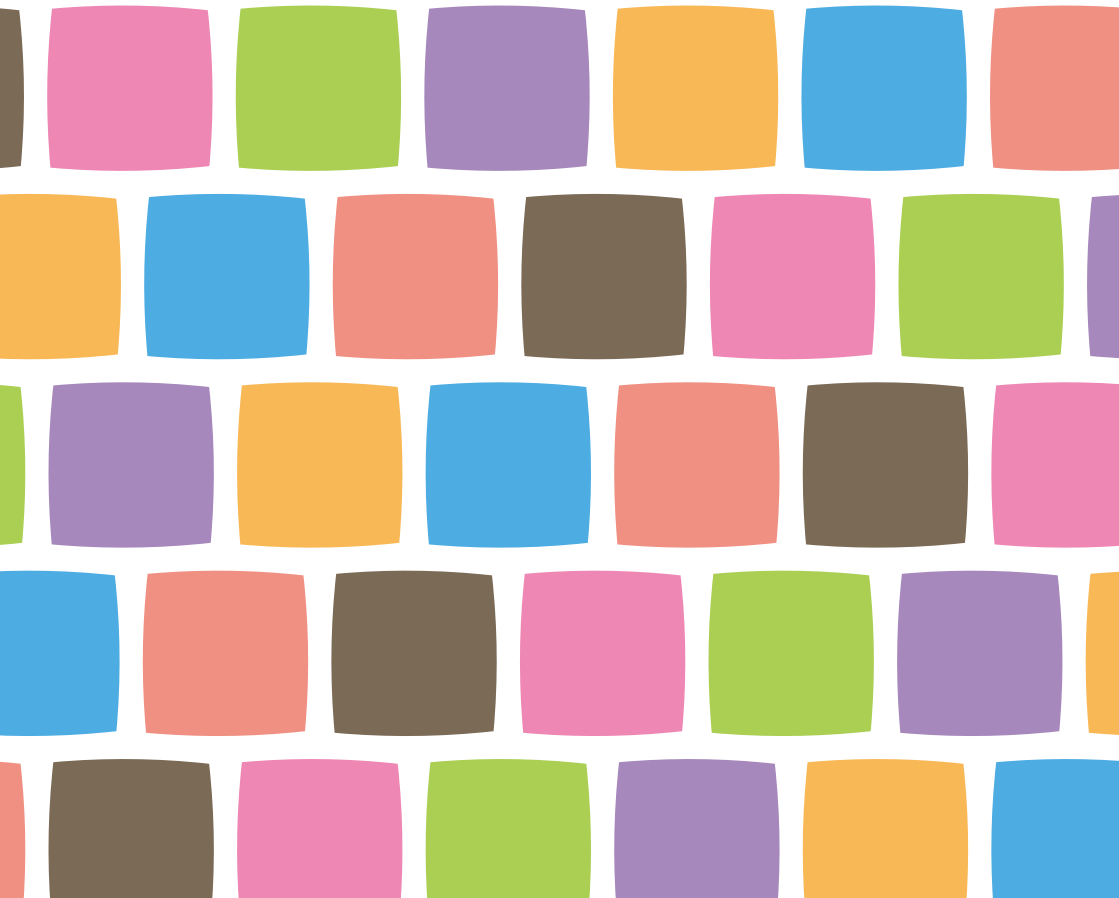


Cycling and walking tours

Kurashiki: Japan Heritage Stories

Discover a city that blossomed from a single cotton plant

Kurashiki City Japan Heritage Promotion Council



Cycling and walking tours

Kurashiki: Japan Heritage Stories

Discover a city that blossomed from a single cotton plant

Weaving together history, technology, and artistic sensibility

Kurashiki, city of textiles

Until 400 years ago, Kurashiki was surrounded by ocean.

Land reclamation efforts from the early modern period onwards helped to expand living space and to support the production of textiles and textile products, such as tabi socks and *hanamushiro* rush mats, made from the cotton and common rush grown on the reclaimed land. The introduction of modern technology from Western Europe from the Meiji period (1868-1912) onwards saw Kurashiki's textile industry flourish, and it has continued to develop while weaving together Japanese tradition with Western technology. Today, Kurashiki is Japan's leading city of textiles, boasting the highest production of textiles by value nationwide.

Dotted among the traditional *shirakabe* white-walled warehouses constructed during the Edo period (1603-1868), when Kurashiki began to reap the benefits of its vast areas of reclaimed land, are Western-style buildings built by entrepreneurs who led the city to success through the spinning industry. Today, these buildings are a distinctive feature of the cityscape and symbolic of its development captivating the imagination of all who visit Kurashiki.





Present day Kurashiki

Kurashiki Japan Heritage Story 1

A Kurashiki story beginning with a single cotton plant.

– The textile town where Japan and the West are woven together –

Modern-day Kurashiki was previously located in an inland sea called Kibi-no-Anaumi; through sediment deposits along the Takahashi River and land reclamation efforts, however, its landmass increased to connect it to the mainland. The salt-rich soil was planted with cotton and common rush, leading to the development of a new industry, a flourishing port, and flood-proofing improvements along the river. In this way, Kurashiki became a vibrant city interwoven with elements of Japan and the West.

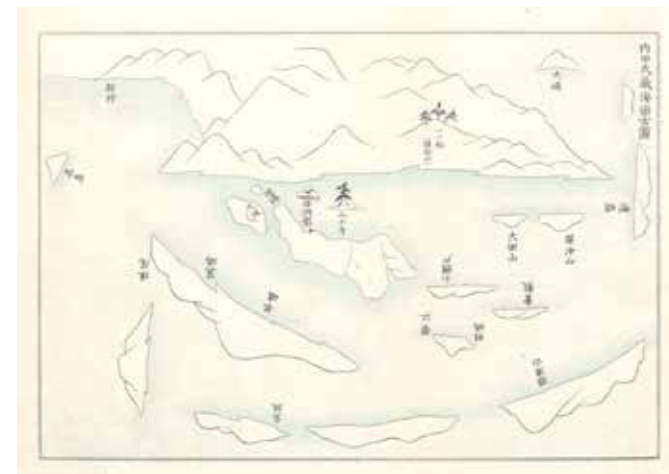
In *The Chronicles of Japan*, completed in 720, it is written that an inland sea, called Kibi-no-Anaumi, lay in the south of present-day Okayama prefecture. The area we now know as Kurashiki lay among several islands floating in that sea, including Tsurajima, Otoshima, and Kashiwajima.

The increasingly aggressive excavation of iron sand from the Chugoku mountain range since the Kofun period (5th-6th centuries), caused large quantities of earth and sand, other than iron sand, to flow into nearby rivers, raising the beds of the lower reaches of Takahashi River and transforming Kibi-no-Anaumi into an increasingly shallow sea.

Around the 16th century, the *daimyo* (feudal lord) of what is now Okayama prefecture, Ukita Hideie, had embankments built around this shallow sea, which lay in his domain, and ordered the start of land reclamation work. In the 17th

century, the rulers of the Bitchu-Matsuyama domain (also modern-day Okayama prefecture) reclaimed land from the sea surrounding Tamashima Island, building a port and excavating the Takase Canal to link that port up with the Takahashi River.

While the area was still made up of islands, warehouses were built in the southern foothills of Mount Tsurugata for the temporary storage of the annual rice tax. Areas used in this way, for stockpiling, were known as *kurashiki-chi* and it is said that the name Kurashiki derives from this term. As the reclamation grounds widened, the Shioiri canal was excavated and warehouses came to be built on the banks of Kurashiki River, where the riverboats would moor. These are the origins of the core layout of what we know today as the Kurashiki Bikan Historical Area.



An old map showing Kurashiki when it was still mostly sea

The *kitamae-bune*, or “northern-bound” merchant ships that travelled the length of Japan, would stop in Shimotsui and Tamashima ports, where they would land dried sardines and herring lees, both of which were used as fertilizer for cotton. These ships, which were also called *ben-zaisen* (trader ships), would then be loaded up with locally produced Bitchu cotton, cotton products, and salt, as well as tobacco, iron, copper, and red iron oxide, all of which would then be transported nationwide.

Land that used to be under seawater has salt-rich soil. This soil was first planted with cotton and common rush, and the Kokura-ori cloth and *tabi* socks that were crafted from the harvested cotton were sold along the approach to Yugasan Rendai-dera Temple, which was a popular destination, located in modern-day Kagawa prefecture, often paired with a trip to Kotohira-ji Shrine. The textile industry flourished in Kojima, and the twisted yarn industry in areas such as Gonai, while making rush mats became established a side business for many farming families.

Come the Meiji period (1868-1912), the Shimomura Spinning Factory was opened in Kojima, a town known for salt production and served by Shimotsui port, while the Tamashima Spinning Factory opened up on nearby Tamashima Island, and the Kurashiki Spinning Factory was built on the ruins of the Kurashiki Magistrate's Office. In order to expand his business, Ohara Magosaburo, the second generation owner of the Kurashiki Spinning Factory, ordered the building of considerable infrastructure in Kurashiki—aside from his factories, he commissioned office buildings and dormitories, as well as a bank, a generator, a hospital and a school, and Japan's first private museum of Western art, the Ohara Museum of Art. The Kurashiki cityscape, in which typical Edo-period buildings coexist seamlessly

with Western-inspired architecture and Western European structures, can be described as a unique industry-scape whose origins can be traced back to a single cotton plant. While the main focus of production in Kojima has shifted over time, from *kokura-ori* cloth and *tabi* socks to army clothing, school uniforms, and denim jeans, the sound of the looms has never ceased, and to date, some 70% of all domestically produced canvas is made-in-Kojima. Since the middle of the Meiji period, the luxury patterned rush mats developed by Isozaki Minki, known as *kinkanen*, have been acclaimed in Europe and North America, and the area now boasts Japan's leading output of common rush. In this way, the spinning industry and rush mat industry were the drivers of modernization in Kurashiki.

Precipitation levels around the lower regions of the Takahashi River are only around 70% of the national average, meaning that it was not possible to secure adequate water for rice cultivation. Until the Meiji period, there were regular disputes over water rights and sluiceways were constructed without permission, weakening the embankments and causing them to give way every time the river flooded. The great swells of earth, sand, and water that flowed out from this high-bedded river would then ravage local homes and fields. From the end of the Meiji period and throughout the Taisho period (1912-1926), Takahashi River was remodeled, with the eastern branch eliminated and the flow concentrated into the western branch. Additionally, the Takahashi River East-West Water District's Treatment and Distribution Facility, which ensured that water was always evenly distributed, was completed in Sakazu during this time. Many cherry trees were planted around the facility and today it remains a much-loved relaxation spot for locals.

A circular inset image showing a traditional Japanese river scene. A small boat with two people is on a narrow river, flanked by lush green willow trees and traditional Japanese buildings. The scene is peaceful and scenic.

p.8~



p.20~



p.36~

A circular inset image showing a suspension bridge, the Bix Creek Bridge, spanning a wide river. The bridge has two tall towers and is surrounded by lush green trees and vegetation on the banks. The sky is blue with some clouds.

p.44~

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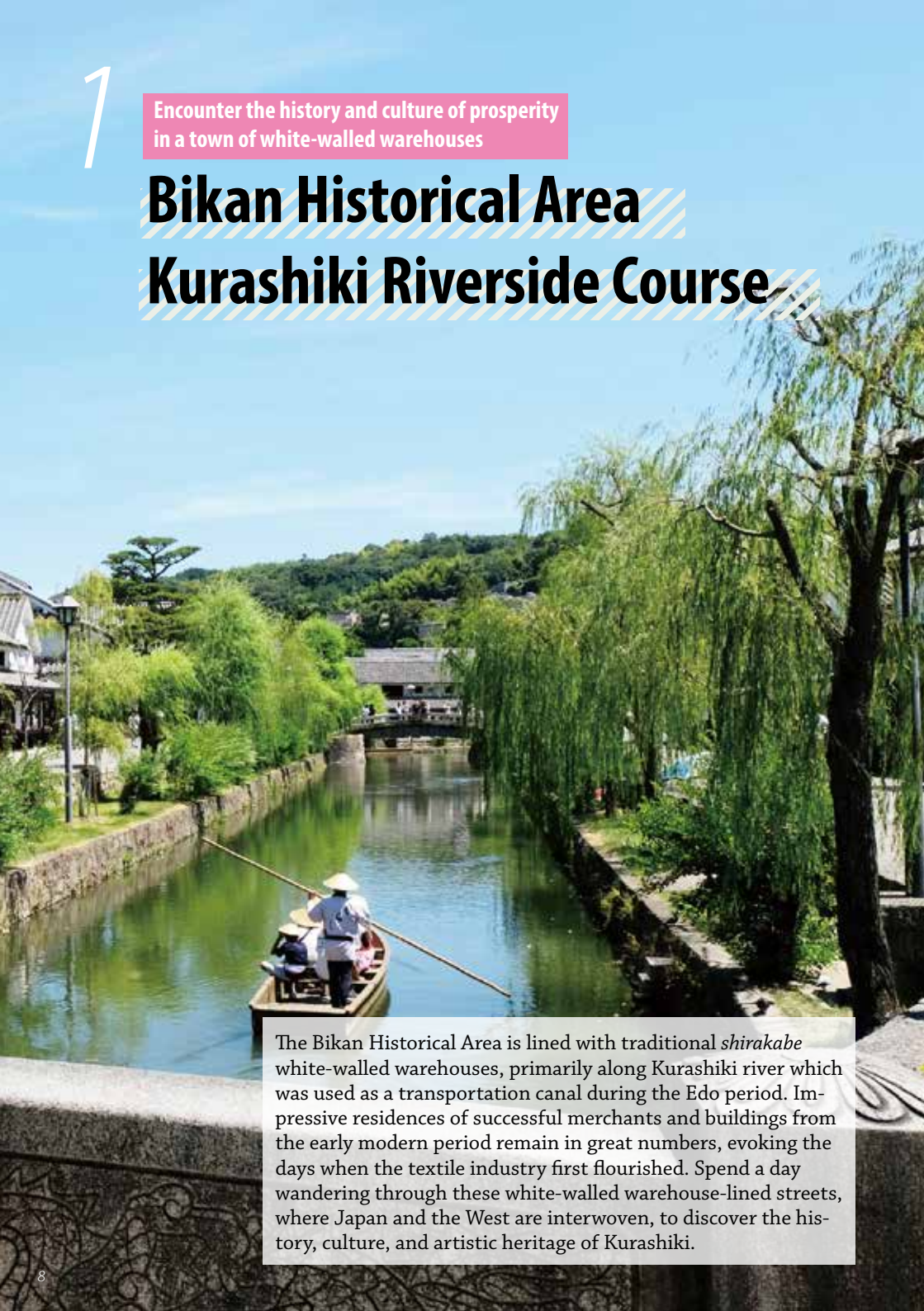


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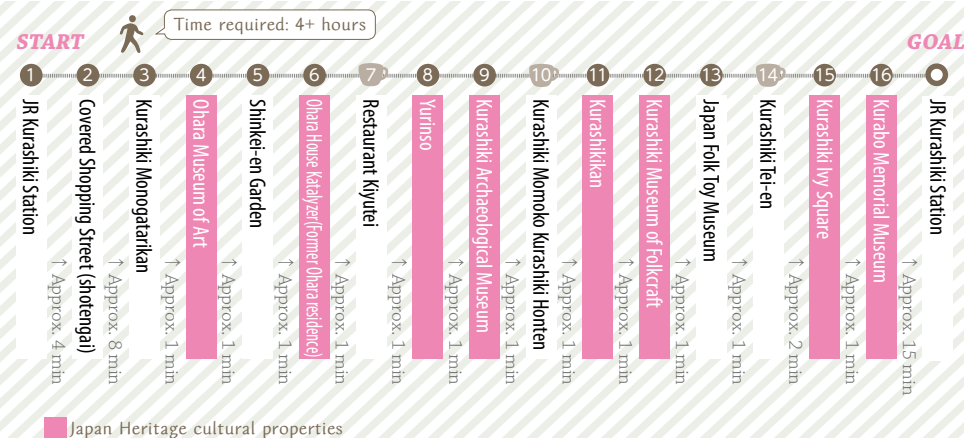
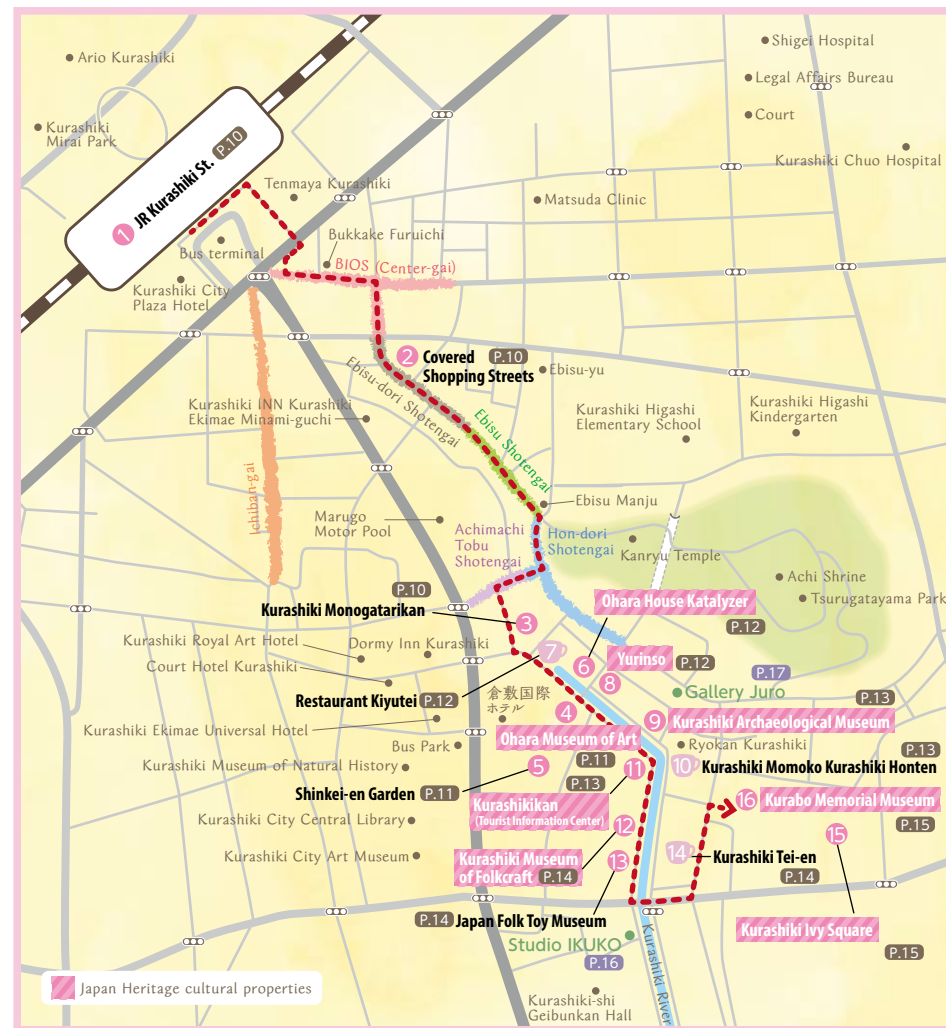
1

Encounter the history and culture of prosperity
in a town of white-walled warehouses

Bikan Historical Area Kurashiki Riverside Course



The Bikan Historical Area is lined with traditional *shirakabe* white-walled warehouses, primarily along Kurashiki river which was used as a transportation canal during the Edo period. Impressive residences of successful merchants and buildings from the early modern period remain in great numbers, evoking the days when the textile industry first flourished. Spend a day wandering through these white-walled warehouse-lined streets, where Japan and the West are interwoven, to discover the history, culture, and artistic heritage of Kurashiki.

