

# ACCESS

If you plan to visit Amami-Oshima Island, Tokunoshima Island, the northern part of Okinawa Island, and Iriomote Island, please take the trip by plane or on a ferry boat.

## ✈ Those coming by plane

### 1 From Tokyo (Haneda / Narita), Osaka (Itami / Kansai), or Fukuoka to Amami-Oshima Island

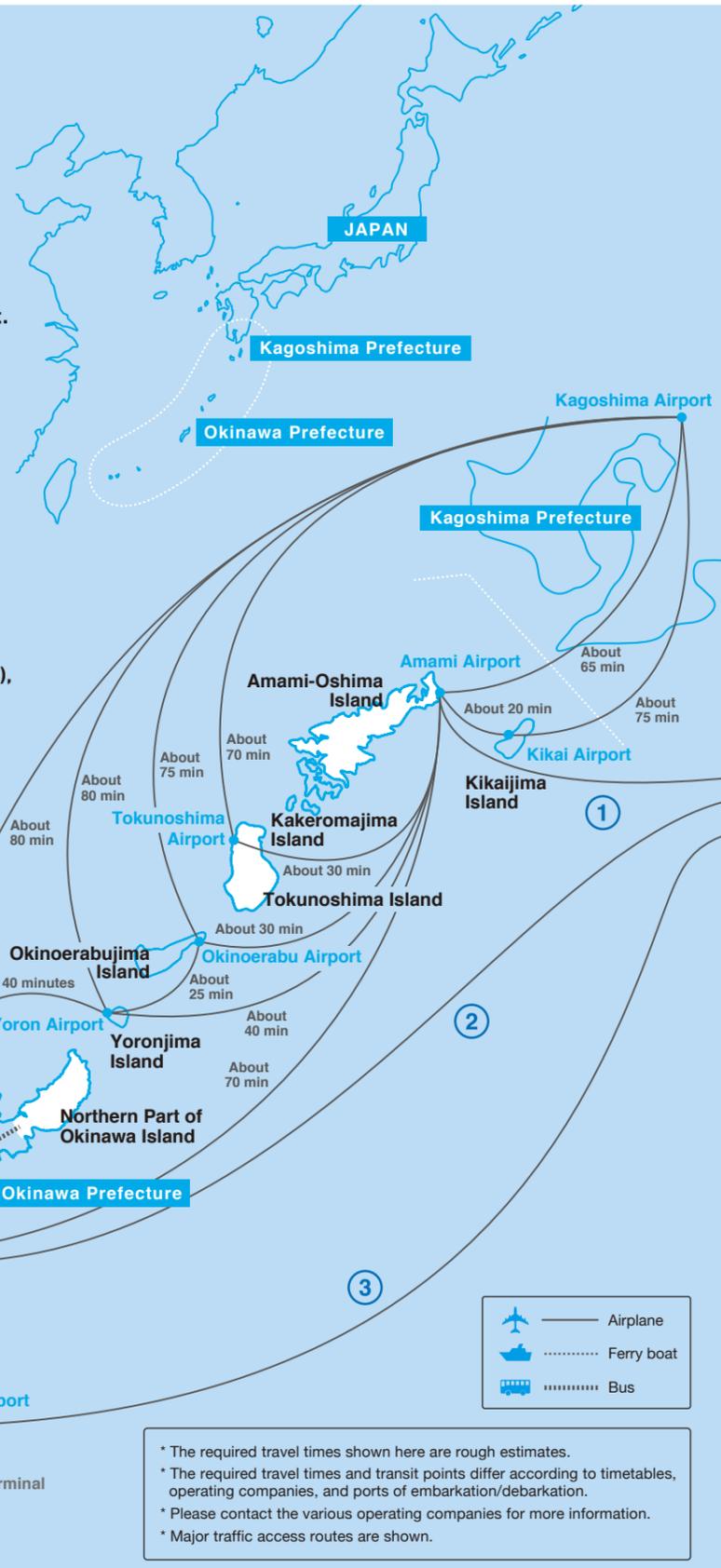
Tokyo	About 2 hours and 15 minutes - 35 minutes
Osaka	About 1 hour and 40 minutes
Fukuoka	About 1 hour and 20 minutes

### 2 From Tokyo (Haneda / Narita), Nagoya (Chubu), Osaka (Kansai) or Fukuoka to Naha

Tokyo	About 2 hours and 30 minutes
Nagoya	About 2 hours and 10 minutes
Osaka	About 2 hours
Fukuoka	About 1 hour and 40 minutes

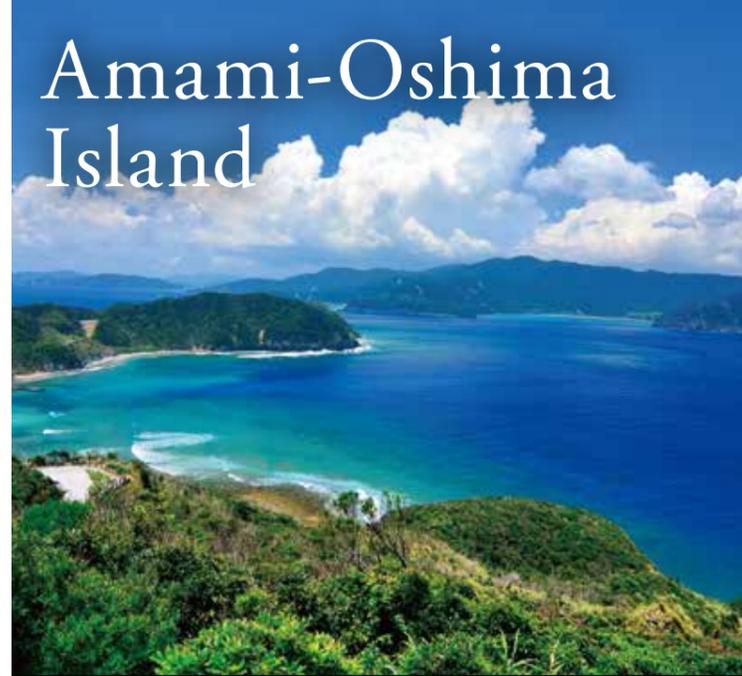
### 3 From Tokyo (Haneda), Nagoya (Chubu), Osaka (Kansai) or Fukuoka to Ishigakijima Island

Tokyo	About 3 hours
Nagoya	About 2 hours and 35 minutes
Osaka	About 2 hours and 20 minutes
Fukuoka	About 2 hours and 5 minutes

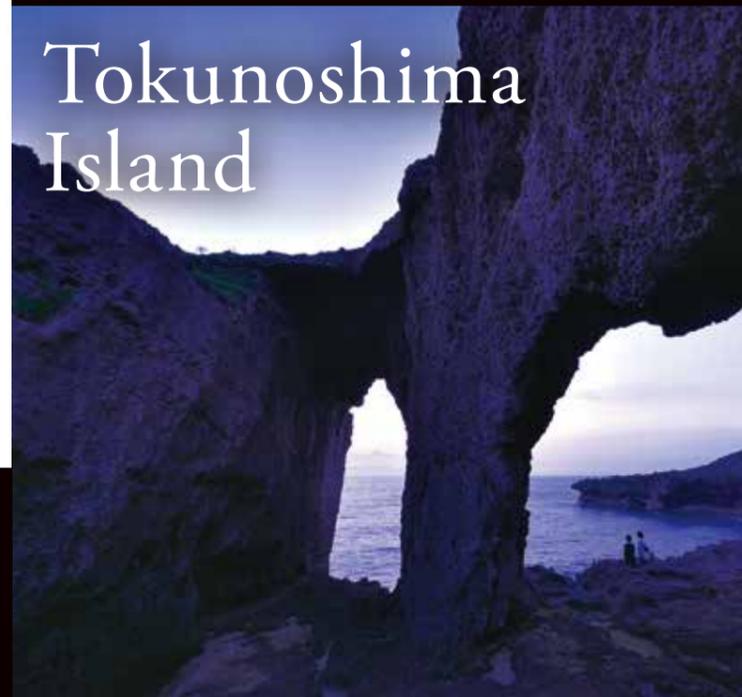
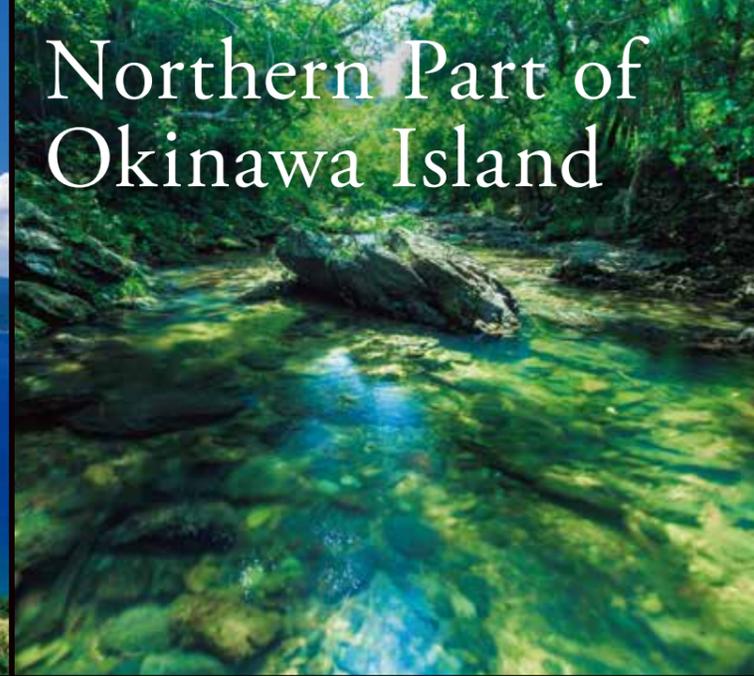


\* The required travel times shown here are rough estimates.  
 \* The required travel times and transit points differ according to timetables, operating companies, and ports of embarkation/debarkation.  
 \* Please contact the various operating companies for more information.  
 \* Major traffic access routes are shown.

