

Shikoku 四国



For more than a millennium, *o-henrō* (pilgrims) have walked clockwise around Shikoku in the footsteps of the great Buddhist saint Kōbō Daishi (774–835), who achieved enlightenment on the island of his birth. Known as the ‘88 Sacred Temples of Shikoku’, the 1400km journey is Japan’s best known pilgrimage and oldest tourist trail, though much has changed in recent centuries.

Before the publication of the first guidebook in 1685, pilgrims frequently disappeared forever in Shikoku’s rugged and mountainous interior. Before the advent of modern conveniences such as weather forecasts, mobile phones (cell phones) and convenience stores, pilgrims frequently fell ill and perished along the journey. Nowadays, hardship is not a factor as *o-henrō* buzz around the island in air-conditioned vehicles while giving little thought to the trials and tribulations of the past. In recent years, however, disenchantment with modern life has led to an increase in the number of Japanese who strike out on foot in search of meaning and self-realisation.

Like the rest of Japan, Shikoku is a land of contradictions – lightning-fast trains race alongside lumbering fishing boats while mountaintop shrines are lit up by walls of vending machines. More than other destinations, however, Shikoku is home to that elusive bit of lost Japan that seems virtually absent from the modern cityscape. Today, travellers can still hike age-old trails that bear the footprints of countless others who set out in that ever-elusive search for enlightenment.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Tread time-worn paths on a pilgrimage to the **88 Sacred Temples of Shikoku** (p630)
- Get off the beaten path in the stunning **Iya Valley** (p632), one of Japan’s three ‘Hidden Regions’
- Take a peaceful soak in the historic **Dōgo Onsen** (p649), located in the capital city of Matsuyama
- Trek up 1368 granite steps to pay homage at **Kompira-san** (p656) in the town of Kotohira
- Climb the sacred peak of **Ishizuchi-san** (p654), the highest mountain in western Japan
- Stroll through Takamatsu’s exquisite Edo-period walking garden, **Ritsurin-kōen** (p658)



History

In Japan’s feudal past, the island of Shikoku was divided into four regions – hence the name *shi* (four) and *koku* (region). The provinces of Awa, Tosa, Iyo and Sanuki became the modern-day prefectures of Tokushima-ken, Kōchi-ken, Ehime-ken and Kagawa-ken. The old names are still in common use in their prefectures.

Despite its geographical proximity to the historical centres of power of Osaka and Kyoto, Shikoku has always been considered somewhat remote throughout Japanese history. Getting there required a boat ride – until three bridge links to Honshū were built over the last couple of decades.

Shikoku is a rugged land. In the 12th century, defeated Heike warriors disappeared into the mountainous interiors to escape their Genji pursuers. Until very recently, the 88 Temples pilgrims returned from Shikoku with stories of extreme hardship that had to be overcome in their search for enlightenment.

It is natural that Shikoku’s northern coast is more developed. The southern coast was cut off by the island’s mountainous topography, ensuring that it lagged behind the northern coast in terms of development. As a result the people of Kōchi have historically been considered tough, hardy and independent.

Climate

Shikoku has amazing variations of climate for a small island. Summer can be stiflingly hot, while in winter the higher peaks are snow-capped. Typhoons regularly pound the Pacific coast from June until October. The village of Monobe in Kōchi-ken prefecture claims to have the highest rainfall levels in Japan, while the protected northern side of the island often suffers water shortages. The landscape of Kagawa-ken is pockmarked with *tame-ike* (water-collection ponds).

Getting There & Away

Before 1986 Shikoku was considered much more remote, with access being mainly by ferry. Today, however, there are a total of three bridge systems linking Shikoku with Honshū. Heading east to west, the Akashi Kaikyō–Ōhashi is west of Kōbe and leads to Tokushima (via Awaji-shima island). The Seto–Ōhashi bridge connects Okayama to Sakaide, which is west of Takamatsu. Finally, the Kurushima Kaikyō–Ōhashi island-hops along the Shimanami Hwy (Shimanami-

kaidō) from Onomichi in Hiroshima-ken prefecture to Imabari in Ehime-ken.

As a result of the improved infrastructure, ferry services are on the decline, though Shikoku is still linked to a few major ports on Kyūshū and the San-yō coast of Honshū. However, most visitors arrive on the island either by train from Okayama or highway bus from Osaka, Kyoto and Tokyo. Air services also connect major cities in Shikoku with Tokyo, Osaka and other major centres.

Getting Around

This chapter’s coverage follows the same order that most of Shikoku’s visitors have used to travel around the island over the past 1000 years – in a circle starting in Tokushima and moving through Kōchi, Ehime and Kagawa prefectures. However, Shikoku’s only train connection with Honshū is via the Seto–Ōhashi, so if you arrive by rail, your first prefecture will be Kagawa-ken (p655).

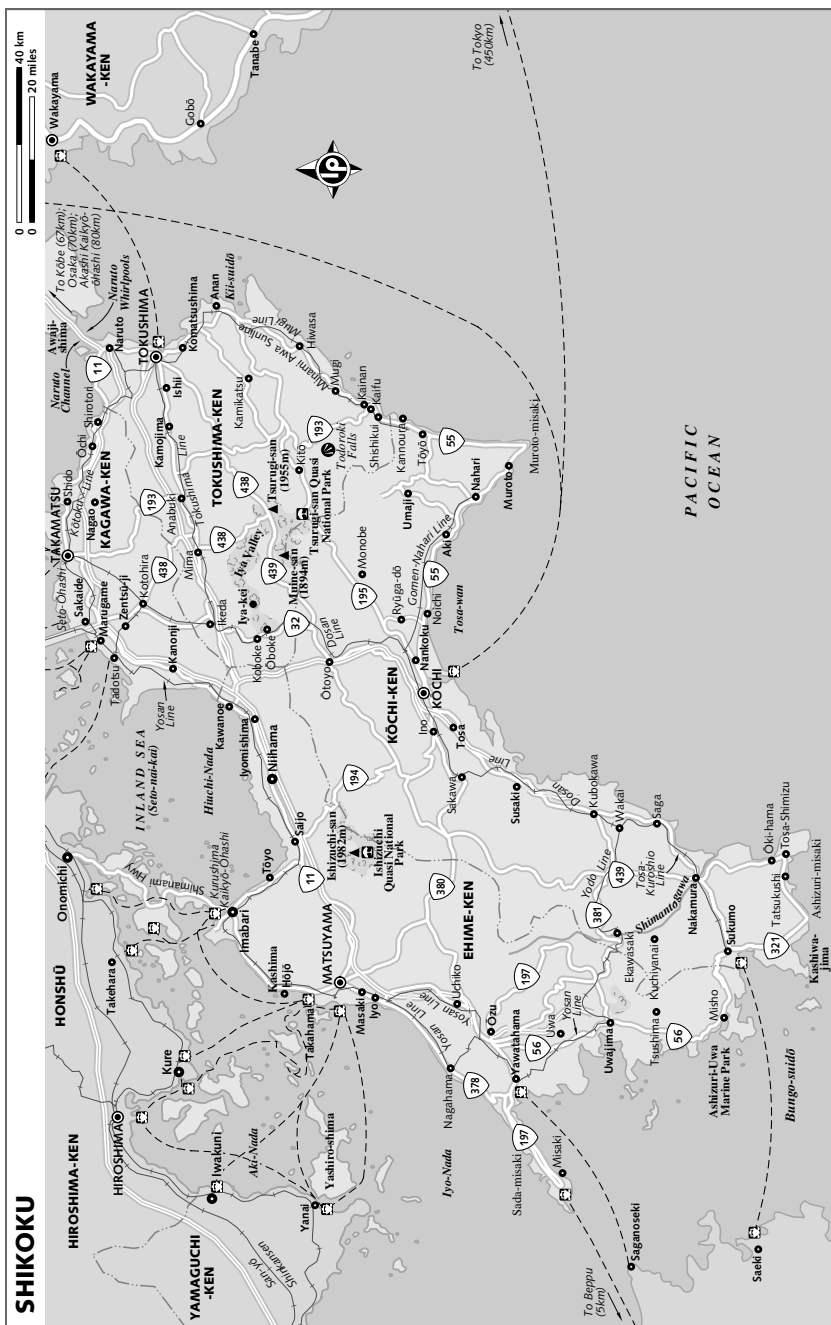
For more information on visiting the 88 Sacred Temples of Shikoku, see the boxed text (p630).

