VISIT WAKAYAMA

The Official Wakayama Travel Guide

en.visitwakayama.jp

Visit Wakayama is a tourist information website operated by Wakayama Tourism Federation. In addition to providing information on the Kumano Kodo, we provide seasonal information on the Koyasan area, Shirahama Onsen area, Wakayama City area, etc.



- Destinations
- Themes
- Plan Your Trip
- Seasons
- Travel Concierge
- Good To Know

Useful Words and Phrases

Hello	Konnichiwa こんにちは	Goodbye	Sayonara さようなら
Thank you	Arigato ありがとう	Excuse me	Sumimasen すみません

Do you speak English? — Eigo ga hanasemasu ka? 英語が話せますか?

I don't understand. / I don't know — Wakarimasen わかりません

I can't speak Japanese — Nihongo wa dekimasen 日本語はできません

Is it OK to take a photo? — Shashin o totte mo ii desu ka? 写真を撮ってもいいですか?

Yes	Hai はい	No	Iie いいえ

Would you please show me on this map where I am right now? — Kono chizu de genzaichi o oshiete kudasai. この地図で現在地を教えてください

Where is the ××××? — ×××× wa doko desu ka? ××××はどこですか?

Bus stop	Basu-tei バス停	Trailhead	Tozanguchi 登山口	Toilet	O-tearai/toire お手洗い/トイレ
Help me!	Tasukete! たすけて!	I need a doctor	Isha ga hitsuyo desu 医者が必要です		

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KUMANO KODO

OHECHI

Pilgrimage Route Maps

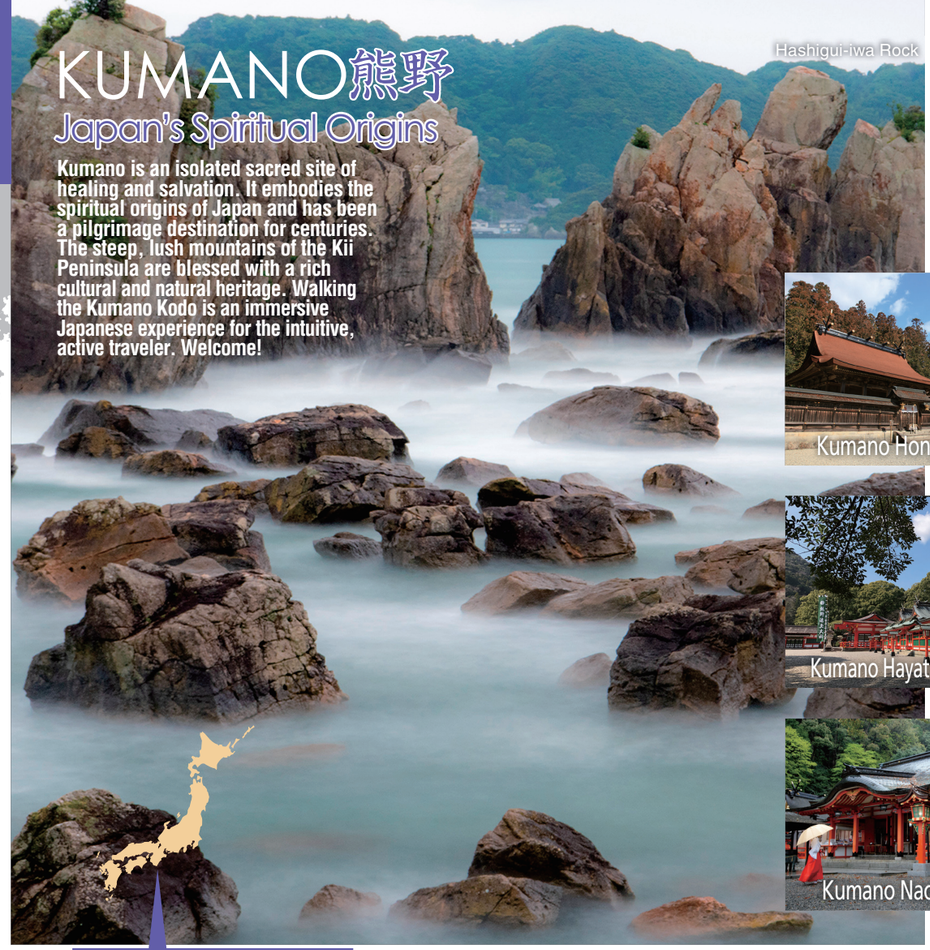






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KUMANO熊野

Japan's Spiritual Origins

Kumano is an isolated sacred site of healing and salvation. It embodies the spiritual origins of Japan and has been a pilgrimage destination for centuries. The steep, lush mountains of the Kii Peninsula are blessed with a rich cultural and natural heritage. Walking the Kumano Kodo is an immersive Japanese experience for the intuitive, active traveler. Welcome!

Kumano Sanzan

The main sites of worship in the Kumano region are the three Grand Shrines of Kumano: Kumano Hongu Taisha, Kumano Hayatama Taisha, and Kumano Nachi Taisha. As a set they are known as the Kumano Sanzan.



Kumano Hongu Taisha is situated in the heart of the kumano. The austere shrine pavilions were originally located at Oyunohara, a sand-bank in the Kumano-gawa River.



Kumano Hayatama Taisha is located in Shingu city, where the impressive Kumano-gawa River empties into the expanse of the Pacific Ocean.



Kumano Nachi Taisha is built on a mountain side facing the inspiring Nachi water fall, which is the tallest in Japan and believed to be a deity.



UNESCO World Heritage

On July 7, 2004 three sacred sites (Kumano Sanzan, Koyasan, and Yoshino/Omine) and the pilgrimage routes that lead to and connect them, were registered on UNESCO's World Heritage list as the "*Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range*".

Kumano Kodo Pilgrimage Route

For over 1000 years people from all levels of society, including retired emperors and aristocrats, have made the arduous pilgrimage to Kumano. These pilgrims used a network of routes, now called the Kumano Kodo, which stretch across the mountainous Kii Peninsula.

Ohechi Coastal Route

The Ohechi route runs along the southwest coast of the mountainous Kii peninsula between Tokei-jinja in Tanabe and Fudarakusan-ji in Katsuura. It was developed in the 15th century and used for both worship and tourism. The coastal landscape attracted many writers and poets during the Edo period (1603-1868).

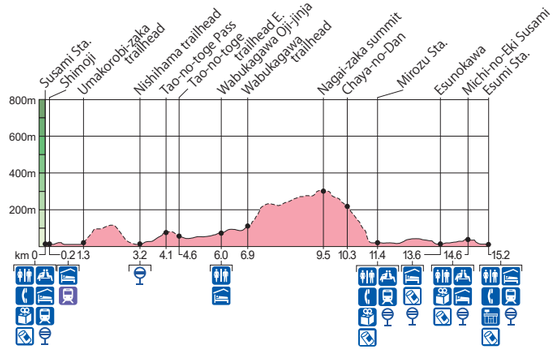
Overview



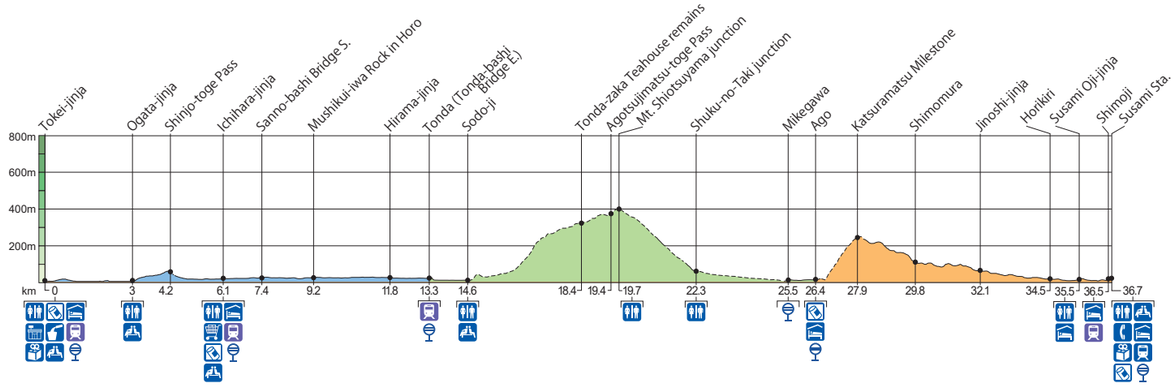
Unpaved trail
Paved trail

	Distance (km)	Time (hr)	Total Elevation Gain (m)	Total Elevation Loss (m)	
Tanabe~Tonda	~13.5	4~5	~140	~120	P.6~7
Tonda-zaka Pass (Tonda~Ago)	~13.5	5~6	~440	~460	P.8~9
Hotoke-zaka Pass (Ago~Susami)	~10.5	4~5	~340	~350	P.10~11
Nagai-zaka Pass (Susami~Esumi)	~15.5	5.5~7	~660	~660	P.12~14
Esumi~Tanami	~16	4.5~6	~350	~360	P.14~16
Tanami~Kushimoto	~9.5	3~4	~170	~160	P.16~17
Kushimoto~Tawara	~15	4.5~5.5	~110	~110	P.17, 20~21
Tawara~Katsuura Onsen	~18	6~8	~670	~670	P.21~24
Katsuura Onsen~Kumano Nachi Taisha	~8	3~4	~400	~60	P.24~25