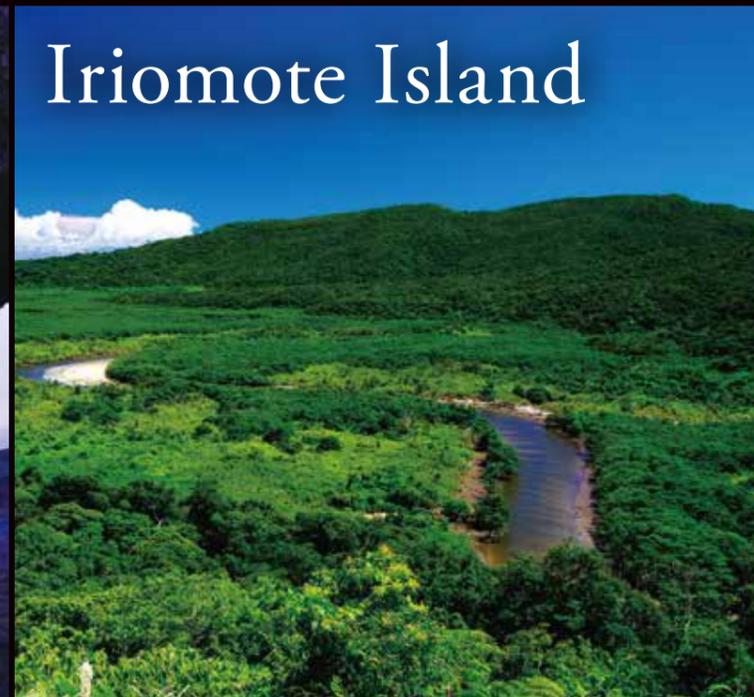
## Amami-Oshima Island



## Northern Part of Okinawa Island



## Tokunoshima Island



## Iriomote Island

# Colorful islands that weave the strands of time

Amami-Oshima Island, Tokunoshima Island, the northern part of Okinawa Island, and Iriomote Island –  
Toward Registration as World Natural Heritage Sites

In view of the registration of Amami-Oshima Island, Tokunoshima Island, the northern part of Okinawa Island, and Iriomote Island as “World Natural Heritage” sites, we navigate through the attractiveness and rich individualities of each of the regions that span Kagoshima Prefecture and Okinawa Prefecture and that possess beautiful natural environments and valuable ecosystems, which we wish to pass on to future generations.



“Kinsakubaru Virgin Forest”  
in Amami-Oshima Island



“Sunset as seen from In'no Jofuta”  
on Tokunoshima Island



“Landscape at Cape Hedo”  
in the northern part of Okinawa Island



“Snorkeling among the corals”  
in Iriomote Island

## World Natural Heritage

“World Natural Heritage” sites are valuable treasures that should be passed on to posterity as the world’s common property. UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) may inscribe an area as a world natural heritage site if it has outstanding universal value in terms of one of the following four criteria based on the World Heritage Convention – “geography and geology,” “ecosystem,” “natural landscapes,” and “biodiversity.” So far, four regions have been inscribed as “World Natural Heritage” sites in Japan: Yakushima (Kagoshima Prefecture), Shirakami Sanchi (Aomori Prefecture and

Akita Prefecture), Shiretoko (Hokkaido), and Ogasawara Islands (Tokyo). Currently, the “Amami and Okinawa Islands,” which stretch from the southern part of Kagoshima Prefecture to the South West Islands of Okinawa Prefecture, have been selected as a prospective “World Natural Heritage” site, following the aforementioned four sites. The strong feelings of mankind to leave valuable natural landscapes and terrain, the rare flora and fauna that inhabit there, and the unique ecosystems that exist there are expressed in the “World Natural Heritage” sites.

### Precautions and a request for cooperation from visitors to applicable areas in Amami-Oshima Island, Tokunoshima Island, the northern part of Okinawa Island, and Iriomote Island

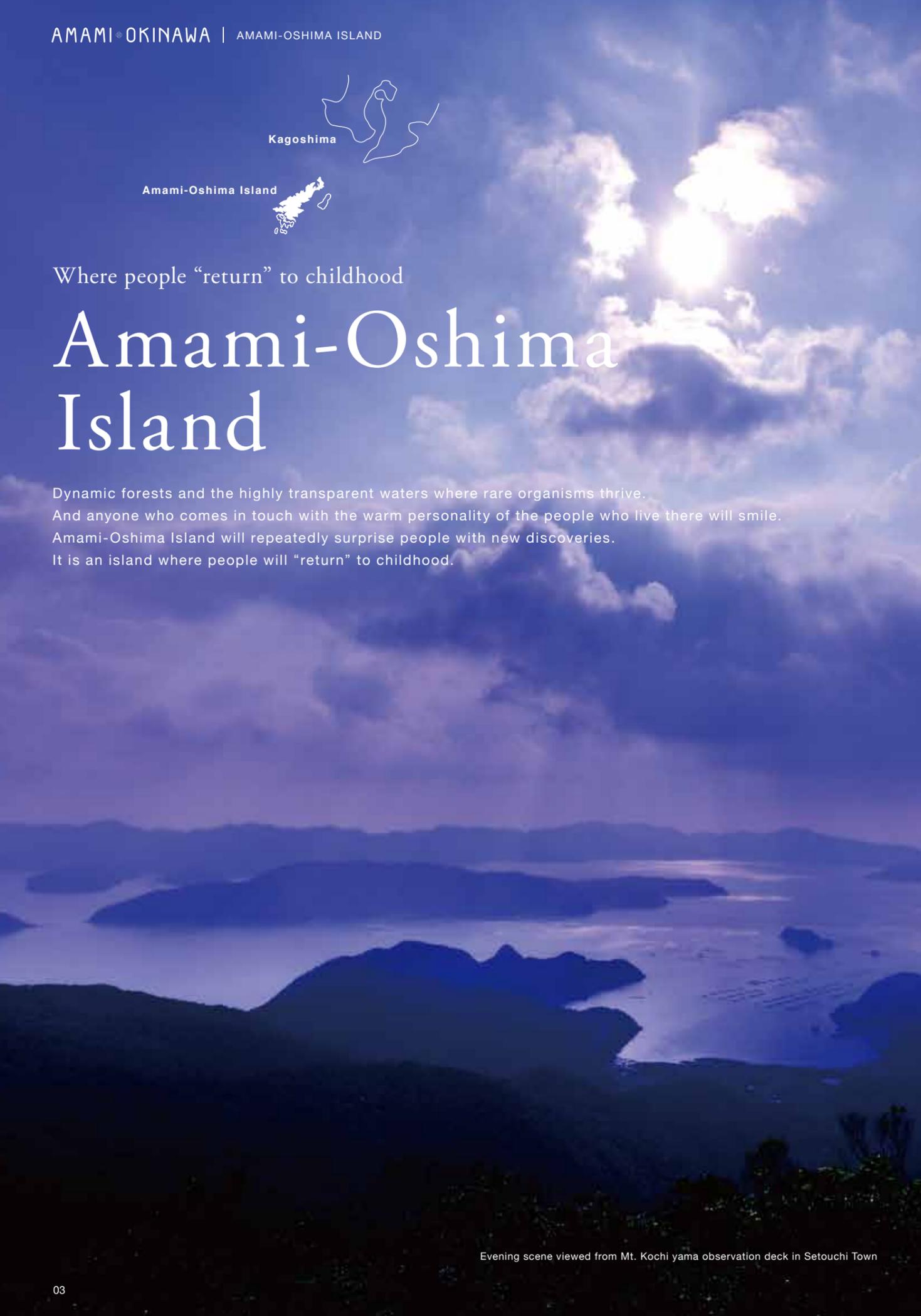
In each of the islands and applicable areas in Amami-Oshima Island, Tokunoshima Island, the northern part of Okinawa Island, and Iriomote Island, which are envisaged for registration as World Natural Heritage sites, there exist many areas where nature remains untouched such as deep forests and coastlines. Therefore, visitors are advised to prepare suitable equipment such as clothes and shoes, and take sufficient precautions to avoid injuries, accidents, etc. In addition, from the point of view of conservation of the natural environment, please be careful not to collect, capture, or take flora and fauna from the applicable areas. We ask for cooperation from each and everyone to protect the rich natural environment, which is the world's common property, and pass it on to the next generation.



Where people “return” to childhood

# Amami-Oshima Island

Dynamic forests and the highly transparent waters where rare organisms thrive. And anyone who comes in touch with the warm personality of the people who live there will smile. Amami-Oshima Island will repeatedly surprise people with new discoveries. It is an island where people will “return” to childhood.



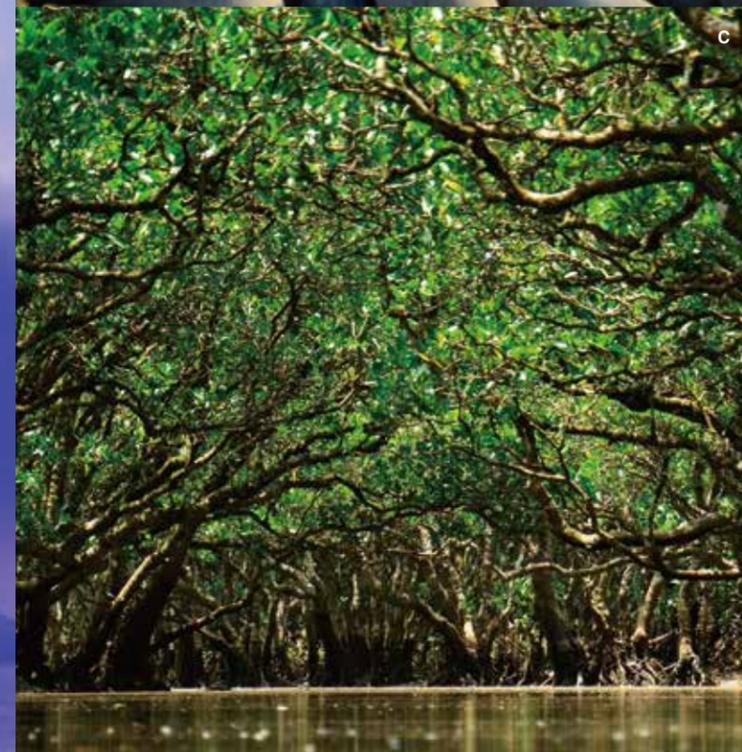
Evening scene viewed from Mt. Kochi yama observation deck in Setouchi Town



A



B



C



D



**Lidith's Jay:**  
A lazuline-colored bird  
A national treasure with beautiful lazuline-colored feathers that inhabit only the Amami Islands

**A.** “Honohoshi Coast,” where rounded stones covering the entire area produce sounds as a result of waves. **B.** “Waterfall of Materiya,” a waterfall that supposedly came to be called by that name after the local word meaning “really beautiful waterfall basin of the sun” gradually changed. **C.** A majestic mangrove virgin forest spreads out in Sumiyocho, Amami City in the central-southern part of Amami-Oshima Island. **D.** “Hirase Mankai,” a festival held during Arasetsu (first Hinoe of August on the lunar calendar) to pray for a good harvest.