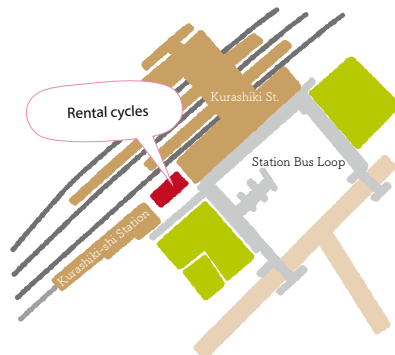


10 min walk to the Bikan Historical Area. Start here!

1 JR Kurashiki Station (south exit)

Adjacent to the north side of the station you'll find outlet stores and a shopping mall. Rental cycles are available from the car rental office at the south exit.

JR Rent-A-Car Kurashiki Office: 20m to the right of the south exit of JR Kurashiki Station ☎086-422-0632 🕒8:00-20:00 (bookings taken until 19:00, reception closed 12:00-13:00) 🗓open year-round 💰¥450 for up to 4 hours, ¥500 for 4+ hours to full day



Walk through five traditional shopping streets to the Bikan Historical Area

2 Shotengai Covered Shopping Streets

Enjoy the range of shops, old and new alike, that line Kurashiki's *shotengai* (covered shopping streets). Start along Kurashiki Center-gai, then walk through Ebisu-dori Shotengai, Ebisu Shotengai, Hon-dori Shotengai and Achimachi Tobu Shotengai to arrive at the Bikan Historical Area.



An atmospheric starting point for sightseeing in Kurashiki

3 Kurashiki Monogatari (Japan Heritage information)

This facility is located in a renovated Edo period building that was formerly the residence of the Ohashi family. It houses an exhibition of Kurashiki's Japan Heritage.

☎086-435-1277 🕒Apr-Nov: 9:00-21:00, Dec-Mar: 9:00-19:00 🗓Year-end (29 Dec-3 Jan) 🆓Free (charge for rental rooms)



Kick the day off by learning about Kurashiki's Japan Heritage here!



Encounter world-renowned paintings and artworks from around the globe

4 Ohara Museum of Art

Japan's first private museum of modern Western art was founded in 1930 by Kurashiki entrepreneur Ohara Magosaburo to commemorate the painter Kojima Torajiro. Today, it holds a collection of some 3,000 pieces, including internationally renowned paintings, contemporary Japanese art pieces, and South-east Asian antiques. The museum's many must-sees include a pond home to waterlilies propagated from Monet's very own.

☎086-422-0005 🕒9:00-17:00 (last entry 16:30) 🗓Mondays (excluding national holidays, summer holidays, October), year-end (28-31 Dec) 💰Adults ¥1,500, High/Junior high/Elementary school children ¥500



On display in the Annex are oil paintings and sculptures by Japanese artists.



On the far wall: Edmond François Aman-Jean, "Festival of Venice" (Ohara Museum of Art Collection)



The museum shop is located in the north of the museum grounds (opening hours 9:00-17:15)

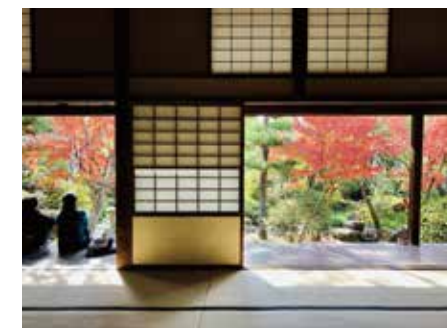


Relax as you take in the seasonal beauty of the garden view

5 Shinkei-en Garden

This traditional building was constructed in 1893 as a second residence for the Ohara family. Look around for free then sit down in the spacious *tatami* room to take in the gorgeous garden view.

☎086-422-0338 🕒9:00-17:00 🗓Year-end (29 Dec-3 Jan) 🆓Free (charge for rental rooms)



Traditional townhouse architecture keeping Kurashiki's history visible today

6 Ohara House Katalyzer (Former Ohara House)

- Build in 1795 as the main residence for the Ohara family. The 10 structures that comprise the residence, including the main building and the storehouse, are adorned with such traditional design features as Kurashiki lattice and the black and white geometry of the *namakokabe* wall finish and are designated National Important Cultural Properties.

☎086-434-6277 🕒9:00-17:00 📅Mondays (except national holidays), year-end *May be unavailable due to private hire 💰Adults ¥500, High/Junior high/Elementary school children ¥400



"Raining Words", one of the installations on the site



A book café displaying part of the Ohara book collection



The Kurashiki Kawabune Steak Set, ¥2,200 (limited to 15 sets a day)



Enjoy the taste of locally grown ingredients at this long-established restaurant

7 Restaurant Kiyutei

Housed in a beautifully preserved Meiji period building with a clay-fired tiled roof, this restaurant serves locally sourced food to the local community. Dishes are as refined as you would expect from a hotel-operated restaurant, while the atmosphere is relaxed and friendly.

☎086-422-5140 🕒11:00-21:00 (last orders 20:30) *Opening times may change 📅Wednesdays

The Ohara family's second home is adorned with distinctive green-hued clay-fired roof tiles

8 Yurinso

- This second home was built by Ohara Magosaburo for his wife. When seen from a certain angle, the clay-fired roof tiles appear shimmering green; this led to the home being nicknamed *midori goten*, or "The Green Palace". Currently, Yurinso is only open to the public during special exhibitions held by the Ohara Museum of Art.

☎086-422-0005 (Ohara Museum of Art) 🕒Limited open days only 📅All days other than open days 💰Varies according to exhibition on open days



Precious excavated artifacts on display in the exhibition rooms

Think back to the history of ancient Kibi province

9 Kurashiki Archaeological Museum

- Opened in 1950 in a renovated rice storehouse from the Edo period. Some 700 items are on display including stoneware and ceramics from the Paleolithic period to the middle ages, primarily from around Okayama prefecture.
- ☎086-422-1542 🕒9:00-17:00 (last entry 16:30) 📅Mondays, Tuesday (except national holidays and substitute national holidays), year-end (27 Dec-2 Jan) 💰Adults ¥500, College/High school students ¥400, Junior high/Elementary school students ¥300 *Price may change in the event of e.g. special exhibitions



Enjoy a refined take on seasonal fruits from Okayama, a fruit-growing paradise

10 Kurashiki Momoko Kurashiki Honten

Indulge in the taste of Okayama-grown seasonal fruits in this café specializing in desserts and drinks.

☎086-427-0007 🕒10:00-17:00 (last orders 16:30) 📅None



Glass pieces by Charles Martin Émile Gallé on display in the second floor café

Peach and lemon parfait ¥1,760



This Taisho period Western building is an oasis at the heart of the Bikan Historical Area

11 Kurashikikan

- A Western-style wooden building originally constructed in 1917 as Kurashiki Town Hall. The building now houses the Tourist Information Center and a public rest space.

☎086-422-0542 (Tourist Information Center) 🕒9:00-18:00 (may change at year-end) 📅None 💰Free

This spot is representative of the Bikan Historical Area's unique scenery, where Western-style buildings blend seamlessly into a traditional Japanese townscape



Showcasing folkcrafts from all periods and places which exemplify utilitarian beauty

12 Kurashiki Museum of Folkcraft

This is the second dedicated folkcraft museum ever opened in Japan. Housed in a converted rice storehouse from the Edo period, the museum boasts a 15,000-piece strong collection of items from Japan and overseas. The artifacts on display, which include ceramics, woodwork, and lacquerware, all share a timeless, borderless elegance have been passed down across generations of craftsmanship.

- ☎086-422-1637 📅Mar-Nov: 9:00-17:00 (last entry 16:45); Dec-Feb: 9:00-16:15 (last entry 16:00) 🗳Mondays (including national holidays falling on a Monday; open every day throughout August), year-end (Dec 29-Jan 1) 💰Adults ¥1,000, College/High school students ¥400, Junior high/Elementary school students ¥300. Discounts available for groups of 20+ people.

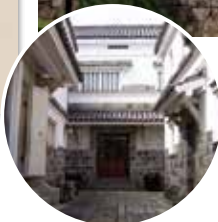


A *suitek* (water-dropper) used to moisten inkstones

Experience the beauty not of artworks but of utilitarian objects, such as ceramics and wood-worked pieces



The beautiful black-tiled exterior of the museum



An equally lovely view of the courtyard



Hariko (papier-mâché figurines) by Manabe Hosei

A museum brimming with nostalgic toys and handicrafts

13 Japan Folk Toy Museum

Folk toys made in all regions of Japan from the Edo period to the present day are on display here. The museum grounds are also home to shops, a gallery, and a cafe.

- ☎086-422-8058 (10:00-17:00) 📅Shop: 10:00-18:00, Museum: 10:00-17:00 *Both open at 9:30 in Mar-Oct 🗳Jan 1 💰Adults ¥400, High/Junior high school students ¥300, Elementary school students ¥200 *Price is for museum only.

Enjoy the free space and courtyard



Home to four unique stores

14 Kurashiki Tei-en

A townhouse more than a century old was renovated through a public-private partnership to create this multi-purpose facility. There are four stores on site, including a café, a hat store, and a bar.

- ☎086-425-0050 (Koba Coffee) 📅Varies by store 🗳Varies by store

The narrow entrance opens up into an expansive space



A classically-inspired space remodeled from a former spinning factory

15 Kurashiki Ivy Square

This multi-purpose cultural facility, home to a hotel and memorial museum among others, was developed by renovating the site of the former Kurashiki Spinning Factory (today the Kurabo Memorial Museum), which in turn was built on ruins of the former Magistrate's Office during the Meiji period. It is designated a Heritage of Industrial Modernization site.

- ☎086-422-0011 📅Varies by facility 🗳Varies by facility 💰Varies by facility



Inside the park grounds there is a hotel, a restaurant, and a hands-on studio



The exhibition room is lined with historical materials

Located within Kurashiki Ivy Square

A key industrial heritage site that reveals the history of Kurashiki's development

16 Kurabo Memorial Museum

A wealth of important resources, including photographs and documents, enable visitors to trace the course of the development of the spinning industry in Kurashiki.

- ☎086-422-0011 📅9:00-17:00 (last entry 16:45) 🗳None 💰Adults ¥300, College/High/Junior high/Elementary school students ¥250

This mark indicates destinations that are Japan Heritage cultural properties.

Feature

The Rich Variety of Kurashiki Folk Handicrafts



Folk handicrafts are one of the cultural properties that make up Kurashiki's Japan Heritage story. In this context, "folk craft" refers to hand crafted items that are aesthetically pleasing but also have a practical use. Here we introduce some of the folk handicrafts on sale in the Bikan Historical Area.

Stunning striped rugs

Kurashiki Hand-woven Rugs

Hand-woven rugs (*dantsu*) made from such materials as rush grass, *washi* paper, and cotton fibers. Distinguished by their modern stripe motifs, these timeless pieces work well in both Western and traditional Japanese interiors. The fact that they are durable and long-lasting is another strong selling point.

IKUKO Studio ☎086-427-0067 🕒10:00-18:00 🗓Mondays
(excluding national holidays)

Chigusa ☎086-422-8170 🕒9:00-17:00 🗓Mondays



A local specialty adapted into charming items

Rush Grass Products

Rush grass (*igusa*) has several properties that make it an excellent crafting material, such as humidity control and air filtering effects. Previously, south Kurashiki was a production center for high-quality rush grass, since like cotton the plant could withstand the salt-rich soil. Today, this special local material is used to create a wide range of rush grass products, from *tatami* mats to rugs to household objects.

Ivy Craft Store, Kurashiki Ivy Square ☎086-454-4061 🕒8:00-16:30
🗓N/A



Popular for their playful expressions

Kurashiki Papier-Mâché Figurines

These papier-mâché figurines (*hariko*), developed by a Kurashiki dollmaker in 1868, have been designated by Okayama Prefecture as a Traditional Folk Craft Item. With their charming expressions and dynamic poses, they are guaranteed to bring a smile and are popular as good luck charms.

Japan Folk Toys Museum ☎086-422-8058 (10:00-17:00)
🕒Shop: 10:00-18:00 (9:30-18:30, Mar-Oct) 🗓Jan 1



Homespun chair mats that are a perfect fit for daily life

Kurashiki Knotting

Hand-woven chair pads crafted using a weft of 160 strands of cotton or wool. With their soft, thick texture and simple, rustic designs that are a fine match for wooden furniture, these chair pads are admired by all generations.

shop & cafe Miyakeshoten, 2F Hayashi Genjuro Shoten
☎086-423-6080 🕒10:00-18:00, café 11:00-17:00 🗓Mondays
(excluding national holidays-closed on Tuesday instead)

So cute they're almost captivating

Kurashiki Hand Balls

These embroidered hand balls (*temari*) have their roots in the Higo *temari* tradition of Kumamoto prefecture and were developed by Tonomura Kichinosuke, a folk art (*mingei*) activist. These are exquisitely beautiful little items thanks to the texture of the vegetable-dyed cotton threads and the delicate embroidery of the Japanese-inspired geometric designs.

Kurashiki Museum of Folkcraft Museum Shop ☎086-422-1637 🕒Mar-Nov:
9:00-17:00 (last entry 16:45); Dec-Feb: 9:00-16:15 (last entry 16:00) 🗓Mondays
(including national holidays falling on a Monday; open every day throughout
August), year-end (Dec 29-Jan 1) 🗒Adults ¥1,000, College/High school students
¥400, Junior high/Elementary school students ¥300.



Everyday glass objects radiating warmth and charm

Kurashiki Glass

Glass objects crafted by glass artists Kodani Shinzo and Kodani Eiji. The collection has won countless loyal fans, thanks to the combination of the warm texture of blown glass, the purity of their particular hue, known as "Kodani blue", and the effortless functionality of each piece.

Side Terrace, Japan Folk Toys Museum ☎086-422-8058
(10:00-17:00) 🕒Shop: 10:00-18:00 🗓Jan 1



Kurashiki's oldest style of ceramics exemplifies utilitarian beauty

Sakazu-yaki Ceramics

Developed in 1869, this is Kurashiki's oldest style of ceramics. It is distinctive for its heavy, stout silhouettes and its use of glazes with deep, glossy hues. A wide range of Sakazu-yaki items is available, such as vases and teacups, to bring a touch of color to everyday life.