Nagai-zaka Pass



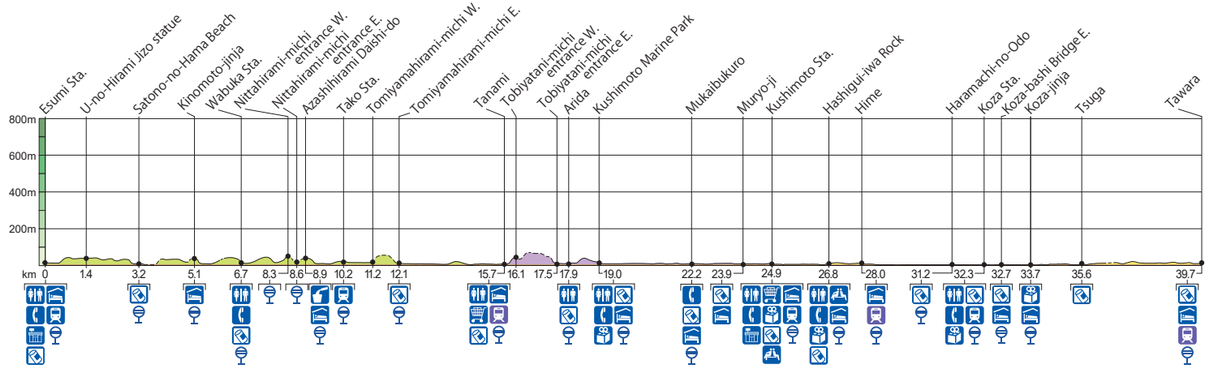
Tanabe~Tonda



Tonda-zaka Pass

Hotoke-zaka Pass

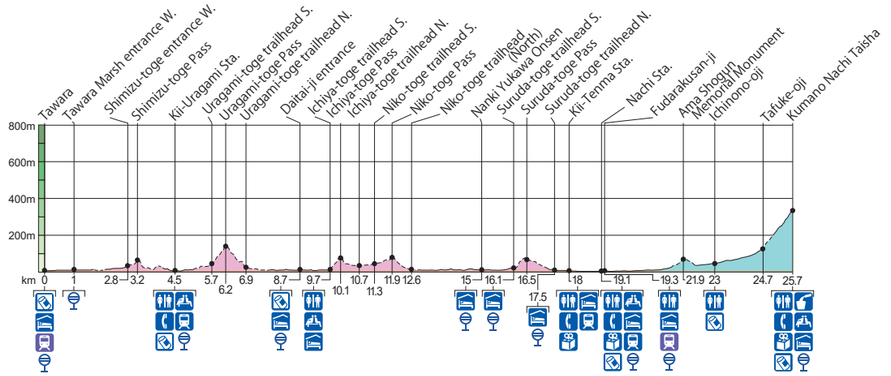
Esumi~Tanami



Tanami~Kushimoto

Kushimoto~Tawara

Tawara~Katsuura Onsen



Katsuura Onsen~Kumano Nachi Taisha

Legend
- Toilet
- Public phone
- Convenience store
- Grocery store
- Shop/Store
- Vending machine
- Drinking water
- Covered shelter
- Accommodation
- Station
- Station nearby
- Bus stop

Tanabe
Gateway to Kumano

Tanabe City is the historic and present day gateway to Kumano, a key location for both land and ocean transportation routes. It is a sleepy coastal city with a population of around 65,000, the largest in the south of the Kii Peninsula. Tanabe Bay is to the west with mountains rising in the East. Across the bay to the south is the Shirahama resort area.

Fishing and agriculture focused on Ume and orange production are the major industries. The mountains inland from the coast are covered with terraced orchards.

Access: JR Trains run daily from Kyoto and Osaka (~2.5 hrs)

Kii-Tanabe Station Area

The station area is the center of the older part of the city. Next to the Kii-Tanabe station is the TANABE Tourist Infomation Center. Most of the other main sites are to the south-west of the station.

TANABE Tourist Information Center

Hours: 9:00~18:00(Open year-round)





Travel Support Center



The KUMANO TRAVEL shop is dedicated to supporting visitors onsite. It is located within short walking distance from the Kii-Tanabe station and is run by bilingual English/Japanese speaking staff. Services include luggage storage, luggage shuttle, accommodation reservations, etc. Outdoor gear and local souvenirs are for sale.
Hours:9:00～18:00 (Open year-round)

Tokei-jinja

Tokei-jinja Shrine was established in 419 A.D and derives from Kumano Hongu Taisha. Many imperial and aristocratic pilgrims paid homage here praying for safe passage into the realm of Kumano. Because the Kumano deities were manifested in Tokei-jinja Shrine, some pilgrims did not make the voyage into the heart of Kumano, but prayed here, subsequently worshipping the Kumano Sanzan from afar.



Ajikoji-Restaurant & Entertainment District

The entertainment area in front of the JR Kii-Tanabe station is called "Ajikoji" and is packed with over 200 restaurants and Japanese style pubs (izakaya). Every alley is full of quaint places to eat and drink.



Tanabe is a safe place for non-Japanese speakers to fully experience delicious local cuisine in an authentic environment. Kanpai!

Where to Eat & Drink

Around Kii-Tanabe Sta. Accommodation

1	**Tanabe Station Hotel** 田辺ステーションホテル	12	**The CUE**
2	**Tentsuku Guesthouse** てんつくゲストハウス	13	**Altier Hotel** アルティエホテル紀伊田辺
3	**Miyoshiya Ryokan** 美吉屋旅館	14	**The Hotel TERAMOTO** ザ ホテル テラモト
4	**DJANGO Hostel & Lounge**	15	**Buddha Guesthouse** ブッダゲストハウス口熊野
5	**Business Hotel Pearl** ビジネスホテルパール	16	**Danshaku** 音楽珈琲館 男爵
6	**Hotel Nankairo** ホテル南海楼	17	**Cozy house**
7	**Guesthouse Ogawaya** 旅の宿 OGAWA・YA	18	**TSUKASA HOUSE** TSUSAKAハウス
8	**Guest house Shin Kumano** ゲストハウスシン熊野	19	**Business Hotel White** ビジネスホテルホワイト
9	**Hanaori Guest House** 花庵ゲストハウス	20	**Tanabe Guesthouse ICHIE** 田辺ゲストハウスICHIE
10	**Hotel Hanaya** ホテル花屋	21	**Kinoyado Shinyashiki** 紀之宿新屋敷
11	**Guest House Kumano** ゲストハウス熊野	22	**Parkside Hotel** パークサイドホテル

Tanabe



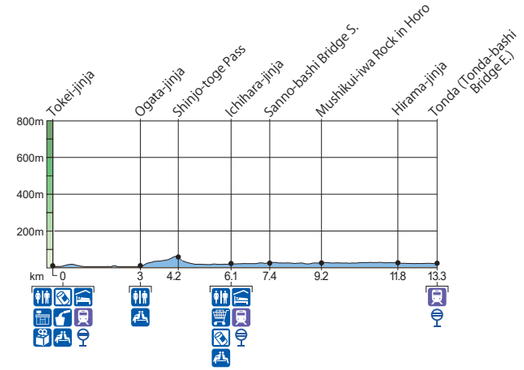
Tokei-jinja～Tonda

鬪鶏神社～富田



Distance (km) : ~13.5
Time (hr) : 4~5
Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~140
Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~120

------- Unpaved trail
——— Paved trail



Legend
Toilet
Public phone
Convenience store
Grocery store
Shop/Store
Vending machine
Drinking water
Information
Public Wi-fi
View point
Covered shelter
Michi-no-Eki rest area
Stamp
Accommodation
Camping
Onsen (Hot spring)
Station
Bus stop
Post Office
Police Station
Fire Station
School
Shrine
Temple
Unpaved trail
Paved road
Other Unpaved trail
Other Paved road

Guest House Koyama
ゲストハウス小山
Enmei Jizoson
延命地蔵尊
Nanki-no-Dai-shita bus stop
南紀の台下バス停
Kisei Expressway
紀勢自動車道
Asso Sta.
朝来駅
Sanno-bashi Bridge (South)
山王橋南詰
Tonda-gawa River
富田川
Iwasaki bus stop
岩崎バス停
Itsukushima-jinja
厳島神社
Ogata-jinja
大潟神社
Shinjo-toge Pass
新庄峠
Ichihara-jinja
櫟原神社
Mushikui-iwa Rock in Horo
保呂の虫喰岩
Michiwake Jizo statue
道分地蔵
Toge-no-Takajizo
峠の高地蔵
Kii-Shinjo Sta.
紀伊新庄駅
Tazu-guchi bus stop
田鶴口バス停
Kamitonda IC
上富田IC
Nuka-zuka
糠塚
Michi-no-Eki Kuchikumano
道の駅くちくまの
Nanki-Shirahama Resort Hotel
南紀白浜リゾートホテル
Yubin-bashi Bridge
郵便橋
Rinno-ji
林翁寺
Uchinokawa Gakko-mae bus stop
内の川学校前バス停
Shirasagi-bashi Bridge
白鷺橋
Tonda (Tonda-bashi Bridge (East))
富田(富田橋東詰)
Shogawa-guchi bus stop
庄川口バス停
Tonda-bashi bus stop
富田橋バス停
Mangan-ji
満願寺
Nichi-jinja
日神社
Hirama-jinja
平間神社
Hashidani bus stop
橋谷バス停
Tanabe City Hall
田辺市役所
JR Kinokuni Line
JRきのくに線
Kii-Tanabe Sta.
紀伊田辺駅
Tsurugaoka bus stop
鶴ヶ丘バス停
Tokei-jinja
鬪雞神社
Tanabe Pocket Park
田辺市街なかポケットパーク
Michiwake-ishi Signpost
道分け石
P5
P8
Kii-Tonda Sta.
紀伊富田駅
JR Kinokuni Line
JRきのくに線

1:25,000
0 500m 1000m

Shinjo-toge Pass

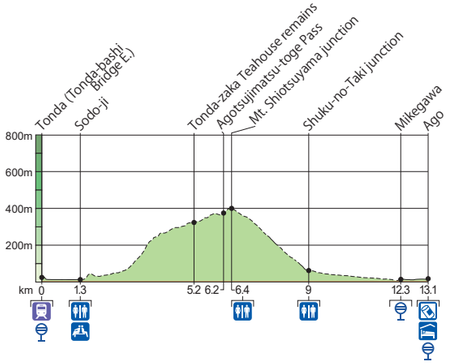


Asso



Tonda～Ago

富田～安居



Distance (km) : ~13.5
Time (hr) : 5~6
Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~440
Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~460