Amami-Oshima Island is an island that became separated from the continent in ancient times. Because the creatures that were left on the island had no natural enemies, they still survive here even now. The Amami rabbit, Lidith's Jay, and Amami thrush are unique species representative of those creatures.

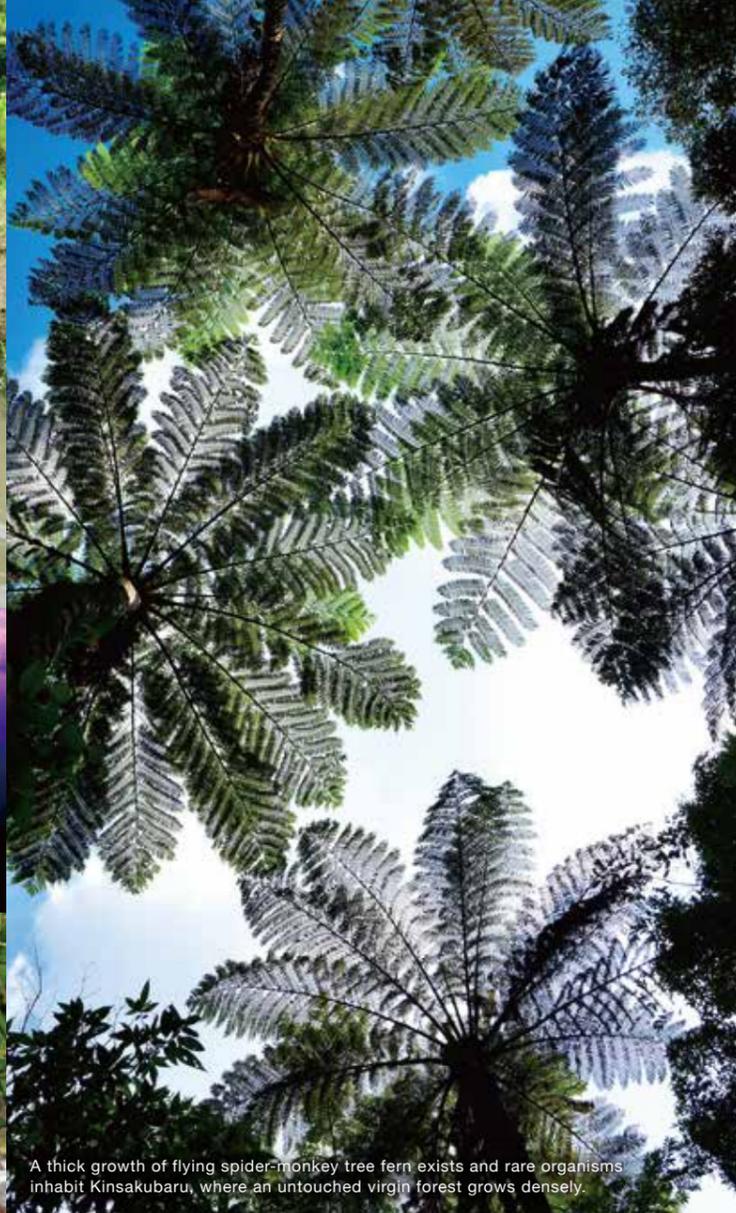
In contrast to the gentle terrain of the northern part of the island, the central-southern part has a rugged terrain with 90% of the land occupied by forests. Due to the large amount of rainfall of 3,000 mm or more per year, subtropical broad-leaved woodlands, tropical woodlands, and ferns nurture rich forests. Once you set foot in the forests, you have entered an adventure movie world. A dense growth of Flying Spider-Monkey Tree Ferns, Okinawa Urajirogashi (*Quercus miyagii*, a species of oak trees), and giant elephant's ear (*Alocasia odora*), for

which Amami-Oshima Island is the northern limit, provide a habitat for rare animals. You should be able to experience biodiversity in the Kinsakubaru Virgin Forest located in the central part of the island and the Mangrove Virgin Forest, which is the second largest in Japan.

In addition, the waters in the surrounding area is also a treasure trove of valuable organisms. Under the influence of the warm Kuroshio Current, about 220 kinds of coral thrive in the surrounding waters, which serve as the habitat for fish. Moreover, sea turtles come to lay eggs on beaches along the coast lined with large and small coves. Various “lifeforms” exist in both the mountains and the ocean in Amami-Oshima Island.



Oshima Tsumugi is Japan's top quality silk fabric with a 1,300-year history.



A thick growth of flying spider-monkey tree fern exists and rare organisms inhabit Kinsakubaru, where an untouched virgin forest grows densely.



Kurasaki Coast, where the fantastic color of the sea and coral reefs that dot sandy areas create a unique spectacle.



A panoramic view of Oshima Strait can be seen from the Mt. Kochi-yama observation deck located in the southern part of the island.



Wax plant, which belongs to the subfamily Asclepiadoideae



The Amami rabbit inhabits only Amami-Oshima Island and Tokunoshima Island.

Photo:Kanko Network Amami



Shimauta (island folk songs) are routinely sung at banquets and are indispensable to the islanders.



Keihan (chicken rice) consists of rice topped with pickled papaya, chicken meat, thin omelet strips, etc. and is eaten by pouring chicken soup over it.

AMAMI-OSHIMA ISLAND

## Nature Experiencing and the Culture of the Island

Amami-Oshima Island has its own culture that has been handed down against various historical backdrops and within a unique natural environment.

### Hands-on experience at mud-dyeing in "Oshima Tsumugi," known as one of the world's top three textiles

Along with enjoying the great natural environment such as canoeing experience in the Mangrove Virgin Forest and trekking in the Kinsakubaru Virgin Forest, hands-on experience in mud-dyeing in "Oshima Tsumugi (woven silk)," which is a traditional craft, is also popular. The unique tonal shades of Oshima Tsumugi are created when the tannin contained in the broth of "Raphiolepis umbellata" (a species of flowering plant commonly known as yeddo hawthorne) unites with the iron

contained in paddy field mud. Repeating the dyeing process in the great natural environment may enable you to sense the profundity of Oshima Tsumugi and the joy of monozukuri (literally means "making things").

### "Shimauta (island folk songs)" blend into the life of the islanders

The unique culture of Amami-Oshima Island was nurtured within the complicated history involving the Satsuma (Kagoshima) and the Ryukyu (Okinawa). In particular, the "Shimauta" sung while playing the "Amami sanshin" has been carefully passed on through traditional events and festivities of the villages. Singing

using falsetto is unique to Amami. In the past, leaving the island had meant bidding farewell from the life that a person had led until then, so there are many farewell songs, and this is also a characteristic. Shimauta has linked people through singing alternately or as a duet. That precious culture still serves as the spiritual cornerstone for the "Shimatchu (islanders)," even now as it has done in the past.

### Taste of home cooking in Amami-Oshima Island

Local Amami cuisine evolved into a unique food culture while being influenced by the Satsuma (Kagoshima) and

the Ryukyu (Okinawa). Using island vegetables and seafood, Kagoshima kurobuta pork and chicken meat, and other local ingredients and producing a sweet flavor with brown sugar are also characteristic of Amami cuisine. Popular among these dishes is "Keihan (chicken rice)," which is eaten by topping rice with chicken meat, etc. and pouring chicken soup over it. It was originally a hospitality cuisine made for Satsuma officials during the Edo era. While having a plain flavor, the chicken soup, in which "umami" is condensed, is so delicious that it captivates not only the islanders but also tourists.



◀ Brown sugar is a food product that is representative of Amami-Oshima Island, where sugar cane cultivation is actively pursued.



▶ Kokuto (Brown sugar) Shochu Liquor is a special shochu made only in the Amami Islands.

Here are the places you should visit!  
If you plan to tour Amami-Oshima Island...



#### 1 Tomori Coast

In Tomori Coast, which is located in the northern part of the island, the waters are among the best in the island in terms of transparency, and because the gradations of their blue color are so beautiful, the waters have been called as "blue angel."



#### 2 Authentic Amami Oshima Tsumugi (Woven silk) Mud-Dyeing Park

Paddy fields are kept and maintained here, so visitors can watch the mud-dyeing process. In addition, visitors can experience creating their own original mud-dyed T-shirts.



#### 3 Kuroshio-no-Mori (Black Current Forest) Mangrove Park

Visitors can explore the Mangrove Virgin Forest while riding on canoes. In addition to the mangroves, the beautiful landscape of Sumiyo, which is rich in water and greenery, is also a must-see site.



#### 4 Amami Marine Museum

Sea creatures that inhabit the waters around Amami-Oshima Island are bred and exhibited here. Hands-on experience in shellcraft using shellfish and seaweed as well as feeding sea turtles are also popular.



#### 5 Waterfall of Materiya

This is a mystic waterfall within Amami Forestpolis in Yamato Village. The waterfall basin that sparkles when sunlight is reflected is spectacularly beautiful.



#### 6 Kokuto (Brown Sugar) Shochu Liquor Distillery Tour

Amami-Oshima Island is the only place in the world where "Kokuto Shochu" is produced. There are breweries on the island where visitors can watch the shochu production process and taste samples.

