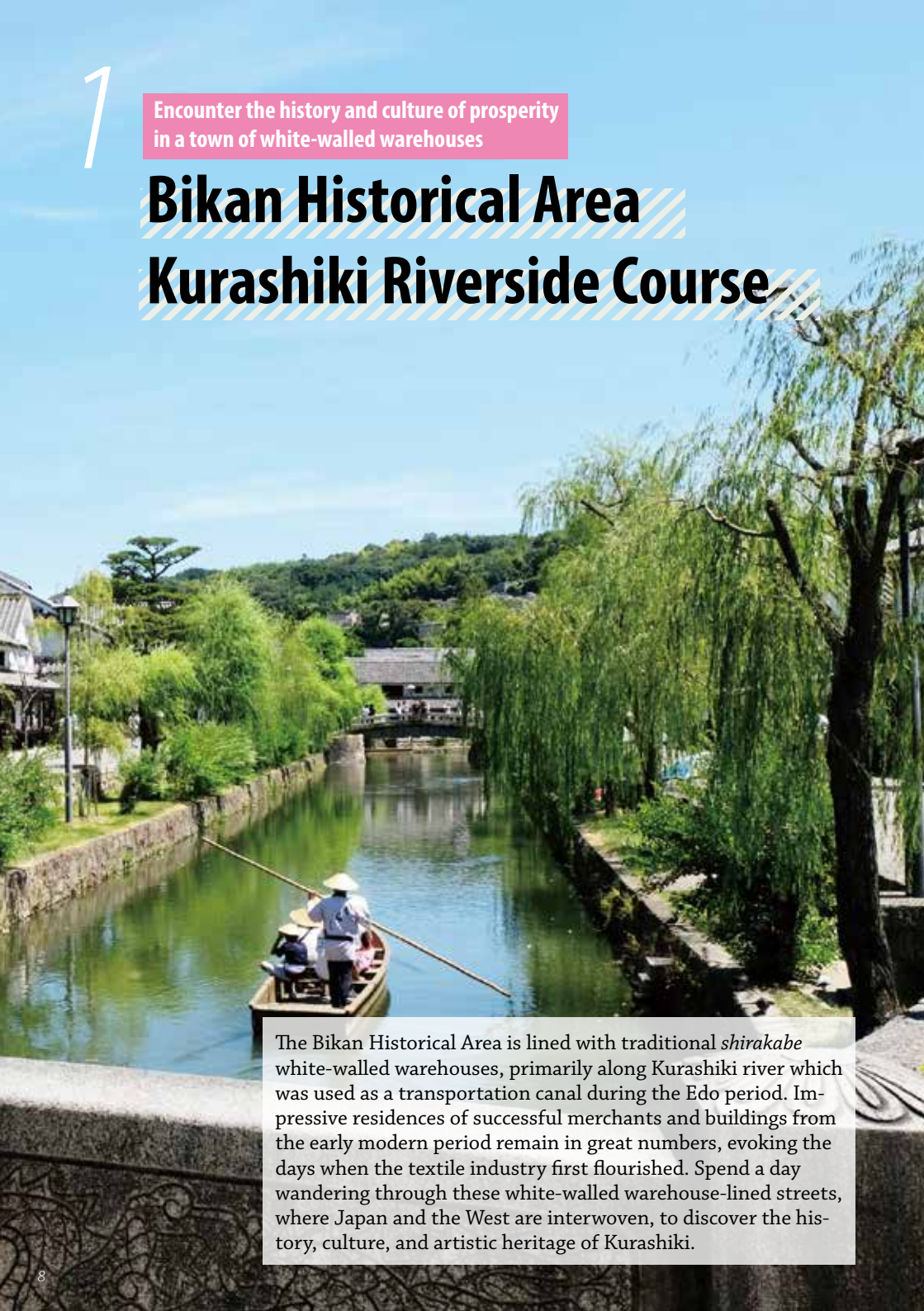


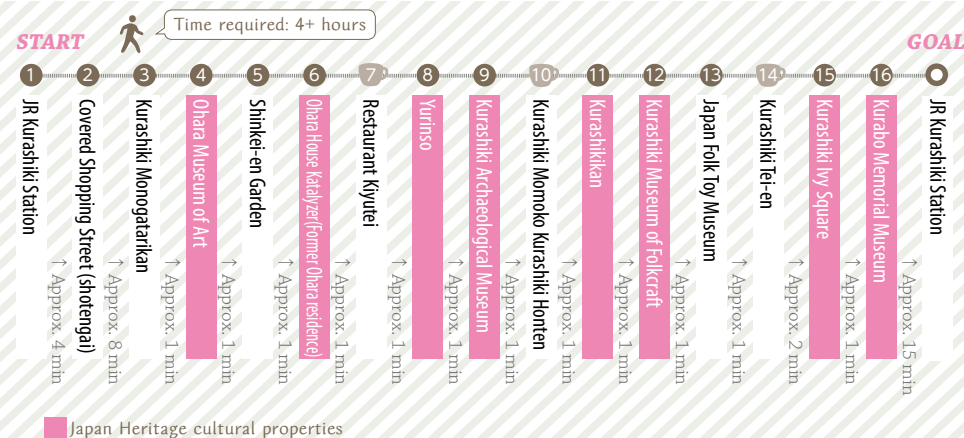
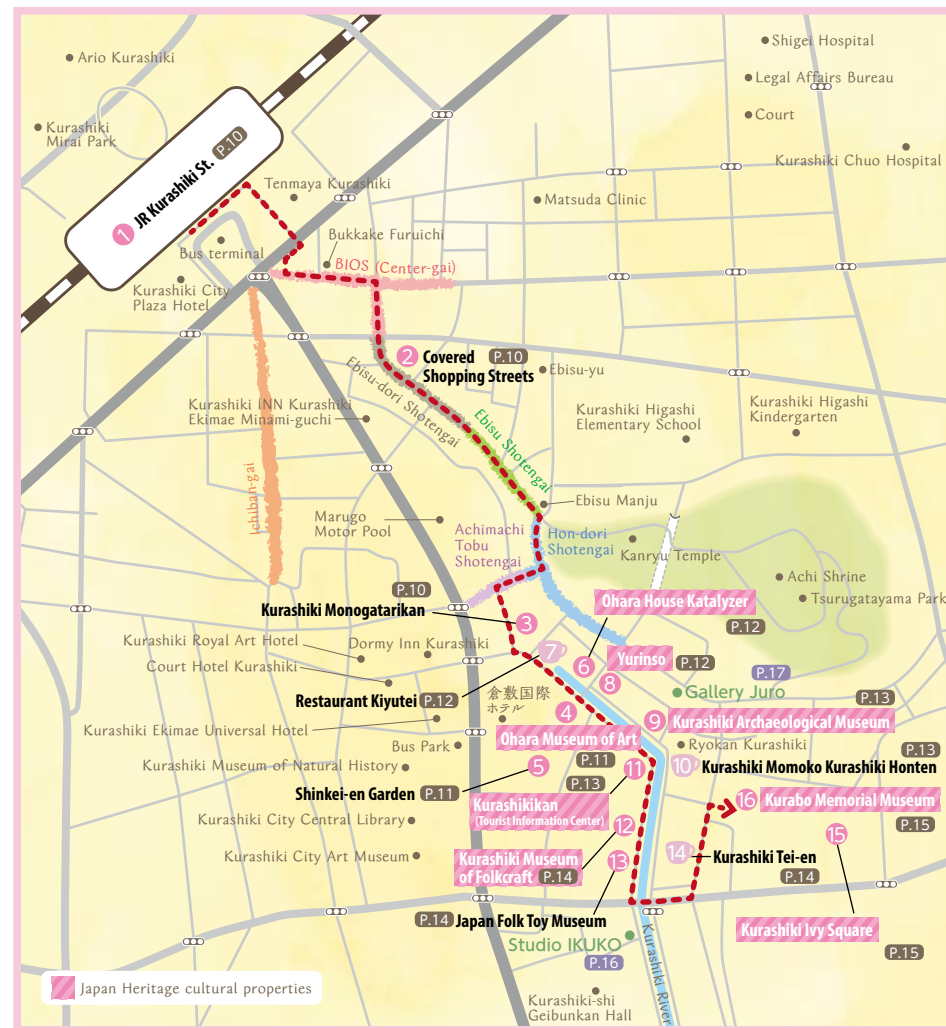
1

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.

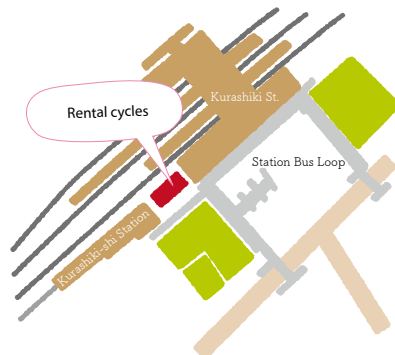


10 min walk to the Bikan Historical Area. Start here!

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.



Kurashiki Center-gai



Ebisu-dori Shotengai



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!



The main building's exterior recalls a Greek temple

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.



Claude Monet, "Water Lilies" (Ohara Museum of Art Collection)



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)

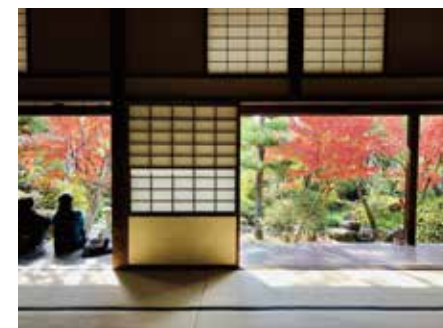


Relax as you take in the seasonal beauty of the garden view

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 suiteki (water-dropper) used to moisten inkstones

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



A museum brimming with nostalgic toys and handicrafts

13 Japan Folk Toy Museum

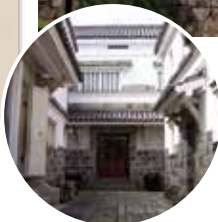
Folk toys made in all regions of Japan from the Edo period to the present day are on display here. The museum grounds are also home to shops, a gallery, and a cafe.

- ☎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



The beautiful black-tiled exterior of the museum



An equally lovely view of the courtyard

Hariko (papier-mâché figurines) by Manabe Hosei



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.