TOKUSHIMA-KEN 徳島県

Home to the first 23 of the 88 temples, the prefecture of Tokushima is known to *o-henrō* as *Hosshin-no-dōjō*, the ‘place to determine to achieve enlightenment’. The first 10 temples are more or less on an east–west line spanning about 25km on the north side of the Yoshinogawa river valley. In the days of old, they were considered a mini-pilgrimage, and remain a worthy alternative if you don’t intend to complete the full 88-temple circuit.

Noteworthy temples in Tokushima-ken include Temple 1, Ryōzen-ji (see p630), which is the pilgrimage’s traditional starting point on the island of Shikoku. The walk from temples 11 to 12, which winds through the mountains of the Yoshinogawa valley, has the reputation of being the steepest and hardest climb on the pilgrimage. Temple 19, Tatsue-ji, is a barrier temple – only those who are ‘pure of intention’ can pass.

Other notable attractions include the lively Awa-odori festival (Awa Dance Festival) in Tokushima, the mighty channel whirlpools of the Naruto Channel (Naruto-kaikyō), the pristine scenery of the Iya Valley and the surf beaches of the southern coast.



TOKUSHIMA 徳島

☎ 088 / pop 270,000

Flanked by forest-covered mountains and centred on a palm tree-lined promenade, the bustling modern city of Tokushima is best known for its annual Awa-odori festival in August. Tokushima also boasts a number of interesting attractions, and is a convenient base for exploring the nearby Naruto whirlpools. To most *o-henrō*, however, Tokushima serves as the gateway to the island, and as the jumping-off point for the first group of temples.

Orientation

Tokushima is defined by its two hills. The first, Shiroyama (城山), is dotted with castle ruins and is directly behind the train station. The second, Bizan (火山), is at the end of Shinmachi-bashi-dōri, which runs southwest from the station. The entertainment district and main shopping arcade are west of the river Shinmachi-gawa.

Information

The **tourist information office** (☎ 622-8556; ☎ 9am-8pm), in a booth outside the JR Tokushima station, has English brochures and maps, and can help with booking accommodation.

The extremely helpful **Tokushima Prefecture International Exchange Association** (TOPIA; ☎ 656-3303; www.topia.ne.jp; ☎ 10am-6pm) is on the 6th floor of the station building, and has an English-speaking staff that can also help you book accommodation. Internet access is available (¥50 for 10 minutes), and you can leave your bags here during the day.

There are coin lockers at the station, and the ATMs at the **post office** (1st fl, Sogō department store) accept international cards. **Kinokuniya Books** (8th fl, Sogō department store) has a smallish English-language books corner.

For more information, check out the useful website www.city.tokushima.tokushima.jp/english/index.html.

Sights & Activities

BIZAN 眉山

At the southwestern end of Shinmachi-bashi-dōri is the **Awa Odori Kaikan** (☎ 611-1611; 1-20 Banchi; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm, closed 2nd & 4th Wed of month), which features extensive exhibits relating to the local dance, namely the Awa-odori. There's also a modest municipal museum (admission ¥300) on the 3rd floor as well as a dance hall on the 2nd floor where

you can watch daily performances (day/night ¥500/700). From the 5th floor, a **ropeway** (cable car; ☎ 652-3617; one way/return ¥600/1000; ☎ 9am-6.30pm, 9am-9pm Fri & Sat in summer) whizzes you to the 280m-high summit of Bizan for fine views over the city and sea. A combined ticket for all the attractions will cost you ¥1500.

At the top of the hill is a small park centred on a peace pagoda, which was erected in 1958 as a memorial to local soldiers who died in Burma (Myanmar) during WWII, and the **Wenceslão de Morães Museum** (☎ 623-5342; 1-26 Banchi; admission ¥200; ☎ 9.30am-5pm, closed 2nd & 4th Wed each month). Morães was a Portuguese naval officer who lived in Japan from 1893 until his death in 1929, and is famous for his multi-volume study of the country. If the weather is nice, you can hike to the base of the hill along several paths in about 15 minutes.