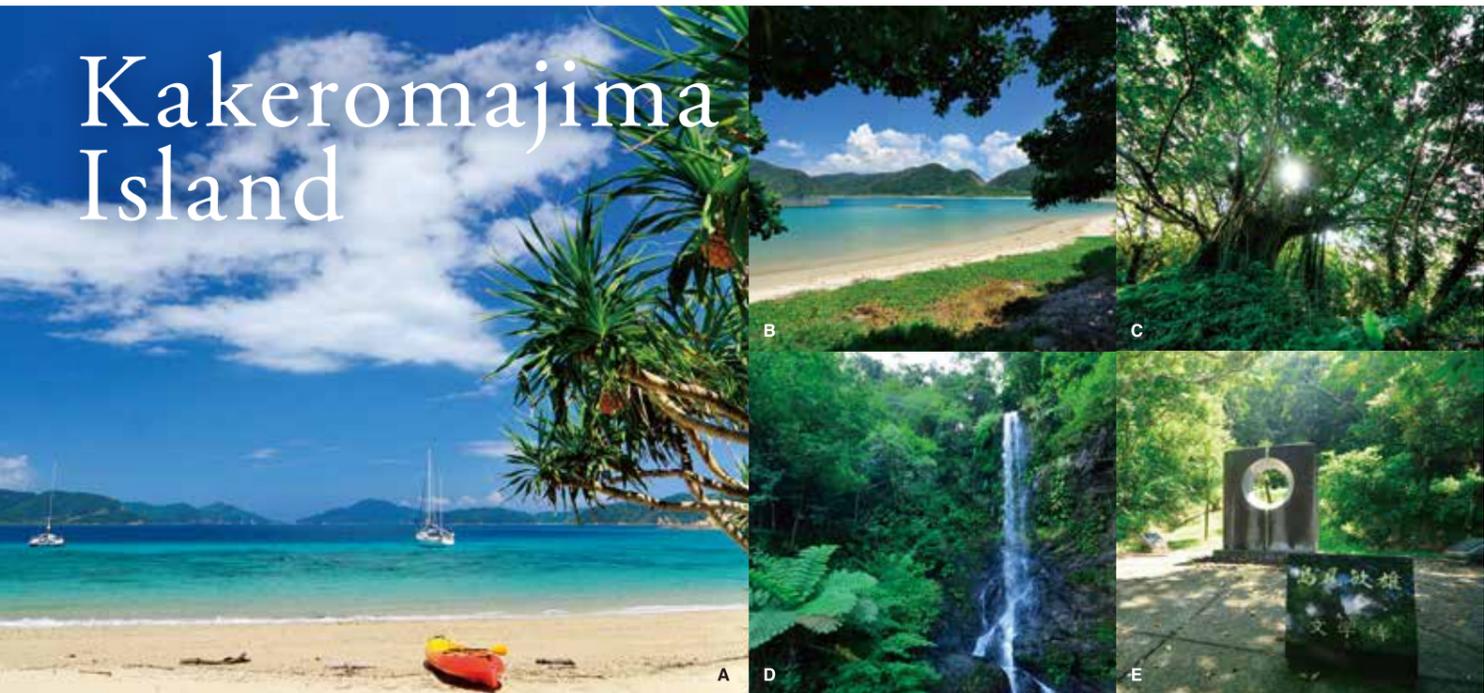


#### 7 Tanaka Isson Memorial Art Museum

Many works by Japanese Nihonga painter Tanaka Isson, who loved nature on Amami-Oshima Island and continued to draw paintings of plants and animals of Amami-Oshima Island with acute power of observation and painting skills, are exhibited here.



# Kakeromajima Island



**KAKEROMAJIMA ISLAND · KIKAIJIMA ISLAND**

### Extraordinary space woven by the sea and forests

There are many beaches on Kakeromajima Island, so you can enjoy swimming and water sports. Among them, Tokuhama Beach, which has a beautiful white sandy beach, is also known for serving as the stage for the last episode of the "Tora-san" series movie titled "Otoko-wa Tsuraiyo: Torajiro - Kurenai no Hana (1995)," precisely because of that. Many spectacular views interwoven by Mother Nature never cease to attract travelers. In addition, lines of Deigo trees, huge banyan trees, forests that nurture the rich flora and fauna, and, moreover, the village landscapes that maintain an old-fashioned

appearance are attractive features unique to Kakeromajima Island.

### Coral islands where upheaval continues even now

Kikaijima Island is an elevated coral reef that is rising 2 mm each year even now. What is attractive about the island is that you can actually experience the natural environment where beautiful tropical flowers bloom and rice paper butterflies, of which Kikaijima Island is the northernmost range, fly around, as well as the breathing of the islanders who live there together caring for each other. Coral stonewalls in the village and a single straight road that extends across sugarcane fields are representative of such attractiveness. In addition, you can get a panoramic view of the East China Sea and the

Pacific Ocean from Hyakunodai Park, which is the highest point in Kikaijima Island, a flat island.

[Kakeromajima Island] A. Surihama Beach is a beautiful beach known as "White Village." B. There are many places of shade around the seaside, allowing you to enjoy relaxing moments. C. Lush, large banyan tree known as "Gajumaru of Takena." D. Waterfall of Kanyu. E. Toshio Shimao, a novelist known for serious literature works such as "The Sting of Death," was stationed as a commander for a naval suicide attack squadron in Nominoura.

[Kikaijima Island] F. An approximately 2.5-km stretch of road extending through sugarcane fields to the ocean is also known as the "Ipponmichi (single straight road) leading to the East China Sea." G. Visitors can watch the production process of Kokuto (brown sugar) Shochu liquor made in the island. H. Kikaijima mango that have been showered with plenty of sunlight. I. White sesame flowers blooming in Kikaijima Island, where white sesame production is the largest in Japan. J. View from Hyakunodai Park. K. Coral stonewalls that surround houses on the island are also splendid.



# Kikaijima Island

# Amami-Oshima Island MAP

## Amami-Oshima Island and surrounding islands four plan

Beautiful coastline, lush primeval forests, and the Mangrove Virgin Forest – Amami's natural environment will resonate through the five senses of travelers.

### Let's go around nearby spots

Tomori Coast / Amami Park / Tanaka Isson Memorial Art Museum / Authentic Amami-Oshima Tsumugi (woven silk) Mud-Dye Park / Kinsakubaru Virgin Forest / Mangrove Virgin Forest / Giant Gajumaru (Banyan Tree) / Coral Stonewall

Popular among the many coasts are the Kurasaki Coast, where you can enjoy diving in an inland sea where the waves are gentle, and the Kuninao Coast, which is famous as a spawning ground for sea turtles. If you visit during the high season in May to September, you can enjoy the beautiful sea of emerald green. In addition, you are encouraged to visit the Tanaka Isson Memorial Art Museum, where many paintings of Japanese Nihonga painter Tanaka Isson, who was attracted by Amami, are displayed. If you can further set your foot on the nearby Kakeromajima Island and Kikaijima Island, your trip should surely become one that is very satisfying.



### Island Column

#### Spending relaxing moments on the pier

Marine taxis are a familiar means of transportation for residents of Kakeromajima Island. Therefore, in each village, there is a pier where small boats can come alongside. Directly beneath the pier is a transparent sea. In this prime location, spending your time as you wish such as sitting on the pier and watching the beautiful sea or fishing is truly a moment of bliss.



It takes 20 to 25 minutes from Amami-Oshima Island to Kakeromajima Island by ferry leaving from Koniya Port, and only 15 minutes by plane to Kikaijima Island. Therefore, you can move instantly from place to place. Enjoy gourmet food such as "Keihan" and "Abura Somen," while also enjoying differences in the terrain and culture. You can also enjoy camping on the uninhabited islands around Kakeromajima Island.

"Abura (Oil) Somen (Noodles)"  
A local cuisine of Amami





The Island that connects all lifeforms to the future

# Tokunoshima Island

Tokunoshima Island has continued to protect rare lifeforms such as the Amami rabbit sometimes firmly and sometimes with an all-embracing gentleness. It is an island that “connects” all lifeforms to the future.

Evening scene viewed from In'no Jofuta



Surrounded by coral reefs, there are many diving spots.



Around the end of the rainy season, hordes of land hermit crabs appear in the sea for spawning.



Rare plants and animals also inhabit Mt. Inokawadake, the highest peak in Tokunoshima Island.



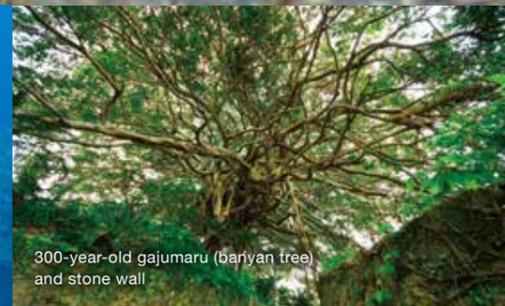
Sunrise in Aze Prince Beach, a white sandy beach surrounded by coral reefs



With an approximately 500-year history, bullfighting is an event that is representative of Tokunoshima Island. If you are lucky, you may see scenes of bullfighting practices on beaches and other places.



Tokunoshima Island is a spawning ground for sea turtles, and you may be able to see them swimming in the sea.



300-year-old gajumaru (barian tree) and stone wall

Forests dominated by evergreen broad-leaved trees such as *Castanopsis sieboldii* and *Quercus miyagii* spread across the mountainous area of Tokunoshima Island centering on Mt. Amagidake, Mt. Inokawadake, and Mt. Inutabutake. Many rare animals and plants such as the Amami rabbit inhabit the forests, but there also exist many species that are endemic to Tokunoshima Island such as the *Tokudaia tokunoshimensis* (Tokunoshima spiny rat), *Goniurosaurus kuroiwae* (Kuroiwa's ground gecko), and *Calanthe tokunoshimensis* (a species of orchid). The mountainous area where these rare species inhabit

is located in the central part of the island, and the outer edges of that area are surrounded by plateaus of limestone consisting of elevated coral reefs. Sugarcane fields and sesame fields spread across the plateaus that slope gently toward the coastline. Moving further down to the coast, you can see oddly shaped rock formations caused by erosion of the elevated coral reefs, as well as "Mushirose," a coast consisting of granite that is rare in southern islands. These diverse features displayed by nature in Tokunoshima Island never cease to fascinate the minds of people.

## TOKUNOSHIMA ISLAND

### Nature Experiencing and the Culture of the Island

#### Experiencing the attractiveness of both the ocean and the mountains

Tokunoshima Island is a large elevated coral reef island with a perimeter of about 90 km. It is popular among divers, as the waters around the island provide many diving points where the divers can enjoy the unusual terrain, tunnel-shaped odd rock formations, etc. that are

typical of elevated coral reef islands. The chances of encountering sea turtles and cuttlefish are very high, and that is another reason that divers are attracted here. Furthermore, in Tokunoshima Island, there exist mountains that harbor globally valuable ecosystems such as Mt. Amagidake, Mt. Inokawadake, and Mt. Inutabutake. The mountains are perfect for bird watching and trekking, and in addition, in the Amami rabbit observation hut, you can see valuable images of the ecology of these nocturnal animals even during the daytime. The varied and complicated terrain of Tokunoshima

Island will give us surprise and excitement.