Gallery Juro ☎086-423-2577 🕒10:00-18:00 (until 17:00, Dec to Feb) 🗓N/A



Take a little trip

Chayamachi

Access

1. Approx. 14 min by train from JR Okayama Station to Chayamachi Station on the Seto-Ohashi Line
2. Approx. 25 min by bus from Kurashiki-Ekimae on a Shimoden bus bound for Chayamachi-ekimae
3. Approx. 5 min on foot from JR Chayamachi Station to Isozaki Minki Memorial Museum



The inventor of the internationally renowned *kinkanen* patterned rush mat

A Isozaki Minki Memorial Museum

This memorial museum honors the achievements of Isozaki Minki, who invented the *kinkanen* patterned rush mat made using locally-grown rush. Isozaki's former residence and research studio has been renovated into an exhibition space showing his work, materials, and important looms. Isozaki installed a slope in the building to make moving equipment easier, as well as a peephole that allowed him to check who was at the door. The museum is dotted with innovative ideas befitting of an inventor.

☎086-428-8515 🕒9:00-16:30 🗓Mondays (excluding national holidays - closed on Tuesday instead), year-end (Dec 28-Jan 4), some other dates 🆓Free



Many important research documents and photographs are on display



The Hanamushiro Studio where you can try handweaving (reservations required)



Slope



Peephole



A rose motif

Designs so intricate it's hard to believe they're woven from rush grass

A dedicated sword museum boasting Japan's biggest collection

B Kurashiki Sword Museum

This impressive collection includes everything from masterpieces of traditional sword craftsmanship to modern swords. There is no better place to immerse yourself in the profound beauty of the Japanese art sword.



☎086-420-0066 🕒10:00-18:00 (last entry 17:30) 🗓Mondays (excluding national holidays - closed on Tuesday instead) 🎫¥1000 *Free for children aged under 6



The 9-dish strong Midorikawa Gozen set (¥2,200). Dishes served will vary by season

Authentic and seasonal Japanese cuisine in a relaxed setting

C Shiki no Aji Midorikawa

A traditional Japanese restaurant that has been a popular community eatery for some 20 years. It is lauded by customers old and new alike for its elegant dishes, which make best use of seasonal ingredients from the Seto Inland Sea.

☎086-428-1147 🕒11:00-14:00, 17:30-21:30 (last order) 🗓Thursdays



Focus

Kinkanen patterned rush mats

The *kinkanen* is a type of patterned *hanamushiro* rush mat invented in 1878 by Isozaki Minki, a native of Chayamachi in Kurashiki.

Kinkanen are distinguished by the intricate weaving techniques used and their bold and colorful motifs, made possible by a groundbreaking method of fiber staining. After returning from Edo to his hometown of Chayamachi, Isozaki Minki set upon the idea of boosting the Okayama economy by developing textiles that made use of the common rush that was a local specialty product. To achieve this, he devoted himself to researching how to craft beautifully ornate rush mats. For four years, he shut himself away on the second floor of his home, working on looms and producing prototypes. Eventually, his hard work produced the *kinkanen*, a textile product of outstanding beauty.

During the Meiji period, these mats were exported overseas as an Okayama specialty. Their elaborate beauty was met with great acclaim and they soon became a key and quintessential



Mount Fuji from the Eastern Sea



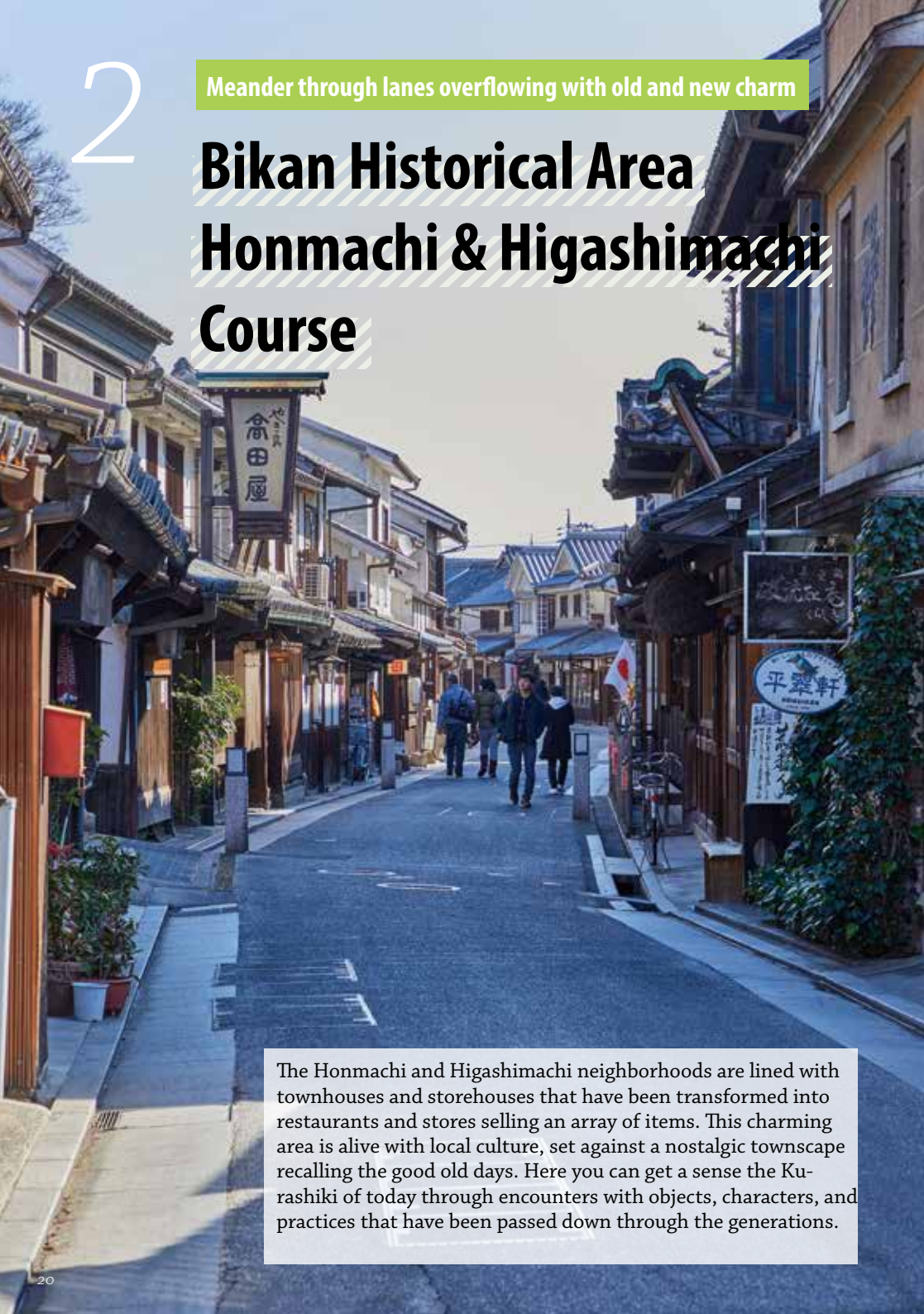
Isozaki Minki, inventor of the *kinkanen*

Japanese export.

The technology used to create *kinkanen* was pioneering at the time, and is difficult to recreate today using modern machinery and techniques. As an invention of great significance, the *kinkanen* made a significant contribution to the economy of Japan at the time. Isozaki's incredible achievement continues to be celebrated today as an integral element of the history of Japan's textile industry. In 2004, *kinkanen* were designated an Important Cultural Property of Kurashiki City.

Meander through lanes overflowing with old and new charm

Bikan Historical Area Honmachi & Higashimachi Course



The Honmachi and Higashimachi neighborhoods are lined with townhouses and storehouses that have been transformed into restaurants and stores selling an array of items. This charming area is alive with local culture, set against a nostalgic townscape recalling the good old days. Here you can get a sense the Kurashiki of today through encounters with objects, characters, and practices that have been passed down through the generations.



10 min walk to the Bikan Historical Area. Start here!

1 JR Kurashiki Station (south exit)

Leave from the south exit and cross the West pedestrian bridge to your right over Chuo-odori to find the entrance to Kurashiki Ichiban-gai, a covered shopping street.

Rental cycles are available from the Rent-A-Car office at the south exit of JR Kurashiki Station.

JR Rent-A-Car Kurashiki Office: 20m to the right of the south exit of JR Kurashiki Station

☎086-422-0632 🕒8:00-20:00 (bookings taken until 19:00, reception closed 12:00-13:00) 🗓open year-round 💰¥450 for up to 4 hours, ¥500 for 4+ hours to full day



Cross over via the West bridge



Another *shotengai* that leads to the Bikan Historical Area

2 Kurashiki Ichiban-gai

Soak in the retro feel of Ichiban-gai, a covered shopping street that recalls the Showa period (1926-1989). Stretching some 300m towards southwards, it is lined with many restaurants and *izakaya* bars and comes alive at night with tourists and locals alike.



The entrance to Ichiban-gai as seen from Kurashiki Station



Enjoy the leisurely stroll towards the Ohashi Residence



The entrance to the main building through the garden has a stately appearance



The main building is designed to give every room a garden view



The *nagayamon* gate



An old private house renovated into a center for local cuisine

4 Naraman no Koji

A *ryokan* (traditional inn) that had closed and an old private house, Shirai-tei, were renovated through a public-private partnership to create this culinary center housing eight eateries, including Japanese and Italian restaurants and cafes. It is winning acclaim for its promotion of local food culture and the use of ingredients sourced from around Takahashi River.

🕒🗓💰Varies by store



The corridor opens up into a courtyard

This designated National Important Cultural Property is a fine example of formal townhouse architecture

3 Ohashi Residence

This mansion was the home of the Ohashi family, who made their fortune by developing new rice field during the Edo period. Several of its structures—the *nagayamon* gate, main building, rice storehouse, and inner warehouse—are designated as national Important Cultural Properties and it is counted as one of Kurashiki's best examples of townhouse architecture.

☎086-422-0007 🕒9:00-17:00 (until 18:00 on Saturdays, Apr-Sep) 🗓Fridays, Dec-Feb; year-end (Dec 28-Jan 3) 💰Adults ¥550, Junior high/Elementary school students ¥350, Senior citizens (65+) ¥350



This mark indicates destinations that are Japan Heritage cultural properties.



Discover quality items to enrich your daily life

5 Hayashi Genjuro Shoten

A pharmaceutical company building, dating back to the Edo period, has been renovated through a public-private partnership to create a concept space dedicated to “enriching everyday life” that now houses eight stores selling a variety of clothing, food, and household items. These quality products, created by artists and master craftsmen, are hard to resist and rich with the unique charm of Kurashiki.

Varies by store Mondays (excluding national holidays, closed on Tuesday instead)

The complex also features a memorial room about the Hayashi family, who made a significant contribution to Kurashiki's development. Take your time and relax in the cafe, the courtyard, or even the roof terrace!



Enjoy a panoramic view of the Bikan Historical area from the windows and roof terrace



Scone set with seasonal jams, ¥850



The alley-like courtyard space



“Classiky ishew atiburanti” on the first floor



Beautiful Western-style architecture in the Renaissance style

6 Former Kurashiki Branch of the Dai-ichi Godo Bank

This Renaissance-style building was completed in 1922 as the Kurashiki branch of the Dai-ichi Godo Bank, the predecessor of Chugoku Bank. Its façade features domed stained glass windows; currently only the exterior of the property can be viewed. Work to see the building reborn as a new exhibition space for the Ohara Museum of Art will start in spring 2020.



A cafe filled with conversation and laughter as bonds grow between customers



Take a break from sightseeing in a spot that links humans with nature.

7 Yurinan

An old private house, some 100 years old, has been transformed into this charming guest house. The popular on-site cafe features a menu packed with dishes celebrating Okayama-grown ingredients, such as local favorite Shiawase Purin (literally, “happiness pudding”) and Tamago-kake Gohan (Rice with egg).

086-426-1180 Cafe 11:00-17:00 (last orders); Guest house: check-in 18:30, check-out 10:00 N/A Varies by room and length of stay



The cafe's signature Shiawase Purin (“happiness pudding”), ¥400



Tamago-kake Gohan (Rice with egg), ¥650



Choose a shared or a private room



The oldest townhouse in the Bikan Historical Area, built in 1721

8 Inoue Residence

The oldest townhouse in the Bikan Historical Area is designated a national Important Cultural Property. The heavily latticed windows, known as *kurashi-ki-mado*, on the townhouse feature fire-proof, single-swing shutters finished in lime plaster. At present, the residence is being conserved and renovated in preparation for being opened to the public in 2022.

086-426-3851 (Cultural Properties Protection Department, Kurashiki City)



A narrow alley, known as a *hiyasai*, adjacent to the building



The exterior of the Inoue Residence. The building is currently under renovation

Indulge in seasonal Japanese cuisine in a tranquil space

9 Sakuraso

Enjoy seasonal dishes prepared with fish and seafood caught in the Seto Inland Sea and seasonal vegetables. This restaurant is renowned for its skillful seasoning, which highlights the natural deliciousness of the ingredients used, and its colorful and attractive presentation.

☎086-426-5010 🕒11:30-14:00 (last orders 13:00),
17:30-22:00 (last orders 21:30) 📅Mondays, one Sun-
each month (irregular)



The Shokado
Bento, ¥1,500
*limited
numbers daily



Look out for the restaurant's
distinctive pale pink noren curtains

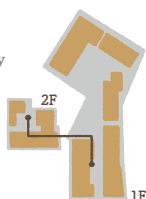


Experience the exhilaration of making by hand!

10 Kurashiki Craft Work Village

A former townhouse transformed into a multi-purpose complex through a public-private partnership. It now houses six stores selling craft items and hand-made items, unified around the central theme of Kurashiki's tradition of craftwork. Each store contains a studio where you can have a go at making items or watch crafters at work.

🕒Varies by
store/studio
📅Thursdays



Focus

Achi shrine and the Suinkyo

Achi Shrine is located at the top of Mount Tsukurugata, a 40m-high hill located at one edge of the Bikan Historical Area. This venerable shrine, standing in a location that has been a place of worship for more than 1700 years, enshrines Munaka Sannyoshin, goddess of the seas. Praying to this goddess is said to bring about safe sea journeys, improvement in performing arts skills, and commercial success.

The annual Great Fall Festival held at Achi Shrine is where Kurashiki's famous masked *suinkyo* characters make their appearance. The *suinkyo* are really young locals wearing masks intended to look like old men and women. These masked figures walk alongside the lion dancers in the festival procession to transfer the goddess's body, in a portable shrine, away from her main shrine.

The *suinkyo* tradition is said to have begun in



Suinkyo roaming through
the Bikan Historical Area



Achi Shrine

1692, when Sawaya Zenbei of Ebisu-machi, an area close to Achi Shrine, was feeling the strain of his advancing years and asked a dollmaker to make a mask in his likeness. He then had a local young person wear the mask and take his place in the procession to move the portable shrine.

If you are lucky enough to be hit on the head with one of the fans the *suinkyo* carry, you are said to be rewarded with improved intelligence or good health.



A range so enticing you won't know where to start!

A boutique food store selling a curated selection of exquisite products from across Japan

11 Kurashiki Heisuiken

The lovingly curated line-up of food products on sale here, chosen by the owner of the sake brewery, is made up of secure, safe, and delicious items that connect to daily life. The store also features a gallery cafe on the second floor.

☎086-427-1147 🕒10:00-18:00
(13:00-17:00 Mondays only)
❌None



An intimate second-hand bookstore where time slows down

12 Mushi Bunko

This second-hand bookstore, located along Honmachi-dori, has been run by owner Ms. Tanaka for more than 25 years. The store holds some 6,000 second-hand and vintage books spanning across all genres, including natural sciences, literature, and social sciences. The store also sells new publications from boutique publishing houses and the owner's own books. In this tranquil space you are sure to find a book that's perfect for you.

☎086-425-8693 🕒11:00-18:00
❌N/A



Three collections of essays by the store owner



Feature

Kurashiki's Byobu Festival

This festival is held in the elegant setting of the Bikan Historical Area. Some two dozen townhouses, mostly in the Honmachi and Higashimachi areas, throw open their lattice doors and invite visitors to take a look at their heirloom collections of *byobu* (multi-paneled folding screens), which are displayed with seasonal *ikebana* flower arrangements and other family treasures. Visitors to the area during festival time will find themselves captivated by the elegant atmosphere created by the combination of beautiful *byobu* and charming Edo-esque townscape.

The Byobu Festival ceased to be held for a time during the Meiji period, but was revived during the Heisei period to enjoy renewed attention. It is held in mid-October every year to coincide with the Achi Shrine Great Fall Festival.



Visitors are treated to displays of *byobu*
folding screens and family heirlooms



Retro items, such as these hanging paper lanterns, are also popular



Packed with more than 800 varieties of masking tape and paper accessories

13 Nyochikudo

A specialist retailer of unique paper accessories sourced from across the whole of Japan. It boasts more than 800 varieties of masking tape, a Kurashiki specialty item, with new products introduced in quick succession. You can also find a wide range of other small household goods and ornaments, including candles, another specialty Kurashiki product.

☎086-422-2666 🕒10:00-17:30 📌None



Have a go in-store at being decorative with paper accessories



Founded in 1918

The store's interior is lined with masking tapes in all colors

A precious townhouse where Meiji period style has been left untouched

14 Kusudo Residence

This is a quintessential merchant house from the Meiji period that is still today home to a kimono fabric dealing business, Hashimaya Gofukuten. It is distinguished by its architectural features, such as its street-front construction style and its lime-plastered *mushiko-mado* latticed windows, which have led to it being designated an Important Cultural Property of Kurashiki City as well as a national Tangible Cultural Property. It also houses a cafe, Yume Kukan Hashimaya.