------- Unpaved trail
——— Paved trail

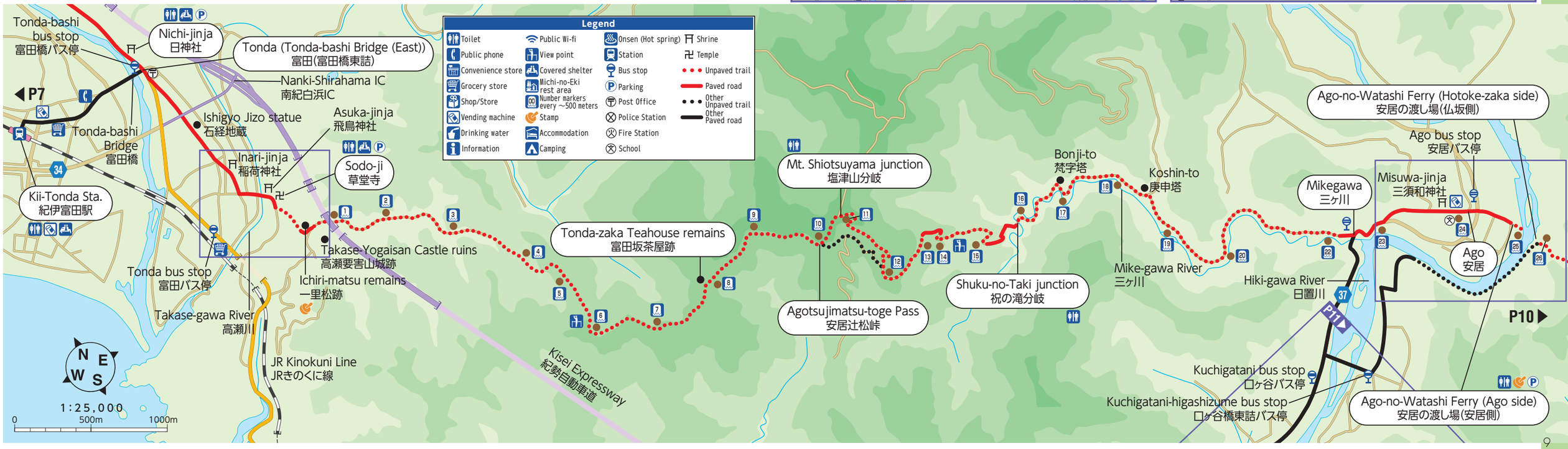


Sodo-ji



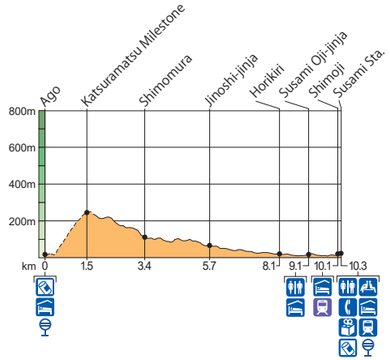
Ago





Ago～Susami Sta.

安居～周参見駅



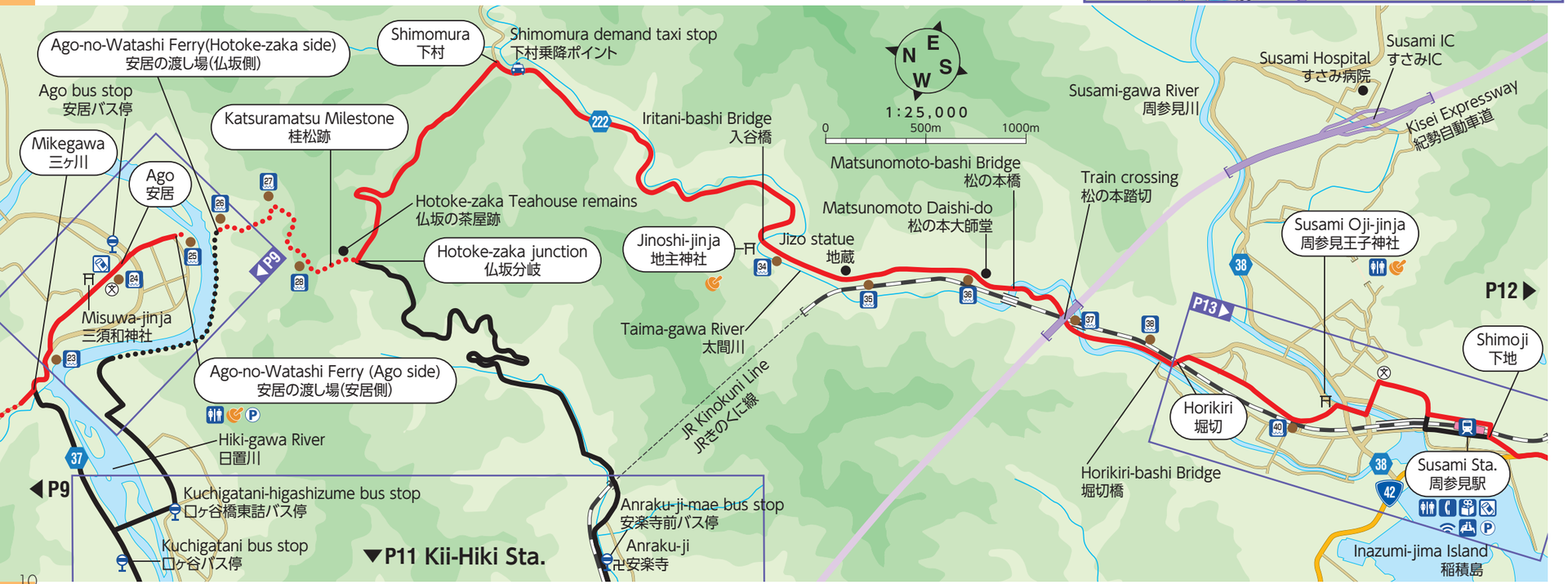
Distance (km) : ~10.5
Time (hr) : 4~5
Total Elevation Gain (m): ~340
Total Elevation Loss (m): ~350

------- Unpaved trail
——— Paved trail



Kii-Hiki Sta.





Ago-no-Watashi Ferry

Pass through the village to the riverbank where ferries have crossed since ancient times. This service was discontinued in 1954 but revived in 2005 after the designation of UNESCO World Heritage.

Another way to cross the river is by using a bridge downstream. The riverbank section of this route is not often maintained.

IMPORTANT: Ferry reservations needed at least 2 days 17:00 or more in advance by phone. Send your address, name, contact information, desired date, hour, and number of people via text message to the phone number below.
PHONE: 080-2500-3223
PRICE: 500 yen/person
Dates: Weekends holidays
HOURS: 9:00～10:00, 13:30～14:30
NOTE: Closed during the year-end and New Year holidays and the Obon holidays period. Services may be canceled due to rising river water, strong winds, weather, etc.



Detour

There are two ways to cross the Hiki-gawa river between Tonda-zaka and Hotoke-zaka, besides by Ago-no-Watashi Ferry.

①Kuchigatani-bashi Route

Route: Mikegawa to Ago-no-Watashi Ferry (Hotoke-zaka side). Walk over the Kuchigatani-bashi bridge, through a small settlement and then scramble along the river bank trail. Road conditions are poor in the trail, so please walk with caution. If you feel unsafe, we recommend the Atagi route.

Distance: ~3.4 km
Time: ~1 hr
Total Elevation Gain: ~140 m
Total Elevation Loss: ~140 m



②Atagi Route

Route: Mikegawa to Hotoke-zaka junction. From Mikegawa, pass through Kii-Hiki station, cross Atagi-bashi bridge, and walk to the Hotoke-zaka junction.

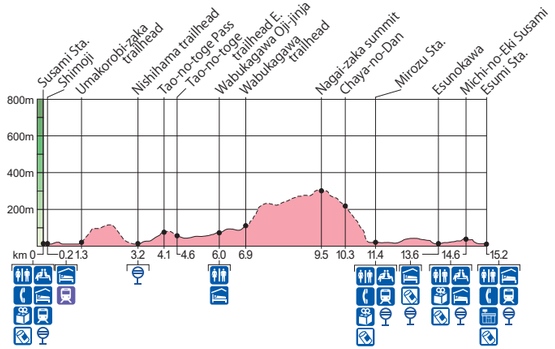
Distance: ~10.6 km
Time: ~3 hr
Total Elevation Gain: ~390 m
Total Elevation Loss: ~180 m

Legend

Toilet	Public Wi-fi	Onsen (Hot spring)	School
Public phone	View point	Station	Shrine
Convenience store	Covered shelter	Bus stop	Temple
Grocery store	Michi-no-Eki rest area	Demand taxi stop	Unpaved trail
Shop/Store	Number markers every ~500 meters	Parking	Paved road
Vending machine	Stamp	Post Office	Other Unpaved trail
Drinking water	Accommodation	Police Station	Other Paved road
Information	Camping	Fire Station	

Susami Sta.〜Esunokawa

周参見駅〜江須ノ川

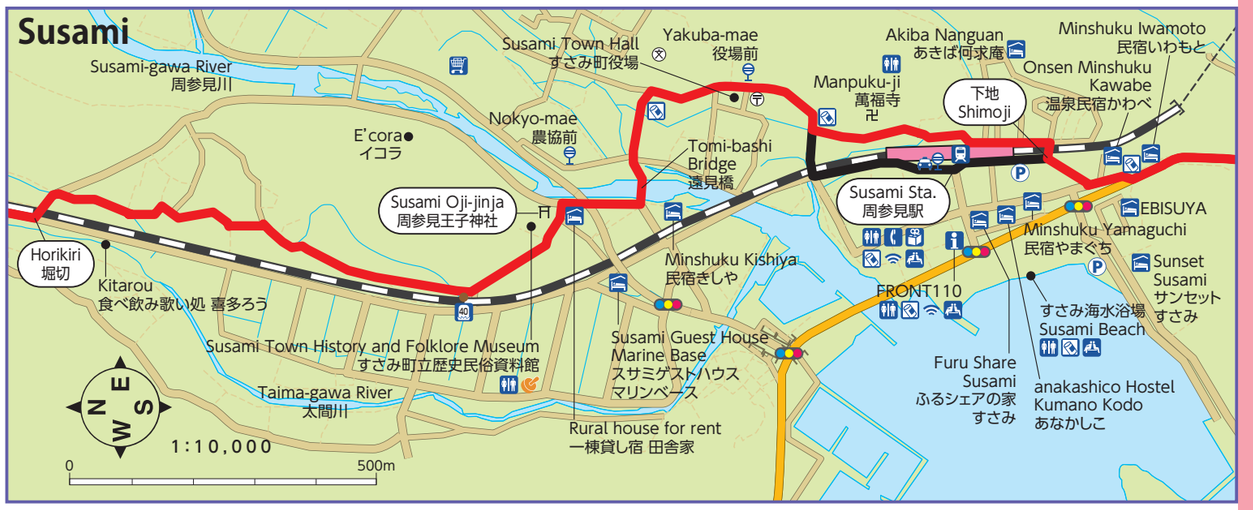


Susami Sta.〜Esumi Sta.