#### "Bullfighting" – an event when the island is wrapped in excitement

Synonymous with Tokunoshima Island is "bullfighting," which has an approximately 500-year history. Unlike Spanish bullfighting that pits people against bulls, bullfighting in Tokunoshima Island pits bulls against each other. These bulls are much larger than ordinary bulls, weighing between 700 kilograms to 1 ton. The scene of these bulls ramming into each other is spectacular. About a dozen local tournaments are held

each year, while "island-wide tournaments" are held in January, May, and October. A bull that wins an "island-wide tournament" becomes the "Grand Island Champion." At the moment of victory, the relevant parties roll into the bullfight ring, shouting "Waido! Waido! (Heave-ho! Heave-ho!)." You can feel the energy of the "Shimatchu (islanders)" from this scene. You may occasionally see bulls being walked along the beaches, a scene that you may only see in Tokunoshima, an island of bullfighting.

Here are the places you should visit!

If you plan to tour Tokunoshima Island...



#### 1 In'no Jofuta

There are rocks and cliffs such as the "Megane Iwa (Glasses Rock)" in the entire coastal area facing the East China Sea. Enjoy the unique terrain formed by erosion over the years.



#### 2 Cape Inutabu

This is a triangular cape in the southwestern part of the island, projecting toward the East China Sea. There is a war memorial for those who died in kamikaze suicidal missions launched from Yamato, a Japanese battleship that was sunk in April 1945.



#### 3 Bullfighting (Nakusami-kan)

There are bullfighting rings used for tournaments in five locations on the island. If you are lucky, you may be able to see bulls being walked even during periods when there are no tournaments being held.



#### 4 Kanamizaki Cycad Tunnel

This is a place of interest in Tokunoshima Island located on a hill in Kanamizaki. As you proceed deeper into the tunnel of cycads, you will come out to an observation deck.



#### 5 Mushirose

This is a rocky area in the northwestern edge of the island. This is the only place on the island where granite exists. The name came from the shape of the rocks spreading out like straw mats.



#### 6 Unbuki

This is an underwater cave (unbuki) that was formed when a coral reef rose above the ground in the past and then sank back into the sea. It is connected to the sea about 400 meters away.



## TOKUNOSHIMA ISLAND CUISINE



In the old days, local cuisine such as "tonsoku (pig's feet)" were served in banana leaves used as dishes.



# Okinoerabujima Island

OKINOERABUJIMA ISLAND · YORONJIMA ISLAND

## Experience the formative art of Mother Nature.

Okinoerabujima Island is a coral island that took 400,000 years to rise. It is also called "Island of Flowers" because Easter lilies or Erabu lilies bloom beautifully in profusion. On the underground of the island, there are 200 to 300 limestone caves, making the island one of the most popular caving and diving spots in Japan. You can also experience the formative art of Mother Nature such as the "Fucha" and "Cape Tamina." It is truly a paradise to watch sea turtles gathering to feed on seaweeds on the coast where coral reefs have built up.

## A resort island surrounded by coral reefs

Yoronjima Island, which is located at the southern tip of the Amami Islands, is a beautiful island surrounded by the largest coral reef in the Amami Islands. The spectacle of many tropical fish gathering in the coral reef is a feast to the eyes of the people enjoying water sports. In addition, at the beaches on the island, you may see sea turtles coming ashore to lay eggs. You can cross on a glass boat to the pure white sandy beaches called "Yurigahama," which appears approximately 1.5 km offshore only during low tide. You can then experience the mystical beauty of being surrounded 360 degrees by emerald green waters.

[Okinoerabujima Island] A. "Syoryudo" is 3,500 meters long cave, and the illumination is spectacularly beautiful. B. "The No. 1 Gajumaru (banyan tree) in Japan," located in Kunigami Elementary School, has a branch spread of 22 meters in diameter. C. "Cape Tamina," a precipitous cliff that stands 51 meters high, is one of the 10 best scenic sights in Amami. D. "Erabu lily" accounts for 90% of all bulbs produced in Japan.

[Yoronjima Island] E. A "Time Tunnel" that appears only during low tide. F. At "Yoron Minzokumura (folk village)," you can experience color-dyed weaving. G. Dragon fruit shaved ice. H. The illusionary "Yurigahama," which appears offshore only during low tide.



# Yoronjima Island

# Tokunoshima Island MAP

## Tokunoshima Island and surrounding islands four plan

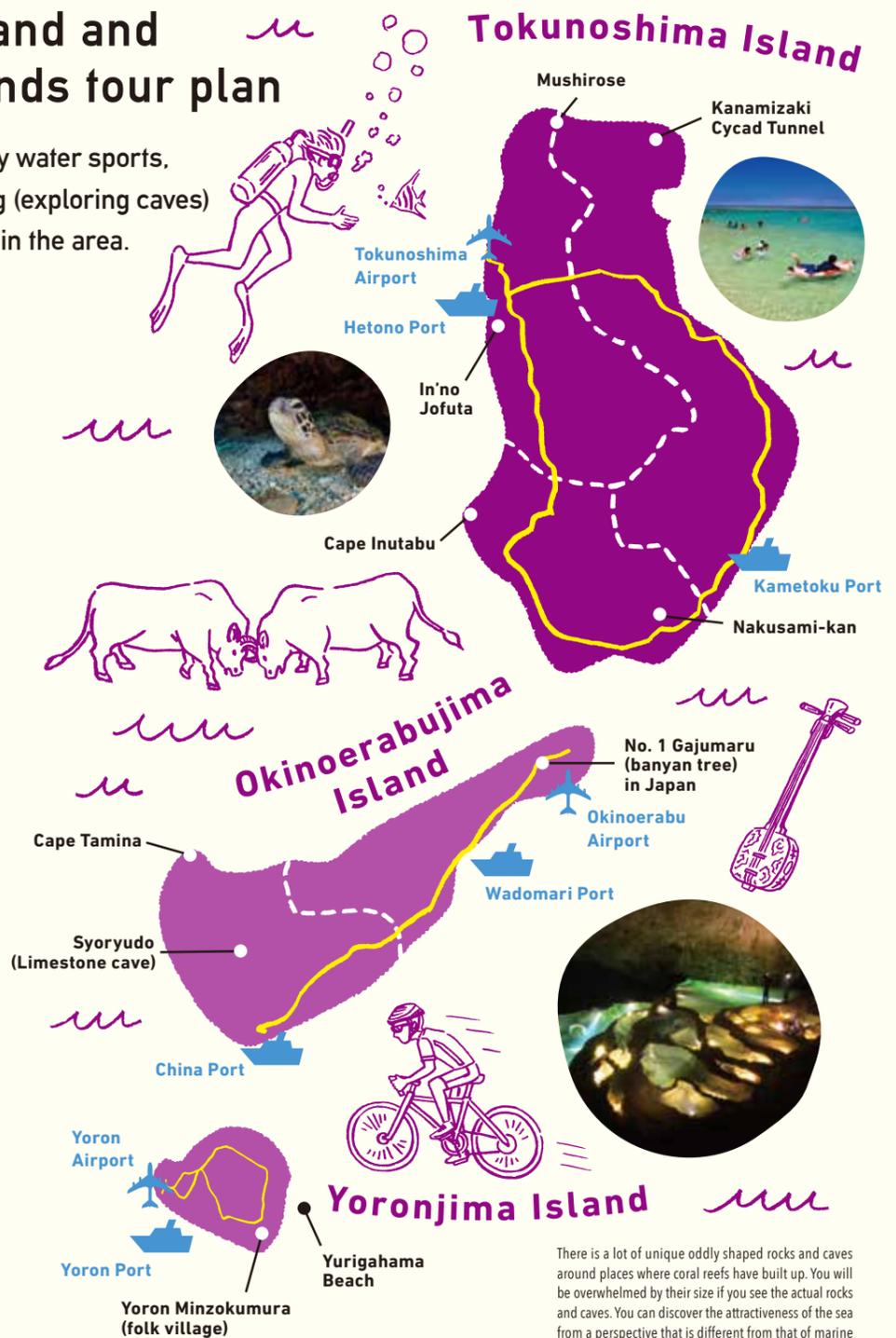
If you are not satisfied doing only water sports, we recommend you to try caving (exploring caves) or a tour of oddly shaped rocks in the area.

### Let's go around nearby spots

Mushirose / Kanamizaki Cycad Tunnel / In'no Jofuta / Cape Inutabu / Nakusami-kan / No. 1 Gajumaru (banyan tree) in Japan / Cape Tamina / Syoryudo (Limestone Cave) / Yurigahama Beach / Yoron Minzokumura (folk village)

With Tokunoshima Island where you can enjoy both the mountains inhabited by endemic and rare species such as the Amami rabbit, as well as the sea where little-known but good diving spots are scattered around, as the main place where you will be visiting, if you can further set your foot on Okinoerabujima Island and Yoronjima Island, you can fully enjoy the extraordinary beauty of those islands.

In addition, with regard to moving around the island, we recommend the sea route that enables you to sense the beauty of the sea and the coral reef up close. From Tokunoshima Island to Okinoerabujima Island, it takes about 1 hour and 50 minutes by boat, while it takes about 1 hour and 40 minutes from Okinoerabujima Island to Yoronjima Island.



## Island Column

**Mystic beach: Yurigahama Beach**

Yurigahama Beach is known as the most famous tourist spot in Yoronjima Island. It is an illusionary white sandy beach that appears only during low tide in the "spring tide" season in the spring and summer. The view will always change depending on the season or tidal current; the scene you will witness there will be the one and only time you will see that spectacle. There is an ancient saying that if you pick up specks of "hoshizuna (star-shaped sand)" that are the same number as your age, you will gain happiness.



There is a lot of unique oddly shaped rocks and caves around places where coral reefs have built up. You will be overwhelmed by their size if you see the actual rocks and caves. You can discover the attractiveness of the sea from a perspective that is different from that of marine sports. Also, please pay attention not to trample on rare plants along mountain trails on Tokunoshima Island.



