

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 こんにちは	Goodbye さようなら
Thank you ありがとう	Excuse me すみません
Do you speak English?	英語が話せますか?
I don't understand. / I don't know	わかりません
I can't speak Japanese	日本語はできません
Is it OK to take a photo?	写真を撮ってもいいですか?
Yes はい	No いいえ
Would you please show me on this map where I am right now?	この地図で現在地を教えてください
Where is the xxxx?	xxxxはどこですか?
Bus stop バス停	Traihhead 登山口
Help me! たすけて!	I need a doctor 医者が必要です

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KUMANO KODO

KIJI



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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!



Senri-no-Hama Beach

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

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

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



Kumano Nachi Taisha

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

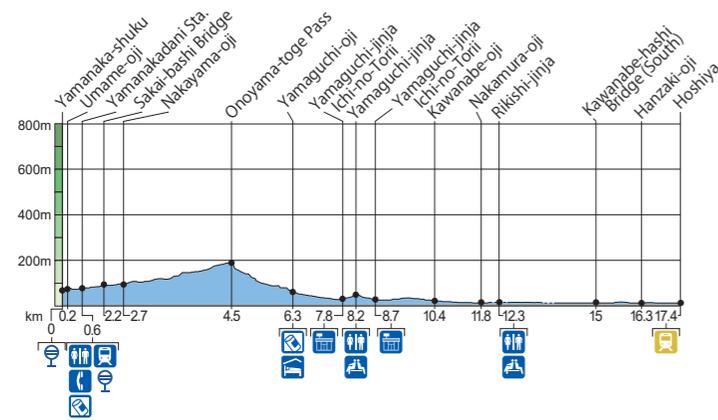
For over 1000 years people from all levels of society, including retired emperors and aristocrats, have made the arduous pilgrimage to Kumano. These pilgrims used a network of routes, now called the Kumano Kodo, which stretch across the mountainous Kii Peninsula.

Kiji Western Route

The Kiji route connects Osaka and Tanabe running along the northeast coast of the Kii Peninsula. It mostly follows modern roadways through developed areas with historic sites scattered along the way. Highlights are agricultural regions including terraced orchards, ocean views, and small passes.