☎086-451-1040 (Yume Kukan Hashimaya) 🕒11:00-17:00 (last orders 16:30) 📌Tuesdays (some temporary closures)



The cafe is housed in the renovated storehouse



The street-front construction of the main building showcases quintessentially Meiji period construction methods

Focus

Barazushi

Barazushi (literally, scattered sushi) is a local variety of sushi that exemplifies the food culture of Okayama prefecture. Vinegared rice is topped with fish and seafood caught in the Seto Inland Sea, such as Spanish mackerel, Japanese scaled sardine, and octopus, as well as other toppings such as shiitake mushroom, shredded egg crepe, and dried gourd. It is enjoyed by Okayama residents as a local dish served on auspicious days, such as festivals or celebrations.

Barazushi was first developed at the beginning of the Edo period. Ikeda Mitsumasa, the third generation *daimyo* of the Bi-zen-Okayama domain, was an advocate of frugality among his retainers and commoners, and ordered that "meals are to comprise one soup and one side dish". The commoners then came up with barazushi, in which the toppings are mixed into the rice, as a way of concealing them as a side dish. So the barazushi dish, which was born out of the ingenuity of the common folk, was passed down through the generations. It is now available to enjoy at sushi restaurants and Japanese cuisine restaurants throughout the prefecture.

At KuraPura, you can enjoy the taste of hako-zushi (wood-box sushi), a dish invented during Ikeda's rule in which ingredients were concealed at the bottom of the box. Their modern interpretation of the dish is called Kaeshi-zushi.



Honmachi & Higashimachi Course



Kaeshi-zushi, served in a wooden box. The dish is topped with shredded egg crepe only



Flip it over to reveal some 20 luxury ingredients at the bottom



The restaurant offers private rooms as well as a spacious shared room

A luxury sushi restaurant that brings a touch of the unexpected to beautifully presented seasonal ingredients

KuraPura Wazen Fu

As well as its signature dish, the Kaeshi-zushi set (¥2,040), this restaurant offers a range of dishes showcasing locally sourced ingredients such as fish and seafood from the Seto Inland Sea and locally grown yellow chives. The dishes served in the restaurant, which follows a traditional residential structure boasting a traditional Japanese garden, are indulgent and so beautiful as to delight the eyes as much as the stomach.

☎086-435-2211 🕒11:30-14:30 (last orders 14:00), 17:00-22:00 (last orders 21:00) 📌Wednesdays (with some irregular closing)



The restaurant also offers an exceptional garden view

Take a little trip

Sakazu

Access

1. Approx. 2 min by bus from Kurashiki-Ekimae bus stop on a Ryobi bus bound for Kurashiki-eki Hokuguchi (alight at Kawa-iri bus stop)
2. Approx. 5 min by foot from Kawa-iri bus stop to Sakazu Park



The area around the sluiceway is perfect for a stroll

- **A valuable agricultural water distribution facility from the Taisho period(1912-26)**
- **A Takahashi River East-West Water District's Treatment and Distribution Facility**
- This facility was designed to deliver water, the most precious resource for human activity, across the entire area by dividing the water equally across six distribution channels. It was constructed at the same time as flood prevention repairs were carried out on the Takahashi River. The sluiceway is built from reinforced concrete, while its 15 arched gates feature *kiri-ishi* (free cut granite stones). In 2016 it was designated a national Important Cultural Property.
- ☎086-434-2251 (Sakazu Park Management Office) 🕒Standard park opening hours ⓧNone 💰Free



Sakazu Park, built in the area around the water distribution facility, is a popular local relaxation spot



The park is also famous for its cherry trees

Everyday items to enrich your everyday life

B Sakazu-yaki Kiln

Kurashiki's oldest style of ceramics, with a history of more than 150 years. Tea cups, vases, and crockery are the main focus of production. Sakazu-yaki pieces are characterized by how easily they mold to the hand and their ease of use, as well as their elegant, lustrous hues and handsome form.

☎086-422-1962 🕒10:00-17:00 ⓧN/A 💰Experiences are charged (price varies)



Try a ceramics experience in the on-site studio, prices start at ¥3,000 (reservations need to be made one week in advance)



Honmachi & Higashimachi Course



A moment of peace enjoying the waterside view

C Waterside Cafe: Miyake Shoten Sakazu

This cafe, housed in an old family home nestled by the river, is walking distance from Sakazu Park. It is in a beautifully relaxing natural setting, with a lovely waterside view that opens up outside its windows and a lush green garden viewable from the porch.

☎086-435-0046 🕒Mar-Nov, 9:00-17:30 (last orders 17:00); Dec-Feb, 9:00-17:00 (last orders 16:30) ⓧNone



Homemade Cake of the Day, ¥850 (with a hot drink). Desserts made with seasonal fruits are particularly popular



Take a little trip

Funao

Access

1. Approx. 20 min by train from JR Okayama Station to Nishiachi Station on the Sanyo Mainline
2. Approx. 45 min on foot from Nishiachi Station to Ichi-no-kuchi Lock.



A lock standing over the Takahashi River canal

A Ichi-no-kuchi Lock

- The remains of a lock that was opened in the early Edo period, to the north of the canal that was also known as the Takase-doshi. It played a crucial role in water transportation along the lower reaches of the Takashashi River. It is retained today as a city designated historic site.

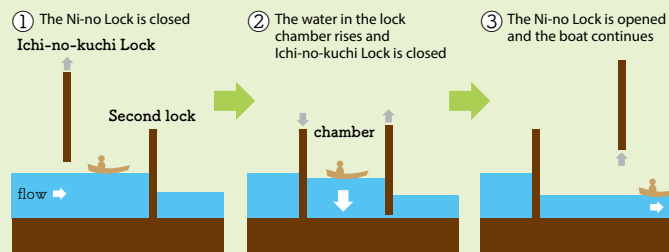


The Ichi-no-kuchi Lock retains its original construction



The Ni-no (second) Lock

The Lock Mechanism



A bottle of popular sweet wine



The venue is also used for events and harvest festivals



Muscat jam 120g, ¥1,080. Makes the perfect souvenir



The winery also makes sparkling wine and juice

Home of a premium wine made from 100% Kurashiki-grown Muscat grapes

B Funao Winery

This winery stands at the top of a small mountain. It is known for its premium wines, made with 100% Kurashiki-grown Muscat of Alexandria grapes; these wines are distinguished by their mellow aroma and fresh, crisp taste. Try some samples, buy bottles to take home, and peruse the other items on sale including jams and confectionery.

☎086-552-9789 🕒9:00-17:00 📅Year-end (Dec 29-Jan 3)

Focus

The Ichi-no-kuchi Lock and Canals

The Takase Canal, linking Tamashima Port with the western branch of Takahashi River, was first opened by Mizunoya Katsutaka, lord of the Bitchu-Matsuyama domain. At the time it was 10km in length and 9m wide, dropping to 3.6m at its narrowest points along its middle reaches. Katsukata ordered the construction of the Ichi-no-kuchi Lock and Ni-no (second) Lock, as well as a 350m lock chamber, in Kagiwa Valley, which today is in the Funao district of Kurashiki City. When the Ni-no Lock is closed, the water level in the lock chamber rises. Once it has risen some 2-3 meters above the water level of the lower reaches of the river, opening the Ni-no Lock meant that the 10 or so canal boats waiting in the lock chamber would be quickly transported downstream. This twinned lock system, which made clever use of differences in water levels, is believed to have been opened in 1664.

The canal boats carried mostly rice, copper, iron, tobacco, charcoal, and firewood to the south of Japan from the north, and salt, marine products, and fish fertilizer from south Japan back up to the north. The Takase Canal also had a role in supplying water to land across the Bitchu-Matsuyama domain, the lord of which had ordered its



construction. However the opening of a railway service between Kurashiki and Shisawa (present-day Gokei) along the Hakubisen line in 1925 brought an end to the canal boats fulfilling that role. Along the lower reaches of the Takahashi River. Still, thanks to the Takase Canal, water could be collected in the Sakazu Reservoir and siphoned through the Takahashi River all the way to Ichi-no-kuchi lock. This gave it a vital role as a channel delivering the bounty of water to the right-banks of the Takahashi River.

Take a little trip

Mizushima

Access

1. Approx. 24 min by train to Mizushima Station
(take the train from Mizushima Rinkai Railway Kurashiki-shi Station, accessible via JR Kurashiki Station)
2. Approx. 40 min on foot from Mizushima Station



Stones slabs engraved with the names of the people involved in constructing the lock remain to this day



The industrial backdrop of the Mizushima industrial complex

The only railway serving a waterfront industrial area in west Japan

Mizushima Rinkai Railway

A *rinkai* railway is a local railway service built to transport freight around waterfront industrial areas. This particular railway covers an area of some 10km, running from the center of Kurashiki to the Mizushima area, and carries passengers as well as freight. It still uses carriages dating back to the Koku-tetsu (former national rail company) era, with their nostalgic color and charm, that cannot be seen in service anywhere else today.

☎086-446-0931 (Mizushima Rinkai Railway Company)

🕒5:23 (first departure)
– 23:00 (last departure)

🚶None 🚶Starting
fare, ¥190; Kurashiki-shi
Station to Mizushima
Station, ¥330



Mizushima Station



Mizushimachokoku-dori is lined with works by famous sculptors



Honmachi & Higashimachi Course



The Rintetsu Garden, a night market held in the underpass

A historical landmark that tells the story of land reclamation

A Itajiki Lock

Fukuda-shinden is the name of an area spanning the Kitase, Nakase, Minamise, and Higashizuka districts of present-day Kurashiki City. The area was reclaimed from the sea between 1845 and 1852, under the direction of Okayama domain. Along the embankments surrounding Fukuda-shinden, locks were built in three locations to enable the removal of excess and polluted water; one of these was the Itajiki Lock. It is 10m tall by 6m deep, with distinctive granite walls. It also features an inscription giving the date of its construction: Built in summer, the sixth month, of the second year of the Kaei era (in other words, June 1849).

☎086-426-3851 (Cultural Properties Protection Department, Kurashiki Board of Education)

Focus

The Itajiki Lock and Land Reclamation

In 1584, the *daimyo* Ukita Hideie ordered work to start on the development of lowland to the east of Kurashiki through the construction of the Ukita embankment, which was to stretch from Tamongahana, located at the boundary of Hayashima and Mishima, to Iwasaki in Futsukaichi, Kurashiki. The land reclamation work carried out by the Okayama domain from the second half of the 17th century is representative, in terms of both scale and technology, of the capabilities of the early modern period. By the second half of the 1660s, the hardness and strength of granite were being leveraged to great advantage in the construction of grid-pattern locks (water gates), in which huge slabs were used for columns and beams. The background to this was that good quality granite could be excavated in large quantities along the coast of the Seto inland Sea and the excavated granite was readily transportable to the reclaimed land by water.

In 1845, the Okayama domain started work on developing the Fukuda-shinden area, successfully reclaiming some 6.25million m² of land by 1852.



Three locks were built on the reclaimed land, in order to remove excess and polluted water; today, the Yobimatsu Lock and Itajiki Lock remain. The locks are fairly small, only around 4m square in width, but the Shiodome Embankment built behind them, standing at some 10m wide and 6m tall, remains today in almost perfect form. The embankment, built using the *kirikomihagi* (cut and insert) masonry technique, contains a stone engraved with the year of construction (June 1849). Stone slabs also remain which are engraved with the names of local magistrates and tax clerks, such as Fukai Chujiro.

3

Get to know all the charms of Kojima

Kojima Walking Course

Kojima is the birthplace of made-in-Japan jeans, and the district of Ajino, in the heart of Kojima, is where you'll find Jeans Street, an up-and-coming tourist destination situated along a *shotengai* (covered shopping street). Jeans Street is lined with stores operated directly by local jeans manufacturers as well as souvenir shops and more besides. Take a look around the Former Nozaki Residence to discover the history of the area, which was originally developed as a salt field. This walking course gives you an intimate sense of how local industry has changed over time.

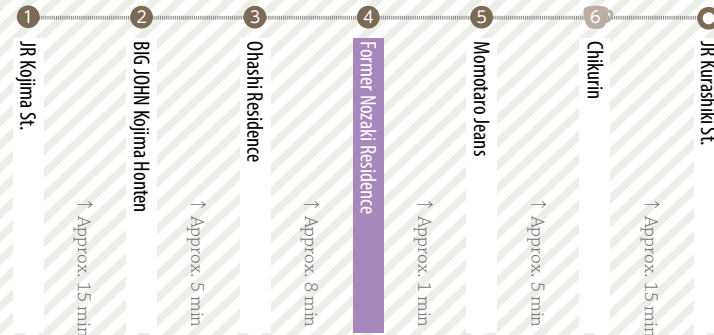


START



Time required: 3+ hours

GOAL



Japan Heritage cultural properties

Feature

Take a trip to Kojima Jeans Street

From premium jeans to denim accessories and fabrics. There's no doubt you'll be obsessed with denim by the time you leave.

Newly built in 2018, this is a public toilet and rest area designed to resemble a pair of jeans. Be sure to take a commemorative photo in front of the toilet entrance where there is a mural featuring an optical illusion



Start the Kojima Walking Tour here!

1 JR Kojima Station (west exit)

Leave by the west exit and start heading for Jeans Street. It's a 15 minute walk. There's also a tourism information booth inside the station building. On Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, and national holidays, you can ride the Jeans Bus from in front of the station straight to Jeans Street (six services a day, excluding year-end).

For enquiries about the Jeans Bus contact Kojima Office, Shimotsui Dentetsu Ltd. ☎086-472-2811 📺 Day pass ¥620 (adults)

You can't miss the denim-wrapped Jeans Bus



Even the station exit gates are decorated with denim!



Walk under the hanging jeans to enter Jeans Street



Look out for the denim-inspired paved roads



Rich with history as Japan's oldest jeans manufacturer

2 BIG JOHN Kojima Honten

Make BIG JOHN your first stop when you arrive at Jeans Street. Founded in 1940, this company became the first to sell entirely made-in-Japan jeans in 1965. Today, the store offers an incredible range of products. You can try a number of hands-on experiences, such as learning how to attach leather labels and buttons, denim processing, indigo dying, and adding images to fabric using laser irradiation. This is a store where you can relax and take your time—and even help yourself to a free drink.

☎086-473-1231 🕒9:00-17:00 📅Year-end 📺(e.g.) M1
Jeans, from ¥16,500



Have a go at dying denim with a denim artisan with over 15 years of experience



Favorite images can be added to denim fabric through laser irradiation processing



You can watch veteran artisans stitching products in-store



An unusual obelisk-like structure recalling ancient Egypt

3 Nozaki Memorial Monument

(Nozaki Buzaemon Shotokuhi)

In a small garden stands a memorial obelisk commemorating Nozaki Bunzaemon, a man known as "the salt field King". It stands 18m tall and is made with granite from Oguchijima Island off the coast of Shimotsui.

☎086-472-2001 (Nozaki Family Residence Salt Industry Historical Museum)



Stroll along Jeans Street



Encounter the history and heritage of the salt field King at his family home

4 Former Nozaki Residence

The family home of Nozaki Buzaemon, who made his fortune developing salt fields during the late Edo period. The residence is designated a national Important Cultural Property. Set in expansive grounds of some 9,900m², the estate comprises buildings with a total area of some 1,100m², including an *omote-shoin* (front reception hall), an *omoya* (main residence), three *chashitsu* (tearooms), and *dozo-gun* (group of storehouses), and elegant dry landscaped gardens. Many historical materials, folk articles, and cultural assets are on display throughout the residence. Thanks to the achievements of the Nozaki family, salt became the primary industry of Kojima. Salt is white, as are cotton and the flesh of sand lance eels, the other key industries in the Kojima area; this is the origin of the phrase *kojima sanpaku*, the three Kojima whites.

☎086-472-2001 🕒9:00-16:30 📅Mondays (excluding national holidays, closed on Tuesday instead), year-end (Dec 25 – Jan 1) 📺Adults ¥500, Junior high/Elementary school students ¥300



Group of storehouses

Stones that resemble the salt fields at Nozaki Beach have been arranged as palanquin stones.



This *tatami*-floored parlor was used as a set location for the TV drama series *The Inukami Family: Kindaichi kosuke, the Unknown*.



This mark indicates destinations that are Japan Heritage cultural properties.

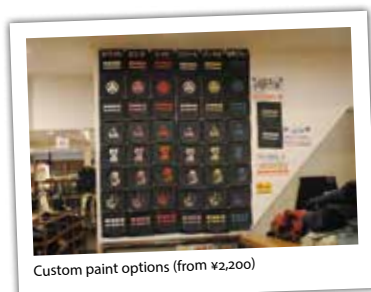


A do-it-all manufacturer, from fabric production to in-house garment making

5 Momotaro Jeans

Momotaro Jeans is the first brand in the world to use denim fabric made with 100% premium Zimbabwean cotton. Its rich indigo colors come from the world's highest concentration of indigo dye. The company's origins as a denim fabric manufacturer allow it to realize its very particular product vision. As the *honten* (flagship store), this store also sells limited edition and exclusive goods and limited edition colors, and even offers customers the chance to create one-off originals.