AWA PUPPET THEATRE 人形浄瑠璃

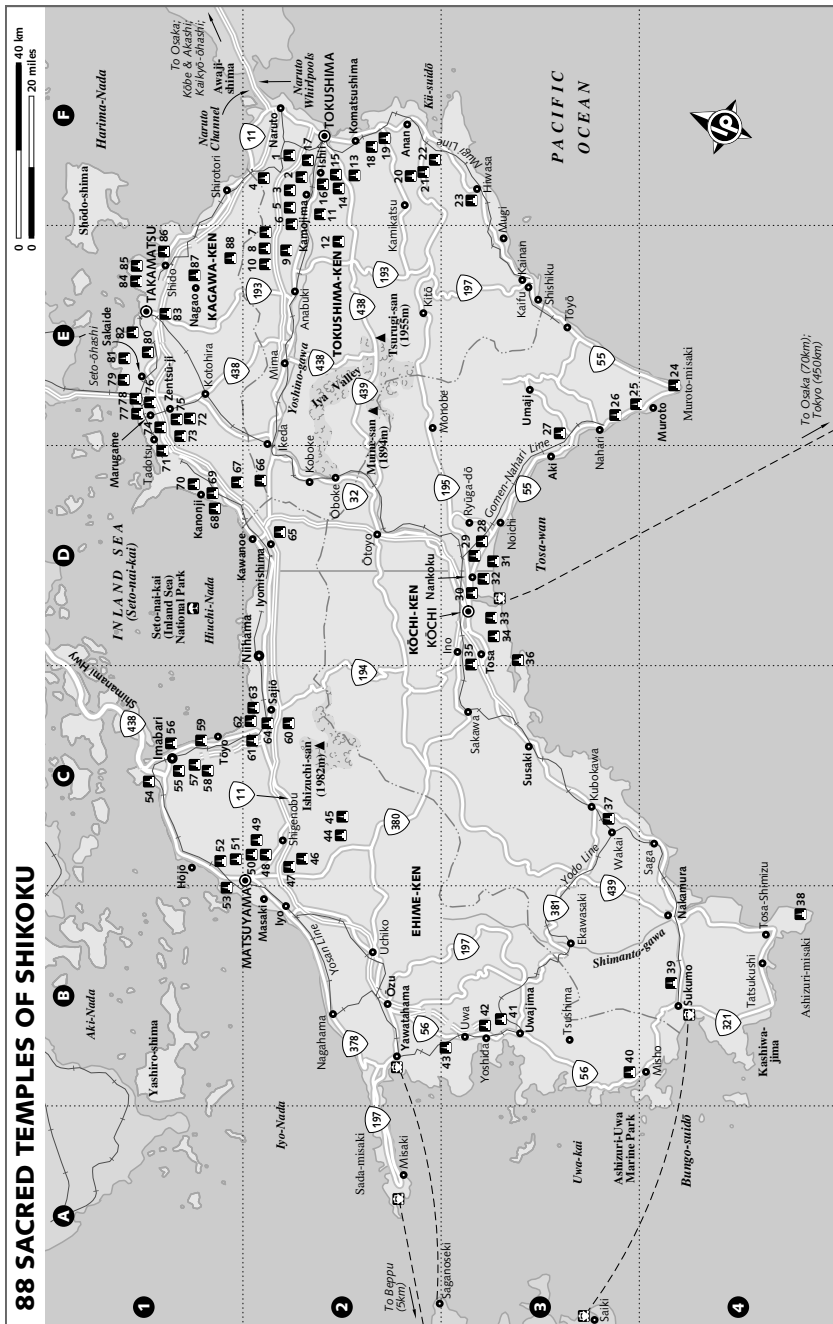
For hundreds of years, *bunraku* (classic puppet theatre), known in the region as *ningyō jōruri*, thrived in the farming communities in and around Tokushima as a popular form of amusement (while the wealthy were entertained by the likes of kabuki – stylised theatre). Unfortunately, the region's puppet theatres have all but vanished, though local puppet dramas can still be seen at the **Awa no Jūrobei Yashiki** (阿波十郎兵衛屋敷; ☎ 665-2202; 1-84 Honura; tickets ¥400; ☎ 8.30am-7pm). This museum, 5km northeast of the JR Tokushima station, is the former residence of the samurai Jūrobei, whose tragic Edo-era life story forms the material for the drama *Keisei Awa no Naruto*. A section from this puppet drama is performed daily by local women, generally at 3pm. Inquire at the tourist information booth or TOPIA for details.

It's also worth visiting the **Awa Deko Ningyō Kaikan** (阿波木偶人形会館; Awa Puppet Hall; ☎ 665-5600; 1-84 Honura; admission ¥400; ☎ 8.30am-5pm), next door to the museum, which features puppet displays and demonstrations of their manufacture and use.

To reach the museum, take a Naruto-bound bus from the JR Tokushima station to the Jūrobei Yashiki-mae bus stop (¥270, 15 minutes).

CHŪŌ-KŌEN 中央公園

Northeast of the train station on the slopes of Shiroyama is **Chūō-kōen** (☎ 621-5295; admission free), which houses the ruins of Tokushima-jō castle. Built in 1586 for the clan of Hachisuka



Iemasa, the castle was largely destroyed during the Meiji Restoration, though the remaining walls and moat provide an atmospheric backdrop to the gardens, bridges and walking trails in the park. If you're having problems imagining the former grandeur of the site, the **Tokushima Castle Museum** (☎ 656-2525; admission ¥300; 🕒 9.30am-4.30pm Tue-Sun) has an impressive reconstruction of the castle as well as several informative exhibits. Just south of the ruins is the attractively landscaped **Senshūkaku-teien** (admission ¥50), an intimate garden that was laid out in the late 16th century.

ASTY TOKUSHIMA アスティ徳島
 Located 4km southeast of the JR Tokushima station, this **exhibition hall** (☎ 624-5111; admission ¥910; 🕒 9am-5pm) spotlights regional culture, particularly puppet drama and pottery. The highlight of the complex is the **Kōgei-mura** (工藝村; ☎ 624-5000; admission free; 🕒 9.30am-5pm Wed-Mon) arts village where you can observe and participate in a variety of traditional arts and crafts including *aizome* (indigo dyeing), *washi* (paper-making) and pottery.
 Direct buses run from the JR Tokushima station to ASTY (¥270, 15 minutes).

Festivals & Events
 Tokushima plays host to one of the premier good-time events in Japan, the annual **Awa-odori festival** (阿波踊り; Awa Dance Festival), which is the largest and most famous 'bon' dance in Japan. Every night from 12 to 15 August, men, women and children don *yukata* (light cotton kimono) and take to the streets to dance to the samba-like rhythm of the theme song 'Yoshikono', accompanied by the sounds of *shamisen* (three-stringed guitars), *taiko* (drums) and *fue* (flutes). Dancing and the accompanying mayhem last into the wee hours of the morning! Plan early because accommodation is at a premium during the festival (more than a million people turn up each year!).

Sleeping
Sakura-sō (☎ 652-9575; fax 652-2220; 1-25 Terashima-honchō-higashi; s/d ¥3500/6000; 📍 🚶) The best budget option in town is conveniently located next to the tracks just three blocks east of the station, though you can expect an early wake-up call in the form of an express train. This humble *minshuku* (family-run budget accommodation) offers modest Japanese-style rooms

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES	
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Temple 4 (Dainichi-ji) 大日寺.....	4 F2
Temple 5 (Jizō-ji) 地藏寺.....	5 F2
Temple 6 (Anraku-ji) 安楽寺.....	6 F2
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Temple 9 (Hōrin-ji) 法輪寺.....	9 E2
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Temple 16 (Kannon-ji) 観音寺.....	16 F2
Temple 17 (Iido-ji) 井戸寺.....	17 F2
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Temple 75 (Zentsū-ji) 善通寺.....	75 E1
Temple 76 (Konzō-ji) 金倉寺.....	76 E1
Temple 77 (Dōryū-ji) 道隆寺.....	77 E1
Temple 78 (Gōshō-ji) 郷照寺.....	78 E1
Temple 79 (Kōshō-in) 高照院 (天皇寺).....	79 E1
Temple 80 (Kokubun-ji) 国分寺.....	80 E1
Temple 81 (Shiramine-ji) 白峰寺.....	81 E1
Temple 82 (Negoro-ji) 根香寺.....	82 E1
Temple 83 (Ichinomiya-ji) 一宮寺.....	83 E1
Temple 84 (Yashima-ji) 屋島寺.....	84 E1
Temple 85 (Yakuri-ji) 八栗寺.....	85 E1
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Temple 87 (Nagao-ji) 長尾寺.....	87 E1
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of *tabehōdai*, *nomihōdai* (all-you-can-eat and drink) for ¥3500/4000 per woman/man.

Drinking & Entertainment

Nightlife in Tokushima centres on the ACTY 21 building, which is an easily identifiable landmark in the Akita-machi entertainment district on the southwest side of the Shim-machi-gawa.

Hung Loose (☎ 623-3255; Tōjō Bldg 2F, 20-1 Ryōgokubashi; ☎ 8pm-4am; E) On the opposite corner from ACTY 21 is this Hawaiian-style surfer bar, which serves margaritas and frozen cocktails (from ¥800) in a tropical setting complete with palm trees and deck chairs.