Distance (km)	:	~15.5
Time (hr)	:	5.5~7
Total Elevation Gain (m)	:	~660
Total Elevation Loss (m)	:	~660

------- Unpaved trail
——— Paved trail

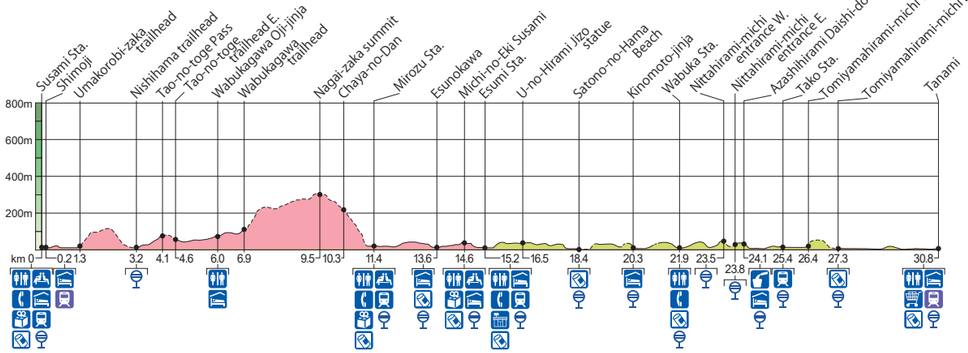






Esunokawa〜Tomiyamahirami-michi

江須ノ川〜富山平見道





Susami Sta.〜Esumi Sta.

Distance (km)	:	~15.5
Time (hr)	:	5.5~7
Total Elevation Gain (m)	:	~660
Total Elevation Loss (m)	:	~660

Esumi Sta.〜Tanami

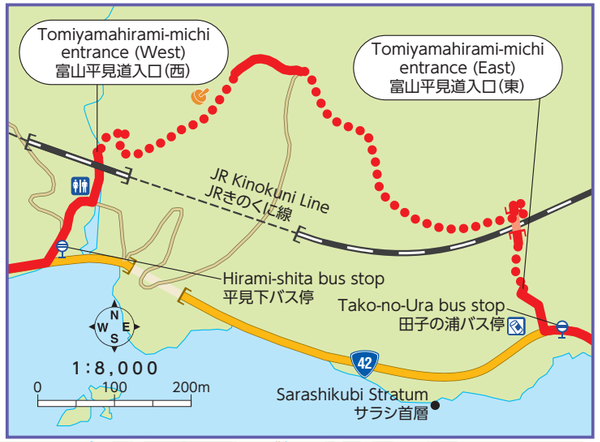
Distance (km)	:	~16.0
Time (hr)	:	4.5~6
Total Elevation Gain (m)	:	~350
Total Elevation Loss (m)	:	~360

------- Unpaved trail
——— Paved trail

Satono-no-Hama Beach



Tomiyamahirami-michi





Tomiyamahirami-michi～Hashigui-iwa Rock

富山平見道～橋杭岩

Tanami ～ Kushimoto Sta.

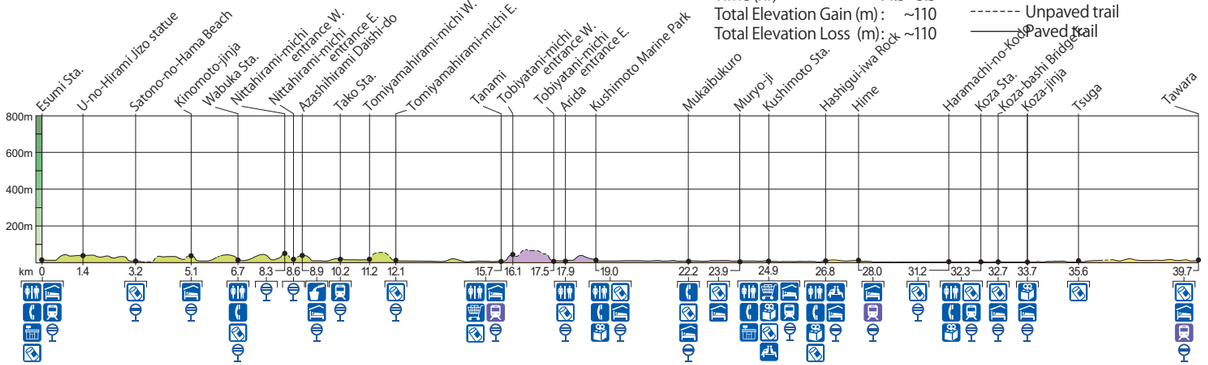
Distance (km)	:	~9.5
Time (hr)	:	3~4
Total Elevation Gain (m)	:	~170
Total Elevation Loss (m)	:	~160

Kushimoto Sta.～Tawara

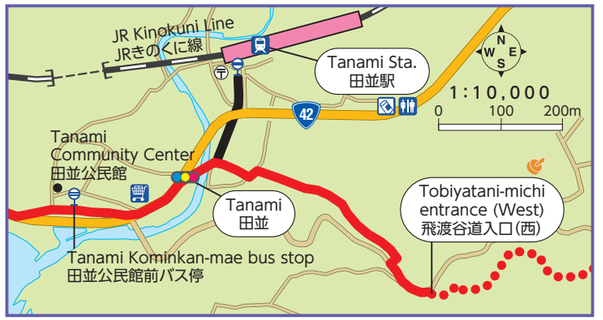
Distance (km)	:	~15.0
Time (hr)	:	4.5~5.5
Total Elevation Gain (m)	:	~110
Total Elevation Loss (m)	:	~110



------- Unpaved trail
——— Paved trail



Tanami









Hashigui-iwa Accomodations

1	**Rental House Tobiuo**	レンタルハウス飛魚
2	**Minshuku Hashigui**	民宿はし杭
3	**Fairfield by Marriott Wakayama Kushimoto**	フェアフィールド・バイ・マリオット 和歌山串本
4	**Minshuku Sakaji**	民宿 坂地

Kushimoto Southern Cape | 串本 |

Overview

Kushimoto town is built precariously on the southern edge of the Kii peninsula between the mountains and the mighty Pacific Ocean. The main settlement is on the coast and bar connecting the mainland to Cape Shionomisaki with bridge to Oshima island. For Japanese people, the name is often associated with onsite weather forecasts during typhoons, as it is the most southern tip of the main island of Japan. There are many interesting natural and historic sites in Kushimoto including rock formations, lighthouses, and small museums.

Muryo-ji Temple & Kushimoto Okyo Rosetsu Art Museum

As you enter the village the trail passes through a neighborhood and the site of Muryo-ji Temple that has been rebuilt in 1786. Numerous artworks are featured in a gallery by prominent Edo period artists such as Okyo Maruyama and Rosetsu Nagasawa. There are many hanging scrolls and two sliding doors decorated with paintings of a tiger and dragon.



Hours: 9:30~16:30

Price: Adults 1,300 yen

Hashigui-iwa

Past Kushimoto station and Hashigui beach is the impressive Hashigui-iwa rock formation which is very popular with photographers. There are more than 40 large and small rocks in a ~900 meter-long line.



Around 15 million years ago magma rose through a crack in a soft mudstone stratum and solidified during an intense period of volcanic activity in the region. Over the millennia the surrounding mud stone has been eroded away leaving the igneous rock pillars. The stones scattered on the seafloor were carried by Tsunami waves.

The name means "bridge pillar rocks" derived from its legendary creation. Nearby is Michi-no-Eki Kushimoto Hashigui-iwa rest area with shops and light snacks.

Michi-no-Eki Kushimoto Hashigui-iwa

Hours: 9:00~17:00

Legend of Hashigui-iwa

A long time ago, locals tried to construct a bridge between Kushimoto and Oshima island. But each time they attempted to build it, an ※Amanojaku appeared from the sea, and destroyed it. Tragically, the deeply distraught people could do nothing about it.

One day, the mighty Buddhist Saint Kobo Daishi was travelling through the area and they pleaded with him to persuade the Amanojaku to let them be.

Kobo Daishi thus confronted the evil creature and asked him to let the people make their bridge, who cunningly replied, "Well, if you can make the bridge by yourself without anybody's help, I won't break it"

"By myself!? That's ridiculous!" Kobo Daishi replied.

"All right. I'll give you the strength of 100 horses, but the time limit is only one day and one night, until the first rooster crows."

"OK, I accept the challenge." Kobo Daishi agreed and the next day, he got up very early, and returned. The Amanojaku gave him the strength of 100 horses, "You agree to stop when the first rooster crows, OK?"

Kobo Daishi started building the bridge. He collected massive rocks and threw them in the sea as pillars one after another. Amanojaku had thought that Kobo Daishi could never complete the bridge in time, but when he looked at his work, he was astonished at the speed he was building it and began to feel anxious.

In the middle of the night, Amanojaku became more and more worried until he faked the voice of a rooster.

Kobo Daishi did not realize that it was Amanojaku's voice, and he stopped working as he promised.