Yamanaka-shuku~Hoshiya

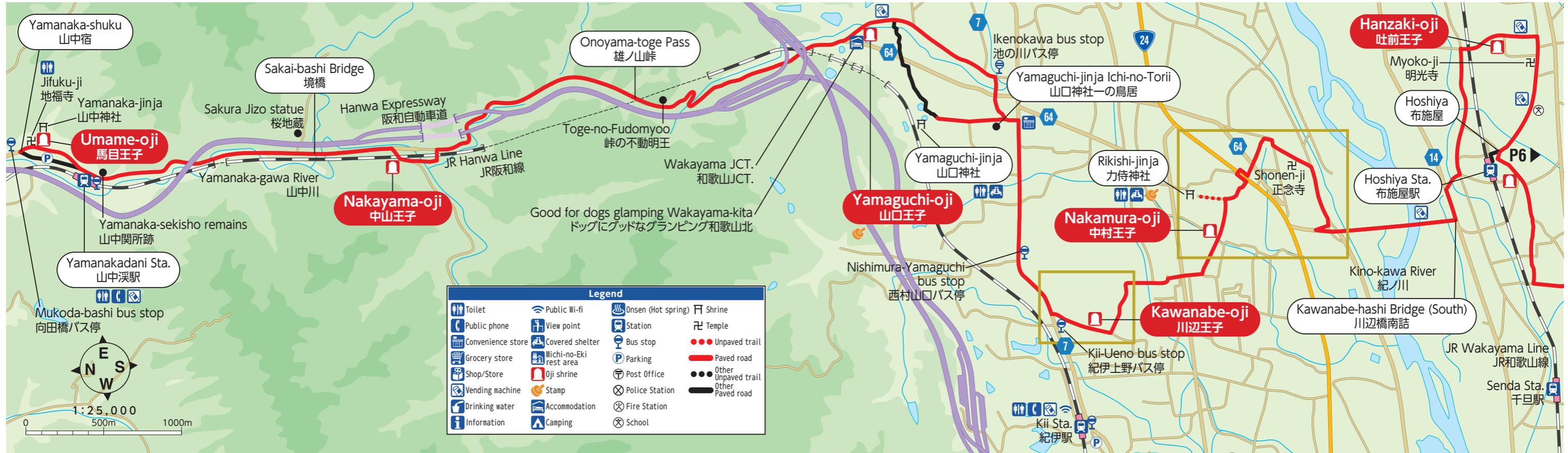
山中宿~布施屋



Ueno

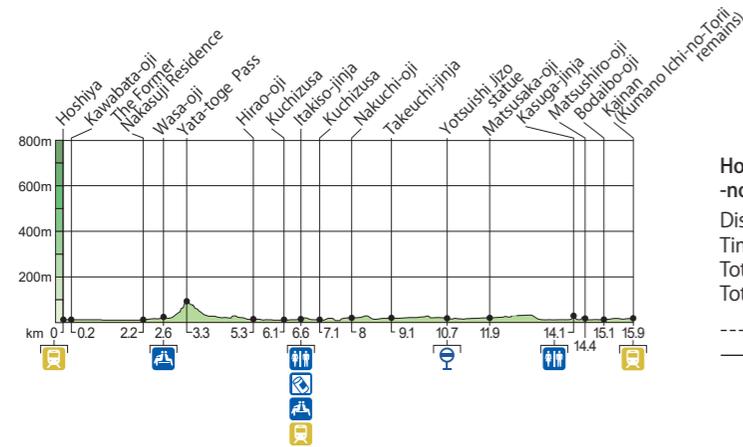


Kawanabe

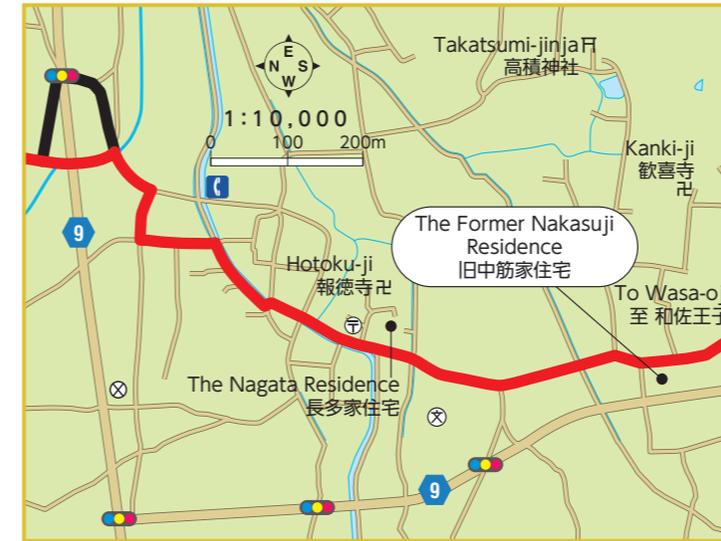


Hoshiya~Matsushiro-oji

布施屋~松代王子



Wasa



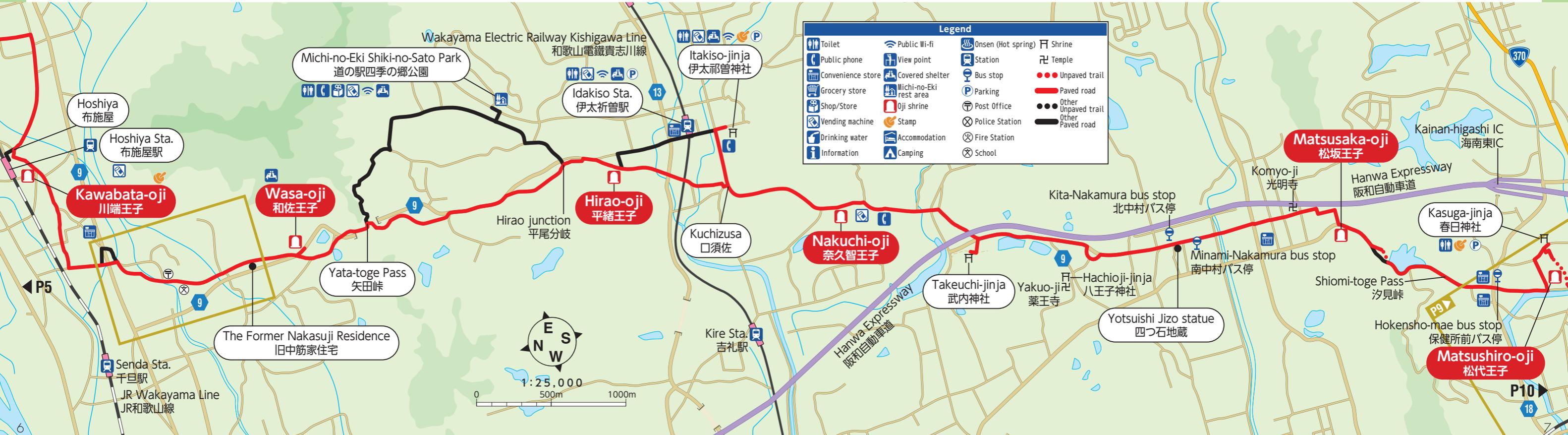
Idakiso Side Trips

Michi-no-Eki Shiki-no-Sato Park

This newly opened Michi-no-Eki rest area is worth the side trip featuring restaurant, cafe, bakery, and farmers' market located within a vast park. Local dishes are sold including fresh seasonal Wakayama ingredients. You must love the nickname of this facility "Food Hunter Park"! Anyone hungry!?

Idakiso Station

Idakiso station is on the private railroad Wakayama Electric Railway famous for its uniquely designed trains and the super-cute Tama-ekicho, the cat station master. Taking a ride for a few stops on this train is a popular tourist destination.



Kainan Overview

Kainan is a major city in Wakayama Prefecture. The Kiiji passes by in the east while most of the urban center is to the west. There are a few side trips, including a large market (Wakayama Marina City) and traditional craft district (Kuroe) that can be accessed via public bus from the Kainan train station.

Wakayama Marina City

On the coast the Wakayama Marina City features a European themed amusement park called Porto Europa and Kuroshio Market, with a diversity of restaurants and shops featuring fresh seafood. The interior is designed like a nostalgic shopping alley from the 1930s. A highlight of the market is the Tuna filleting show.



Kuroe Crafts District

To the north of Kainan station is the Kuroe district, where craftsmen have been producing high quality lacquerware for over 400 years. This is one of the three largest lacquerware production areas in Japan. The techniques are handed down from generation to generation, with multiple labor-intensive stages. One style that is well known, purposely has the final red coating thinly applied to show the rich black layer of lacquer underneath in a worn through fashion. In addition to shops, the Kishu Lacquerware Cooperative operates a visitor-type center called the Uruwashi-kan, with exhibits and sale of Kishu Lacquerware.



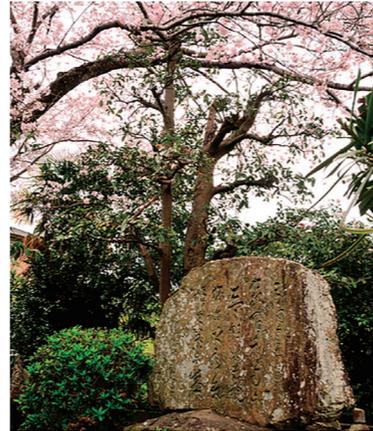
Sake

In the Kuroe district there is a sake brewery producing the award-winning brand Kuroushi. The brewery is in a traditional building with sake tasting cafe and shop. The lofty wooden construction offers a classic setting for a relaxing taste testing experience.



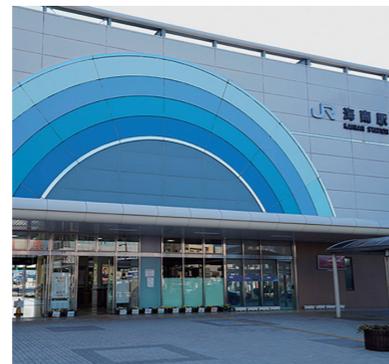
Manyoshu

Kainan and surrounding areas are featured in the Manyoshu, the oldest extant collection of poetry compiled in the 8th century. Literally translated as the "Anthology of Ten Thousand Leaves", it contains 4,500 poems in 20 volumes and regarded as zenith of ancient Japanese poetry. There are monuments dedicated to this literary classic along the Kiiji.



Kainan City Bussan Tourist Center

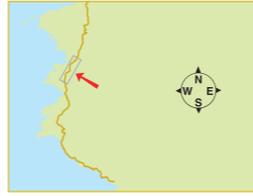
Location: Kainan Station first floor
 Hours: 9:00~18:00 (Closed on New Year's holidays)
 Rental Bicycles
 Hours: 9:00~17:30
 Rental Bicycles Price: 500 yen/ 3 hours, 1,000 yen/1 day



Kainan

Matsushiro-oji~Miyahara

松代王子~宮原



Kainan (Kumano Ichi-no-Torii remains) ~Miyahara

Distance (km) : ~12.5
 Time (hr) : 4.5~6
 Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~710
 Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~710

----- Unpaved trail
 ——— Paved trail

Kitsumoto



Hata



Legend			

Miyahara~Higashi-no-Umadome-oji

宮原~東の馬留王子



Miyahara ~ Yuasa
 Distance (km) : ~70
 Time (hr) : 2~3
 Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~220
 Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~220