Roppongi 7 (☎ 652-7099; ACTY 21, Akitamachi, 1-chōme; cover charge ¥3000; ☎ 8pm-4am Mon-Sat; E) Located on the 6F of the ACTY 21 building is this popular bar and discotheque, where locals get smashed and dance until the wee hours of the morning.

Getting There & Away

Tokushima's airport, 8km north of the city, is easily reached by bus (¥430, 25 minutes, hourly) from the front of the JR Tokushima station. There are direct flights to/from Tokyo (JAS/SKY, ¥23,950, 70 minutes, five daily), Nagoya (NAL, ¥16,000, one hour, two daily) and Fukuoka (JAC, ¥20,300, 85 minutes, two daily).

Tokushima is one hour from Takamatsu (¥1410), 2½ hours from Kōchi (¥3080) and 3½ hours from Matsuyama (¥4760) by the hourly *tokkyū* (limited express).

Overnight JR highway buses connect Tokushima with Tokyo (¥10,000) and Nagoya (¥6600), and there are frequent buses each day to/from Osaka (¥3600, 2½ hours) and Kyoto (¥4100, three hours). Note that the JR Pass is not valid for these connections.

Ferry services have all but disappeared, though there are still regular daily connections with **Nankai Ferry** (☎ 0120-732-156) between Tokushima and Wakayama (¥2400, about two hours). Ferries depart/arrive at Okinosu port, 3km east of the town centre, and can be reached by bus (¥240, 10 minutes, hourly) from the front of the JR Tokushima station. From Tokyo is the long-distance **Ocean Tōkyū Ferry** (☎ 5128-0109) going to Tokushima (¥9000, 18 hours).

Getting Around

It's easy to get around Tokushima on foot – it's only about 700m from the JR Tokushima

station to the Bizan cable-car station. If you're looking to be a little more mobile, however, **free rental bicycles** (☎ 622-8556; deposit ¥3000; ☎ 9am-4.30pm) are available from the underground bike-parking area to your left as you leave the station.

AROUND TOKUSHIMA

Naruto Whirlpools 鳴門のうず潮

At the change of tide, sea water whisks through the narrow Naruto Channel (which separates Shikoku from Awaji-shima island) with such velocity that ferocious **whirlpools** are created. The *naruto-no-uzu-shio* are one of the region's most famous attractions, though unfortunately they're not as easy to see as the tourist literature would have you believe.

In addition to knowing the tidal schedule, it also helps if you can time your visit to coincide with the full moon, which is when the whirlpools reach their peak intensity. To save yourself any disappointment, consult with the tourist information office or TOPIA in Tokushima.

For an up-close and personal view of the whirlpools (this is not for the faint of heart), you can venture out into the Naruto Channel on one of the **tourist boats** (¥2000, 30 minutes), which depart from the waterfront in Naruto. For a bird's-eye view, you can hike along the **Uzu-no-michi** (渦の道; ☎ 088-683-6262; admission ¥500; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun), a 450m-long walkway underneath the Naruto-Ōhashi bridge that puts you just 45m above the swirling maelstrom.

To visit the whirlpools, you can take the local train from the JR Tokushima station (¥350, 40 minutes, hourly), though the JR Naruto station is about a 15-minute walk from the waterfront. A more convenient option is to take a Naruto-bound bus (¥600, one hour, hourly) from in front of the JR Tokushima station to the Naruto-Ōhashi bridge.

IYA VALLEY 祖谷溪

The remote Iya Valley, one of Japan's three 'Hidden Regions', is a welcome escape from the hustle and bustle of urban Japan. With its houses perched high on hillsides and its air of isolation, Iya has been dubbed the 'Tibet of Japan'.

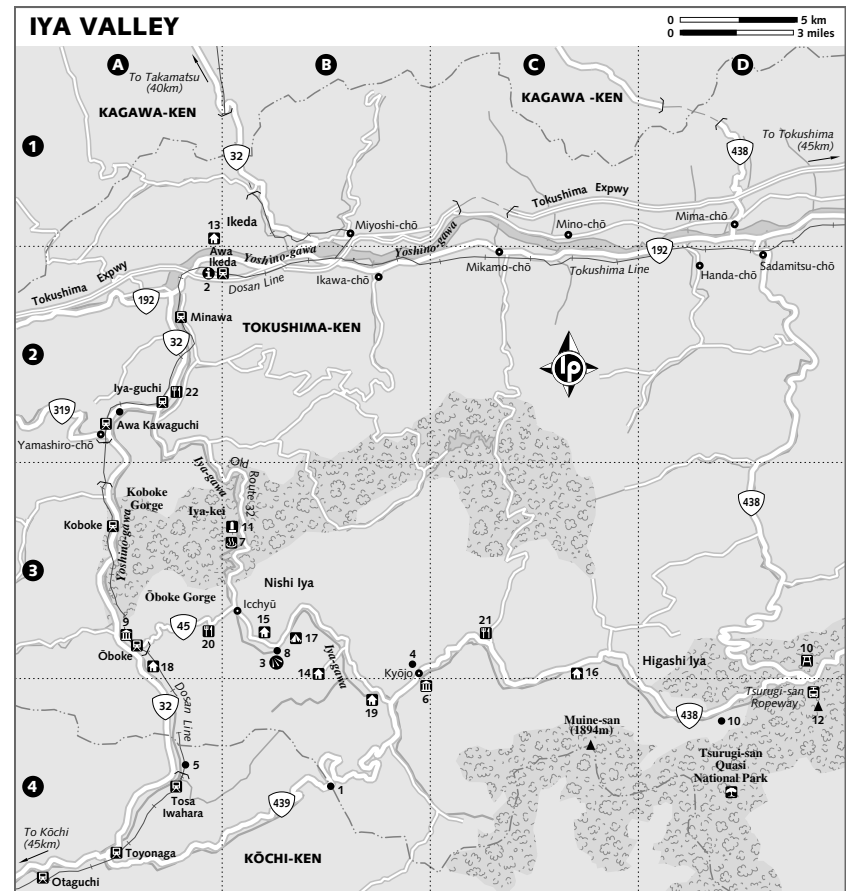
The earliest record of the valley describes a group of shamans fleeing persecution in Nara in the 9th century. Iya later became a refuge for defeated Heike warriors, fleeing the Genji clan in the 12th-century civil wars.

The steep mountain topography and Japan's deepest gorges have ensured that Iya remains a refuge to this day.

Along with its famed *kazura-bashi* (vine bridges) and emerald green rivers, Iya boasts

some classic folk architecture, with traditional farmhouses nestled into the hills.

The Iya region is a nature and adventure-sports haven, with superb hiking around Tsurugi-san mountain, white-water rafting in the



INFORMATION

Kyōbashi Pass 京柱峠1 B4
Tourist Information Office
阿波池田駅観光案内所2 A2

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Biwa-no-taki 琵琶の滝3 B3
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stunning Ōboke and Koboke Gorges and great – if hilly – cycling opportunities. Worn-out travellers can reward themselves at the end of the day by soaking in top-notch *onsen* (mineral hot springs) and sampling Japanese mountain cuisine such as Iya *soba*, *dengaku* (fish and vegetables roasted on skewers) and the local *ishi-dofu* (hard tofu). Noted for its firm texture, *ishi-dofu* is traditionally made firm enough to be carried with straw tied around the tofu.