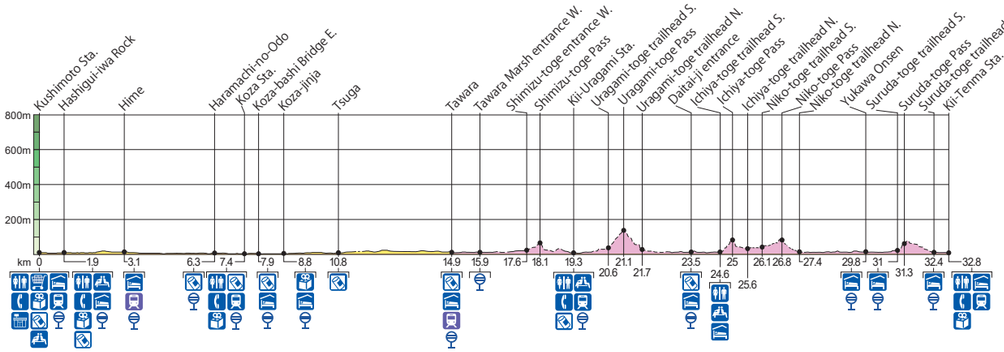
So that is why to this day, Hashigui-iwa rocks do not reach across the bay.

※An Amanojaku 天邪鬼, literally translated as "heavenly evil spirits", is a supernatural demon-like creature in ancient Japanese folklore that can probe into one's soul and provoke wicked desires into real-life actions. They are skilled impersonators and cause mischief and spread evil wherever they go, deliberately acting contrary to victims to torment them.



Hashigui-iwa Rock～Tawara Marsh

橋杭岩～田原湿地





Kushimoto Sta.～Tawara

Distance (km)	: ~15.0
Time (hr)	:4.5~5.5
Total Elevation Gain (m)	: ~110
Total Elevation Loss (m)	: ~110

Tawara ～ Kii-Tenma Sta.

Distance (km)	: ~18.0
Time (hr)	: 6~8
Total Elevation Gain (m)	: ~670
Total Elevation Loss (m)	: ~670

------- Unpaved trail
——— Paved trail

Koza



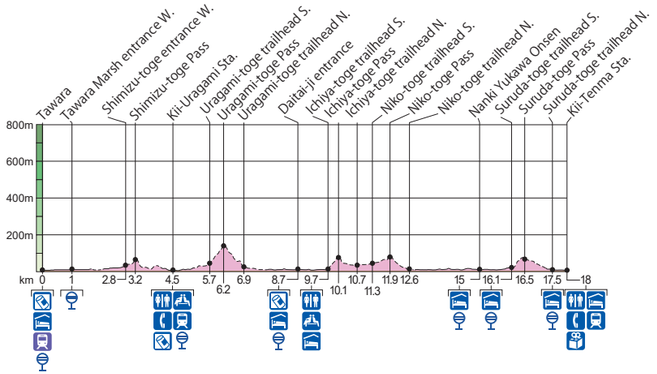
Tawara





Tawara Marsh～Suruda-toge Pass

田原湿地～駿田峠



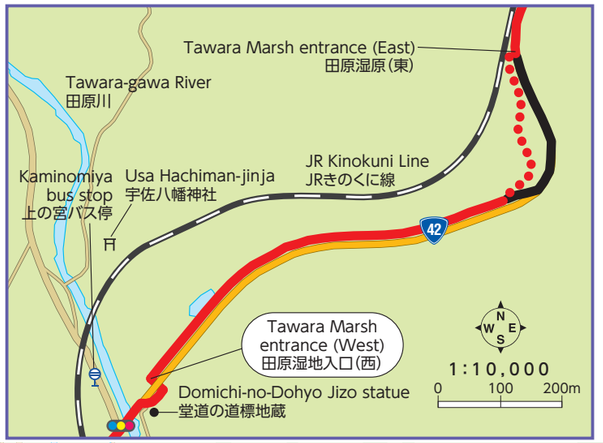
Tawara ～ Kii-Tenma Sta.

Distance (km)	:	~18.0
Time (hr)	:	6~8
Total Elevation Gain (m)	:	~670
Total Elevation Loss (m)	:	~670

------- Unpaved trail
——— Paved trail



Tawara Marsh



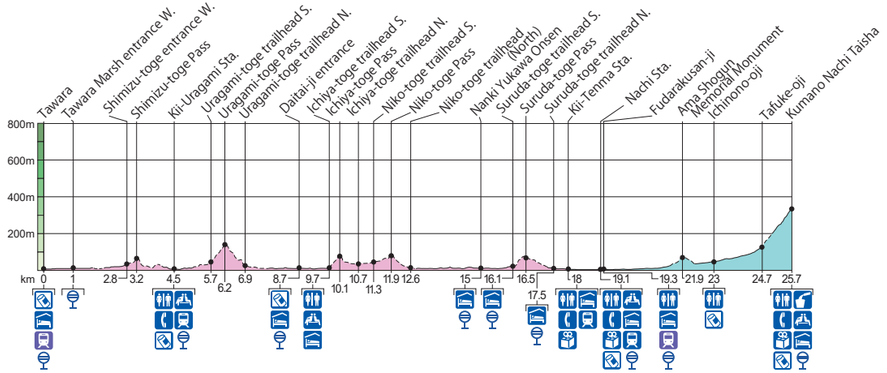
Nanki Yukawa Onsen





Suruda-toge Pass ～ Nachisan

駿田峠～那智山





Tawara ～ Kii-Tenma Sta.

Distance (km)	:	~18.0
Time (hr)	:	6~8
Total Elevation Gain (m)	:	~670
Total Elevation Loss (m)	:	~670

Kii-Tenma Sta. ～ Kumano Nachi Taisha

Distance (km)	:	~8.0
Time (hr)	:	3~4
Total Elevation Gain (m)	:	~400
Total Elevation Loss (m)	:	~60

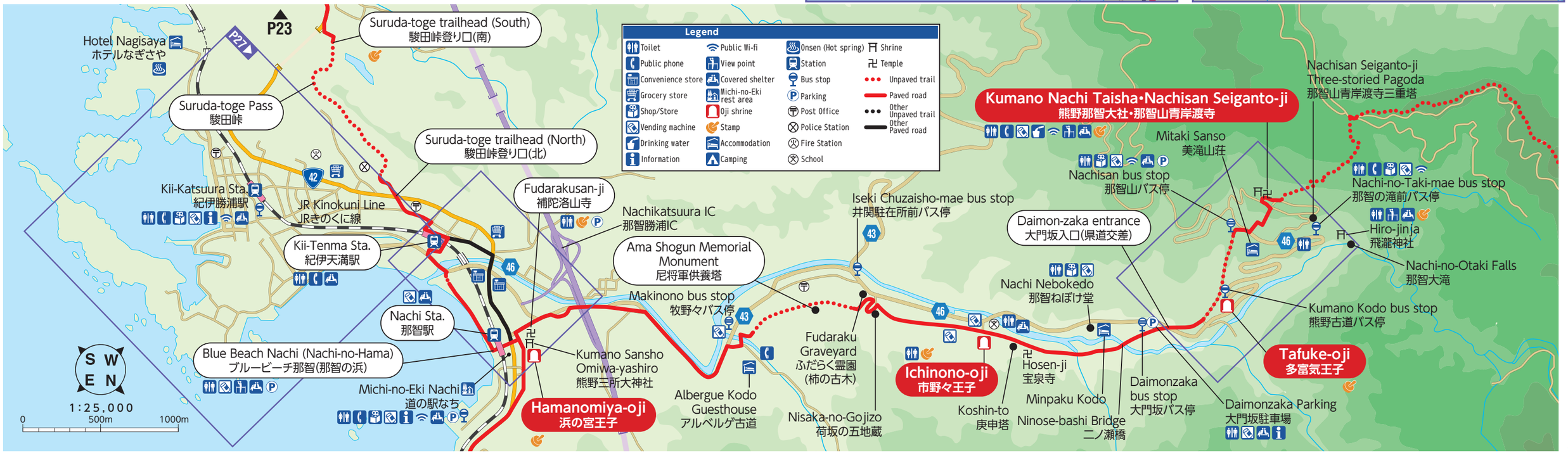
------- Unpaved trail
——— Paved trail

Fudarakusan-ji



Nachisan





Katsuura Onsen Fishing Port

Katsuura is a seaside village offering glimpses of local life on the edge of the mountainous Kii peninsula where a local fishing port and hot spring resort exist side-by-side.
Access: JR trains run daily from Osaka (~3 hrs, 45 min) and Nagoya (~3 hrs, 45 min).

Onsen

Katsuura is well-known for its hot mineral waters which feed soothing baths at many of the accommodations including Bokido a hot spring in a cave with ocean views, at Hotel Urashima.

There are also hot spring foot baths called Ashiyu scattered throughout town, near the fishing port and in front of the Kii-Katsuura train station, great to immerse your wear feet in.



Fish Market

Katsuura is a famous fishing port, especially for tuna. In the main harbor is the commercial fish market held in the morning. There is a viewing room overlooking the sales area. Inquire at the information center for details about market tours.

Hours: Open early
Closed: Saturdays, variable

NOTE: Please respect the market, do not walk amongst the fish as outside footwear can contaminate the site and your presence can disrupt the activities.



Blue Beach Nachi (Nachi-no-Hama)

At the base of Nachi Bay is Blue Beach Nachi for those looking for some sand. The wide crescent shaped beach is ~2 km north of Kii-Katsuura station.



Benten-jima Island

Along the Northern edge of the Katsuura peninsula, which faces onto Nachi Bay, are some unique landmarks such as the photogenic Benten-jima, which links to land a low tide. This small pinnacle island is part of the Nanki Kumano Geopark and features a picturesque red Torii gateway at its foot.



Katsuura Information Center

Hours: 9:00~18:00 (Open year-round)





Restaurant Guide

Local seafood | Izakaya pub | Full meals | Sushi | Udon&Soba noodles

1	**Gosaku** 吾作	**0735-52-3878**	17:00～22:30	定休(日と月曜の祝日) Closed on Sun. & national holidays of Mon.
2	**Yuya** ゆや	**0735-52-5577**	17:00～23:00	定休(月) Closed on Mon.
3	**bodai** bodai	**0735-52-0039**	11:00～14:00 17:00～22:30	定休(火) Closed on Tue.
4	**Ichirin** いちりん	**0735-29-7911**	11:30～13:30 17:00～21:30	定休(木) Closed on Thu.
5	**Takehara** 竹原	**0735-52-1134**	11:00～14:00 17:00～21:00	不定休 Variable holidays
6	**Hinodemaru** ハーバー食堂日の出丸	**0735-52-0606**	7:00～13:30 17:00～21:30	定休(金) Closed on Fri.
7	**Nachi** まぐろ三昧那智	**0735-52-1046**	11:30～21:00	不定休 Variable holidays
8	**Katsuragi** 桂城	**0735-52-1845**	11:30～14:00 17:00～22:00	定休(月と第4日) Closed on Mon. & every 4th Sun.
9	**Morimotoya** 森本屋	**0735-52-4578**	11:00～14:00	定休(第2,第4火) Closed on every 2nd & 4th Tue.
10	**Yamato** 大和	**0735-52-5738**	11:00～16:00	定休(木) Closed on Thu.