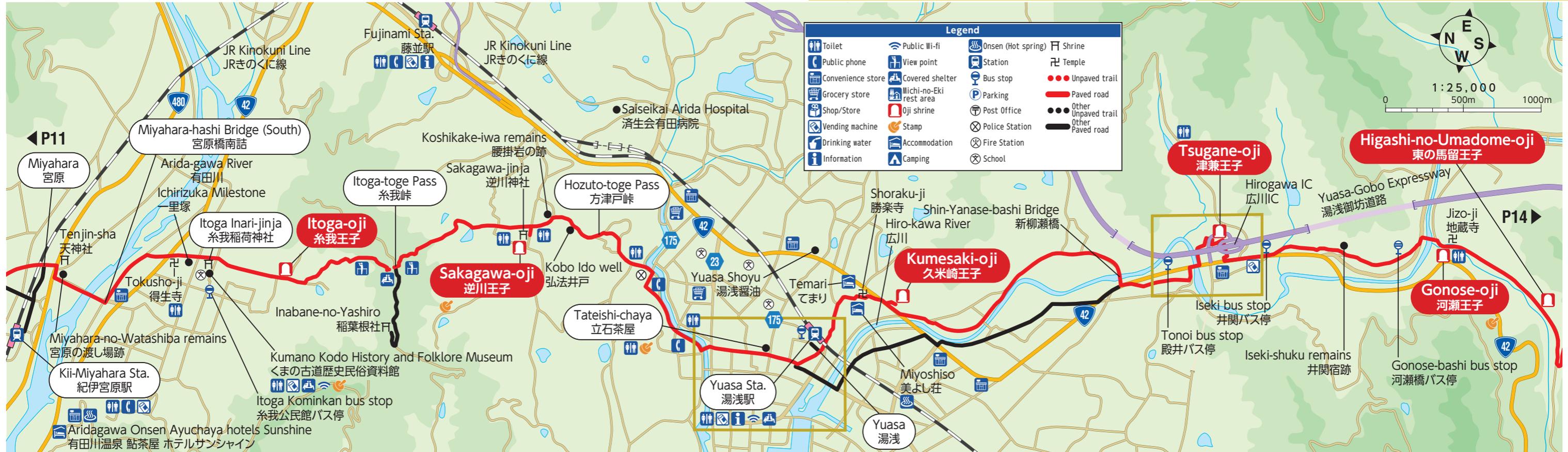
Yuasa ~ Gobo
 Distance (km) : ~23.0
 Time (hr) : 8~10
 Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~620
 Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~620

----- Unpaved trail
 ——— Paved trail

Yuasa

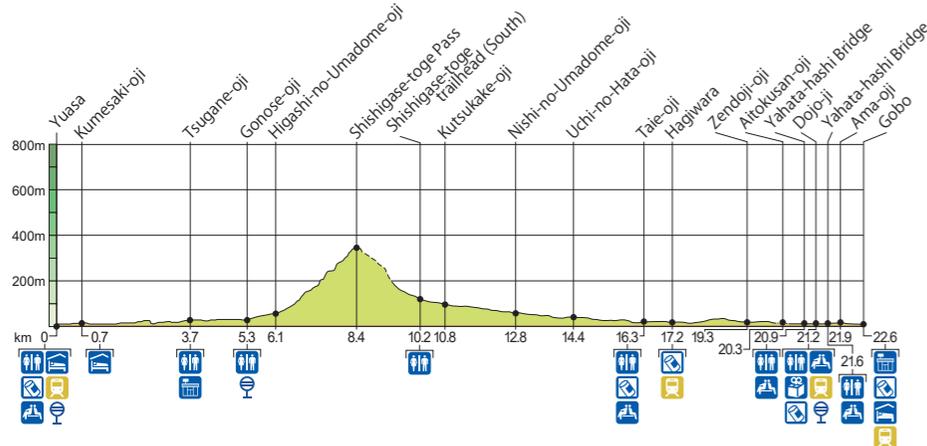


Tsugane-oji



Higashi-no-Umadome-oji~Gobo

東の馬留王子~御坊

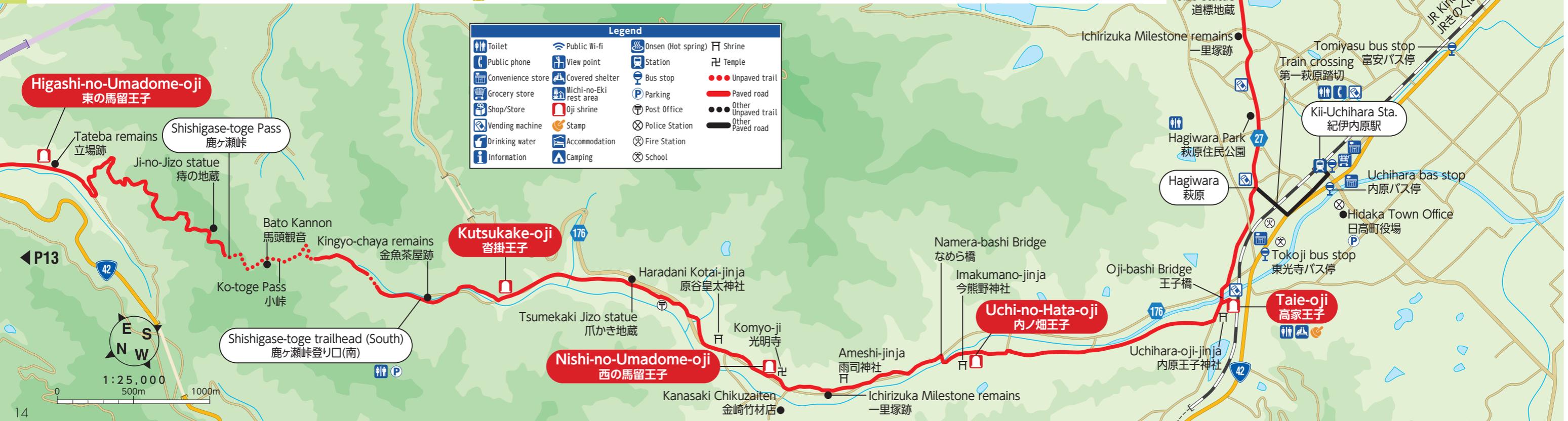


Yuasa ~ Gobo
 Distance (km) : ~23.0
 Time (hr) : 8~10
 Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~620
 Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~620

----- Unpaved trail
 ——— Paved trail



Dojo-ji



Dojo-ji

History

Doji-ji temple was believed to be founded in 710 and therefore one of the oldest in Japan. The expansive grounds feature a gate, worship hall, and three-story pagoda. The main wooden statue of Senju Kannon dates from the Heian period and is a National Treasure. The foundation myth relates to a young girl called Kami-naga-hime or long-haired princess who found a statue of Senju Kannon in the harbor.