Most approach the Iya Valley via JR Ōboke station. However, getting around the valley involves some planning, as Iya's sights are very widespread. Infrequent buses travel between Ikeda, Ōboke and Iya, but the best way to explore the region is with your own wheels – rental cars are available in Shikoku's larger cities. It is possible to rent a car at JR Awa Ikeda station (☎ 0883-72-0809), but be sure to call ahead, since no cars are kept on site. There is a **tourist information office** (☎ 0883-72-7620) with maps outside the station.

Ōboke & Koboke 大歩危・小歩危

Ōboke literally means 'Great Danger Walking' (Koboke means 'Little Danger Walking'), and judging by the steep topography around here, it's no wonder why. South of Ikeda on Old Rte 32, along the scenic 8km-long stretch of the Yoshino-gawa between Koboke and Ōboke, white-water rafting and kayaking trips run from April to late November. The Aussie-run **Happy Raft** (☎ 0887-75-0500; www.happyraft.com), beside JR Tosa Iwahara station, operates reliable daily rafting trips with English-speaking guides (half-day trips ¥6500, full-day trips per weekday/weekend ¥12,500/13,500).

A great place to warm up after a chilling plunge down the Yoshino-gawa is at the **Iya Onsen** (☎ 0883-75-2311; ¥1500), which is along Old Rte 32. Here, guests can ride a self-propelled gondola down a cliff-side to discover a sulphurous but steamy *onsen* overlooking the river. The *onsen* is sex-segregated, and each

side has a small but extremely pleasurable hot spring-fed pool.

Just north of the *onsen* is the famous **Peeing Boy Statue**, which is placed at the same spot that passing motorists dare each other to stand for a rest stop. Standing on the highway barrier and peeing into the valley below may not seem dangerous at first, though you'll want to finish your business before the winds pick up!

Lapis Ōboke (☎ 0883-84-1489; admission ¥500), 1km north of JR Ōboke station, is a noteworthy geology museum featuring a fine collection of precious stones. It also serves as a tourist information centre.

An excellent Japanese-style budget-inn near JR Ōboke station is the riverside **Ku-Nel-Asob** (☎ 090-9778-7133; www.k-n-a.com; dm ¥2600; ☎). Accommodation is in simple but attractive communal tatami rooms, and the friendly English-speaking owners can provide free pick-ups/drop-offs at JR Ōboke station. A kitchen is available, and food can be bought at Bokemart, 30m from the train station. Since the house doesn't have a bath, a ride to the nearby Iya Onsen is offered for ¥500, including entry to the *onsen*.

Another good option is the **Awa Ikeda Youth Hostel** (☎ 0883-72-5277; dm ¥2850; ☎), which is part of the Mitsugoin-ji mountain-temple complex in Ikeda. Rooms are a bit on the Spartan side, though the real appeal here is the ambience provided by the attached mountain-temple. Book ahead if you need a pick-up at JR Awa Ikeda station (6pm only). It's up a very steep mountain, so don't try to walk there.

Perched high above the river near JR Iyaguchi station, **Woody Rest** (☎ 0887-87-2211; lunch/dinner from ¥700/1000; ☎ 11am-9pm; E) is a great place to sample the local specialities. The friendly, English-speaking couple can help you choose the perfect meal set, and they're also a great source of local travel information. Look for the English sign.

There is spectacular scenery in the deep canyons along Old Rte 32 – public buses (¥880, 55 minutes, three daily) between Ikeda and Iya Valley ply this narrow route. However, you can go at your own pace and really appreciate the beauty of the region if you have your own wheels.

Nishi Iya 西祖谷

Nishi Iya is popular for crossing the **Kazura-bashi** (¥500; ☎ 9am-5pm) vine bridge. Rivers in Shikoku's mountainous interior were

once commonly spanned by these perilous catwalks, which could conveniently be cut down to prevent pursuing enemy clans from crossing. Nearby, **Biwa-no-taki** is an impressive, 50m-high waterfall.

Kazura-bashi Camping Village (☎ 090-1571-5258; tent sites ¥500 plus ¥200 per person, bungalows for up to 4-5 people from ¥5200; ☎) is an excellent camping ground 500m upriver from the vine bridge. The atmosphere is pleasant and rustic, and the basic facilities are well cared for.

If you're looking for more upscale accommodation, head no further than **Hotel Kazura-bashi** (☎ 0883-87-2171; www.kazurabashi.co.jp; per person with meals from ¥15,900; ☎) which is a few kilometres north of the bridge. Hotel Kazura-bashi offers minimalist Japanese-style rooms with terrific mountain views. The hilltop *onsen* here boasts equally terrific views, and is open to nonguests (¥1000). The *onsen* is sex-segregated, and is highlighted by its cliff-top *rotemburo* (open-air hot spring).

For great local chow, it's worth seeking out **Senkichi** (☎ 0883-87-2733; ☎ 10.30am-5pm Fri-Wed Apr-Nov), on Rte 45, which serves home-made Iya *soba* for only ¥520. The stylish interior resembles a traditional Iya farmhouse. The exterior of the building is nondescript, though it's easy to spot if you look for the red waving flags advertising *soba*.

Higashi Iya 東祖谷

To escape the throngs of Japanese tourists at the vine bridge in Nishi Iya, head 30km east to the spectacular **Oku Iya Kazura-bashi** (¥500) in Higashi Iya. Set in a pristine natural environment, the secluded *fufu-bashi* (husband-and-wife vine bridges) hang side by side, high over the river gorge. Near the self-propelled, wooden cable-cart (a must-try!), there's a small public camping area.

The worthwhile **Higashi Iya Folk Museum** (☎ 0883-88-2286; admission ¥300; ☎ 8.30am-5pm) is housed in the large red building in Kyōjo, and displays historic artefacts from the region.

Several kilometres up a narrow, winding road near Kyōjo, **Buke Yashiki** (☎ 0883-88-2893; admission ¥300; ☎ 9am-5pm Wed-Mon) is an enormous thatched-roof samurai house-cum-museum commanding spectacular views of the valley. Beside the house is a pleasant Shintō shrine that is home to a massive cedar tree dating back more than 800 years.

Memme Juku (☎ 0883-88-2170; www.iya.jp/takumi/e.htm) is a nature- and field-studies school led

CHIIORI – A RURAL RETREAT

High on a mountainside in the remote Iya Valley, looking out over forested hillsides and plunging gorges, is one of Japan's most unusual places to visit.

Chiiori – 'The Cottage of the Flute' – is a once-abandoned 18th-century thatched-roof farmhouse that has been painstakingly restored towards its original brilliance. Unlike many such examples of cultural heritage in Japan, where concrete and plastic have wrecked the architectural aesthetic, here glistening red-pine floorboards surround open-floor hearths under soaring rafters. And best of all, it is a living, working building that welcomes both guests and volunteers.

Until the 1970s, residents of Iya preserved a way of life untainted by the effects of modernity. Set amid steep hillsides dotted by thatched houses and forests strewn with narrow mountain paths, Iya was an example of an untouched coexistence of man and nature, albeit one that offered residents little hope of wealth and comfort. In recent decades, however, the locals' traditional lifestyle and the balance with the environment has been rapidly upset; employment moved from agriculture to government-subsidised and frequently pointless construction, the effects of which – eg paved riverbeds – can be seen from almost any roadside.