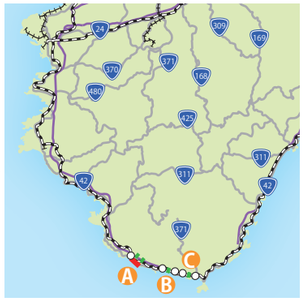
Katsuura



Model Itineraries

Below are basic overviews of the ways to walk the Kumano Kodo Ohechi route from a shorter highlight trip to a multi-day trek.

Highlight Walks



Umakorobi-zaka Highlight Walk
- Train to Susami
- Walk Umakorobi-zaka to Nishihama bus stop (p.12, ~3.5km)
- Bus to Susami Sta. A

Tomiyamahirami-michi Highlight Walk
- Train to Tako
- Walk Tomiyamahirami-michi to Tako-no-Ura bus stop (p.15, ~2km) B

Tobiyatani-michi Highlight Walk
- Train to Tanami
- Walk Tobiyatani-michi to Kii-Arita Sta. (p.16, ~3km) C

Nagai-zaka Day Walk



The Nagai-zaka (p.12~13) is the most popular day walk on the Ohechi route which runs between Susami and Mirozu train stations.
Walking in either direction is possible, but monitoring train times at Mirozu station is important as only local trains stop there. From west to east is a more common direction of walking.

Tonda-zaka Day Walk



- Bus to Tonda-bashi or train to Kii-Tonda Sta.
- Walk Tonda-zaka to Ago (p.8~9, ~14km)

NOTE: There is limited public transportation in this area so the two most common ways to connect the Kii-Hiki Station and Ago is by community bus, taxi or walking.
Community bus and taxi reservations must be done in Japanese.

Kii-Hiki & Ago Access Options

WALKING

Route: Kii-Hiki Station to Mikegawa, on road #37
Distance:~5 km
Time:~1.5 hr
Total Elevation Gain:~90m
Total Elevation Loss:~80m

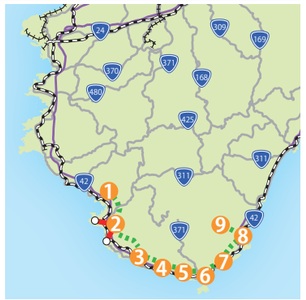
TAXI

Route: Kii-Hiki Station to Ago area.
Company: Meiko Taxi, Kii-Hiki Station Office
TEL: 0739-52-2155(Japanese only)
Price:~2000yen
NOTE: There is only one taxi based here and the driver is on holiday on Sundays and national holidays. It is best to call in advance to make a reservation (Japanese only). If you plan to use a taxi it is often easiest to take the train in the morning to Kii-Hiki and walk from Mikegawa to Tonda. The taxi can then be reserved to correspond to the train arrival time.

COMMUNITY BUS

Route: Kii-Hiki Station to Ago area.
Company: Meiko Taxi, Main Office
TEL: 0739-42-2727 (Japanese only)
Price:~300yen
NOTE: Limited bus times with reservations needed for most departures. Does not run on Sundays or national holidays. Call directly for information (Japanese only).

Ohechi Intermediate Complete Trek



Day1 :
- Transfer to Tanabe, overnight 1

Day2 :
- Walk to Tonda (~14km)
- Bus to Shirahama Onsen or Tsubaki Onsen, overnight 2

Day3 :
- Bus to Tonda-bashi
- Walk to Ago and Susami (~24km), overnight 3

Day4 :
- Walk to Esumi (~16km), overnight 4

Day5 :
- Walk to Tanami (~16km), overnight 5

Day6 :
- Walk to Kushimoto (~10km), overnight 6

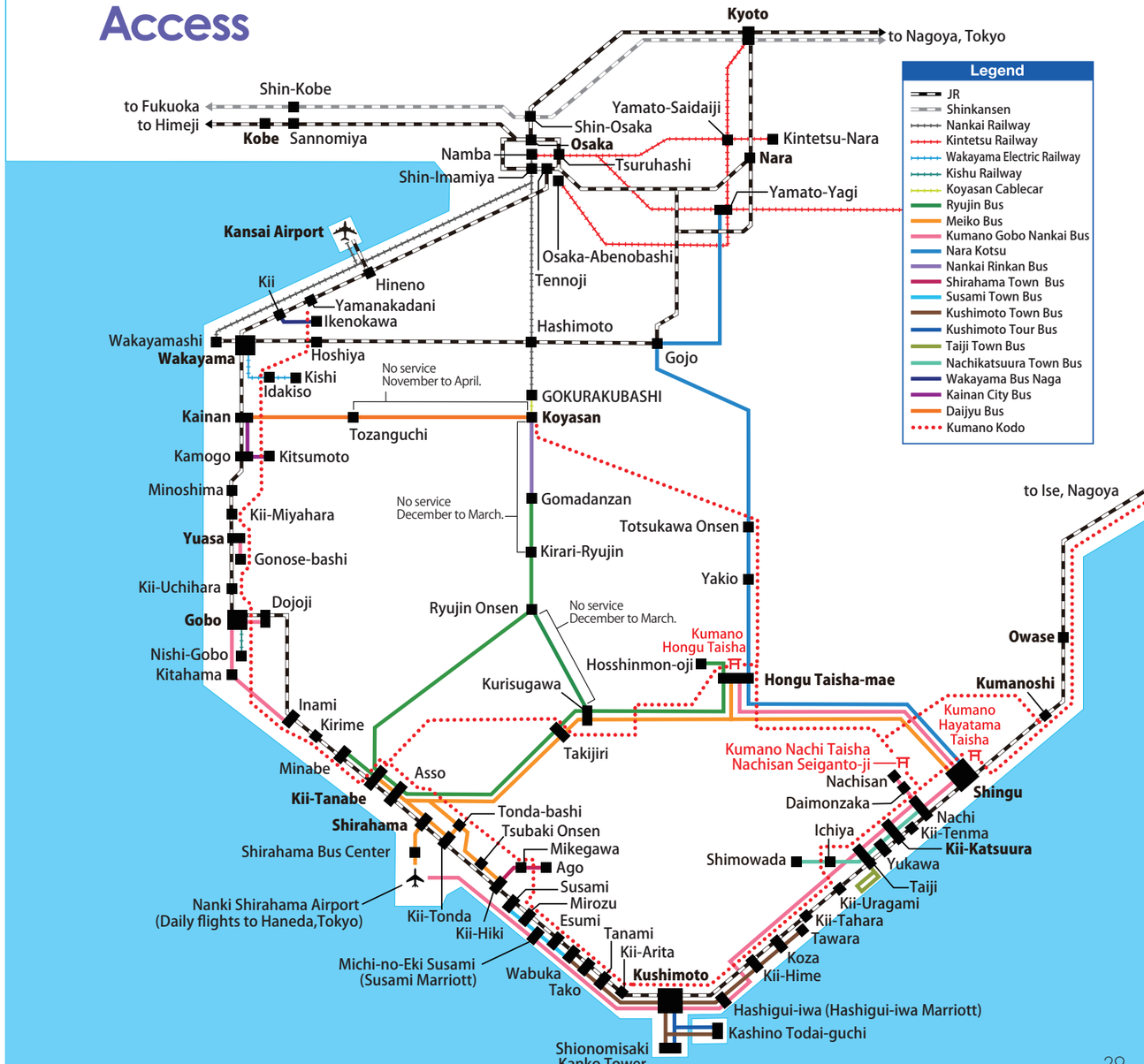
Day7 :
- Walk to Tawara (~15km), overnight 7

Day8 :
- Walk to Katsuura Onsen (~18km), overnight 8

Day9 :
- Walk to Kumano Nachi Taisha (~8km) 9

Day10 :
- Transfer to next destination

Access



Route Guide

Tanabe to Tonda

This semi-urban route from Tanabe to Tonda begins in the city center, transitioning from neighborhood streets to rural riverside landscapes.

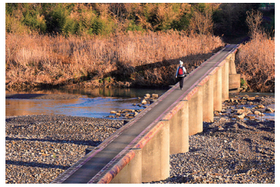
Michiwake-ishi Signpost
The historic stone signpost in the Kitashinmachi neighborhood marks the junction between three Kumano Kodo Routes: Kiiji to the north, Nakahechi to the east and Ohechi to the south. It is a large square piece of rock 218cm high and 30cm thick. This is the starting point of the Ohechi.

Aritoshi-jinja
Nearby the signpost is the Aritoshi-jinja shrine with a history of over 1000 years. The origin of "Aritoshi" is related to the story of a young man who was ordered to pass a thread through a conch shell, and succeeded by tying an ant to the thread, and have it go through the conch shell with drops of nectar. "Ari" means "ant" and "toshi" refers to passing through.

Tokei-jinja
Tokei-jinja often served as the ritual beginning of the pilgrimage for those passed through Tanabe.

Departing the City Center
The trail passes through the urban center heading south on a main road lined with stores and restaurants. If you are walking this section on a weekday during the school year it is possible to see waves of uniformed students riding their bicycles to nearby high schools.

Ogata-jinja
The trail begins to climb over a small hill at Ogata-jinja, south of Kii-Shinjo station. The Kii peninsula coastline faces the Pacific Ocean and intermittently gets inundated by tsunami waves. At Ogata-jinja there are rock monuments which mark the height of historic tsunamis.