Legend of Anchin & Kiyohime

The Dojo-ji is famous for the legend of Anchin and Kiyohime dating from the 10th century which has been adapted for well-known Noh and Kabuki dramas. Anchin was a monk on pilgrim to Kumano when he had a romantic encounter with princess Kiyohime. He promised to return but did not. Kiyohime chased Anchin and saw him off in the distance. She was so furious that she raged after him with terrible might. Eventually she caught up with him at the Dojo-ji temple, where Anchin was hiding under the temple bell. Kiyohime's anger transformed her into a serpent demon and wrapped around the bell, incinerating herself in the process and killing Anchin. Reciting of the tale using scrolls is performed onsite.



Gobo City

Gobo City is located at the mouth of the Hidaka-gawa River near the center of the western coastline of the Kii Peninsula. It is a small city with a population of ~22,000. The main industries are commercial fishing, forestry, and agriculture, especially flowers.

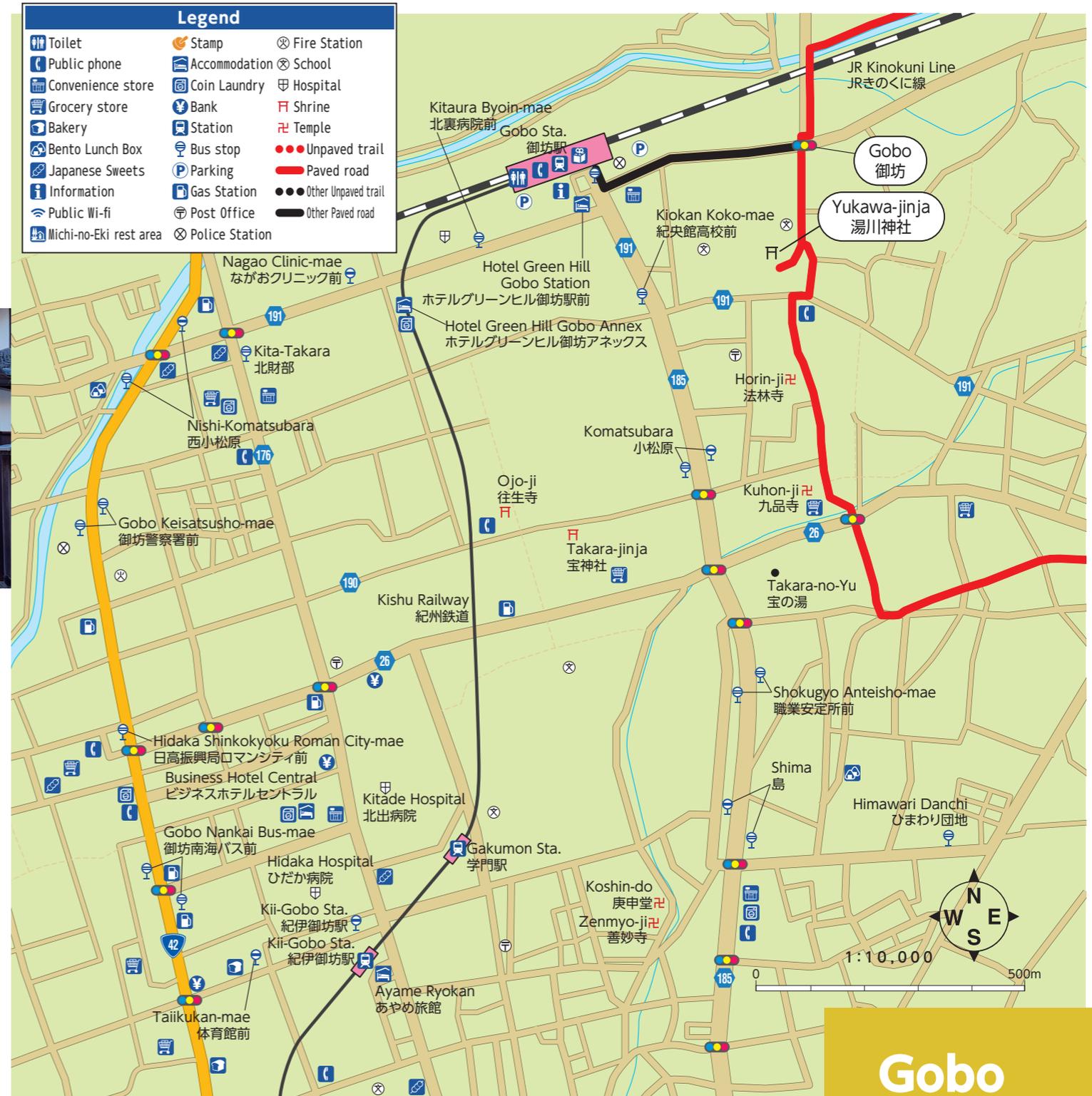
Jinaicho temple town

The name of Gobo is derived from the Hongan-ji Hidaka-betsuin temple which was founded in 1540, which the city developed around. It is near the Nishi-Gobo Station on the Kishu Railway. Although one is not allowed to enter the grounds the main building can be seen through the gates. The four-hundred-year-old ginkgo tree on the temple's grounds is a prefectural natural monument. Nearby is a collection of older, classic buildings.



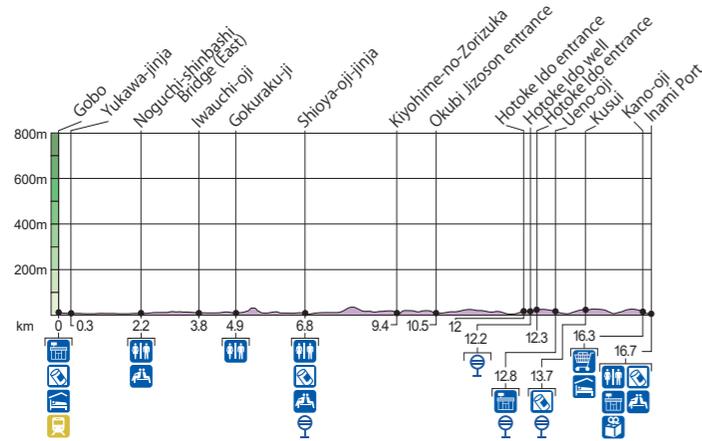
Kishu Railway

This private railway line is the second shortest in Japan and links the JR Gobo station with the center of the city. It is a single car that makes journeys back and forth on a single track.



