17-1 NAKAMIZO, KUMANO-CHO, AKI

T/ 082 855 3010

01



01



02



03



04

FAMOUS LOCAL PRODUCTS

We've picked some exceptional local products that define the region, starting with handmade Kumano brushes that supply the world's best cosmetic brands, with a large selection available.

Also, don't miss out on Momiji manju from Miyajima - small maple leaf shaped cakes filled with sweet bean paste. Other variations including chocolate, custard, or matcha.

From the same region is Kakiya no oiruzuke, oysters marinated and preserved with oil and spices (the oil

is great with pasta), and don't pass up the famous Ikaten Setouchi Lemon Flavor, a salty and crunchy snack flavored with squid and local lemons.

KUMANO BRUSHES 熊野筆

KUMANO FUDE SELECT SHOP - FROM 1,000 YEN

MOMIJI MANJU もみじまんじゅう

FUJIYA - 90 YEN

KAKIYA NO OIRUZUKE 牡蠣屋のオイル漬け

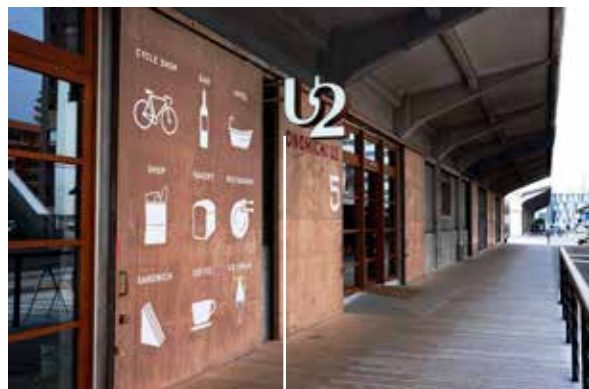
KAKIYA - 1300 YEN

IKATEN SETOUCHI LEMON FLAVOR

イカ天 瀬戸内れもん味

324 YEN

ROOMS WITH A DIFFERENCE



HOTEL CYCLE - U2 ①
5-11 NISHI GOSHO-CHO, ONOMICHI
T/ 0848 21 0550

Located inside the chic and modern Onomichi U2 complex, this hotel was designed and constructed for cyclists. The rooms come fitted with special wall space to hang up your bicycle next to the bed. The complex features a range of restaurants, bars and coffee shops. There's also a cycle store so you can do some last minute maintenance or make some purchases before hitting the Shimanami Kaido cycle route to Shikoku.

www.onomichi-u2.com



HOTEL SANDANKYO ③
三段峡ホテル
1734 SHIWAGI, AKIOTA, YAMAGATA
T/ 0826 28 2308

Situated at the mouth of Sandankyo, this beautiful Japanese style building has the feel of a large ryokan, rather than that of a regular hotel. Perched on one side of the ravine with wonderful views of the woods and the river flowing below, you can even enjoy this view while soaking in the onsen. It's the perfect starting point for your explorations of the extensive gorge and its waterfalls.

www.sandankyo.co.jp



MIHARASHI TEI みはらし亭 ②
15-7 HIGASHI TSUCHIDO-CHO, ONOMICHI
T/ 0848 23 3684

Miharashi Tei is a renovated guesthouse offering some of the best views of Onomichi. Located on the hill just under the famous Senko-ji temple, the 100 year-old building is in the traditional saen (tea culture) architectural style. The guesthouse offers both shared dormitory rooms and private tatami rooms at very affordable rates, making this an ideal destination for backpackers on a budget.

miharashi.onomichisaisei.com/en/



Y51 ④
761-3 KAZAHAYA, OSHIBAJIMA
AKITSU-CHO, HIGASHI HIROSHIMA
T/ 0846 45 6251

Connected to the mainland by a short bridge just east of Takehara, this elegant and stylish cottage sits on tranquil Oshiba Island in the Seto Inland Sea. It offers a spectacular view of the coastline, islands, and wildlife. The cottage accommodates up to eight people and has proven to be a hit on Airbnb, especially among overseas travelers looking to unwind.

www.facebook.com/y51bythesea/





CATCH SOME BASEBALL

A different experience from its American counterpart, nothing beats the festival-like atmosphere of Japanese baseball, and few fans are as passionate about their team as those of the Hiroshima Carp.