☎086-472-1301 🕒10:00-19:00
📅Year-end 📅(e.g.) Shutsujin Classic Straight, from ¥24,200



Custom paint options (from ¥2,200)



Limited edition, *honten*-exclusive tote bag (¥5,280)

Accessible and delicious authentic yoshoku cuisine

6 Chikurin

A long-standing restaurant with a retro look serving up authentic *yoshoku* cuisine (Western-influenced Japanese dishes). They are impressively committed to making everything by hand and in-house, down to their sauces, dressings, and even the mayonnaise. That's probably why the dishes here stand out as so aromatic and deeply flavored! The portions are very generous, too.

☎086-472-2187 🕒11:00-14:30, 17:00-20:30 📅Tuesdays



Lunch special, ¥700



Rice-filled omelette, ¥650

Feature

Must-have Denim Goods

It's not surprising that denim-themed goods are all the rage on Jeans Street. Here are some of our top picks for obsessive and innovative denim-inspired products!

Made with indigo powder!

Indigo soft serve icecream created for Kojima

RIVETS

Indigo may be best known as a dye for denim fabric, but that same indigo is also a health food with an outstanding antioxidant effect. This indigo soft serve is generously topped with Japan-grown powdered indigo. It has a refreshing salted vanilla flavor, inspired by the area's three main industries, as encapsulated in the phrase *kojima sanpaku* (the three Kojima whites: cotton, salt, and sand lance eels).

☎086-441-9100 🕒11:00-15:00 (Open later during summer)
📅Tuesdays and Wednesdays weekly, irregular Thursday closures, year-end. 📅Indigo soft serve ¥400, Octopus croquette ¥200



Keyring



Indigo soft serve



Marugo tabiRela kids (from ¥3,850)



Filled with denim accessories that vibe of Jeans Street!

038 OMIYA

This souvenir store is stocked with all things stylish and delicious from the Seto Inland area. From denim coin purses and keyrings, to place mats, neckties, bowties, and more, you'll find it hard to take your eyes off these denim goods and accessories. The store also sells *sanada himo* woven cord, *tatami-beri* (*tatami* mat decorative edging), and *tabiRela*, a casual style, split-toe shoe brand from local *tabi* manufacturer Marugo.

☎086-441-4038 🕒10:00-18:00 (11:00-17:00 on weekdays)
📅N/A

4

Explore school uniforms, *tatami* mat edging, and locally-made sake

Kojima Cycling Course

Set off by bicycle from Kojima Station to tour the Shimonochō and Kotoura areas. You'll pass through places where you can have fun learning about Kojima's textile industry in depth and encounter local sake breweries. The course takes you on an exhilarating ride through the different feel of different areas, so you can discover all the charms of Kojima.



START



Time required: 5+ hours

GOAL

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	GOAL
JR Kojima St.	Kojima Station Tourism Information Booth	Mori no 8 Katen	Kojima School Uniform Museum	JEANS MUSEUM & VILLAGE	TCB jeans	Sankan Brewery	Juhachi Zakari Brewery	Takada Orimono (FLAT)	DENIM HOSTEL float	JR Kojima St.
	↑ Approx. 1 min	↑ Approx. 15 min	↑ Approx. 15 min	↑ Approx. 4 min	↑ Approx. 2 min	↑ Approx. 3 min	↑ Approx. 15 min	↑ Approx. 10 min	↑ Approx. 8 min	↑ Approx. 30 min

Start the Kojima Cycling Tour here!

1 JR Kojima Station

Alight at Kojima Station on the Seto-Ohashi line and head to the Tourist Information booth inside the station building. Here you can rent a bicycle and begin your cycling tour of Kojima.



You'll be riding up some hills over the course so we recommend an electric bicycle!



"School Uniform Toilets" in front of the station. The outside of the men's toilet is painted to resemble *tsume-eri gakuseifuku* (standing collar school uniform), while the women's resembles *sera fuku* (sailor suits).

Tourist Information booth inside the station

2 Kojima Station Tourist Information (Rent Bicycles)

Here at the Tourist Information booth inside the station, to your right once you leave through the ticket gates, is where you can rent yourself a bicycle.

☎086-472-1289 ☎9:00-16:30 (rentals not available 12:00-13:00) ¥300 (per session per day) *Electric bicycles, ¥500 ☒Year-end

You can also rent bicycles from Kojima Industrial Promotion Center (p61).

A pair of bijou stores set in the heart of the forest

3 Mori no 8 Katen

These two stores, situated on the second floor of what used to be a sewing factory, opened in 2017. Rather than a department store – known in Japanese as a "one hundred item store", or *hya* (100)-*katen* – these stores style themselves as the "eight item store", *ha*(8)-*katen*, comprising *rolca*, a home living store selling "little luxuries" for home and daily living, such as clothing and local honey, and BUONO UNO, an Italian restaurant.

☎086-472-2257 (rolca) / 086-472-8039 (BUONO UNO)
☎11:00-16:00 (rolca) / 11:30-15:00 (last orders) (BUONO UNO)
☒Tuesdays ☒(e.g.) Kojima Seto Inland Hundred-Flower Honey, ¥1,980 (rolca) / (e.g.) Daily pasta lunch ¥1,490 (BUONO UNO)



Linen aprons dyed here in Kojima are a best-selling item



Home-made honey collected from the Mori no 8 Katen gardens



Italian restaurant BUONO UNO

Discover – and dress up in – the history of school uniforms in Japan

4 Kojima School Uniform Museum

This museum is situated in the grounds of school uniform manufacturer Nippon Hifuku. On display on the first floor are some 200 signs and posters advertising the various school uniform manufacturers based in Kojima. There are also examples of pre-war school uniforms and some very retro paper storage bags. On the second floor you can try on a wide selection of school uniforms, so don't forget to take a commemorative photo in your favorite style! Next door is Kojima Tokumeikan where you can buy local specialties and outlet student uniforms.

☎086-436-7707 (weekdays only) ☎10:00-17:00

☒Year-end ☒Free



The second floor has a dress-up corner

Focus

Local Textile Products

The Kojima area was unsuited to rice cultivation and so was used to grow cotton from the middle of the Edo period onwards. This was the starting point for the Kojima textile industry, which has since blossomed in many directions.

In the earliest years of the industry, *sanada himo* (Sanada woven cord, p53) became popular as a souvenir associated with the pilgrimage to Mount Yuga. From the dawn of the Meiji period, the industrial revolution saw the opening of multiple spinning factories, and the introduction of motorized sewing machines sparked a boom in the production of *tabi* socks.

During the peak years of the Taisho and Showa periods production of *tabi* socks dwindled and the focus shifted onto the production of school uniforms and denim jeans, both ideally suited to the Kojima textile industry given its skill in working with thick fabrics.

In 1963, Kojima produced 10.06 million school uniform sets in a single year, the highest volume ever recorded. Even now, around 70% of all school uniforms in Japan are manufactured within Okayama prefecture. In 1965, the first ever entirely made-in-Japan jeans were produced in Kojima, leading to the area becoming renowned as the



Sanada himo woven cord



Tatami-beri (tatami mat decorative edging)



Sailcloth



Japanese tabi socks

birthplace of Japan-made jeans. Kojima produces many other fabrics besides, including sailcloth (p67) and *tatami-beri* (tatami mat decorative edging, p51). One of the area's great strengths is that it is home to companies working along each stage of the production chain, from weaving, where fibers are woven into fabric, to dyeing, where fabric is dyed, and sewing, where fabric is sewn into garments.

Today, Kurashiki boasts the highest production by value in the textile industry across the whole of Japan. It is Japan's leading city of textiles.

This mark indicates destinations that are Japan Heritage cultural properties.

The more you know about jeans, the more there is to love about them!

5 JEANS MUSEUM & VILLAGE

Operated by Betty Smith, the leading manufacturer of women's jeans, this is the only jeans museum in Japan. Building 1 was opened in 2003 as a way to ensure the history of jeans was remembered and to enable children to discover that history. In the following decade, a number of additional facilities were added to the museum. Now, the museum includes Building 1, which features displays on the history and historical contexts of jeans, and Building 2, dedicated to tracing the development of jeans in Japan over time. Other facilities include the oldest denim sewing factory in Japan, a hands-on experience factory, a Betty Smith showroom shop, and an outlet store—making this truly a village worth visiting.

☎086-473-4460 🕒9:00-18:00 📅Year-end 🆓Free



Building 1 of the Jeans Museum



Inside Building 1 of the Jeans Museum
The display includes many valuable items, such as an original model for the iconic 501XX by Levi's.



The second floor of Building 1 is a bespoke salon
Here you can order a fully bespoke pair of jeans, guided by specialist staff who will also take your exact measurements



The sewing factory founded in 1962



Building 2 is a converted washing factory



The factory outlet store sells non-standard and bargain items

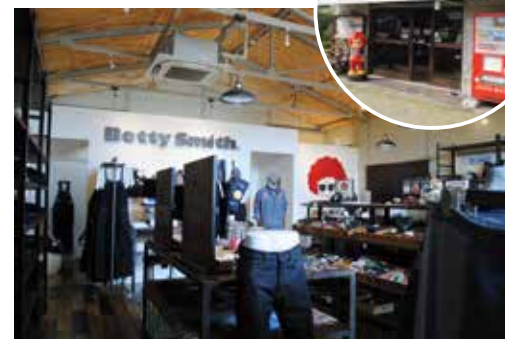


Have a go at customizing your own jeans
Add your choice of buttons, rivets, and leather patches to ready-made jeans for a bespoke look



Cotton in front of the hands-on experience factory
Every year, many cotton flowers blossom in the fall

Betty's Store is where you'll find everything from new products to classic items



Jeans can be customized with embroidery and patches

You'll be welcomed by brand mascot Betty-chan



The Hands-on Experience Factory



Utmost respect for the tradition of denim jeans

6 TCB jeans

This brand specializes in raw denim, where the fabric has not been treated or pre-shrunk. These are stiff and sturdy jeans that grow with you, gradually softening and molding to your body. Each item comes with a tag that shows which decade that particular style is paying homage to. The brand recreates the best styles from years gone by, paying close attention to every detail.

☎080-3873-8476 ☎10:00-18:00 ☎Year-end ☎(e.g.) CATBOY JEANS, ¥23,100



The second floor shop

The shop carries a wide range of sizes including plenty for taller and larger frames



Tags show the decade being paid homage to by each style, e.g. 20's



The first floor is an open factory

The closest sake brewery to Kojima Station

7 Sankan Brewery

A brewery established in 1806. To this day it continues to make sake that is rich and dry, in order to pair well with fish from the Seto Inland Sea—as was the original founder's intention. Despite being coastal soil, the *shikomi-mizu* (brewing water) has been filtered through granite, leaving it pure and crisp. The brewery also offers a popular range of non-sake products, including an *amazake* (non-alcoholic fermented rice drink) set, during the summer months only, and *kakigori* (shaved ice).

☎086-472-3010 ☎10:30-16:30 (open until 18:00, Jun-Sep)
☎Tuesdays (open every day Jun-Sep), year-end.



Kakigori (shaved ice) made with shikomi-mizu (brewing water) and topped with sake lees syrup

Everything is good in its season

8 Juhachi Zakari Brewery

This brewery, standing at the entrance the approach to the Mount Yuga, dates back to 1785. It is determined to be loyal to its locality and uses 100% Okayama-grown rice. The resulting sake is fresh with subtle acidity and has won acclaim overseas as well as in Japan. Its Takaji label of sake is particularly exquisite and is only available as a limited edition in selected stores.

☎086-477-7125 ☎9:00-12:00, 13:00-16:00 ☎Saturdays, Sundays, and national holidays; years-end (check brewery website for details)



Discover the limitless versatility of tatami-beri

9 Takada Orimono (FLAT)

Tatami-beri is the word for the decorative edging used on *tatami* mats. Takada Orimono was founded in the Meiji period, meaning it has long been dedicated to the production of *tatami-beri*. Today, the company has an incredible thousand-odd designs in its range. Recently, *tatami-beri* has been enjoying renewed attention as hand-made material. You can buy this edging and associated goods at FLAT, the company's factory shop which also offers free recipes, product displays, and hands-on experiences such as making walnut buttons. This is a place to have fun with this unique decorative textile.

☎086-477-6777 ☎10:00-15:00 ☎Sundays, national holidays (irregular closures on Saturdays) ☎(e.g.) *tatami-beri* roll end, ¥165



Coin purses



Have a go at making walnut buttons!

An end-to-end manufacturer that starts with the fabric and ends with in-house production

10 DENIM HOSTEL float

This hostel with an in-house cafe opened only recently in 2019 but is already famous for its dry chicken curry. This slowly simmered dish is made without any water, instead getting all the moisture it needs from coconut milk and the water content of the vegetables used. The design concept for the cafe is denim, as evidenced by nods to denim everywhere—even the benches and counter are stained with indigo. It also boasts an incredible close-up view of the Seto Inland Sea, and of course is a great place to stay overnight too!

☎050-8880-3135 ☎11:30-22:30 ☎Tuesdays ☎(e.g.) dry chicken curry, ¥800



The cafe's famous dry chicken curry



Denim goods on sale



One of the hostel rooms

*You are able to try sake samples at breweries but riding a bicycle after drinking is illegal so please refrain if cycling.

Take a little trip

Mount Yuga

Access

- Approx. 35 min by bus from JR Kojima Station on a Shimoden bus bound for Yugasan
- (*two departures daily, none on Saturdays, Sundays, or national holidays)
- Approx. 15 min by taxi from JR Kojima Station



A Grand Head Temple where the feudal lords of Bizen came to pray to ward off evil

A Yugasan Rendai-ji Temple

Mount Yuga (Yugasan) enshrines the Bodhisattva Yuga Daigongen and is renowned as a sacred mountain with the ability to ward off evil. Ritual prayers at Rendai-ji, in which temple priests take turns to read the Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra, leave a profound impression. Each year the temple welcomes some 400,000 visitors. Rendai-ji was the official prayer hall during the period when the Ikeda family held the feudal lordship. As such, you can also appreciate the architecture of the temple's guest hall, gardens, and *shoheiga*, or large surface paintings.

- ☎086-477-6222 ☎9:00-16:00 (prayer service applications)
- ❌None 🆓Free (fee payable for *gokito* prayer service)



Ritual prayers



The onari-no-ma (guest hall)



Yuga Shrine *go-shuincho*, books used to collect seal stamps given to shrine visitors



Original *go-shuincho* collection books are must-haves!

B Yugasan Yuga Jinja Hongu Shrine

In the past, a visit to Mount Yuga was often paired with a visit to Konpira-san (Kotohira-gu Temple). Yuga Jinja has 52 *bunsha* sub-shrines across Japan, but this is the *hongu* (head shrine). The shrine is popular for its incredible *otorii* entrance gate, crafted in Bizen-yaki pottery, and its *go-shuincho*, books used to collect seal stamps given to shrine visitors, which are available in denim and canvas versions.

- ☎086-477-3001 ☎9:00-16:00 (prayer service reception)
- ❌None 🆓Free (fee payable for *gokito* prayer service)

Relax with natural hot spring waters and a seasonal lunch

C Kurashiki Yuga Onsen Hotel Santoka

After visiting Mount Yuga, take a relaxing break in a tranquil *onsen* (hot spring). This particular *onsen* was founded after it was noticed that pilgrims found their symptoms would alleviate when they visited the area. The exquisite lunch menu offered by the hotel, which changes monthly in order to reflect the most seasonal ingredients, is another highlight of a visit here.

- ☎086-477-5588 ☎11:00-15:00 (*onsen* day use) / 11:00-14:00 (lunch) ❌None 🆓Day use of *onsen* and lunch package, ¥3,300



The Irodori Set (pictured) is packed with seasonal ingredients, while the Steak Set and Fish of the Day Set are also popular choices

Focus

Sanada Himo

It's said that one of the factors behind the textile industry flourishing so robustly in the Kojima area is that *sanada himo*, a type of woven cord, had been manufactured in this area since the Edo period. During that period when it was the fashion to go on a dual pilgrimage to Yuga and Konpira, visitors to Mount Yuga would find *sanada himo* on sale at the temple entrance. Over time, it became a popular souvenir for visitors to the area.

Sanada himo is a narrow woven fabric, woven by warp and weft, and is even said to be the world's narrowest woven fabric. After the Battle of Sekigahara, Sanada Masayuki and Sanada Yukimura are said to have woven this type of cord during their imprisonment in Kudoyama; this led to the cord being sold under the claim that it was "a strong cord made by the Sanadas". Compared to braided cord, *sanada himo* was strong and resistant to stretching, making it ideal for use in sword straps and adjustable straps for armor. The cord was also used to tie paulownia wood boxes containing implements used for the tea ceremony, as well as *obi*jime to keep the *obi* sash in place.

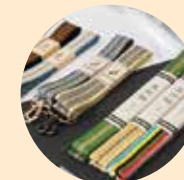
Today, *sanada himo* manufacturers are rare—and therefore precious—nationally. Sakamoto Orimono uses old power looms previously used in the Kojima and Karakoto districts to make *sanada himo* cords that are rich with the warmth of this local heritage.