The Nurturing Island

# Northern Part of Okinawa Island

The three villages in the northern part of Okinawa Island are filled with unconstrained, powerful energy that nurture forests that embrace lush greenery and lifeforms that exist there, reflecting the precious state of the coexistence between nature and people.

Mystic Mt. Yonaha dake veiled in the morning sun



Okuni-rindo (length: 35.5 km) that enables people to travel through the forests of Yanbaru (northern part of Okinawa Island)



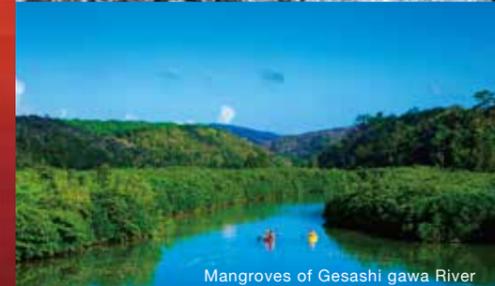
A view of Adakajima Island from the Ada district



Japan's largest "giant gajumaru (banyan tree)" in Dai Sekirinzan Park



Okinawa rail – species of rail endemic to the northern part of Okinawa Island



Mangroves of Gesashi gawa River



The unique shaped tree crown of Itajii



Ta waterfall in Ogimi Village refreshes your mind and body

Kunigami Village, Ogimi Village and Higashi Village in the northern part of Okinawa Island are a treasure chest of globally valuable natural environment. The laurel forests of Itajii (Sudajii) that have a unique shape resembling a broccoli when seen from above cover approximately 70% of the forests of Yanbaru (northern part of Okinawa Island). A wide variety of plants such as the giant Cyathea arborea and Cyathea lepifera grow densely in the forests. The major appeal is the experience of dynamic breath of nature that makes you feel a sense of slipping back in time to the dinosaur ages. The influences of the monsoon and warm Kuroshio current create

subtropical rainforests, preserving the temperate and humid climate. Mt. Yonaha dake, one of the highest peaks on the island, is blessed with over 3,000 mm of average annual rainfall, returning the blessings back to Mother Earth. Also, many rare creatures such as Okinawa rail, Pryer's woodpecker, and Yanbaru long-armed scarab beetle inhabit the forests, embraced in the rich greenery. This biodiversity-rich nature forms an image suitable for calling it a "treasure" common to mankind. While the northern part of Okinawa Island is located near 27 degrees north latitude, the existence of the

forests there in itself is often referred to as valuable "miracle forests," as other similar regions in the world are grasslands or arid regions. We wish for you to touch the blessings of nature that have been nurtured over a long time. Please engrave the beautiful landscape in your minds.

## NORTHERN PART OF OKINAWA ISLAND

### Nature experiencing and the culture of the island

#### Nature and cultural experiences that create impressions

In the northernmost tip of the main island of Okinawa, "Kunigami Village" offers night hikes for forest therapy and observation of nocturnal insects. The village also offers a "fixed net fishery experience tour" where you can experience the mood of "Uminchu (fisherman)." You can

also experience kayaking through the Gesashi-gawa River in "Higashi Village," while glancing at a community of mangrove trees, a designated national natural treasure. In "Ogimi Village," there is a workshop where you can experience "Bashofu (\*1)," an Important Intangible Cultural Property.

#### A simple landscape coexisting with nature

The northern part of Okinawa Island, where delicate nature and the people who live there have coexisted and nurtured their history, is a region where agriculture has

been actively practiced from the past. Fruits such as shikuwasa and pineapple are known as major specialty products. Processed items such as jams arranged with those products, as well as sweets are also becoming popular souvenirs.

The northern part of Okinawa Island is one of the best destinations for relaxing and refreshing the mind and body, for it provides various ways to enjoy yourself, ranging from natural and cultural experiences to specialty island gourmet and even strolling through villages.

\*1 Hands-on experience in making Bashofu (cloth woven from the stalks of "basho" or Japanese fiber banana)

Here are the places you should visit! / If you plan to tour the northern part of Okinawa Island...



#### 1 Kayauchi Banta

The cliff stands facing toward the East China Sea. Standing 80 meters high, the cliff is spectacular! The observation platform is a great shooting spot from where you can overlook the beautiful coastline.



#### 2 Dai Sekirinzan & Gajumaru

The tropical karst formed from limestone two hundred million years ago is the northernmost range in the world. The huge Ugan-Gajumaru hanging its aerial roots down along the walking course is also a must see.



#### 3 Cape Hedo

Cape Hedo is located on the northernmost tip of the main island of Okinawa, where the scenery from the cliff is spectacular. It is also possible to see Yoronjima Island of Kagoshima Prefecture on the horizon on a clear sunny day.



#### 4 Oku community

This is a community in the northernmost part of the main island of Okinawa where rustic landscapes remain. At the "Oku Kyodo Baiten (community store)," which is also a place for refreshing and relaxation for the locals, you can get a glimpse of the life of the villagers.



#### 5 Bashofu experience

You can experience a part of the process of making the Bashofu of Kijoka, an Important Intangible Cultural Property. The beautiful traditional craft that coexists with the local natural environment and the people is simply amazing.



#### 6 Shikuwasa

Ogimi Village's specialty product "shikuwasa" is a citrus fruit characterized by its sweet sour taste. You can easily enjoy drinking its juice.

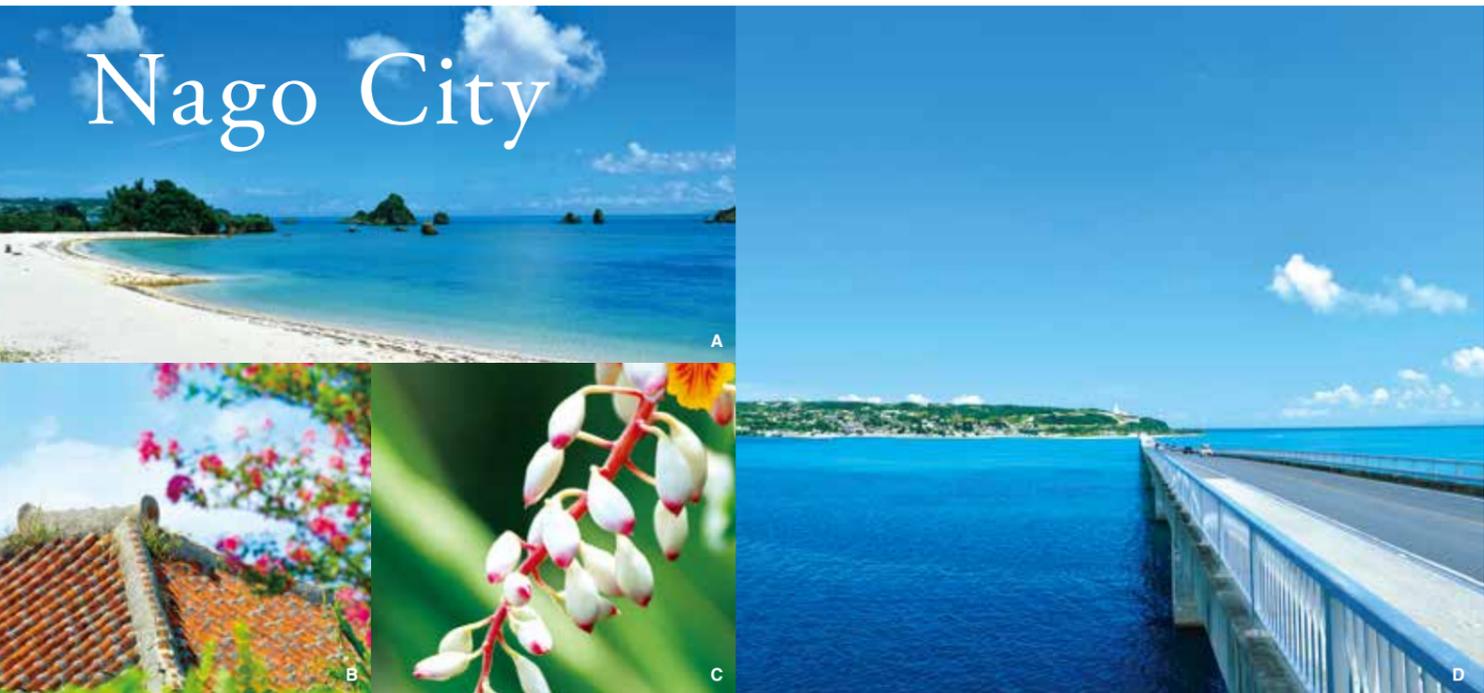


#### 7 The forest of Takae

This is a deep forest of sub-tropical plants and a habitat for rare animals and insects. If you are lucky, you may encounter Pryer's woodpecker.



# Nago City



NAGO · MOTOBU · NAKIJIN

Two islands where you can go by car from the northern part of Okinawa Island and enjoy the scenery while driving

"Yagajijima Island" and "Korijima Island," which are connected by a bridge to the main island of Okinawa, are attractive islands where you would want to definitely stop by on your way back from visiting the northern part of Okinawa Island. There is a camping ground on the beach on Yagajijima Island, and it is an attractive feature to be able to enjoy such activities as fishing and riding on rental boats. Yagajijima Island and Korijima Island are connected by Kori-o-hashi Bridge. The view from over the bridge is so beautiful that you would want to take

pictures. On "Tenuhama" on Korijima Island, there is a rock called "Heart Rock," which portrays a romantic scene during sunset.