Part of the project's mission has been working with residents to promote sustainable, community-based tourism and realise the financial potential of traditional life – which until recently many locals saw as backward and valueless. It is a work in progress – many thatched roofs in the area are still hidden by corrugated tin sheets – but by adding to the growing numbers of tourists visiting the area, largely because of the work of those involved in Chiiori, visiting here helps to encourage those conservation efforts.

Perhaps ironically given the Japanese tendency towards national pride, this place is the fruit of the work of two Americans. The house was bought as a ruin by the author and aesthete Alex Kerr in the early 1970s, and he went on to romanticise the Iya Valley – and feature Chiiori – in his award-winning book *Lost Japan*. Travel writer and photographer Mason Florence bought a half-share in the house in 1997, and managed the project until the middle of 2007.

Public transport is available to the bottom of the mountainside from the nearest train station, JR Ōboke – about 30km away – but buses are infrequent, and having your own vehicle is a better option. Chiiori itself can sometimes arrange pick-ups.

To learn more about the project log onto www.chiiori.org.

by villagers who offer courses in Iya's traditional arts, crafts and customs. The school is in the village and tricky to find – either phone ahead or check the web for directions.

Mampan Lodge (☎ 0883-88-5001; cabins per person ¥4000; P) at Ryūgūake-kōen park rents out comfy forest cabins complete with mini-kitchens. This is a great option for self-caterers looking for a quiet, rural escape.

our pick **Iyashi no Onsen-kyo** (☎ 0883-88-2975; per person with meals ¥12,000; P ♻️ 🗺️) on Rte 438 is a beautiful hotel and hot-springs complex with some cutesy thatched-roof houses, a commendable restaurant serving local cuisine and an attractively designed *onsen* (¥800 for non-guests). The *onsen* is a large sex-segregated complex, designed with natural wood, which features a variety of indoor and outdoor baths and Jacuzzis.

At **Soba Dōjō** (☎ 0883-88-2577; 🕒 11am-9pm), also on Rte 438, you can sample a bowl of Iya *soba* (¥500) and even make your own (¥2500). From the road, look for the red waving flags advertising *soba*.

Tsurugi-san 剣山

This mountain's name translates to Sword Peak, although it is gently rounded rather than sharp-edged. At 1955m, Tsurugi-san is the second-highest mountain in Shikoku and provides excellent short and long hiking opportunities, as well as snowboarding in winter. A chairlift goes midway up, from which it is a leisurely 40-minute walk to the summit, but bona fide hikers start from **Ōtsurugi-jinja**, the shrine near the car park.

Information on the popular multi-day hike between Tsurugi-san and Muine-san (1894m), as well as mountaintop accommodation and other detailed regional hiking information, can be found in Lonely Planet's *Hiking in Japan*.

SOUTHERN TOKUSHIMA-KEN

徳島県南部

Tokushima's spectacular southern coastline is highlighted by its rocky scenery, near-empty beaches and picturesque fishing villages. In addition to the last temple in Tokushima, the region is also home to several of the island's best surf spots.

The JR Mugi line runs down the coast as far as Kaifu, just short of the border with Kōchi-ken prefecture. From Kaifu, the private Asa Kaigan railway runs two stops to Kannoura

in Kōchi-ken. There is a train line to Nahari from Kōchi city – but there is no train around Muroto-misaki. Kannoura is at the end of the line for train travel from Tokushima. You can continue by bus or thumb to the cape at Muroto-misaki and on to Kōchi city.

Hiwasa 日和佐

☎ 0884

If you're doing the pilgrimage, you'll be visiting **Yakuō-ji** (薬王寺), Temple 23 and the last temple in Tokushima. In this tiny fishing town, Yakuō-ji is a *yakuyoke-dera*, a temple specialising in warding off bad luck during unlucky years. Although there are a number of designated unlucky years, the unluckiest age for men is 42, while for women it is 33. The stairway up to the temple is split. The men's side has 42 steps, while the women's has 33. Pilgrims approach on the appropriate side and put a coin on each step – if you turn up at a busy time, the steps are virtually overflowing with money!

If you're hoping to rest those travel-worn bones, the town's best accommodation option is in Yakuō-ji's **shukubō** (☎ 77-1105; per person with meals ¥7000; P ♻️). Small but attractive Japanese-style tatami rooms are perfect for slowing down and contemplating the beauty of the temple complex.

If you have your own wheels, forget Rte 55 and take the spectacular **Minami-Awa Sun-line** (南阿波サンライン) coastal road, which runs south to Mugi. There is little traffic as the 18km road to Mugi snakes its way around the coast revealing spectacular views out to sea.

Kainan, Kaifu, Shishikui & Tōyō

海南・海部・穴喰・東洋

The next few towns are 'surf city' Japan – Kainan, Kaifu, Shishikui and Tōyō in neighbouring Kōchi-ken prefecture are where it's at in Shikoku for surfers. The coastline is spectacular, and there are superb beaches and colourful characters. National and international surfing contests are occasionally held in the area.

Each of the towns boasts sweeping yellow-sand and boulder stone beaches where you can carve a few waves, though it's best to inquire locally about specific surf spots. Be advised that the coastline is rocky in parts, and the waves and surge can really pick up in this region.

Visitors with wheels can head inland on Rte 193 from Kainan for about 25km to Shikoku's

highest waterfall, the 55m-high **Todoroki Falls** (轟の滝), where there is good hiking in the surrounding area.

A 15-minute walk east of Kaifu station is the extremely enjoyable 4km-long **Atago-yama walking trail** (愛宕山遊歩道), which features sweeping views of the surrounding coastline.

At Shishikui Beach, take the hourly glass-bottomed boat cruise run by **Blue Marine** (ブルーマリン; ☎ 0884-76-3100; cruises per person ¥1800; 🕒 9am-4pm Wed-Mon) to see the area's sea life.

A popular accommodation spot for surfers is the **Koku-minshuku-sha Mitoko-so** (国民宿舎みとこ荘; ☎ 0884-76-3510; fax 0884-76-3609; per person with meals ¥6500; P ♻️), a few kilometres southwest of Shishikui, out on the coast. It's a government-run lodging house with modest Japanese- and Western-style rooms, though the best features of the Mitoko-so are its great views and a big communal bath.

KŌCHI-KEN 高知県

The largest of Shikoku's four prefectures, Kōchi-ken spans the entire Pacific coastline from east of the cape at Muroto-misaki to west of the cape at Ashizuri-misaki. Historically known as the land of Tosa, the region was always considered wild and remote as it's cut off from the rest of Japan by a barrier of rugged mountains on one side and the Pacific Ocean on the other. To *o-henrō*, Kōchi-ken is known as *Shūgyō-no-dōjō* (the place of practice) and has a notorious reputation as the pilgrimage's testing ground.

Although the trip through Tosa makes up more than a third of the pilgrimage, only 16 of the 88 temples are located in the province. In fact, there are 84km between the last temple in Tokushima-ken at Hiwasa and the first temple in Kōchi-ken at Muroto-misaki. Furthermore, the distance from Temple 37 (Iwamoto-ji) in Kubokawa to Temple 38 (Kongōfuku-ji) at Ashizuri-misaki is 87km, the longest distance between temples on the pilgrimage. Since there are few places this remote in all Japan, *o-henrō* tend to breathe a sigh of relief after moving on to Ehime-ken prefecture.