Gobo~Kusui

御坊~楠井

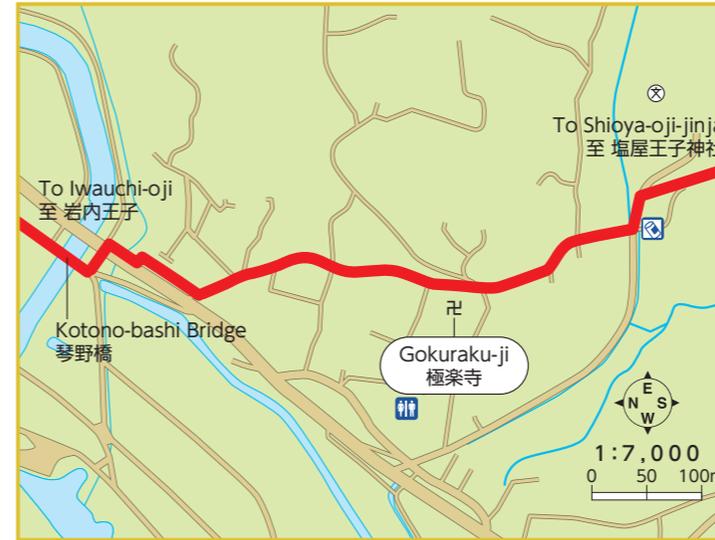


Gobo ~ Inami Port
 Distance (km) : ~17.0
 Time (hr) : 5~7
 Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~240
 Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~250

----- Unpaved trail
 ——— Paved trail



Gokuraku-ji



Shioya-oji-jinja

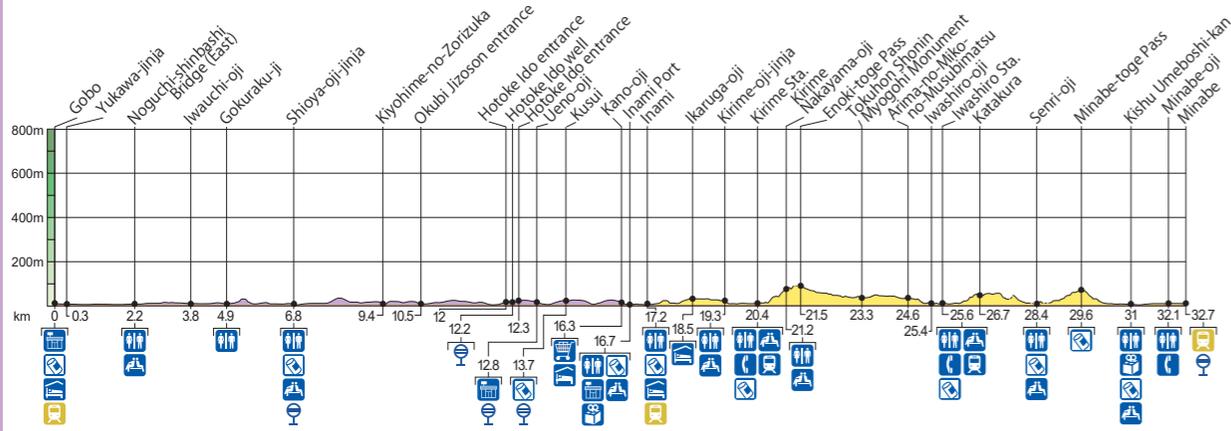


Legend		



Kusui~Katakura

楠井~片倉



Gobo ~ Inami Port
 Distance (km) : ~17.0
 Time (hr) : 5~7
 Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~240
 Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~250

Inami Port ~ Minabe
 Distance (km) : ~16.5
 Time (hr) : 5.5~7.5
 Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~420
 Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~420

----- Unpaved trail
 ——— Paved trail



Inami



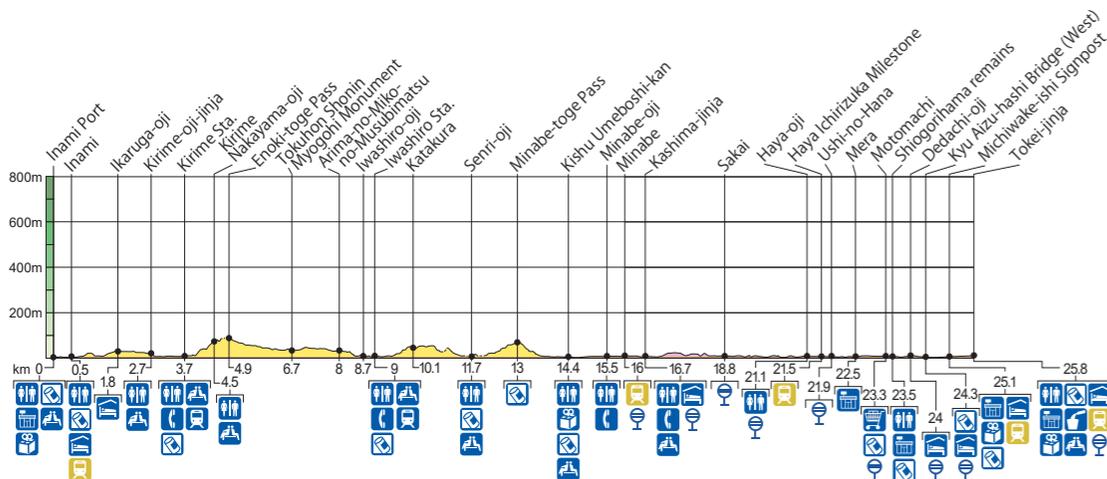
Kirime



Legend			

Katakura~Tokei-jinja

片倉~鬪雞神社



Inami Port ~ Minabe
 Distance (km) : ~16.5
 Time (hr) : 5.5~7.5
 Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~420
 Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~420

Minabe ~ Tokei-jinja
 Distance (km) : ~10.0
 Time (hr) : 3~4
 Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~120
 Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~120

----- Unpaved trail
 ——— Paved trail

Senri-oji



Minabe-oji



Model Itineraries

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

Day Walks



- Fujishiro-zaka Day Walk**
- Transfer to Kainan Sta.
 - Walk Fujishiro-zaka to Kitsumoto bus stop (p.10, ~6km) **A**
 - Bus to Kamogo Sta.
- Itoga-toge and Yuasa Day Walk**
- Transfer to Kii-Miyahara Sta.
 - Walk Itoga-toge Pass and Yuasa to Yuasa Sta.(p.12~13, ~8km) **B**
- Shishigase-toge Pass Day Walk**
- Transfer to Yuasa Sta.
 - Walk Shishigase-toge Pass to Kii-Uchihara Sta.(p.13~15, ~18km) **C**