- 01 Japanese pro baseball is divided into two leagues, the Central and Pacific - both comprised of six teams each. Historically underdogs, in 2016 the Hiroshima Carp dominated the Central League.
- 02 Carp fans are fiercely loyal and you'll find them all throughout the country. Even at away games you'll see complete strangers high-fiving each other and enjoying the party-like atmosphere.
- 03 There's no "Take Me Out to the Ballgame." In fact, many Japanese don't know the song. Instead, at the seventh inning stretch, they blow up red balloons with noisemakers and release them all together.
- 04 You can purchase tickets at the MAZDA Zoom-Zoom Stadium ticket office on game days from 11 AM until 30 minutes before the game ends or 10 PM, whichever comes first.

GEAR UP FOR THE GAME

Once you get to the stadium, you'll want to get into the spirit and cheer on the team. Die hard fans always come prepared.



JERSEYS

IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING, SHOWING YOUR COLORS IS A FUNDAMENTAL WAY TO SUPPORT YOUR TEAM.



KUNG FU BATS

SPARE YOUR HANDS THE PAIN OF NON-STOP CLAPPING BY USING PLASTIC BASEBALL BATS.



SKY JET BALLOONS

IN HIROSHIMA, THE SEVENTH INNING STRETCH IS CELEBRATED WITH A FLURRY OF RED BALLOONS.



LOCAL SAKE

CELEBRATE A WINNING SEASON AT HOME WITH A GLASS OF LOCAL CARP-BRAND SAKE.

GETTING AROUND

Hiroshima has its own unique way of getting around, from electric streetcars to ferries crossing between islands.

- 01 Using the streetcars is an efficient and cheap way to navigate Hiroshima City. With stops at Hiroshima Station, the A-Bomb Dome, and Miyajimaguchi, the trams regularly run back and forth between all the main sights.
- 02 There are seven color-coded lines that cross the city, with final destinations displayed on both the front of the streetcar and at streetcar stops. There's a flat rate of 160 yen for the inner-city section and an extra zone-based fare when you use the Miyajima Line.
- 03 There are two main types of ferries. A standard ferry for passengers and cars and an express service just for passengers. Ferry travel can often be the fastest and easiest method of transport.
- 04 For busier ferry routes, tickets are usually purchased in the ferry terminal before boarding. Otherwise, it's common to pay once you're on board for very short journeys or on less popular routes.

TRANSPORT PASSES

You won't be able to go around everywhere with your standard Suica e-money card. Get the local Paspy card, or better yet get a pass that let's you use just about everything during your trip, no matter where you go.

- 01 Streetcars, buses, and ferries in Hiroshima only accept the local "Paspy" card and JR West's "Icoca" card. Some smaller ferries will only accept cash. Unfortunately, you can't use the Paspy on JR trains.
- 02 The Visit Hiroshima Tourist Pass is the easiest and cheapest option if you don't have a JR Pass. It can't be used on JR Lines, but it gives you unlimited travel for three days on streetcar lines, buses around the prefecture, and the ferry to Miyajima.
- 03 Purchase the passes at Hiroshima Airport, Hiroshima Station, Hiroshima Bus Center, or Orizuru Tower Tourist Information Center.
- 04 An easily recognizable red bus with a maple leaf on the front is tailored for visitors to Hiroshima, and goes from Hiroshima Station to all major sightseeing spots. Use your JR Pass or pay 200 yen when you disembark.

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ABOUT

NAVITIME for Japan Travel is the most downloaded smartphone app for travelers visiting Japan. Available in English, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, and Korean.