Power loom



Various products are available



Sakamoto Orimono

- ☎086-477-6340 ☎9:00-17:00 ❌Saturdays, Sundays, national holidays, year-end, O-bon, during exhibition/event appearances 🆓*Sanada himo* roll end, from ¥100

Feature

Kojima Udon

Kojima used to be a place where people from Shikoku came en masse to find employment. They brought with them udon culture from the Shikoku city of Sanuki. Here we introduce some of the top udon restaurants in Kojima, be that authentic, orthodox, or unique.

MAP → See p45

Super juicy, just-fried tempura

Ishiharu Udon

This udon place is best known for its incredible tempura udon. They only start frying once an order is placed. Add a splash of udon broth to their battered, fried shrimp to literally hear how juicy the dish is before you try it. The premium Naruto wakame, with its springy texture, is a perfect sidekick.

☎086-477-6887 ☎10:00-18:00 ☎Mondays, every third Sunday
¥ (e.g.) Nikuten Udon, ¥800



Noodles as deliciously glossy and firm as any you'll find in Sanuki itself

Udon no Tsukasa Takato

If you like your udon noodles firm, this is the restaurant for you. The signature dish is a simple soy sauce udon. This masterful dish combines firmly textured, glossy udon noodles with richly-spiced broth cut through with the fresh acidity of sudachi citrus. Another firm favorite is the Tamago Toji Udon, generously swirled with two egg yolks.

☎086-474-5847 ☎Weekdays, 11:00-14:00 / Saturdays, Sundays and national holidays, 11:00-14:30, 16:30-19:00 ☎Thursdays ¥ (e.g.) Shoyu Udon, ¥650



Admire with the eye, devour with the tongue

Tanaka-ya

The noodles served up at Tanaka-ya are, according to the owner, "not trying to be like Sanuki udon". They are relatively thin and soft with just a slight bite. Each serving bowl is actually an example of high-grade Arita-yaki pottery. The restaurant interior is clean and calm and packed with customers bringing clients and family alike.

☎086-473-7690 ☎11:00-14:30, 17:30-20:00 ☎Fridays ¥ (e.g.) Tempura Udon (Jo), ¥1,045



Bound to impress meat lovers and volume seekers

Tsuru Tsuru

The combination of silky smooth noodles, as suggested by the restaurant name (*tsuru tsuru* is onomatopoeia for smooth and slippery), with a bold and deep broth is simply sensational. The main branch also operates as a butcher, which is why its meat toppings taste so good! The restaurant offers a strong selection of set meals, so you could go every day without tiring of its taste.

☎086-473-3386 ☎10:00-19:30 ☎Tuesdays ¥ (e.g.) Niku Niku Udon, ¥550



Hand-made udon crafted using only the very best water

Donpachi

This place is famous for its Tama (Egg) Butter Udon, a Carbonara-style dish made with firm noodles, and the distinctive taste of butter and cracked black pepper. Also popular is the Donpachi Set Meal, comprising two kinds of udon, *kitsune* and *zaru*, as well as mixed rice. The secret to their great-tasting dishes is their insistence on using only the very best water.

☎086-472-0207 ☎11:00-14:30, 17:00-20:30 ☎Mondays(excluding national holidays, closed on Tuesdays instead) ¥ (e.g.) Tama Butter Udon, ¥700



Warm up with miso-simmered udon

Hiroyoshi

The star attraction here is the Miso Nikomi Udon, and this dish is no pale imitation of the miso-simmered udon found in Nagoya. The owner was inspired by the staff meals he used to be served at his previous work. The taste of this exquisite dish, which combines with depth and sweetness of miso with a hint of acidity from yuzu citrus, is unique to this restaurant.

☎086-473-6075 ☎11:00-14:00, 17:00-20:00 ☎Tuesdays ¥ (e.g.) Special Miso Nikomi Udon, ¥900



Udon to relish, made with carefully selected ingredients in an old private residence

Baiso

Housed in an old private residence, built 120 years ago as the second home of the Nozaki family (see p41). Baiso uses noodles made with 100% grown-in-Japan wheat and uses no sugar in its *tsuyu* broth base, instead simmering soy sauce, Japanese sake, mirin, and red and white wine to create a wonderfully sweet broth. This is a place to enjoy a truly indulgent dining moment.

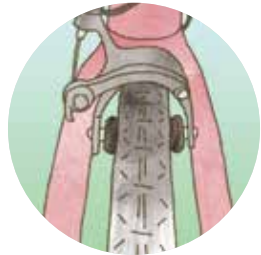
☎086-473-0900 ☎11:00-14:00(closes when noodles sell out)
☎Mondays ¥ (e.g.) Ebi-Mochi Bukkake Udon, ¥1,280



Before you set off

All About Cycling in Kurashiki

Cycling is the ideal way to take a tour of Kurashiki's Japan Heritage, but it's important to make a few checks before you set off to ensure a pleasurable ride. So before you start riding, be sure to check the lights and reflectors, the brakes, and other key parts for any defects or damage. You should also make sure to cycle safely by following the rules of the road.



Brakes

Are the front and back brakes working properly? Are any of the brake wires loose?



Tyres

Are the tyres inflated properly? Are they showing any wear? When riding, make sure to keep any bag ties, scarves, or other trailing items well away from the tyres to avoid tangling.



Lights & reflectors

Are the lights working properly? Are the reflectors free from dirt? Are there any problems with the placement or angle of the lights and reflectors?

Follow the Five Rules for Safe Cycling when Riding in Kurashiki!

In Japan, bicycles are defined as "light road vehicles" under the Road Traffic Act. When riding a bicycle, you need to be conscious of the fact that you are in control of a vehicle and follow the rules and etiquette of the road, and ride in a way that enables all road users to have a safe and pleasant experience on the road.

Particular Points to Remember

- Park bicycles in the right place, e.g. designated bicycle parking area.
- Make sure to always lock up bicycles to prevent theft.
- Take care to avoid bags and clothing becoming tangled up in the wheels.
- Be aware that it is not permitted to ride a bicycle when listening to loud music on headphones.

Five Rules for Safe Cycling in Okayama Prefecture

- 1. In principle, ride on the road and use sidewalks in exceptional cases only**
[Ride on the sidewalk only when]
 - There is signage showing you can ride on the sidewalk
 - The rider is under 13 or 70+ years old
 - It would be dangerous to ride on the road
- 2. Ride on the left side of the road in the direction of travel**
- 3. Pedestrians take priority on sidewalks; bicycles must give way**
- 4. Observe all safety rules**
 - No riding after drinking alcohol, no riding double, no riding side by side
 - Use bicycle lights at night
 - Obey traffic lights at intersections, stopping and checking for safety
 - No using mobile phones or umbrellas while riding
- 5. Children must wear helmets when cycling**

Where to Rent Bicycles

1 Kurashiki City Travelers Rest

☎086-425-6039 ☎9:00-16:30 ☎¥300 (1 day)



2 Kojima Station Tourist Information

☎086-472-1289 ☎9:00-16:30 (reception closed 12:00-13:00) ☎¥300 (per session per day) *Electric bicycles, ¥500



3 Shin-Kurashiki Station Tourist Information Corner

☎086-526-8446 ☎9:00-16:30 (reception closed 12:00-13:00) ☎¥300 (per session per day, electric bicycles ¥500), ¥500 (2 days, non-electric bicycles only)



4 Chayamachi Station (Omiyage Kaido Chayamachi Branch)

☎086-428-5883 ☎9:00-17:30 ☎¥300 (1 day), ¥500 (2 days)



5 Kojima Industrial Promotion Center

☎086-441-5123 ☎9:00-17:00 ☎Tuesday ☎¥500 (electric bicycle, 1 day)



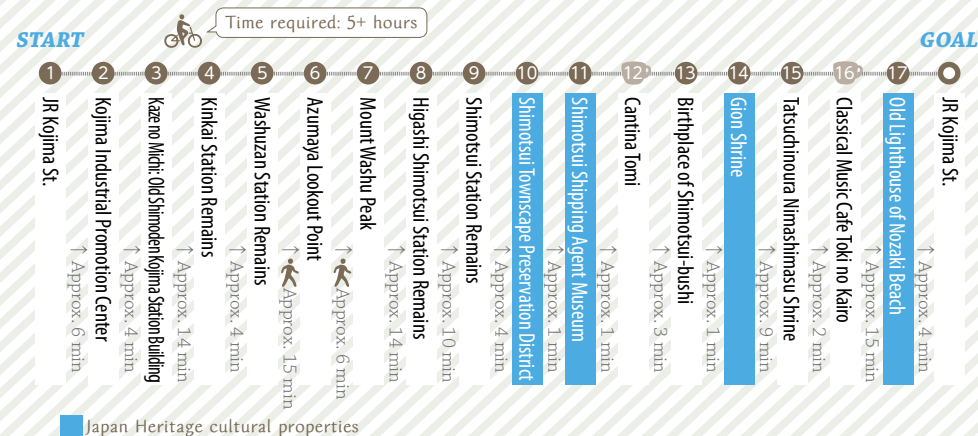
6 JR Rent-A-Car Kurashiki Station Office

☎086-422-0632 ☎8:00-20:00 (bookings taken until 19:00, reception closed 12:00-13:00) ☎¥350 for up to 4 hours, ¥500 for 4+ hours to full day



Shimotsui Wind Street Course

This cycling course take you to Shimotsui, a coastal town that first flourished as a port of call for the *kitamae-bune*, “north-ern-bound” merchant ships that traveled the length of Japan. It offers some incredibly scenic views, including the fishing port and the panorama from Mount Washu. Dubbed “Kaze no Michi” (Wind Street), it runs along a railway line formerly operated by the Shimotsui Dentetsu company that has been redeveloped for bicycle and pedestrian use only, making it the ideal cycling course.





Kurashiki Japan Heritage Story 2

A unique space spun from the dreams of men who conquered stormy seas

– A port of call for the *kitamae-bune*, a hometown for shipowners –

From the middle of the Edo period to the beginning of the Meiji period, the *kitamae-bune*, or “north-ern-bound” merchant ships, used the Nishimawari Kaigun (Western sea route), along the Nihonkai coast and through the Seto Inland Sea, to travel between Hokkaido in the north and Osaka in the south. At each port of call along the way they would load up with local specialty products and sell what they had already picked up. In present-day Shimotsui and Tamashima Island you can still find traces of the prosperity and hopes that the ships brought with them over the stormy seas.

At ports of call the *kitamae-bune* would buy local products at low prices, while selling wares from other ports at a good profit. The *kitamae-bune* captains had a strong understanding of each area, its industries and needs, and so ensured the ships functioned as floating trading houses; the goods transported southwards to Osaka included such Hokkaido specialties as herring, salmon, and *kombu* (kelp), while the northbound ships would take rice, salt, cotton, and sake. During the Kanei era (1624-1644), Shimotsui port was developed, together with Ushimado port, as a public-facing reception port for the Okayama domain; it flourished as a port where ships travelling along east-west routes would wait for favorable tides, as well as an importantly positioned port linking Kojima to Shikoku island for ships travelling along north-south routes. Here in Shimotsui, many goods were traded, including dried sardines, boiled herring, rice, and soybeans. Ships loaded up salt harvested from the Seto Inland Sea, which was prized for its ability to keep fish fresh, while off-loading coal destined to be used on the salt fields. During its peak, it is said that some 50-60 ships would be moored at the port at any one time. Today, you can get a sense of the scale of the shipping trade at Gion Shrine, overlooking narrow alleys that still retain something of the atmosphere of those times, for its *tamagaki* fence posts are engraved with many of the places from where traders came:

Echigo, Kaga, Satsuma, Chikuzen, Iyo, Osaka, and many more. Today, Shimotsui is still home to the family residence of the Nozakis, who made their fortune with the *kitamae-bune*, while in Kojima you can find the home of Nozaki Buzaemon, who was known as “the salt field King”. The land reclamation and port construction work that eventually was to result in Tamashima port began during the years of Mizunoya Katsutaka's lordship of the Bichu Matsuyama domain. In 1671, an embankment was completed, starting at Otoshima and linking Amidasan Island, where Haguro shrine is located, and Kashiwajima Island. The embankment stretched some 391m between Amidasan and Kashiwajima Islands and was 53m wide. Wholesalers were invited to the area and efforts to build it into a port town began. Cotton grown across Bichu accounted for some 80% of the goods loaded onto *kitamae-bune* at Tamashima port, while iron and copper produced in the Bichu Matsuyama domain were also key goods leaving the port. In turn, dried sardines and boiled herring, both used as cotton plant fertilizers, represented the bulk of the goods unloaded at Tamashima. On the pillars and beams of the warehouses still standing in the old port town, you can see the damage made by insects trying to get to the large quantities of boiled herring they once contained.

Start the Shimotsui Wind Street Course here!

1 JR Kojima Station (west exit)

The west exist of Kojima Station is your starting point when heading to Shimotsui.



Kojima Industrial Promotion Center



The arcade in front of the station, where jeans sway in the breeze

Get set up with a denim-decorated bike

2 Kojima Industrial Promotion Center (Rent Bicycles)

Drop by this Industrial Promotion Center to hire yourself a bicycle. All bikes for hire are electric bikes featuring a denim-inspired design. You can reserve bikes via the Center's website, six months to one day in advance. (Reservations for the same day are by telephone only).

☎086-441-5123 ☎9:00-17:00 ☎Tuesday (excluding national holidays, closed Wednesday instead), year-end 🚲Electric bicycle, ¥500 (1 day)

You can also hire bicycles from the Tourist Information inside JR Kojima Station (see p46)



A bicycle with an original denim design



A charmingly retro station building

3 Kaze no Michi: Old Shimoden Kojima Station Building

Kaze no Michi (Wind Street) is the name given to the former railway line that winds around the foothills of Mount Washu. The track was once operated by Shimotsui Dentetsu, a railway company more usually nicknamed Shimoden. Operations ceased in 1990 and the track was turned into a route for cyclists and walkers. This is only Shimoden station building that remains standing today.



The old station name sign still remains





Arrive at the gateway to Mount Washu

5 Washuzan Station Remains

This station was originally built to facilitate the climb up to the peak of Mount Washu; the location is still serviced by public toilets and an observation deck. Leave your bike here and head off along the Mount Washu Nature Study Path (*washuzan-shi-zen-kenkyuro*) on foot.



Leave your bike and head up to the mountain peak on foot



Soak in the sea view from the old station remains

4 Kinkai Station Remains

Make your way past the remains of Bi-zen-Akasaka Station and Atsu Station to arrive at what remains of Kinkai Station. The sea view makes for pleasant cycling along this route.



Feel the full impact of Seto Ohashi Bridge as seen from above

6 Azumaya Lookout Point

The Seto Inland Sea National Park was Japan's first ever national park. This *azumaya* (gazebo) is located on the western side of Mount Washu, noted as the most picturesque part of the park. This out-of-the-way spot is renowned for being the best—and the most close-up—place to admire Seto Ohashi Bridge from above.



The *azumaya* (gazebo)

This single pine is around 200 years old. Previously Mount Washu was almost entirely lacking in foliage making this lone pine something of a local symbol.



Look out over a Seto Inland Sea panorama

7 Mount Washu Peak

Walk along the mountain path and up the stone stairs to reach the very top of Mount Washu. Here at the 133m peak, you can enjoy a 360°, panoramic view of blue sea, some 50 islands of varying size, boats criss-crossing the waters, the Seto Ohashi Bridge, and the townscape.



Head back down to the Washuzan Station Remains and jump back on the bike to head for the next stop on the course!



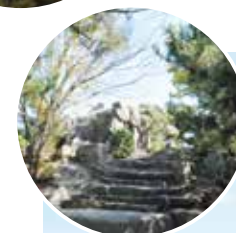
The nighttime illumination is beautiful.



A stone monument inscribed with *shoshuho*, the name given to the peak by the great 19th century writer Tokutomi Soho. The name means "gather here all the beautiful views of the Seto Inland Sea".



Kofun burial mounds are dotted around the path up to the lookout point



Take a little trip

Mount Washu

If you've made it to the peak of Mount Washu, walk another 10 min to drop into the Visitor Center and Rest House!

Access

- Approx. 30 min by train from JR Okayama Station to Kojima Station on the Seto-Ohashi Line
- Approx. 29 min by bus to Washuzan Daini Tenbodai from JR Kojima Station on a Shimoden bus (Shimotsui Loop Line Tokohai-go)



Discover more about Mount Washu

A Mount Washu Visitor Center

The Visitor Center features displays about the nature and history of Mount Washu, as well as the history of the Seto Ohashi Bridge. Make your exploration of the area more enriching by finding out more about the mountain here.

- ☎086-479-8660
- 🕒9:00-17:00 (Apr-Sep), 9:00-16:30 (Oct-Mar)
- 📅Year-end (Dec 29-Jan 3)
- 💰Free



Engraved with the lyrics to a Shimotsui folk song

B Shimotsui-bushi Kahi Song Monument



This monument is engraved with the opening lyrics to Shimotsui-bushi, a famous local folk song: "oh, the port of Shimotsui / easy to sail into, easy to depart".



A place to pick up souvenirs, eat, and take a break

C Mount Washu Rest House

As well as a shop and a restaurant, the Rest House has space where you can relax and even a breastfeeding room. If you visit the restaurant, try the always-popular local specialty *takomeshi*, rice steamed with octopus pieces.