Kōchi-ken is also regarded as an exquisite destination for outdoor lovers. Whether your passion is surfing, whale-watching, canoeing, rafting, hiking or camping, Kōchi-ken brims with scenic spots, especially along the Shi-

manto-gawa, one of the last naturally flowing rivers in Japan.

TOKUSHIMA TO KŌCHI

If you've just come down the coast from Tokushima, you're literally at the end of the line at Kannoura as you pass into Kōchi-ken prefecture. This is the end of the train line, and if you want to carry on down to Muroto-misaki, you'll either have to take the bus or use your thumb. The good news is that the coast and its beaches and rocky headlands are about as scenic as they come.

The most popular spot along the coast for surfers is **Ikumi Beach** (郁美ビーチ), which also has free **camping**. If you're looking for slightly more comfortable accommodation, **Minami Kaze** (みなみかぜ; ☎ 0887-29-3638; per person ¥3000) is right on the beach at Ikumi, and is extremely popular with surfers. This basic *minshuku* has a collection of 10 simple Japanese-style rooms with shared toilets and showers. Meals and draught beer are also available.

Infrequent buses run to/from Kannoura from/to Muroto-misaki (¥1680, one hour) and Kōchi city (¥2950, 2½ hours). For the last 40km to the cape, the road hugs the coast, hemmed in by mountains on one side and the sea on the other.

Muroto-misaki 室戸岬

☎ 0887

One of Shikoku's two great capes that jut out into the Pacific, Muroto-misaki is famed in Japanese literature as one of the wildest spots in the nation, and as the doorway to the land of the dead. To pilgrims, it is the place where Kōbō Daishi achieved enlightenment. On a calm day, the Pacific is like a millpond; in bad weather Muroto is pounded by huge waves and buffeted by the wind. Visitors can explore Kōbō Daishi's bathing hole among the rock pools, or the cave where he once meditated.

A few kilometres northeast of the cape, a 5.5m-high white statue of the saint stares out to sea. Temple 24, **Hotsumisaki-ji** (最御崎寺; also known as Higashi-dera), sits on top of the hill directly above the point. The temple complex here has a basic **youth hostel** (☎ 23-0024; dm ¥3200) with threadbare Western-style dormitories. Meals and draught beer are available.

There are regular buses from Muroto to Kōchi station (¥3050, 2½ hours, seven daily).

A FOOD LOVER'S GUIDE TO SHIKOKU

Stretching from the ice-capped mountains of Hokkaidō to the subtropical islands of Okinawa, the Japanese archipelago is striking in its regional variation. With this incredible diversity of landscape, it should come as no surprise that each region of Japan boasts its own signature dishes and **meibutsu** (名物; local delicacies). Needless to say, the island of Shikoku is no different.

The island's most famous dish is **sanuki-udon** (さぬきうどん), a type of *udon* noodle that comes from Kagawa-ken (which was historically known as Sanuki), and is renowned for its silky texture and *al dente* firmness. According to legend, *udon* was first brought to Kagawa from China in the 9th century by Shikoku's most famous son, Kōbō Daishi (p630). Since the prefecture doesn't receive enough rainfall to enable full-scale rice production, Kagawa-ken relies heavily on wheat as a staple crop. In fact, it's estimated that *udon* consumption in Kagawa-ken is nearly seven times the national average. *Sanuki-udon* is traditionally served as **kake-udon** (かけうどん; noodles in hot soup), **zaru-udon** (ざるうどん; cold noodles with dipping sauce) and **kame-age** (釜揚げ; hot noodles with dipping sauce).

Another famous Shikoku delicacy is **iya-soba** (祖谷そば), a type of buckwheat noodle that comes from the Iya Valley in Tokushima-ken, and is renowned for its rough-hewn texture and rich flavour. Due to its cool, mountain climate, the region is perfectly suited for buckwheat production as opposed to rice. Iya-soba is best served as **zaru-soba** (ざるそば; cold noodles with dipping sauce), **kake-soba** (かけそば; noodles in hot soup) or as a complement to **iya-dofu** (祖谷豆腐; Iya tofu), a hard yet creamy variant of tofu.

In Tokushima-ken, the ferocious surge of the Naruto Whirlpools (p632) results in a special variant of **wakame** (わかめ; a type of seaweed) that is especially thick and textured. *Wakame* is typically harvested in the springtime, and is preserved according to traditional drying techniques that originated during the Edo period. After being laid out in the sun to dry, charcoal is sprinkled over the top, which facilitates the preservation process. In Shikoku, *wakame* features prominently in most soups and stocks, and is easily identified by its bright green colour.

The Naruto Whirlpools also have a pronounced effect on local fish, especially on the **tai** (鯛; sea bream), which is particularly lean and light in texture. In Shikoku, tai is usually served with **sudachi** (すだち; a small citrus fruit) and **sansho** (山椒; a tangy spice).

In Kōchi-ken, keep an eye out for **katsuo-no-tataki** (かつおのたたき), a famous dish of lightly charcoal-braised bonito that is left raw in the middle, served as sliced sashimi and usually accompanied by a light vinegar and soy sauce mix. The perfect follow-up to *katsuo-no-tataki* is its salted offal, which is called **shutō** (酒盗), or 'sake-theft', as it accompanies the drink so well that sake-less gastronomes are forced to turn to crime.

Finally, if you're travelling along the Shimanto-gawa, there's no shortage of unique local dishes including **tennen-ayu-no-shio-yaki** (天然鮎の塩焼き; salted and grilled wild sweetfish), **masu** (鱒; trout capriccio with capers and red peppers) and **magani** (まがに; boiled river crab).

Ryūga-dō 龍河洞

☎ 0887

Accessible by bus from Noichi station on the Gomen-Nahari line is the impressive limestone cave **Ryūga-dō** (☎ 53-2144; www.ryugadou.or.jp in Japanese; admission ¥1000; ☎ 8.30am-5pm). Designated as a national natural monument, the cave has characteristic stalactites and stalagmites, and traces of prehistoric habitation. About 1km of the 4km of cave is toured in the standard visit. If you're into caves and book ahead, you can do the 'adventure course' (¥3000) and don overalls for a two-hour exploration of the cave's more inner reaches.

Ryūga-dō can also be reached by bus from Tosa-Yamada station (¥440, 20 minutes, hourly).

KŌCHI 高知

☎ 088 / pop 335,000

As the former capital of Tosa province, the castle town of Kōchi played a prominent role in the Meiji Restoration. Today, however, humble Kōchi is simply a prefectural capital, though there are a number of interesting sights in town, including its small but original castle. The city is also a good spot for resting your tired bones and indulging in modern

conveniences before venturing out to the next set of temples.

Orientation

Kōchi city is centred on Harimayabashi-dōri, which runs from north to south and is serviced by a tramline. This street crosses the Obiyamachi shopping arcade near Harimaya-bashi, a recently rebuilt replica of a historic bridge.

Information

The helpful **tourist information office** (☎ 882-7777; ☎ 9am-8pm), at the JR Kōchi station, provides English maps and brochures, and can help you book accommodation.