Featuring Japan's most popular train route search functionality, the app also includes door-to-door route search, navigation, real-time train timetables, and offline search for free wifi spots.

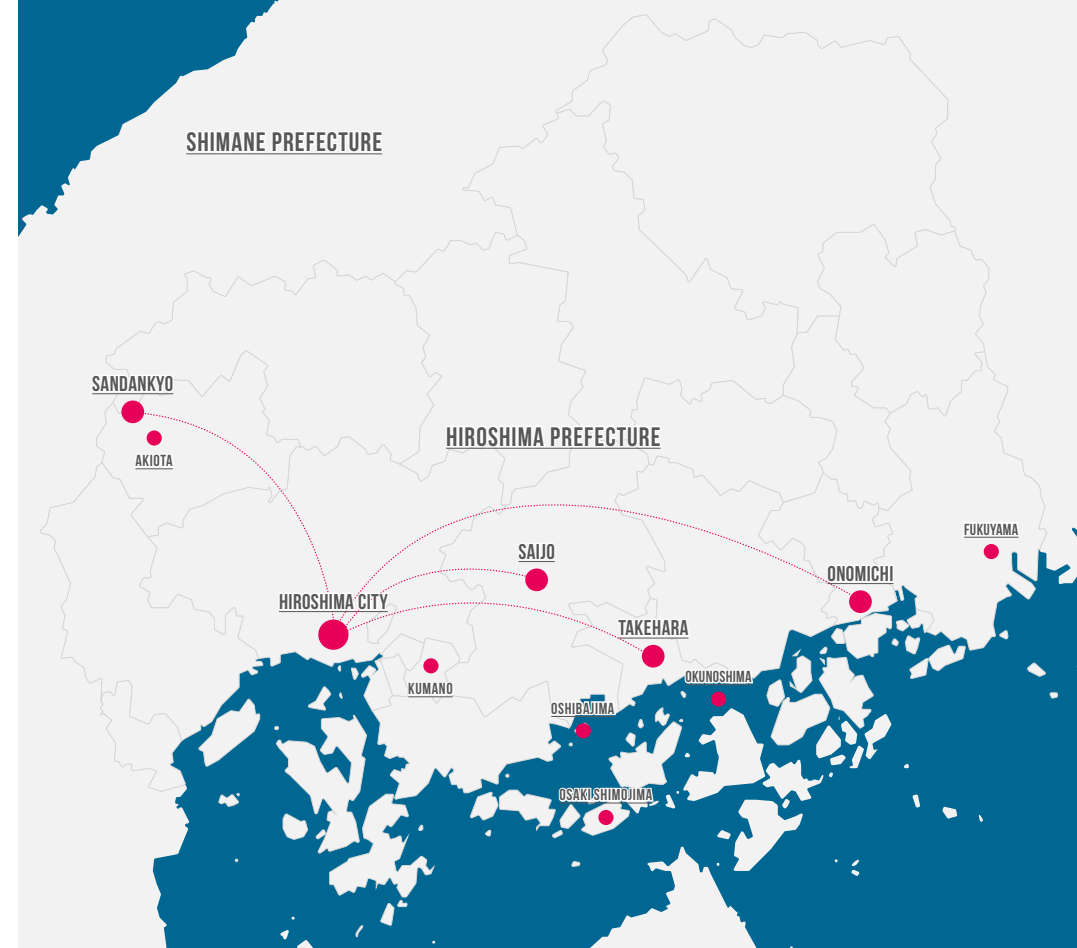
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GETTING TO HIROSHIMA WITH THE JAPAN RAIL PASS

TOKYO - HIROSHIMA	5HRS 7MINS
NAGOYA - HIROSHIMA	3HRS 7MINS
KYOTO - HIROSHIMA	1HR 58MINS
SHIN-OSAKA - HIROSHIMA	1HR 27MINS
HAKATA - HIROSHIMA	1HR 8MINS





VISIT
HIROSHIMA
Hiroshima Prefecture
visithiroshima.net

MADE IN JAPAN