There are many tourist spots where families can have fun in Motobu Town and Nakijin Village in the northern part of Okinawa Island

In Motobu Town, there is "Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium," a popular tourist spot. After watching huge whale sharks and mysterious sea creatures there, we recommend tasting Okinawa soba noodles and take a stroll along an alley lined with Fukugi trees in Bise. Rocked in a cart pulled by a water buffalo that passes through this alley, you will find yourself wrapped in a strange feeling

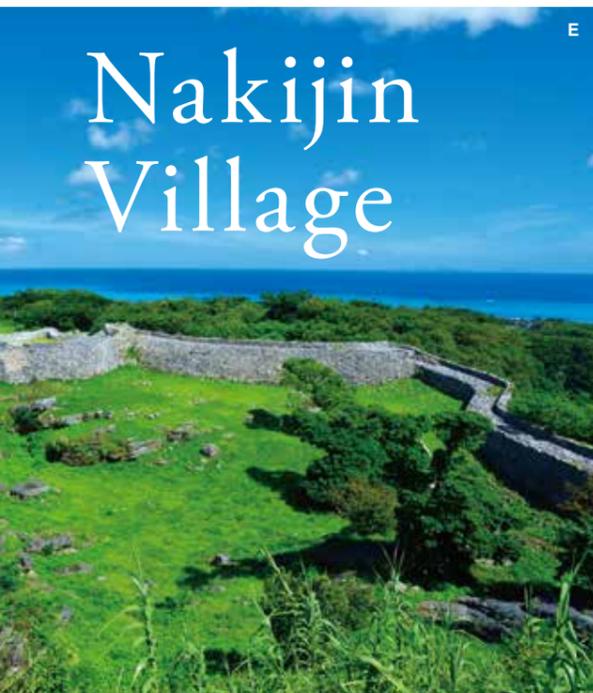
as if you had gone back in time. In Nakijin Village, you can enjoy walking around "Nakijin Castle Ruins," which is one of the world heritage sites. Every year from late January to early February, cherry blossoms are in full bloom around the castle ruins and the surrounding areas. The castle ruins are also illuminated, and you will be wrapped in a fantastic atmosphere.

[Nago] A. You can spend a pleasant time at Yagaji Beach B. The traditional landscape still remains even now C. Shell ginger that blooms around May to June

[Nakijin] D. Kori-o-hashi Bridge lets you move from one island to another E. "Nakijin Castle Ruins" - a world heritage site

[Motobu] F. Let's observe sea creatures at "Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium" G. Rows of Fukugi trees in Bise - the island's virgin landscape H. Okinawa soba noodles - one of the soul foods for Okinawan people

# Nakijin Village



# Motobu Town



# Northern Part of Okinawa Island MAP

## Northern part of Okinawa Island and surrounding areas tour plan

Scenic spots and the culture utilizing Mother Nature are a major attractive feature of the northern part of Okinawa Island and surrounding areas that let you feel Okinawa as it is.

### Let's go around nearby spots

Okinawa Rail Ecology Center / Shioya Bridge / Higashi Museum / Nakijin Castle Ruins / Rows of Fukugi trees in Bise / Ocean Expo Park and Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium



The northern part of Okinawa Island and nearby municipalities are a perfect area to explore while driving. The lush plant communities and the beautiful scenery of the "rows of Fukugi trees" from which you can experience the elegance of the traditional village gently welcome visitors. There are tourist spots where you can learn from actual observations such as the "Okinawa Rail Ecology Center," where you can confirm the ecology of Okinawa rails. Family members and friends can thus enjoy heartfelt moments with each other.

### Island Column

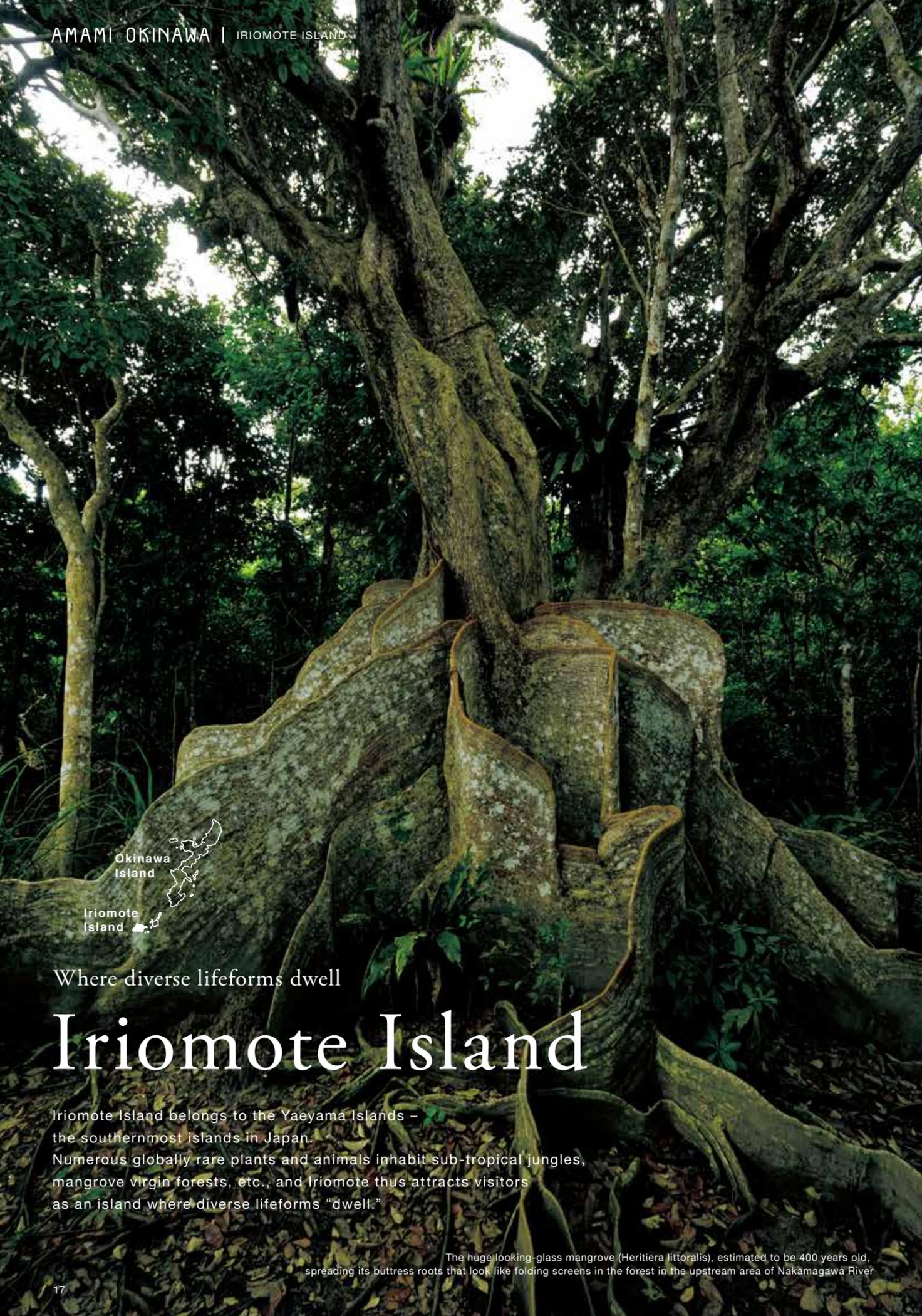
#### "Hands-on-Experience at Tea-Picking" in Oku, Kunigami Village

The Oku district of Kunigami Village has been known as one of the leading tea-producing areas in the prefecture. "Kunigami-Maaji" soil, which is suitable for tea cultivation, is found in this area. Since tea is harvested in March, the picked tea leaves here are known as the earliest "shincha (new tea)" in Japan. In Kunigami Village, there are facilities that conduct programs for "hands-on-experience at tea-picking." In addition to picking tea leaves, you can experience valuable "tea making" processes including parching tea leaves and kneading them.



In the northern part of Okinawa Island, which is about a two-and-a-half-hour to three-hour drive from Naha Airport, you can not only enjoy the attractive landscape as photo shooting spots but also enjoy a variety of nature experiencing programs that utilize the rich environment such as forest and the ocean.





[B] Photo : Hitoshi Yoneyama [C] Photo : Iriomote Wildlife Conservation Center, Ministry of the Environment



The crested serpent eagle and the Chinese box turtle that inhabit the island

Where diverse lifeforms dwell

# Iriomote Island

Iriomote Island belongs to the Yaeyama Islands – the southernmost islands in Japan. Numerous globally rare plants and animals inhabit sub-tropical jungles, mangrove virgin forests, etc., and Iriomote thus attracts visitors as an island where diverse lifeforms “dwell.”

The huge looking-glass mangrove (*Heritiera littoralis*), estimated to be 400 years old, spreading its buttress roots that look like folding screens in the forest in the upstream area of Nakamagawa River

Iriomote Island, which belongs to the Yaeyama Islands, ranks next to the main island of Okinawa in terms of area, and 90% of the island is covered by subtropical natural forests. There is a history in which the island was connected with the continent a number of times due to the effects of crustal movements and the rising and falling of the sea level, and many continental and southern flora and fauna have been confirmed. The Iriomote cat, which became an endemic species of the island over a long period of time, has been designated as a special national natural treasure as well as an endangered species, and activities to protect it have been under way. In addition, Urauchigawa River, the longest river in Okinawa that flows through the northern part of the island, is a river with the highest diversity of fish species in Japan, with more than 400 species living in the approximately

19km stretch of water from the headwaters to the mouth of the river. Also, Iriomote Island is the only place where all seven species of mangrove plants that exist in Japan, including loop-root mangrove (*Rhizophora mucronata*) and nipa palm (*Nypa fruticans*), are distributed. Eco-tours that give consideration to the natural environment are actively conducted on the island, making it possible to experience the island’s natural environment directly through such activities as kayaking, trekking, and canyoning. This is an overwhelming story about nature woven by the rich forests, rivers, ocean, and the starry skies that are like treasure chests that you would want to pass on to the next generation. On Iriomote Island, where a unique ecosystem and mystic landscapes dwell, there exist numerous impressive scenes that will be unforgettable.