Kainan to Gobo Trek



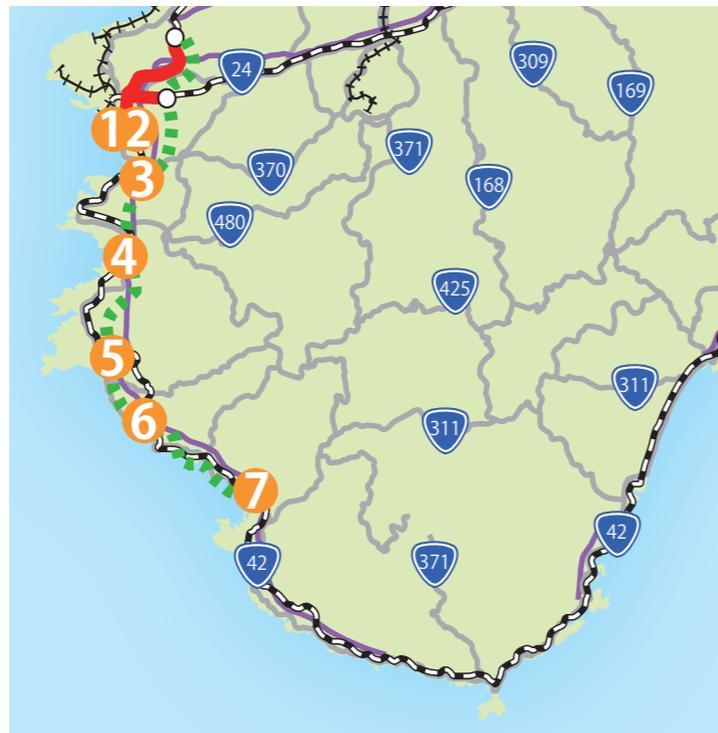
- Day1:**
- Transfer to Kainan Sta.
 - Walk to Miyahara (p.10~11, ~13km), overnight **1**
- Day2:**
- Walk to Yuasa (p.12~13, ~7km), overnight **2**
- Day3:**
- Walk to Gobo (p.13~15, ~23km), overnight **3**
- Day4:**
- Transfer to next destination

Kirime to Tanabe Trek



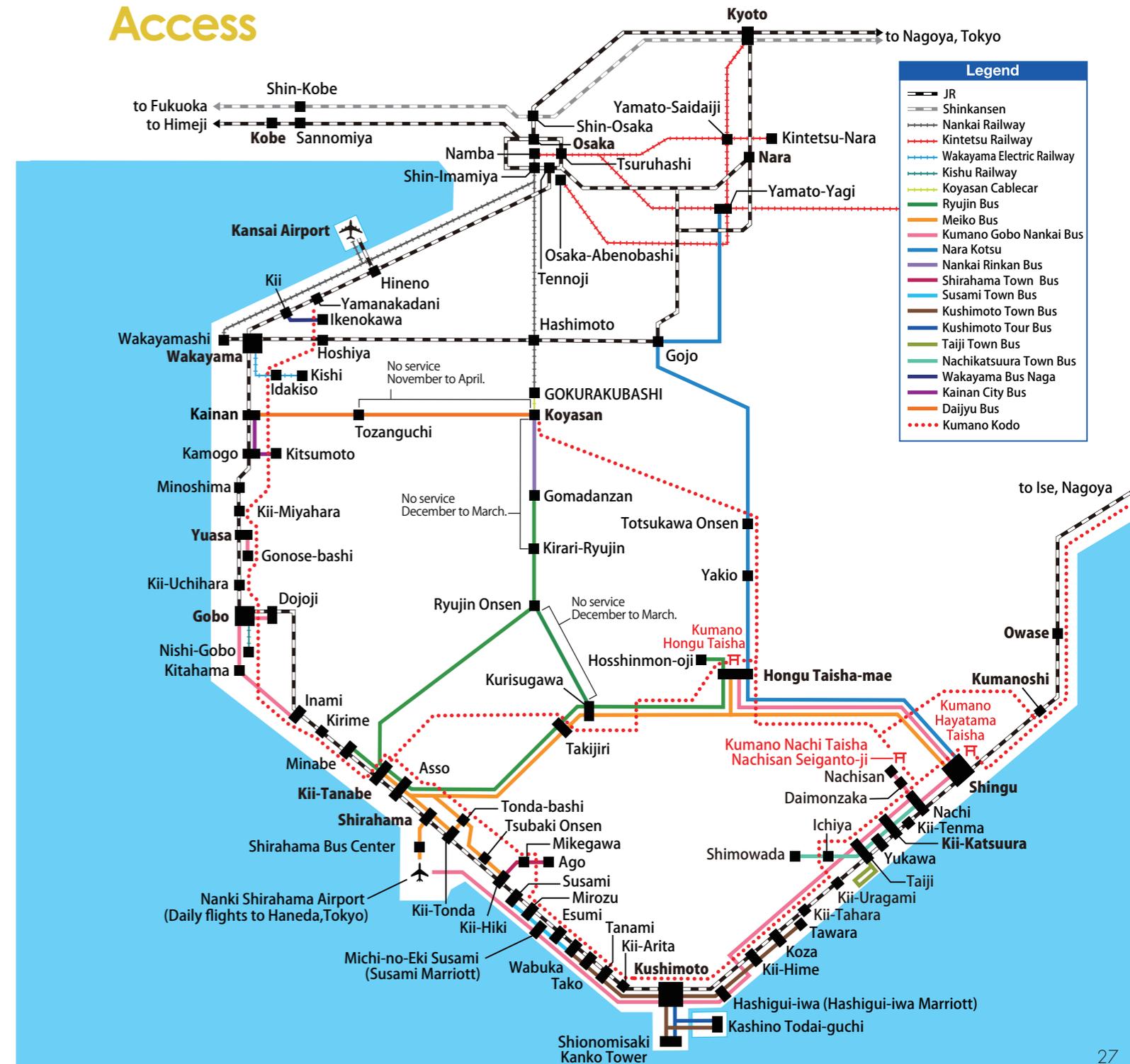
- Day1:**
- Transfer to Kirime Sta.
 - Walk to Minabe (p.21~22, ~13km), overnight **1**
- Day2:**
- Walk to Tenjinzaki and Tokei-jinja to Kii-Tanabe Sta. (p.22~23, ~13km), overnight **2**
- Day3:**
- Transfer to next destination

Kiji Intermediate Complete Trek



- Day1:**
- Transfer to Wakayama Sta., overnight **1**
- Day2:**
- Transfer to Yamanakadani Sta.
 - Walk to Hoshiya (~18km)
 - Transfer to Wakayama Sta., overnight **2**
- Day3:**
- Transfer to Hoshiya Sta.
 - Walk to Kainan Sta. (~17km), overnight **3**
- Day4:**
- Walk to Yuasa (~20km), overnight **4**
- Day5:**
- Walk to Gobo (~23km), overnight **5**
- Day6:**
- Walk to Inami Port (~17km), overnight **6**
- Day7:**
- Walk to Tokei-jinja (~26km), overnight **7**
- Day8:**
- Transfer to next destination

Access



Route Guide

Overview

This map booklet covers the Kii route from the border of Wakayama and Osaka at the JR Yamanakadani train station to Tanabe City. Historically pilgrims began in Kyoto taking a boat to Osaka, then walking south on the Kii along the coast. This route dates from the 9th century and was the main route from the north to south. It has been developed over the centuries and now follows mostly paved roads through settled areas. The main remaining mountain pass is just south of Kainan city. The Kii is inland until Gobo city from where it skirts along the coastline until Tanabe. Because it follows the main train line, it is possible to break this route of the Kumano Kodo easily into sections. Although it has a long history, because most of the original trails have been lost, it is considered more of a minor route.

NOTE: Signage is inconsistent and often only in Japanese.