Sanno-bashi Bridge


At Ichihara-jinja the trail follows side roads through a residential area scattered with fields through the wide, fertile river plain of Tonda-gawa River.
Sanno-bashi is a special type of low-water crossing bridge called sensuikyo. When the river is high or flooded, the water flows over it easily, submerging the structure without damage. There are no railings, which adds a slight sense of adventure.

Mushikui-iwa Rock in Horo & Dainichi-do
The technical term for the honeycomb patterned cliff is called a tafone (plural: tafoni). The colloquial Japanese name is "Mushikui" or "insect eaten". The cliff reveals the sandstone layers, originally formed long ago as deposits on the ocean floor. Beside the cliff is the Dainichi-do hall dedicated to Dainichi Nyorai, the cosmic Buddha, where locals pray for recovery from illness and for the health and safety of their farm animals.

Hirama-jinja
The shrine ground of Hirama-jinja features many ancient trees, including a giant Yonominoki or Hackberry seeming to grow straight out of the rocks. At the base of this tree is a small Gorinto tower under the stone outcropping believed to be a warrior's gravesite.

Nichi-jinja


Nichi-jinja is a combination of shrines, with the main deity being transferred from Ise Jingu by Norihide Yoshida in 1167. The current construction dates from the mid-18th century.

Kii-Tonda Station Junction
The Tonda-bashi bridge is the junction to the JR Kii-Tonda train station. The scenery becomes more varied, spotted with rice paddies and fields until you come to Sodo-ji.

Tonda-zaka

The Tonda-zaka slope is the first major pass on the Ohechi route, the west side is a mountain trail, while the east side of the pass follows a gravel forestry road to the small Ago settlement along the Hiki-gawa River.

Sodo-ji
Sodo-ji is a branch temple of a Zen sect and was restored in 1774. It is known to have a fine collection of famous calligraphy. Follow the trail to the right of this foundation to begin the walk into the forest of the Tonda-zaka slope.

Ichiri-matsu remains
The first landmark is the remains of Ichiri-matsu, a milestone marking the distance in ri, a classic Japanese counter with the equivalent of about 4 km. Pine trees were often planted at such sites, but unfortunately no pine trees remain.

Takase-Yogaisan Castle Ruins
The remains of a feudal period castle are located on a slightly elevated ridge, featuring the remnants of enclosures, dry moats, and protective trenches. One of its functions is believed to be the monitoring and control of the Ohechi.

Shirahama Peninsula
As the trail climbs, looking back offers scenic views of the Shirahama peninsula to the northwest.

Tonda-zaka Teahouse Remains
Teahouses were critical infrastructure of pilgrimage routes in the area, offering places of rest, nourishment, and social exchange. This teahouse appears in the travelogues of writers and artists including an episode from an 1804 journal. It is believed to have been operating until approximately 1919.

Agotsujimatsu-toge Pass


Agotsujimatsu-toge pass is close to the highest point of the Tonda-zaka. The name derives from the fact that groves of pine trees grew in the area. But in 1948 a forest fire destroyed the forest. From here the trail descends on a mixed gravel and paved forestry road until the Shuku-no-Taki junction.

Bonji-to
This memorial tower is engraved with the sacred Sankrit characters believed to represent Buddhist divinities including those of Amida (Buddha of Compassion and Wisdom) and Kannon (Bodhisattva of Mercy), two of the most worshipped in Japan and part of the main triad of deities worshipped at the Kumano Sanzan grand shrines.

Koshin-to
A Koshin-to is a monument or pillar often erected at the village entrance to protect it from epidemics and calamities. This area was the boundary of a previous settlement nearby.
Koshin is a folk belief with Taoist origins dating back to the Heian period (794-1185). According to the ancient sexagenary calendar, every 60th day was Koshin day. It was believed that on the night of this day while sleeping, the Sanshi (three worms or entities) in the body would escape and ascend to report the sins of the person to the Celestial God, which would result in a shorter lifespan. To prevent this, believers would stay up all night, which developed into an important event of the faith.

Mikegawa
Mikegawa is located where the trail meets route 37, the main road that runs the length of the Hiki-gawa River. It is ~5km from here along the road southwest to Kii-Hiki train station.

Ago Settlement


To the east of Mikegawa is the small settlement of Ago built on a wide bend in the river where rice cultivation takes place.

Hotoke-zaka

This trail rises over the ridge across the river from Ago.
It is a short, steep ascent on a mountain trail, then onto paved, rural roads to Susami village on the coast.

Hiki-gawa River Crossing
There are two ways to cross the Hiki-gawa River, one is a boat crossing (reservations needed) and the other a detour trail (not often maintained) accessed via a bridge.

Katsura-matsu Milestone
On the opposite side of the river, the trail climbs steeply for ~1 km until Katsura-matsu Milestone. The playful name means "wig pine tree" because of a tree that stood here with the appearance of sporting a hair piece.

Hotoke-zaka Teahouse Remains
This teahouse operated until ~1940. Until the completion of the rail line in 1935, there was a lively cattle market held nearby monthly.

Jinushi-jinja


Jinushi-jinja is a prime example of the strong and ancient nature-worship belief system of the indigenous culture. There is no shrine pavilion here, but rather nature itself is the object of worship.

Susami Station
The route continues south along route 222 until it enters the small coastal village of Susami passing by the Susami Oji-jinja shrine and Manpuku-ji temple before arriving at Susami train station.

Susami


Susami is one of the larger villages along this section of coastline which has a fishing port and pleasant beach. A dome-shaped island stands out in the bay and is called Inazumi-jima. Worshiped by local people, it is marked by a red torii gate.

Nagai-zaka

Nagai-zaka is a series of passes between Susami Station and Mirozu Station. The main Nagai-zaka section is on the eastern half. This is probably the most popular section of the Ohechi because of its diversity of scenery and ease of access from the train line.

Coastal Road
Leaving Susami Sta. the trail follows the road offering picturesque views of the rocky coastline.

Umakorobi-zaka Trailhead
The Umakorobi-zaka trailhead is a little tricky to find because it is in the rear of a concrete industrial site. Walk through the facility to the back and you can find a sign and a staircase leading up into the forest.

Solar Panels
The trail works its way around a large field of solar panels near the top of the small pass.

Nishihama Trailhead
Once the trail reaches the coastline again it runs along route 42 until a small side road leading back into the mountains. This junction is called the Nishihama trailhead.

Tao-no-toge Pass
The Tao-no-toge pass is a lovely short trail, up and over a rise, before descending to rejoin the road.

Wabukagawa Oji-jinja
The trail follows a paved road through a scattering of homes that line a valley with terraced rice fields. The Wabukagawa Oji-jinja shrine is a conglomeration of different shrines from different time periods dating back to ancient times. The old growth shrine grove is impressive with Camphor, Cryptomeria, Nagi and Muku trees.

Wabukagawa Trailhead
Continuing along the road leads to the west trailhead of the Nagai-zaka proper.



Hanchiku
Hanchiku is an ancient road construction technique where soil and clay are built up and pounded to level the surface for ease of passage. The beautifully manmade ridge lines are intelligently constructed to blend in with nature creating a long-lasting and aesthetically pleasing trail.

Chaya-no-Dan
Along the way there are multiple ocean-view lookout points before arriving at the remains of a teahouse where currently radio towers stand.

Mirozu Trailhead
Follow a paved road briefly before beginning the descent through the forest to the east trailhead. From here it is a short walk to Mirozu train station.

Mirozu Station
Mirozu is a small, local train station with a stunning backdrop of dramatic shoreline. If the small cafe is open, enjoy a well-deserved drink and soak in the views while waiting for the train.

Chartered Fishing Boats
One of the main industries left in these tiny port settlements are charter fishing boats. The Japanese are huge fishermen, and this part of the coast is a hugely popular destination.

Michi-no-Eki Susami
The Michi-no-Eki Susami rest area has a multitude of services including a souvenir shop, restaurant, and information center. Next to this facility is the Ebikani Aquarium, a modest crabs and shrimp aquarium but well-loved by enthusiasts.

Medieval Struggles
Omachi-zaka slope, just after the Michi-no-Eki, is the site of a somber episode in the aftermath of the famous Genpei War (1180-1185) which led to the establishment of the Kamakura shogunate under Minamoto-no-Yoritomo ushering in Japan's medieval period. Genji (Minamoto clan) had defeated the Heiki (Taira clan) who fled into the rural regions of Japan. It was here that Princess Shiragiku was tracked down and slain, while her eight samurai attendants waited unknowingly a short way down the slope. Hearing of the assassination and their subsequent failure of duty, all of them committed ritual suicide.

Esumi to Tanami

From Esumi to Tanami the Ohechi hugs the rugged southeast coastline linking small fishing villages, many of which have seen a dramatic drop in population. The trail follows essentially the same route as the JR rail line and highway 42, crisscrossing along the way. Much of the way is on paved roads, main and subsidiary, with the occasional, short, forested path over a small pass.

Hirami Plateaus
The trail continues along the coastline passing by a series of settlements accessed by short slopes connected by roads. There are Buddhist statues with names reflecting the unique geology of the area: U-no-Hirami Jizo, Naka-no-Hirami Jizo, and Ohirami-no-Jizo. The word "Hirami" is unique to this area referring to the Coastal Terraces or flat plateaus extending into the sea which provide precious farmlands in this mountainous region. Some of the plateau's names are Denji's Hirami, Western Hirami, and Eastern Hirami-continuing all along this section of coastline.

Satono-no-Hama Beach & Coast Trail
After the Ohirami-no-Jizo the route leaves route 42 descending into a small bay and the scenic Satono-no-hama Beach. Follow the trail along the beach and around the rocky head to Rokubo-hama beach.



NOTE: There is no distinct trail, so walkers pick their way through and over the shoreline rocks. Once around the small cape a trail into the forest at the far end of the beach leads back to route 42.

Wabuka Station
Continue on-and-off roads and short trails until Wabuka village and the white, cubic train station.

Divine Fishing Legend
A local legend describes that in Wabuka on a cold winter's night a fisherman noticed a disheveled monk in distress. He took him to his home for the night and fed him a hot meal. The next morning, he was very thankful and upon his departure he told the fisherman that in the spring at a spot 4 km in the ocean from here and a depth of 180 meters you can catch a large fish. In the spring the fisherman followed the monk's directions and just as he said caught a huge fish. The villager all agree that it must have been Saint Kobo Daishi and erected a hall in his honour. This is one of the possible beginnings to the small Daishi-do monuments in the area.