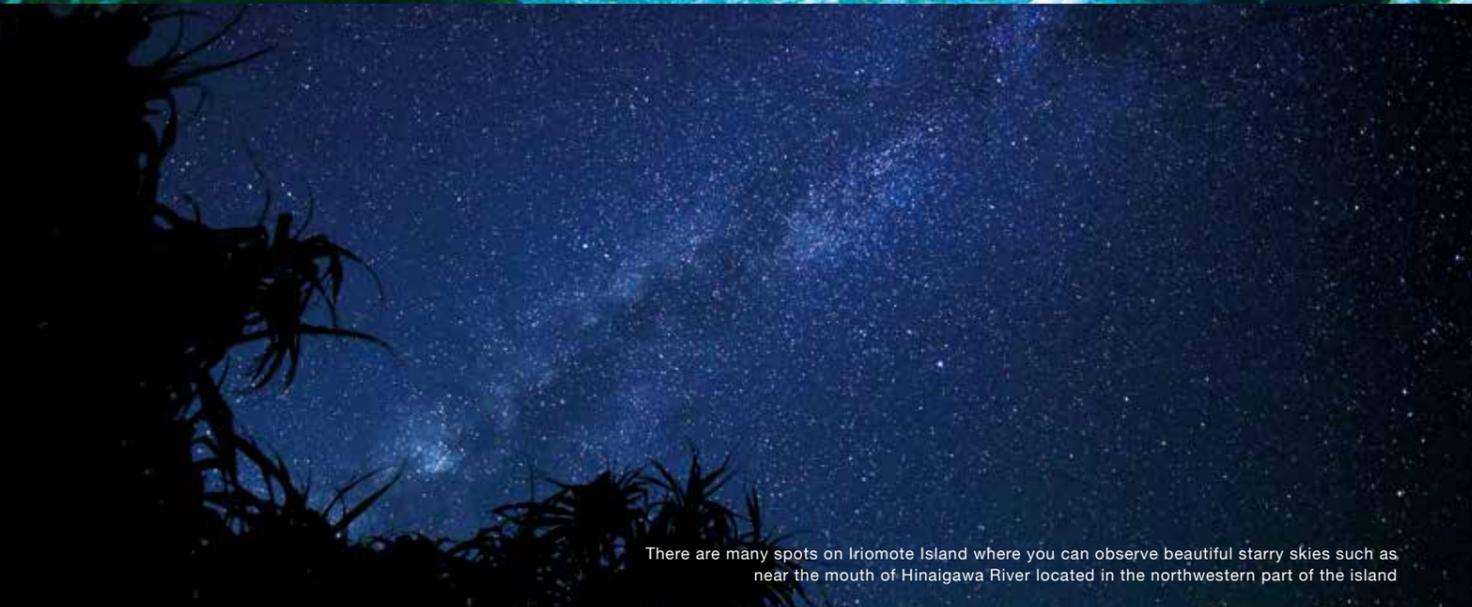
Diving in the beautiful sea where you can encounter tropical fish and coral is a popular activity.



Canyoning that you can experience in Omijagawa River will let you create the ultimate memory of being embraced in the bosom of the forest



In the ocean that is highly transparent and sparkles under the sun, you can enjoy SUP and other much-talked-about marine leisure activities



There are many spots on Iriomote Island where you can observe beautiful starry skies such as near the mouth of Hinaigawa River located in the northwestern part of the island



Common putat (Barringtonia racemosa)



Miruku God



Buffalo cart on Yubujima Island

IRIOMOTE ISLAND

## Nature Experiencing and the Culture of the Island

In Iriomote Island, which is the largest among the islands of the Yaeyama Islands, you can enjoy a dynamic experience of nature and get yourself exposed to the island's unique food and culture.

### A moment of emotional excitement in a mystical forest

The deep forests of Iriomote Island are beautiful unexplored regions far removed from everyday life. Jungle trekking toward various large and small waterfalls that are like treasures hidden in the forests or kayaking experience in mangrove forests are truly a once-in-a-lifetime encounter with Mother Nature. You will be spiritually moved by one-of-a-kind scenes that you will get to see at that precise moment. Various night tours are also available, and stargazing tours and observation of Yaeya-

ma-hime-botaru fireflies emitting fantastical illumination (around February through April) are conducted.

### Actively enjoying playing in the ocean

Playing not only in the forests and rivers but also in the ocean is one of the attractive features of Iriomote Island that is unique to a southern island. In the dazzling ocean that embraces the island, you can enjoy kayaking and snorkeling while sensing vivid tropical fish and the coral beneath your eyes. In addition, the recently much-talked-about topic of SUP (stand up paddle board) is also among the popular hands-on experience programs.

What is attractive about Iriomote Island is the fact that there are numerous activities that can be enjoyed not only between friends and couples but also among family members. By setting your foot on the forests and ocean and blending into the landscape that is almost like a different world, you can get more familiar with the natural environment of the island

### Food and culture of the island that coexist with nature

Coexistence with nature is an everyday affair in Iriomote

Island, which is surrounded by subtropical forests and the ocean, and where the rustic village scenery is impressive. For example, a unique food culture that has been nurtured by the blessings of the island such as "kamai (wild boar)" soup and Okinawa soba noddle soup using "gazami (Japanese blue crab)" as an ingredient can be observed, and plant dyeing using natural dyes of plants growing on the island, such as noni (Morinda citrifolia), hibiscus, and shell ginger, has flourished here. In addition, festivals of the island such as the Harvest Festival (Pui) and Shichimatsuri (Shichi) are still observed in accordance with the lunar calendar, and the

islanders are living here while protecting and cherishing the traditional customs and culture. Emotional excitement of "another world" that is different from everyday life exists here, and energy that fills the hearts of visitors dwell on this island.

Here are the places you should visit!

If you plan to tour Iriomote Island ...



#### 1 Shinmori Family Residence

This is an old folk houses that is said to be the oldest house in Okinawa Prefecture. The tasteful appearance such as the thatched roof and flat coral stonewalls are characteristic features of this house.



#### 2 Kanpire Falls

This is a beautiful waterfall located in the upstream area of Urauchigawa River, the longest river in Okinawa Prefecture. If you want to enjoy trekking, wear clothes that will allow you to move around easily.



#### 3 Hoshizuna (Star Sand) Beach

This is a highly transparent beach in the northern part of Iriomote Island. You can find "hoshizuna" -star-shaped exoskeletons of foraminifer (tiny one-celled organisms called Baclogypsina sphaerulata).



#### 4 Wild Boar Soup

The meat of the kamai (wild boars) that are running around jungles are a valuable source of protein for the island. It is said to be healthy food, and is consumed in the form of soup, etc.



#### 5 Barasu Island

This is an uninhabited coral island floating mid-point between Iriomote Island and Hatomajima Island. Snorkeling, which allows you to come into contact with tropical fish, has gained popularity.



#### 6 Yubujima Island

Rocked in a buffalo cart and crossing the shallows, you can reach Yubujima Island. The whole island has become a subtropical botanical garden, where time flows slowly.



#### 7 Kayaking in Nakamagawa River

Here is a magnificent panorama of nature where wetlands of mangroves and communities of Yaeyama palm trees, which are a national natural treasure, spread out. Touring around in a kayak is recommended.





# Kohamajima Island

# Taketomijima Island

TAKETOMIJIMA ISLAND · KOHAMAJIMA ISLAND · HATERUMAJIMA ISLAND

Great joy felt in a small paradise – Dyeing your heart in the vivid colors of the island

The beautiful village and the slow flow of time that have remained unchanged since the olden times are the attractive features of Taketomijima Island, which is about a 10-minute ride on a speedboat from Ishigakijima Island – the hub of the Yaeyama Islands. Simple but colorful landscapes such as the graceful appearance of carts drawn by water buffaloes, Kaijihama Beach, which is well-known for hoshizuna, and the blooming bougainvilleas spread out here.

Kohamajima Island, which is about 25 minutes by speedboat from Ishigakijima Island, is a pastoral island facing directly opposite Iriomote Island and where sugarcane fields and pastures spread out. You can heartily enjoy the comforts of paradise, such as through bicycle riding, diving, etc.

Discover beautiful beaches like those in a dream on Japan's southernmost coral island

Haterumajima Island, the name of which is said to have been derived from "Hate (Edge) no Uruma (Coral) no Shima" (Island of Coral at the Edge), is Japan's southernmost inhabited island. It offers superb views that are worth going to the island even if it takes about one hour on a speedboat from Ishigakijima Island. Representative

of those views is Nishihama Beach, which is overwhelmingly transparent. The sight of delicate blue gradations that continue from the water's edge to the horizon is truly breathtakingly beautiful. Also, if the weather is good, you may have the rare opportunity of observing the Southern Cross. The star-drenched sky and the gentle sound of waves – your mind and body will be healed by these gifts from paradise.

[Taketomijima Island] A. Water buffalo cart going around the village. [Kohamajima Island] B. Sugar Road, which is surrounded on both sides by sugarcane fields. C. Flowers that blend into the sky of the southern island. D. Playing in the sea at the beach will become the best memories for visitors. [Haterumajima Island] E. Cutting sugarcane manually. F. The beautiful scenery of coral. G. Many goats live on the island. H. Nishihama Beach, where blue and pure white colors blend.



# Haterumajima Island



# Iriomote Island MAP

## Iriomote Island and surrounding islands tour plan

The Yaeyama Islands, which include Iriomote Island, are an area spotted with individualistic islands. They are full of attractive features that would make you want to visit many times.

### Let's go around nearby spots

Kabira Bay / Uganzaki Lighthouse / Kondoi Beach / Sugar Road / Yubujima Island water buffalo cart / Looking-glass mangrove / Kanpire Falls / Urauchigawa River / Scene of grazing Yonaguni horse / Nishihama Beach



Ishigakijima Island is the main gate that connects the Yaeyama Islands and the outside area. There are many scenic spots such as Kabira Bay and Cape Hirakubozaki, and many tourists visit this island each year. It takes about 40 minutes by speedboat from Ishigakijima Island to Iriomote Island. You can feel free to experience the island, as day-trip eco-tours are also set up. In addition, spreading across Yonagunijima Island, which is located in the westernmost part of Japan, are mountains, fields, and pastures where the Yonaguni horse grazes. Although Yonagunijima Island is a small island, it is characterized by great views that are large in scale as if it were a foreign country.

### Island Column

Shisa (lion dogs) that are unique to Taketomijima Island

In Okinawa, there are many houses that have placed Shisa figurines on top of gateposts and roofs as a talisman and guardian angel. Among these houses are many houses with red roofing tiles in Taketomijima Island, and there are many Shisa with individualistic expressions and forms originally made by tile craftsmen using leftover tiles and plaster. Please try by all means to keep an eye out for them when you stroll through the village.



Small individualistic islands are scattered around the periphery of Iriomote Island, which is a part of the Yaeyama Islands. For example, the appearances and landscapes of Haterumajima Island, which is Japan's southernmost island, and those of Yonagunijima Island, the westernmost island, differ greatly, but in either island, there exists a history that nature and people have spent together.