- ☎086-479-9164
- 🕒9:00-17:30 (Restaurant is open 11:00-14:00 (last orders) on weekdays, 11:00-15:00 (last orders) on weekends and national holidays)
- 📅None



Washu Takomeshi Set, ¥1,430

The go-to lookout point on Mount Washu

D Mount Washu Second Lookout Point

Easily accessible from the nearest bus stop and car park, this lookout point is the most popular among visitors to Mount Washu. With its benches and telescopes, the Second Lookout Point is the perfect place to spend time taking in the view of the Seto Inland Sea.

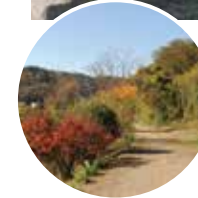


Get back on the bike from the Washuzan Station Remains

The next station some 500m along from Washuzan Station

8 Higashi Shimotsui Station Remains

Set off again on "Wind Street" and head for Shimotsui.



Carriages remain at this end-of-the-line station

9 Shimotsui Station Remains

Shimotsui Station was the final stop on the Shimotsui Dentetsu line. Today, some of the carriages that once carried passengers along the line have been conserved thanks to the efforts of Shimoden and Shimotsui Minato Densha Hozonkai (Shimotsui Port Train Conservation Society), a local community group.

- ☎086-472-1289 (Kojima Station Tourist Information)



With their nano-gauge (at just 762mm), these railway carriages are unusual in Japan

Focus

Shimotsui Castle Remains

Today, Kojima is a peninsula, but it was once an island, as suggested by its name—Kojima, meaning single or lone island. To the north of this lone island there once lay a shallow inland sea, Kibi no Anaumi, which separated Kojima from the mainland. This inland sea was a key route for ships traversing the Seto Inland Sea. Kibi no Anaumi was fed into by a number of large rivers, including Takahashi River, Asahi River, and Yoshii River. This meant that from the late middle-ages until the early modern period, large volumes of sediment built up in this inland sea, eventually leading to the route around the south of Kojima becoming preferred as the primary shipping route. This is how Shimotsui came to be considered a key location in the Seto Inland Sea by army and navy alike.

In the 16th century, Ukita Hideie ordered a citadel to be built in this very Shimotsui. After the domain was taken over by Ikeda Tadatsugu in 1603, large-scale improvements were undertaken at the direction of the senior retainer Ikeda Nagamasa, leading to the completion of its form as



a fully-fledged early-modern castle building in 1606. Shimotsui Castle is built on a hill, 89 meters above sea level, to the rear of Shimotsui Bay, and commands a sweeping view of the Seto Inland Sea. It was used by successive lords Ikeda Yoshiyuki and Ikeda Yoshinari before being abandoned in 1639 under the *ikkoku-ichijo* ("one castle per province") order, just thirty-some years after its completion.

Today, all that remains of the original castle is the stone walls. However, the area where Shimotsui Castle was built has recently been developed into the Seto Ohashi Kakyo Memorial Park, where visitors can learn about the castle and its history.

A port town still soaked in its thriving *kitamae-bune* history

10 Shimotsui Townscape Preservation District

From the mid-Edo period onwards, Shimotsui became a regular port of call for the *kitamae-bune*, which in turn brought prosperity as a town of lodgings and merchant traders. Today, many merchant houses used as boiled herring (fertilizer) warehouses still remain. The historical townscape has been preserved into modern times thanks to buildings retaining original features such as roofing tiles fireproofed with mud daub, the black and white geometry of the namakokabe wall finish, *mushiko-goshi* lattice windows, and vertically latticed doors.



The main pillar of the "Aren't you finished yet?" bridge railing. The name comes from what local prostitutes used to call out to *kitamae-bune* sailors from the bridge that once stood here.

A group of common-use wells. Common-use wells, which were previously shared by several homes, are dotted around the district.



Learn about the history of Shimotsui in this museum

11 Shimotsui Shipping Agent Museum

This museum is housed in a restored building once used by a shipping agent who made his fortune trading with the *kitamae-bune*. The many displays here tell of the history and culture of Shimotsui, as well as the *kitamae-bune* ships themselves. It is a place of learning but also gives a tangible sense of the taste of a merchant house of the time.

☎086-479-7890 🕒9:00-17:00 (last entry 16:30)
🗓️Tuesdays (excluding national holidays, closed Wednesday instead), year-end (Dec 29-Jan 3) 🆓Free



Model of a *kitamae-bune*

This mark indicates destinations that are Japan Heritage cultural properties.

An eye-catching eatery built around the pillars and beams of an old herring storehouse

12 Cantina Tomi

This restaurant is located in the grounds of the Shimotsui Shipping Agent Museum. Here you can enjoy Japanese or Italian food made to show off local ingredients in the Kura Hall, built where a *kura* (storehouse) used to store boiled herring fertilizer once stood. As well as the Kura Set Meal (see photo), many diners are fans of the *anago-don* (grilled saltwater eel served on a bowl of rice), which is only served on days when fresh eel can be sourced.

☎086-479-9456 🕒Weekdays: 11:30-14:00, 17:30-21:00 (last orders) / Weekends and national holidays: 11:30-14:00, 18:00-21:00 (last orders) 🗓️Tuesdays, first Wednesday of each month (third Monday of each month open for lunch only) 🍽️(e.g.) Kura Set Meal, ¥1,760



Kura Set Meal, ¥1,760



Focus

Sailcloth

Sailcloth (*hampu* in Japanese) is a thick and sturdy plain-woven fabric made from multi-stranded cotton yarn (its weight is generally more than 8oz (=approx. 227g) per square meter).

Japanese sailcloth was invented in the late Edo period by Kuraku Matsumemon, of Takasago City in Hyogo Prefecture. His sailcloth was used in the sails of *kitamae-bune* and other ships and quickly become ubiquitous. The emergence of Kuraku's sailcloth is even said to have prompted a change in the shipping technology of the time. By the early modern period, spun fabrics took over in popularity thanks to the impact of the industrial revolution.

The history of Kurashiki sailcloth dates back to 1888. That was the year when husband and wife Takeyari Ishigoro and Ume founded a textile factory in the Gonai area of Kojima. Their eldest son later initiated the production of sailcloth in that same factory. Sailcloth has been used as an industrial and commercial material, primarily for lorry sheets, school bags, tents, gymnastics mats, and the fabric tops of vaulting boxes, but its role is changing with the times and today it is attracting considerable attention as an apparel fabric.

Kurashiki Hampu, the brand name of the sailcloth produced by the same Takeyari family, is a



first-class, luxury sailcloth beautifully and evenly woven right to its selvedge (fabric edges), made by craftsmen and women on carefully cared for shuttle looms that have been out of production since the late 1960s. The texture of this fabric is robust yet bursting with warmth, thanks to the skill of its crafters and the natural fibers from which it is woven. The tradition of sailcloth production continues to be passed down and currently around 70% of all sailcloth made in Japan is made here.

Baistone Main Shop

414-2 Sobara, Kurashiki ☎086-485-2112 🕒10:00-17:00
🗓️Year-end 🍽️(e.g.) Basic Tote Bag (small landscape), ¥4,400;
1m of No. 8 Sailcloth Fabric, ¥1,650

A monument standing on the coast

13 Birthplace of Shimotsui-bushi

On the Western tip of Shimotsui Fishing Bay stands a monument inscribed with the words, "The Birthplace of Shimotsui-bushi", which is a famous local folk song. This is also a popular fishing spot, where you can enjoy the pleasant combination of warm sunlight and refreshing sea breeze.



A beloved shrine, known as "Shimotsui's very own Gion"

14 Gion Shrine

Sitting on a small hill with an elevation of 22m above sea level, this shrine is set in a spot from where you can look out over the Shimotsui port. Its *tamagaki* fence posts are engraved with the names of the owners of the *kitamae-bune*, who made donations to the shrine in order to ask the guardian deity of the sea for the safe passage of their ships.

☎086-479-9468



One of the official shrines listed in the *Engishiki Jinmyocho*, a list of important shrines compiled in 927

As featured in the film *Hirune Hime* (Napping Princess)

15 Tatsuchinoura ni Mashimasu Shrine

Located at the base of Seto Ohashi Bridge, this shrine boasts a panoramic view of the Shimotsui townscape. It is renowned as a shrine offering protection against fire. It is also known for appearing in the 2017 anime feature film *Hirune Hime* (Napping Princess) and is a popular destination for fans of the film from all over Japan.

☎086-472-5330

This mark indicates destinations that are Japan Heritage cultural properties.



Feel as if you've travelled back in time in this unique space

16 Classical Music Cafe Toki no Kairo

This *meikyoku kissa* (a type of cafe where classical music is played) opened in the foothills of Mount Washu in 2015. Classical music is played inside the cafe, which is decorated with antique furniture and ornaments. This is a special place loved not just by locals but by music fans who travel long distances to visit.

☎070-5522-1622 ☎10:00-18:00 ☒Thursdays ☒(e.g.) Toki no Kairo Coffee, ¥600



The cafe walls are lined with portraits and photos of famous composers



Take the coastal route back to the station.



A wooden lighthouse from the late Edo period

17 Old Lighthouse of Nozaki Beach

Once you've made it back to Kojima from Shimotsui, make this your last sightseeing stop. This lighthouse was built in 1863 by Nozaki Buzaemon, as both a votive light offered to Shiogama Myojin, God of Salt, and a source of nighttime light for ships approaching and leaving the beach. This is a prime example of how Japanese lighthouses used to look, before the adoption of Western European-style lighthouse construction. Few such lighthouses remain across Japan, making this a precious heritage structure.

Focus

Famous Local Folk Song "Shimotsui-bushi"

Shimotsui-bushi opens with the lyrics: "oh, the bay of Shimotsui / easy to sail into, easy to depart / Easy to catch a tailwind, easy to avoid a headwind". Shimotsui-bushi is a folk song that has been sung since the Edo period, initially by sailors in parlors in the town's red-light district. The song was passed on to other areas by sailors on *kitamae-bune* ships, so that today similar folk songs can be heard in other ports on the Seto Inland Sea and along the Nihonkai coast.

By the final years of the Edo period, the *kitamae-bune* were making so much money that it was said that "a single voyage would bring a profit of a thousand *ryo*". By this time, they were constructed with a single large sail that would swell with the wind to propel the ships onwards. The "tailwind" (*matomo*) mentioned in the opening verse of Shimotsui-bushi refers to a wind blowing from behind a ship, in the direction of its travel. The "avoid a headwind" (*magiru*) refers to the technique



of moving the sail to the left and right, when encountering a headwind, in order to catch the wind diagonally and sail a zigzag course. In other words, the lyrics extol the virtues of Shimotsui port, namely how easily it can be entered and left and how favorable its winds.

Shimotsui-bushi is one of the most recognizable of all folk songs from Okayama Prefecture, and indeed is famous nationwide. In the fall of each year, the Shimotsui-bushi All-Japan Championship is held in Kojima to determine who is the Japan best singer of this particular song. The competition unfolds between many entrants, including men and women, young and old alike, from across the entire country.

6

A port town that flourished through *kitamae-bune* trade

Tamashima Gourmet Course

The history of Tamashima begins in the Edo period, when the rulers of the Bitchu-Matsuyama domain undertook land reclamation work and developed a port. Tamashima port, which prospered as a port of call for the *kitamae-bune*, became the heart of a wholesale district, situated in the Shinmachi and Nakagai-cho areas; today, a townscape that recalls the prosperity of those times remains. So let's set off on a ride through this retro port town.





Start at the south exit of Shin-Kurashiki Station



Start your cycling tour of Tamashima here!

① JR Shin-Kurashiki (Rent-A-Cycle)

Rent a bicycle from the Rent-A-Cycle counter at the Tourism Information center on the second floor of the station building.

Rent-A-Cycle Counter ☎086-526-8446
 ☎9:00-17:30 ☎Year-end (Dec 29-Jan 3)
 ☎Standard bikes ¥300 (1 day), electric bikes ¥500 Rental period: 9:00-16:30 (rental service not available 12:00-13:00)



The Rent-A-Cycle service is available at the Tourism Information inside the station

Learn the history of Tamashima as a "port flowing with people and information"

② Tamashima Citizens Exchange Center

On the first floor of the Kouryu Building you will find the History, Folk, and Maritime Exhibition Room, which houses a collection of important materials and resources about the history and folk culture of Tamashima as a place that has developed in harmony with the sea.

☎086-526-1400 ☎9:00-22:00 ☎Fourth Monday of the month in May, Aug, Nov, Feb (if Monday is a national holiday, closed on Tuesdays instead). ☎Free



Exhibits include models of *kitamae-bune* (also known as *sengoku-bune*) and *takase-bune* ships and picture scrolls showing views of Tamashima

A crow *tengu* on the roof tiles, overlooking the port town

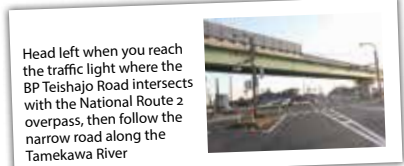
③ Haguro Shrine

In 1658, when Mizunoya Katsutaka, lord of Bitchu Matsuyama domain, ordered land reclamation work to begin around Tamashima, he also ordered the construction of Haguro Shrine on what was then Amidasan Island, a small island in the Seto Inland Sea. The current main hall (*honden*) was rebuilt in 1845, followed by the worship hall (*heihaiden*) in 1852. An *odachi*, a great sword crafted and engraved by the swordsmith Henmi Yoshitaka, is enshrined here; it is a prefecturally designated Important Cultural Property.

☎086-522-2695 ☎N/A ☎Free



Turn left at the third traffic lights along the wide road in front of the station (Hiroshima Bank will be on your left)



Head left when you reach the traffic light where the BP Teishajo Road intersects with the National Route 2 overpass, then follow the narrow road along the Tamekawa River



The center also has a cafe inside



Crow *tengu*

The temple mascot, Haguron, greets you at the entrance

The *kinako ohagi* are generously filled with red bean paste

④ Amato no Mise Yamato

Every single *ohagi* (sweet rice ball) on sale here is made by hand, freshly each morning, with 100% made-in-Japan ingredients, from the glutinous rice to the *kinako* (roasted soybean flour), to the Hokkaido-grown soybeans. These *ohagi* are distinctive for their natural sweetness. There are just two varieties on offer (each priced at ¥70 per ball), *anko* (red bean paste) and *kinako*, and if you head to the store just after opening time you can watch them being made. The store closes once the *ohagi* have sold out; on most days, this means the store has closed by midday.

☎086-522-5055 ☎9:00 until sold out ☎Wednesdays



Lodgings, office, and a factory stand side-by-side



A long-established company famous for its Tate Brand Sauce

⑤ Teshimaya

First opened in 1720 as a wholesaler of cotton and marine products, before switching to the production of soy sauce in the Meiji period. Come the Taisho period, the company also started to produce vinegar, then launched production in 1933 of what is now its main product, Tate Brand Sauce. The company store is located in an area that was at the very heart of Tamashima during its years of greatest prosperity. If the office is open, you can buy products and take a look at advertising signs, posters, and leaflets from years gone by.

☎086-522-2148 ☎8:30-17:00 ☎Sundays, national holidays, second Saturday of each month



Focus

Tamashima Port and Shipping

Until the beginning of the Edo period, the areas of Funao, along the right bank of the western branch of the Takahashi River, Nagao, and the coast of Tamashima comprised a river delta and tideland area with many islands linked together. The reclamation of land from these shallows began in the Edo period, resulting in the development of a port in Tamashima. Goods landed at the port included dried sardines and boiled herring, both of which were used as fertilizer for cotton, while locally-grown cotton would be loaded onto ships alongside other goods including salt and iron. Soon, the streets of the port town were lined with some 43 wholesalers and more than 200 warehouses, and Tamashima was flourishing as a trading center of Bitchu cotton, dubbed the "Naniwa of the west" after the busy port in Osaka. According to the records of the Yunoki family, in the 7th year of the Anei era (1778), a total of 430 ships (both *kitamae-bune* and passenger ships) arrived in Tamashima, including 162 from Chikuzen, 119 from Sanuki, 93

from Banshu, 20 from Kaga, and 10 from Suo.

Haguro Shrine, which looks down over the port town, was built on the orders of Mizunoya Katsutaka, lord of the Bitchu Matsuyama domain, in order to pray for the success of the land reclamation project. The *tamagaki* fence posts surrounding the shrine are engraved with many of the places from where traders came: Hakodate, Akita, Noto Wajima, Kyoto, Osaka, Kaga, Ashu, Unshu, Bingo, Onomichi, Geishu Otake, and Bakan. These were dedicated to the shrine by the merchants and *kitamae-bune* ship owners who traded with Tamashima; hanging within the shrine are many *ema* (votive pictures) asking for safe sea passage. The *kitamae-bune* were ships that travelled along the western sea route between Hokkaido and Osaka during the Edo and Meiji periods. They would load up with herring, salmon, and *kombu* (kelp) in Hokkaido, trading those goods at each port of call along the Nihonkai coast and Seto Inland Sea. These "floating trading houses" played a pivotal role in shipping during this period.