Nittahirami-michi
Between Wabuka and Tako are more Hirami plateaus including the Nittahirami with a well-preserved trail in the forest and stone wall remains.

Tokuhon Shonin Myogohi Monument
Tokuhon Shonin (1758-1818) was a Buddhist monk from Hidaka in Wakayama Prefecture. He entered priesthood at the age of 27 and went on a nationwide pilgrimage. While on his journey, he chanted the Nembutsu for the people and communities in need along the way. The Nembutsu is a religious chant invoking the Buddha of the Pure Land.

Tomiyamahirami-michi
The first forested trail after Tako station is Tomiyamahirami-michi, a well-worn trail which has been eroded into the earth by the centuries of pilgrims and travelers. Between the stones, coral was used to pave the path. Here native forest creates a tunnel effect leading to a short ridge line. On the other side of the pass there is a dynamic, sharp swirling descent to a small tunnel underneath the JR rail line which emerges back to route 42.

Tanami to Kushimoto

Between Tanami and Kushimoto village the Ohechi mainly follows route 42 with a trail over small pass: Tobiyatani-michi. The views across the Pacific Ocean are expansive.

Tobiyatani-michi
The Ohechi follows the coastline on route 42 until Tanami village where the Tobiyatani-michi leads over a pass to the neighboring Arida village.



Historic records mention "ash burners" who burnt coral to make plaster powder from the ash. Local tradition says that the plaster was used for the white walls of Wakayama Castle and on the first stone lighthouses in Japan built in the 1870s. There is a nice viewpoint on the east side of the trail before the descent to the bayside. Follow around the bay and over another hill to arrive at the Kushimoto Marine Park.

Kushimoto Marine Park
The Kushimoto Marine Park was the first established marine park in Japan in July 1970, associated with the Yoshino-Kumano National Park. The Kushimoto Marine Park Center is a set of educational and sightseeing facilities focused on the marine environment in Kushimoto including an aquarium, underwater observation tower, glass-bottom boat tour, restaurant, souvenir shop, research station and diving park.



The clear warm waters of the Kuroshio Current from the south washes along the coast in Kushimoto, the southernmost tip of Honshu (the main island of Japan) creating the perfect conditions for a coral reef-the most northern in the world. This rich marine environment is registered under the international Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

Roadside Monuments
Around 3 km past the aquarium are two monuments across from each other, one is a green statue of Kobo Daishi during the time of his ascetic training in Shikoku and one symbolic of a Turkish talisman.

Kushimoto & Turkey
Turkey's connection to Kushimoto began in 1890 when a vessel sank off it shores, and its surviving crew were helped by the local people. Present-day Kushimoto has sister city relations with Mersin and Yakakent. To celebrate this connection a large "Nazar Boncuk" Turkish tile amulet was built in 1999.

Mukaibukuro Junction
At the Mukaibukuro junction the trail splits in two, one inland over a high plain with some agricultural activity and the coastal route via Kushimoto town, which passes by the Muryo-ji Temple & Kushimoto Okyo Rosetsu Art Museum and impressive Hashigui-iwa Rock formations.

Kushimoto to Tawara

After the junction of the inland route and coastal route the Ohechi follows the highway until the next town, Koza, at the mouth of the Koza-gawa River.
The Ohechi follows the main highway until Tawara.

Koza
This town lines the narrow banks of the Koza-gawa river at its mouth. The trail follows narrow streets with closely built houses back to the coast and around a small fishing port before meeting up again with route 42.

Divine Islands Love Story

There are two sacred islands in Koza that relate to a tragic legendary love story: Kuroshima and Kochijima. Kuroshima is ~1 kilometer in the ocean from the mouth of the river. Kochijima is in the middle of the river ~3 kilometers upstream.
Long ago there was a sea bream living around Kuroshima island and a snake, who were deeply in love. When a great flood struck the Koza-gawa river they were separated and could no longer meet, as the snake was now associated with Kochijima island. The local people took pity on the separated lovers and began to take the spirit of the sea bream once a year to see the spirit of the snake. This is the legendary beginning of the Kochi Matsuri festival's Mifune sacred boat entry ritual, where elaborately decorated boats head to Kuroshima Island for a purification rite before heading to Kochijima Island. The boats are remnants of the traditional whaling culture of Koza.

Tawara
Along the next section of route 42 just before the tiny settlement of Tawara is the rugged coastline famous for ocean fog at sunrise in the winter and very popular with photographers. Then the trail heads up the banks of the Tahara-gawa river. On the opposite side of the river mouth is a small beach, fishing port, and accommodation with hot spring. The shoreline beyond that is called the Arafune Coastline, park of the regional Geopark. Inland from the Arafune Coastline on the top of the mountain is the future site of the Spaceport Kii rocket launch complex, Japan's first privately owned facility.

Tawara to Katsuura

From here is a series of small passes which connect rural settlements, until arriving in the Katsuura, a larger fishing village, and hot spring town.

Tawara Marsh
The trail leaves the road and walks along a paved path on the edge of marsh before returning to the highway.
Caution: A dangerous section of road walking leads to the western entrance of the short Shimizu-toge.

Shimizu-toge Pass

The Shimizu-toge Pass marks the border between the regional areas of Kuchi-Kumano and Oku-Kumano, with a monument built in 1927 to mark the transition. On the east end there is a good view onto the fingerlike Uragami Bay.

Uragami-toge Pass
The route descends through a set of homes to the Kii-Uragami train station before heading back into the coastal mountains and the Uragami-toge pass.

Shiogama-jinja
Near the train crossing is Shiogama-jinja, a small village shrine with bright red torii gate and shrine pavilions perched on the top of a small hill surrounded by forest. A singular ritual to exorcise demons and pray for bountiful catches is performed here at the beginning of each year. It is connected to the whaling tradition and features children collecting sacred straw objects that a priest shoots with an arrow.

Binchotan Charcoal Kilns
Along the forestry road on the western side of the Uragami-toge pass there is a set of charcoal kilns that specialize in the production of the high-grade Binchotan charcoal. Binchotan is a type of white charcoal made from ubame oak trees, which grow along the Kii peninsula coastline. Binchotan is a very dense, hard white charcoal that burns cleanly at high heat for a long time-perfect for cooking. It is named after Bicchuya Chozaemon, a charcoal dealer from Tanabe that first sold the product in Edo in the 17th century.

Ota-gawa River Valley
The trail runs through the forest and descends into the Shimowada district with aging homes and rice paddies. Cross Ota-gawa river at Suwa-jinja to access the next small pass, Ichiya-toge.

Ichiya-toge Pass
The west entrance to Ichiya-toge pass is a zoo-well actually not a true zoo-but a small garden with statues of exotic animals such as giraffes and camels. The trail runs through the forests and under the expressway to a retention pond.

Yonego-ike
The Yonego-ike pond was constructed in 1708 by local villages over a three-year period of intense labour. And took another 10 years to complete the irrigation channels to the village below. This water has been sustaining crops and livelihoods of citizens for over 300 years.

Niko-toge Pass
On the other side of the old park that surrounds the retention pond is the Niko-toge pass. On the steep climb there are glimpses of the ocean and Taiji village in the distance. The descent follows a creek that only has water when it rains, and mixed forests of cedar and cypress plantations.

Yukashi-gata Lagoon

Across the Niko-gawa river the trail follows roads around the saline Yukashi-gata lagoon with plants and marine animals typical of salt marshes. An estuary at the confluence of three rivers was closed off by sediment at the river mouth creating the brackish lagoon. The historic Yurinoyama Onsen, loved by locals, is on its banks.

Suwa-jinja
After the Yukashi-gata lagoon the trail follows a sideroad and then a short portion of route 42. Before the route 42 junction is Suwa-jinja and its impressive grove.

Suruda-toge Pass
Suruda-toge pass is the final pass before reaching the Katsuura village and notable as the setting for an unusually large number of legends. The trail entrance is just before the tunnel and passes through the grounds of a private residence with a lumber yard.

Kasu Jizo statue and the Old Well
About halfway through the pass is a large cut at the top of the mountain. On the west side of the path is a shimenawa rope between two trees, forming a torii-like entrance. Beyond this, marked by red banners, rise the stairs to the Kasu Jizo statue.
Not far from the base of the stairs stands an old well. According to tradition, it was dug as an act of gratitude by a man whose mother regained the use of her legs after he carried her on his back to pray at the Kasu Jizo statue.

Descent into Katsuura
The trail feels like a backdoor entrance to the village of Katsuura arriving in the parking lot of the Hotel.

Katsuura to Nachisan

At Katsuura the trail turns inland, leading to the impressive Nachi-no-Otaki falls. The final Daimon-zaka slope is one of the most photographed sections of the Kumano Kodo.

Fudarakusan-ji

Fudarakusan-ji is a Tendai Buddhist temple located ~6 km downstream from Nachi-no-Otaki falls near the coast.
It is from here that Buddhist priests performed Fudaraku Tokai, a type of ritual martyrdom involving sailing out into the southern sea in search of the Kannon's southern Pure Land Paradise called Fudarakusan.

Furiwake-ishi: Kumano Kodo Junction
On the grounds of Kumano Sansho Omiwa-yashiro shrine stands a stone pillar called the Furiwake-ishi (Parting Stone). This marks the intersection of three Kumano Kodo routes: Nakahechi, Ohechi, and Iseji.

Daimon-zaka

Daimon-zaka is an impressive cobblestone staircase (600 m long with 267 stairs). It is lined with centuries old trees and runs from the valley bottom to the Kumano Nachi Taisha shrine sanctuary.

Kumano Nachi Taisha & Nachisan Seiganto-ji
The third of the three Kumano Sanzan grand shrines is located on the side of the mountain and features a giant camphor tree. Next to this is the wonderful wooden Seiganto-ji is a Tendai Buddhist temple founded in the early 5th century. Across the valley is the Nachi-no-Otaki falls is 133 meters high and 13 meters wide, the tallest fall in Japan.