Yamanaka-shuku to Hoshiya

The border between Osaka and Wakayama prefectures is a line of mountain called the Izumi Range. This section climbs over the range and descends into the valley bottom, ultimately crossing the Kino-kawa River.

JR Yamanakadani Station & Yamanaka-shuku

The Yamanakadani train station is on the north side of the pass in a small collection of homes called Yamanaka-shuku. In the golden age of the pilgrimage this post-town was a very prosperous stopover with more than 20 inns. It is about a one-hour train ride from Osaka.

Umame-oji

This is the first of dozens of small oji shrines that line the Kii route. Oji are subsidiary shrines of the Kumano Grand Shrines that protect and guide pilgrims. These shrines house the "child deities" of Kumano and historically served as places of both worship and rest.

Yamanaka Sekisho remains

This valley is one of the easiest ways over the range and subsequently all traffic flowed through here making it a logical site of a Sekisho gate. Sekisho were checkpoints across Japan developed by the Edo government (1600-1868) to control the movement of people and collect tolls. The border between the Kii Domain (or Kishu Domain) (present day Wakayama Prefecture) and Izumi Domain (present-day Osaka Prefecture) is just south of here. The Kii feudal province was administered from Wakayama Castle in present-day Wakayama City. This is why train stations in Wakayama Prefecture often have the prefix Kii.

NOTE: Subsequently modern-day infrastructure such as expressways and train line also squeeze through this narrow gap in the mountains. Traffic can be very heavy, so it is vitally important to be careful when walking on these narrow roads.

Nakayama-oji

This mountain chain is also known by the name Katsuragi and has been revered as sacred-permeated with deities. This is where En-no-Gyoja, the founder of the mountain asceticism sect of Shugendo, first trained in the 7th century. Shugendo is a mixed religion with its roots in shamanistic mountain worship. A pilgrimage training route runs nearby, and often wooden prayer amulets can be seen left on the small oji shrine grounds.

Onoyama-toge Pass & Kino-kawa Plains

The road leads up and over the Onoyama-toge Pass (180m above sea level) before descending sharply on a set of narrow switchbacks, as the Kino-kawa river plains spread out below. Just after passing under the giant concrete freeway the Kii turns left on a side street and Yamaguchi-oji. From here the trail follows a series of roads towards the river. Side roads lead to Yamaguchi-jinja shrine which dates from the late 8th century, and further on in rice paddies the Rikishi-jinja shrine. Because of river flooding the oji shrines have moved locations over time.



Kino-kawa River

The Kino-kawa River was a major access route into the northern parts of the Kii Peninsula. Historically pilgrims used boats or, if river conditions permitted, waded across in a purifying ceremony.

Hoshiya Station

Hoshiya Station is a small train station on the other side of the river.

Hoshiya to Kainan

From Hoshiya Station to Kainan Station the Kii passes through rural neighborhoods, with a short climb and descent over the Yata-toge Pass, then passing by some larger shrines, such as the Itakiso-jinja. The Michi-no-Eki Shiki-no-Sato Park and feline themed Wakayama Electric Railway are possible side trips.

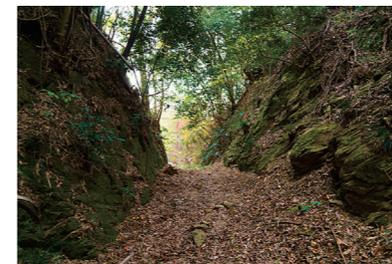
The Former Nakasuji Residence

This impressive former residence of a local leader is an example of classic Japanese architecture including a large hall, front gate, kitchen, and warehouse which is well preserved. It was built in

1852 and is designated as an important national cultural property. Access is limited so check on arrival if entry is permitted.

Yata-toge Pass

After passing Wasa-oji the trail rises through a bamboo forest to the Yata-toge pass. The main trail runs to the right and descends. The left route leads to a side trail and the Michi-no-Eki Shiki-no-Sato Park.



Itakiso-jinja

A short, but worthwhile side trip leads to the Itakiso-jinja. This is a famous shrine dedicated to "Itakeru-no-Mikoto", the god who introduced trees to Japan. Therefore, worshippers from the forestry and lumber industry often pray and give thanks here. Onsite are chainsaw art carvings and the stump of a sacred 1,000-year-old tree. Climbing through it wards off misfortune. There is a 6th century tomb nearby.

Kainan Station

After passing through suburbs the flat sideroads lead to the urban center of Kainan City. Kainan station is a major JR station.

Kainan to Miyahara

The section south of Kainan city including Fujishiro-oji and the mountains trail to Fujishiro-toge-oji is probably the most popular section of the Kii. The full walk to Kii-Miyahara station goes over two passes, also making it the most challenging section.

Haraedo-oji

The remains of Haraedo-oji is located down a short photogenic forested trail, which is lined with numerous Buddhist statues, many colored with lichen and moss. It is written that a torii gate, the first sacred entrance to Kumano, stood nearby and that pilgrims purified their mind and body.

Suzuki-yashiki Residence

If your last name is Suzuki (there are over 2,000,000 surnamed Suzuki living in Japan now), then this is the place to visit! It is recorded that the first man with the surname Suzuki moved here from the Kumano region in ~1150, and subsequently their clan lived here for 122 generations until the last descendent died in 1942, watching over the shrine and spreading the Kumano faith across the country. The residence itself is a national historic site and has been recently restored and opened to visitors.

Fujishiro-oji

Fujishiro-oji is one of the prestigious five Gotai-oji shrines. It was a

key stopping point for pilgrims including those from the imperial family and aristocrats. On the shrine grounds are gigantic sacred, thousand-year-old camphor trees, one of which is said to protect children, and has an access ramp so that worshippers can touch the tree and receive its regenerative powers. In the Gongen Hondo there are impressive Buddhist statues representing the three main deities of the Kumano faith.

Fujishiro-zaka

From Fujishiro-oji the trail climbs the Fujishiro-zaka slope out of the valley through sections of towering bamboo groves.



Fudesutematsu (Brush-Throwing Pine & Inkstone Rock)

In the 9th century, a brilliant court painter, Kose-no-Kanaoka, went on pilgrimage. Here he met a young boy (who was an incarnation of the Kumano deity) and challenged him to a painting contest. He lost the competition and, to his frustration, threw away his brush at the base of a nearby large pine tree. This tree then came to be known as the Fudesutematsu or Brush-Throwing Pine. Arrogance does not pay when on the Kumano pilgrimage! In honor of this story, it is said that the first lord of the Kishu Domain, Tokugawa Yorinobu, dedicated a giant inkstone rock here.

Fujishiro Toge-oji & Jizobu-ji

Fujishiro Toge-oji is located on the temple grounds of Jizobu-ji. The principal image of Jizobu-ji is a large stone statue of Jizo Bosatsu measuring over three meters in height and dates from 1323.