This mark indicates destinations that are Japan Heritage cultural properties.



A gently swaying commuter bridge serving local residents

6 Steel Drum Bridge

Built in 1980 as a floating bridge to connect the 1-chome and 2-chome areas of Tamashima along north to south, this bridge uses steel drums instead of piers. It is known affectionately as Steel Drum Bridge. Here you'll see local residents strolling leisurely across the bridge as well as children crossing on their bicycles.

Opposite Kurashiki City Tamashima Library

VIEW POINT!



The oldest *shotengai* in Tamashima running along a former National Route

7 Torimachi Shotengai

This *shotengai* (covered shopping street) is unusual in that it runs along a former National Route, and is home to a number of well-known stores and confectionary shops, including some that have been open for more than a century. The entire street is enveloped in a retro atmosphere recalling the days of the Showa and Taisho periods.

Varies by store (many stores closed on Thursdays)



Chuka Soba Mizukawa

The quaint décor of this restaurant is a match for the converted warehouse in which it is housed. The *chuka* soba (Chinese-style buckwheat noodles) is the go-to item on the restaurant menu.

086-527-6700 11:00-15:00 (last orders 14:30), 18:00-21:00 (last orders 20:30) X Sundays



Tamashima
Three Top Old & New
Gourmet Drop-in Spots

Toita Takoyaki-ten

Rich and creamy *takoyaki* (grilled octopus cooked in batter) is soul food for Tamashima locals. Just ¥150 for 8 pieces!

086-526-3356 10:00-17:00 X Mondays, Thursdays, and one Sunday per month



Walk 1 or 2 minutes from the Tamekawa River Drainage Pumping Center and you'll find the only manhole cover in Tamashima to be part of the national "Manhole Card" project, namely multiple series of collectible cards featuring decorated manhole covers from around Japan; have fun searching the streets for this colorful cover.



Encounter the riverside district running along the banks of Tamekawa River

8 Tamashima Port Bridge Plaza

Next to the Tamekawa River Draining Pumping Center, built to resemble a *shirakabe* white-walled warehouse, stands the new port, where sea water runs into the Tamekawa River. That's why, depending on the season, you might find local people fishing for Japanese sardinella here. The old port lock, which was one of the locations for the feature film *ALWAYS: Sunset on Third Street*, became dilapidated and was removed. There is, however, a monument made with some of the old parts of the lock now standing in the park developed near the entrance to the Torimachi *shotengai*.



Take a short break while admiring the riverside view

A true taste of Showa, unchanged since shop opening

9 Olympic Shokai

These *fufuyaki*, a type of grilled and filled pancake, are popular for the soft and fluffy pancake texture and the subtle sweetness of the *an* (bean paste) filling. Choose from *azuki-an* (red bean paste) or *uguisu-an* (green pea paste) fillings; each type is ¥100 a piece. The store is now run by a third-generation owner who is committed to continuing the authentic Showa taste, unchanged since the business began in 1933.

086-522-2511 10:00-18:00 X Thursdays



GELATO OBLATE.

The owner of this gelateria, whose parents ran a dairy shop, trained in Florence, Italy, before opening in Tamashima in 2018.

090-4806-8753 11:00-18:00 *Closes at 17:30 in winter X Mondays, Tuesdays *Open on national holidays



A long-established *wagashiya* trading for over 130 years

10 Shotoen

This *wagashiya* (traditional Japanese confectionery store) was opened in 1888 by first generation owner and tea ceremony aficionado Kameyama Yoshitaro, who demanded his confectioners make "sweets to treat guests". Each subsequent owner has inherited Yoshitaro's passion for confectionery, and the store holds around 50 tea ceremonies a year.

☎086-526-7655 🕒8:30-18:00

📌Open year-round except for New Year (1-2 Jan)



The store's famous *sengoku-bune* (wooden freight ship) confection resembles a ship's sail to symbolize the prosperity of Tamashima as a port town

Jonamagashi (fresh and moist sweets of the highest quality) to celebrate the season



Nationally Registered Tangible Cultural Property

11 Former Yunoki Residence (Saiso-tei)

This building is said to have been built during the Tenmei era (1781-1789) of the Edo period by the Yunoki family, who served the lord of the Bitchu-Matsuyama domain, to house the lord whenever required. As such, the building is as elegant as one would expect for an abode of a feudal lord, with exquisite garden views and exceptional taste. This is also where, towards the end of the feudal period, a retainer named Kumata Ataka committed ritual suicide to absolve the entire domain of its enemy status.

☎086-522-0151 🕒9:00-17:00 📌Mondays (excluding national holidays, closed Tuesday instead), year-end (Dec 28-Jan 4) 🆓Free



Guiding ships along a safe route to Tamashima Port

12 Old Tamashima Lighthouse (Old Tamashima Port)

This old lighthouse started lighting the way for ships sailing in between Mount Hachiman in Tamashima-Kashiwajima and Tamashima Port in 1951. It carried out its role for 42 years, before being decommissioned and the upper part of its structure being moved to a corner of Kawasaki Minato Park for conservation. This is a popular walking route for local people.



A warehouse with a stunning *namakokabe* interior that exemplifies how wholesalers prospered

13 Saigokuya Hall

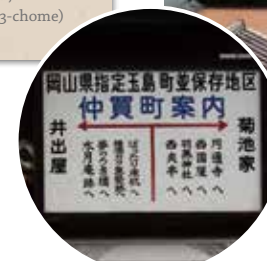
Now available for hire as a multi-purpose space, this restored building, which previously housed a shipping agent during the most prosperous period for the Shinmachi wholesale district, retains the imposing structure and high ceilings of the original *shirakabe* white-walled warehouse. The interior of the warehouse, which features the black and white geometry of the *namakokabe* wall finish from ceiling to floor, is truly masterful.

☎086-525-5711 🕒9:00-19:00 (reservations required) 📌Please enquire 🏠From ¥5,250 (please enquire) / visit only (please enquire)

Merchant houses and warehouses that still tell of port town prosperity

14 Tamashima Townscape Preservation District

- The Tamashima Townscape Preservation District, made up primarily of the Shinmachi, Nakagaicho, and Yaidecho areas, was designated as a townscape preservation district by Okayama Prefecture in 1995. Within the district are many merchant houses and warehouses with traditional *nuriyazukuri* mud daub coating and *honkawarabuki* tiled roofs that also retain such distinctive architectural features as: *mushiko-mado* latticed windows, *koshi* latticework, *shikkui-kabe* lime plastering, and *namakokabe* wall finishes. The townscape is the perfect place to cast your mind back to Tamashima at the height of its prosperity.
- Shinmachi (part of Chuo-cho 1-chome, Tamashima, Kurashiki City), Nakagaicho (part of Agasaki, Tamashima), Yaidecho (part of Tamashima 3-chome)



A Map of Tamashima Port in Bitchu Province, drawn in the Meiji period. It gives a detailed picture of how Tamashima Port would have appeared during the Edo period when it was a port of call for the *kitamae-bune*. The embankment in the center of the image corresponds to where Shinmachi-dori stands today.



The townscape as seen along Shinmachi-dori from Haguro Shrine

Nakagai in Japanese means "brokerage". As the name suggests, this area used to be where brokers gathered. Today it is home to many traditional local industries, including miso, soy sauce, and sake brewers.



This mark indicates destinations that are Japan Heritage cultural properties.

Two business days are enough to make this bakery healthy bread famous

15 Artefato

This bakery might only be open on Fridays and Saturdays, but it has plenty of fans thanks to its owner-baked bread. Its renowned *miso-pan* (miso bread / miso bakes), crafted with miso (fermented soy beans) made by Tamashima Miso Shoyu, are particularly addictive when filled with the bakery's home-made cream. You can also enjoy the bakery's very own blend of coffee once the lunch rush is over.

☎086-525-5711 🕒10:00-18:00 📅Sundays through Thursdays

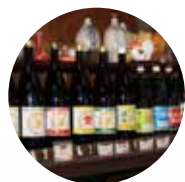
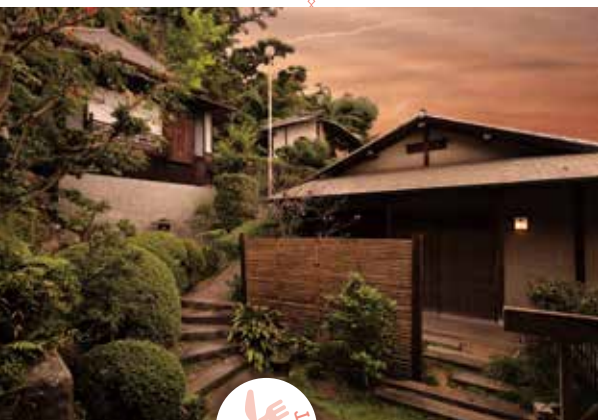


Indulge in the luxury of a meal served in a secluded private room

16 Bingoya

This scenic, secluded *ryokan* (traditional hotel), surrounded by *ubame* oak trees and boasting a view overlooking Tamashima Bay, has been welcoming visitors to Tamashima since 1914. Each of the rooms, which are scattered across the mountain slopes, has a distinct style and offers a private space where you can enjoy lovingly prepared dishes that showcase the bounty of the Seto Inland Sea.

☎086-522-3432 🕒11:30-14:30 (last orders 13:45), 17:30-21:00 📅Irregular closings; reservations required for dining and accommodation; please enquire about garden access only



Telling the history of a wholesaler teeming with brokers

17 Tamashima Miso Shoyu

This company has been in operation since the mid-Edo period and was established in its current form as a specialist seller of miso (fermented soy beans) and *shoyu* (soy sauce) in 1920. Today, the sixth generation owner, Nakano Shunichi, focuses on telling visitors about the history of Nakagaicho as a wholesaler district, while also ensuring that the long-standing taste of his miso and *shoyu* remains unchanged.

☎086-522-3418 🕒9:00-17:00 📅Saturdays, Sundays, national holidays *Visits must be booked in advance



A Kurashiki brewery where sake is made to the strains of Mozart

18 Kikuchi Brewery

Kikuchi Brewery, established in 1878, is known as the home of the Sanzen label of local Kurashiki sake. The background music at the brewery is provided by Mozart; against the strains of his music, the brewers use the best of Okayama-grown brands of brewers' rice, such as Omachi and Asahi, to brew sake that is not only renowned in Japan but is lauded in overseas tasting competitions as well.

☎086-522-5145 🕒10:00-16:00 (closed from 12:00-13:00) 📅Saturdays, Sundays, national holidays



This spot, along the Ryokan Taigu trail, is famous for its gorgeous fall leaves

19 Entsu-ji Temple & Entsu-ji Temple Park

Entsu-ji Temple, of the Soto school of Buddhism, is where the monk-poet High Priest Ryokan, known affectionately as Ryokan-san, trained during his youth. Take a short walk from the solemn atmosphere of the rock garden and reed roofed-buildings to discover Entsu-ji Temple Park. The park is particularly busy during spring and fall, thanks respectively to its beautiful cherry blossom and fall foliage.

☎086-522-2444 (Entsu-ji Temple) *If coming by bicycle please be aware that the approach to the temple is along a long, ascending path

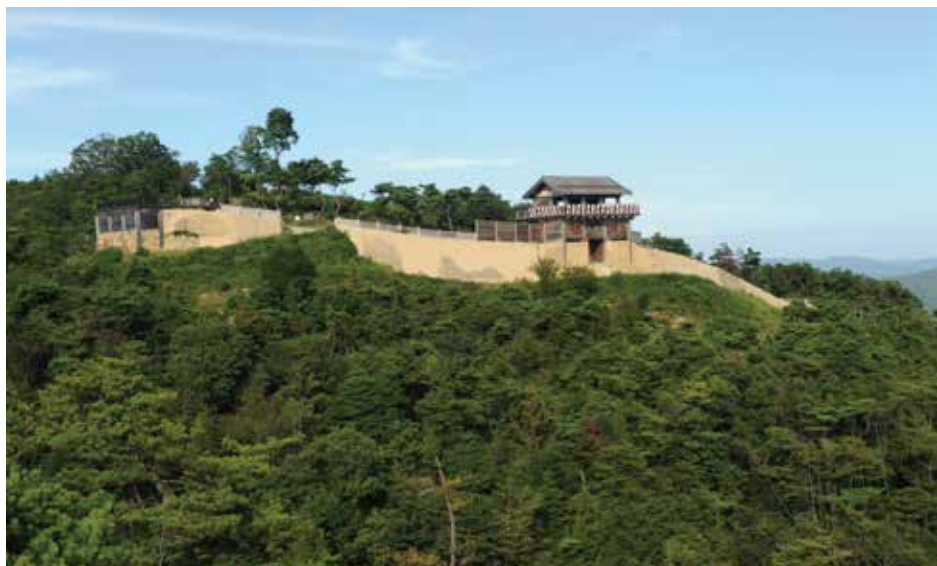


VIEW POINT!



The rock garden

The view from Entsu-ji Temple looking out across the whole of the Tamashima townscape



Kurashiki Japan Heritage Story 3

Okayama, Birthplace of the Momotaro Legend

- A tale of ogre annihilation conjured from ancient Kibi heritage -

The story of Momotaro was inspired by the legend of Kibitsu-hiko-no-Mikoto, who was told to have vanquished an ogre named Ura who controlled the region of Kibi. The origins of that legend are said to lie in the power struggle between the regions of Yamato and Kibi. Today, the same winds that have blown since the Kofun period still bluster across the lands of Kibi; it takes only a single step to insert yourself into an eternal historical drama.

The legend of the defeat of Ura the ogre

In the late Yayoi period (2nd-3rd centuries), the region of Kibi became politically united, and a unique regional culture began to emerge. By the Kofun period (4th-6th centuries), many *kofun* (burial mounds) had been constructed in the region (the area that is now Okayama prefecture); the 11,810 mounds that remain here make it the fifth highest prefecture nationwide for mound numbers. Both *The Chronicles of Japan*, completed in 720, and the *Record of Ancient Matters*, completed in 712, note the conflict between the regions of Kibi and Yamato. Indeed, the Tatetsuki Ruins, dating to the end of the 2nd century, and the Tsukuriyama Kofun (burial mound), constructed in the mid-5th century, as well as the Yataotsuka Kofun, thought to date to the mid-6th century, are all clear indications that the power held by Kibi during that period was comparable to that of Yamato, which later was eventually to establish Japan's first unified state.

From his residence, Castle Kinojo, the ogre Ura would have had a commanding view of the many islands floating in Kibi no Anaumi inland sea and the many structures being built so assiduously across the lands of Kibi. Among these would have been what are now called the Tatetsuki Ruins, which during the Yayoi period formed one of the largest tombs of the time. The five standing stones arranged around the central circular mound are said to have been erected as shields in preparation for Kibitsu-hiko-no-Mikoto's battle with Ura, while the divine object of Tatetsuki Shrine, the Sentaimonseki Stone, is said to have been used by Kibitsu-hiko-no-Mikoto as a flying vehicle. The Yataotsuka Kofun, which together with the Komorizuka Kofun and the Musaozuka Kofun comprise the so-called "Three Great Stone Kofun of Kibi", is believed to be the tomb of Shimotsu Michinoshi, the ancestor of notable 7th century scholar Kibi no Makibi.

Feature

Kurashiki Souvenirs

These specialty products from Kurashiki make perfect souvenirs to commemorate your encounter with Kurashiki's Japan Heritage.



Candles

Kurashiki boasts a significant share of the market for candles intended for celebratory or event use, such as wedding candles. You can also have a go at candle-making yourself.



Muscat Grapes

The so-called "Queen of grapes", thanks to their elegant flavor and aroma. The Funao area, rolling with small hills, is the largest center of Muscat grape production in the prefecture.



Sweet Peas

Funao is one of Japan's leading areas for sweet pea cultivation. Here, more than 50 varieties of beautifully colorful sweet peas are grown, with distinctively long-lasting flowers.



Octopus

Shimotsui-dako (Shimotsui octopus), caught off the shores of Shimotsui, is a famous local delicacy. Delicious all year round, just as the local saying goes: "there's only three days a year when it doesn't taste good".



Bambooware

In Mabi Town, a production center for bamboo, a wide range of bamboo products are crafted including bamboo accessories, bamboo furniture, and homeware.



Masking Tape

Formerly reserved for industrial use, this masking tape has been transformed into a homeware item through cute and colorful designs. It is growing in popularity, particularly among women.



Peaches

These gorgeous peaches with their sweet aroma and meltingly soft texture are testament to why Okayama is known as the fruit kingdom. Notable for their elegant white color.



Tsurajima Burdock

This burdock is grown in the sandy soil around the remains of the Takahashi River repair works site. It is distinctive for its white skin and absence of any harshness of flavor.

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Kurashiki City Japan Heritage Promotion Council

The Council was established in June 2017 to bring together diverse bodies including historical, cultural, economic, and tourism-related organizations, public transport bodies, and government.

The aim of the Council is to develop and implement measures designed to make best use of Kurashiki's three Japan Heritage stories to enhance the appeal of and create vitality in the region, and in doing so cultivate affection and pride in the local community and aid regional revitalization through the promotion of industry and tourism.

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Cycling and walking tours

Kurashiki: Japan Heritage Stories

Discover a city that blossomed from a single cotton plant

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