Gosho-no-Shiba

Behind the temple to the right along a small hard-to-find trail beside the public toilets leads to the Gosho-no-Shiba viewpoint, a panoramic view of Kainan and the historic Wakanoura area. This is a great rest spot. From here the trail descends into the valley.



Ichitsubo-oji

Originating from the middle of the 18th century, a unique rite of passage ceremony (and wish for healthy growth) for young baby boys takes place during the autumn festival at Ichitsubo-oji. Once babies can walk, they are dressed in red loincloths and engage in sumo bouts often ending in tears, hence the nickname of the ceremony "Crying Sumo".

Hai-no-toge Pass

Gradually, paved roads lead up to the Hai-no-toge Pass. The south side descends into the Arida-gawa river basin through orange orchards with views across the valley. Near the riverside is Kii-Miyahara train station.

Miyahara to Yuasa

This short section follows farming road through orchards over a pass and into the small town of Yuasa famous for Soy Sauce.

Arida Mandarin Oranges

This is orange country! Arida is famous throughout Japan for its delicious mandarin oranges, which grow on steep terraced orchards, exposing them to an abundance of sunlight. Approximately 450 years ago, Ito Magoemon, a farmer, brought the first orange tree here from Kumamoto Prefecture in southern Japan which sparked the beginning of the industry which now is one of the country's largest producers.

Itoga Inari-jinja

This is the oldest known Inari-jinja shrine in Japan dating from 652. There are large camphor trees and a visitor center next door. The small center has limited English, but some period displays.

Itoga-toge Pass

During the Edo period (1603-1867) at this pass there were two tea houses which served oranges to pilgrims.

Yuasa Soy Sauce

Yuasa is famous as the birthplace of soy sauce. There is an area on the northside of town next to the canal that has preserved these traditional houses and factories, making for an attractive side trip. This area has the lengthy name of "Yuasa Important Preservation District for Group of Traditional Buildings".



Tateishi-chaya

The Tateishi-chaya is a traditional building transformed into a rest spot and mini-information center for visitors. Across the street is an impressive vintage stone signpost for the Kumano Kodo.

Yuasa to Gobo

The main geographical feature of this section which separates the two-Yuasa being a rural outpost and Gobo a larger urban center is the Shishigase-toge Pass. On the Gobo side is the main cultural

feature in Dojo-ji temple.

Shishigase-toge Pass

After passing through the Iseki-shuku remains, now a quiet residential area, but once a thriving area of inns, the road gradually ascends through rice paddies, and eventually into a forestry road. There is a large clearing at the pass where a tea house once stood. The descent joins follows a long creek-side road back into the outskirts of Gobo city and Kii-Uchihara Station.



Dojo-ji

Further through town is Dojo-ji temple, with its noteworthy pagoda and collection of rare Buddhist statues. Its association with the legend of Anchin and Kiyohime is well-known throughout Japan.

Gobo Station

To the west of Yukawa-jinja is JR Gobo train station, a major station on the line.

Gobo to Inami Port

South of Gobo the Kiiji follows paved roads near the coastline parallel to Route 42.

Yukawa-jinja

Yukawa-jinja is a quiet, shady, shrine for safe-childbirth. On the grounds is a stone bridge from the Edo era and 1000-year-old camphor tree.

Hidaka-gawa River

Gobo City is built around the Hidaka-gawa River. Historically pilgrims used ferries to cross. In the legend of Anchin and Kiyohime, this is where the princess transforms into a serpent snake to seek revenge on her betraying lover.



Shioya-oji

Up a steep stone staircase leads to the cozy shrine grounds of Shioya-oji, one of the oldest oji shrines on the Kumano Kodo. It is believed that worshippers who pray here are blessed with beautiful children.

Kiyohime-no-Zorizuka

This is one of the historic sites of the Anchin and Kiyohime legend. When Kiyohime found Anchin trying to escape by crossing the Hidaka-gawa River, she hung her sandals on a tree branch and followed him barefoot, hence the name Zorizuka. Zori, is traditional straw sandals.

Hashicho Fish Terrace

South from Gobo the Kiiji follows the coastline more closely. Being near the sea is Hashicho Fish Terrace, a fish market and restaurant, where locals go to get the best of the day's catch.

Inami Port

The Inami train station is just up the Inami-gawa River from the fishing port in this sleepy village. You may come across frog figurines and images (even a bridge!) in Inami because of a modern-day rebranding based on the different nuances of the work Kaeru in Japanese-to think, to change people, to prosper, etc. -but can also mean simply a frog.

Inami Port to Minabe

The Kiiji follows a variety of major and minor roads from oji to oji until Minabe with short stretches on the beach. One of this area's claim to fame is that it the birthplace of the ubiquitous, Katsuobushi fish stock used extensively in Japanese cuisine.

Kirime-oji-jinja

Kirime-oji-jinja is tucked into a protected clearing surrounded by hills covered with a rich diversity of native evergreen trees. This is also one of the prestigious Gotai-oji and historical lodging site for the imperial family when on pilgrimage.

Kirime Nakayama-oji

Past Kirime train station on the hillside is the Kirime Nakayama-oji, with a small shrine dedicated to healing feet and legs based on a legendary episode of a Yamabushi ascetic's mystical powers.

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. There are over one thousand Tokuhon Shonin Myogohi monuments remaining nationwide including a series along this section of the Kiiji.

Iwashiro-oji

Just before the Iwashiro train station a short side trail connects to the scenic beachside Iwashiro-oji surrounded by pine trees.

Ume Country

One of the main agricultural products of this region is Ume, or Japanese apricot (often mistranslated as plum). You can begin to see ume orchards and drying ume racks to make umeboshi, which are salt pickled. Umeshu is a rich, sweet ume liqueur.

Senri-no-Hama Beach

The trail runs along Senri-no-Hama beach for a few hundred meters, which is a local nesting site for loggerhead sea turtles.



Kishu Umeboshi-kan

As you enter Minabe, there is an imposing green factory called the Kishu Umeboshi-kan, with a souvenir shop selling a multitude of ume based products and umeboshi tasting.

Minabe to Tanabe

From Minabe the road passes through coastal neighborhoods until Tanabe City crossing the Aizu-gawa River into the downtown area.

Tenjinzaki

To the west of Tanabe there is a peninsula with a rock point called Cape Tenjinzaki. It is a popular place for citizens to fish, stroll the coastline, and enjoy sunsets.

Shiogori-hama Remains

Before heading into the sacred Kumano mountains on the Nakahechi route, pilgrims would perform salt-water purification rites in the ocean called Shiogori. This monument, which sits in a park is the original site, but modern land reclamation projects have expanded the landscape further south.

Michiwake-ishi Signpost

In the heart of Tanabe on a retro shopping street, tucked against a store front is a large stone signpost. This is the end of the Kiiji route which splits into the Nakahechi heading inland and the Ohechi continuing south along the coast. Continue into the city center to find the Kii-Tanabe station and Tokei-jinja shrine.