Also well worth visiting for local information, maps and friendly advice is the **Kōchi International Association** (KIA; ☎ 875-0022; www.kochi-f.co.jp/kia; 4-1-31 Honmachi; ☎ 8.30am-5.15pm Mon-Sat, closed Sat Aug), on the south side of the castle. It offers free internet access, a library, TV and English newspapers. Check out the association's website for information and events.

Coin lockers and a left-luggage office are available at the post office; next to the station.

Sights & Activities

KŌCHI-JŌ 高知城

Unlike other concrete reconstructions, Kōchi's **castle** (☎ 824-5701; admission ¥400; ☎ 9am-4.30pm) is the real thing. Building on the site dates back to the 14th century, though the original castle was built between 1601 and 1611, burnt down in 1727 and later rebuilt in 1753. By this time, however, the peaceful reign of the Tokugawa shōgunate was well established, and castles were scarcely necessary except as a symbol of a feudal lord's power. Therefore, the Kōchi lord rebuilt the castle with his *kaitokukan* (living quarters) on the ground floor, with doors opening into the garden. As a result, Kōchi-jō is a rather cosy little castle, and unlike those that were strongly fortified against enemy attack.

GODAISAN 五台山

Several kilometres east of the town centre on a stand-alone hill is **Godaisan-kōen** (五台山公園; ☎ dawn-dusk), which has excellent views over the city from its *tenbōdai* (viewpoint). At the top of the hill in the park is **Chikurin-ji** (竹林寺; ☎ 882-3085; admission to Treasure House & Gardens ¥400; ☎ 8.30am-5pm), Temple 31 on the

88 Sacred Temple Circuit, which has pleasant gardens, a five-storey pagoda and a small Treasure House. On the south side of the hill are the **Kōchi Prefectural Makino Botanical Gardens** (高知県立牧野植物園; ☎ 882-2601; admission ¥500; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun), which features more than 3000 different plant species. Frequent buses from the Harimaya-bashi bus terminal run directly to Godaisan (¥150, 10 minutes).

KATSURA-HAMA 桂浜

Katsura-hama is a popular **beach** located 13km south of central Kōchi at the point where Kōchi's harbour empties out into Tosa-wan. A five-minute walk west and up from the beach is the **Sakamoto Ryōma Memorial Museum** (高知県立坂本竜馬記念館; ☎ 841-0001; 8-30 Jōsan; admission ¥400; ☎ 9am-5pm), which tells the life story of this local hero in miniature dioramas. Although it was the progressive samurai class of Kagoshima and Hagi that played a major part in the dramatic events of the Meiji Restoration, the citizens of Kōchi claim it was their hometown hero Sakamoto who brought the two sides together. His assassination in Kyoto in 1867 at the age of 32 cemented his romantic yet tragic image, and he appears – looking distinctly sour – on countless postcards and other tourist memorabilia in Kōchi. In addition to the museum, there is an impressive **statue** of Sakamoto Ryōma by Katsura-hama beach. Frequent buses run from Kōchi station to Katsura-hama (¥610, 30 minutes).

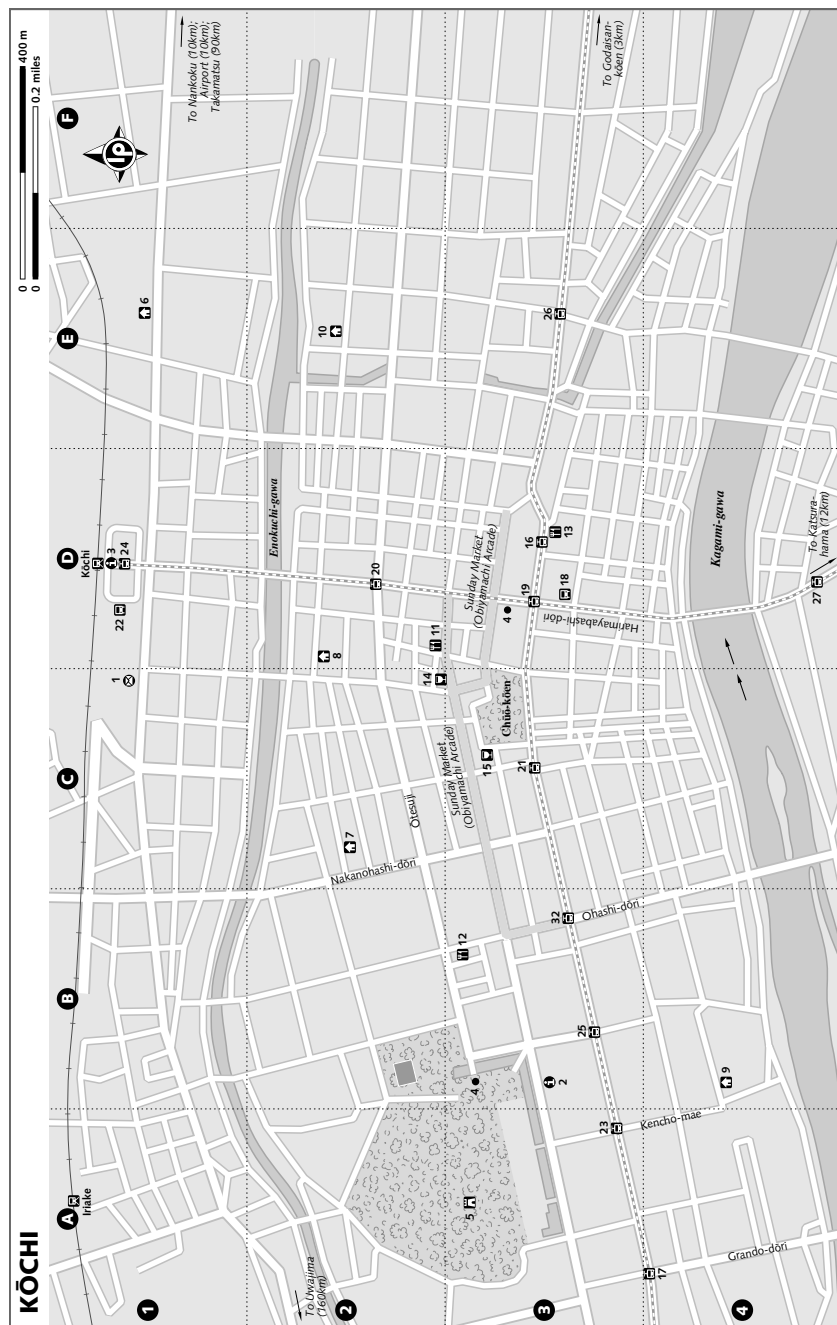
SUNDAY MARKET 日曜日

If you're in Kōchi on a Sunday, don't miss the colourful **street market** (☎ 5am-6pm Sun Apr-Sep, 6am-5pm Sun Oct-Mar) along the road leading to the castle. The market, which has been going for some 300 years, has everything from fruit, vegetables and goldfish to antiques, knives and large garden stones.

Festivals

Kōchi's lively **Yosakoi-matsuri** (よさこい祭り) on 10 and 11 August perfectly complements Tokushima's Awa-odori festival (12 to 15 August; p629). There's a night-before event on 9 August and night-after effort on 12 August, but 10 and 11 August are the big days. Needless to say, a lot of alcohol disappears in the sweltering summer heat, and a lot of fun is had by all.

Recent festivals have attracted about 20,000 dancers in around 200 teams, including one



team of foreigners. If you're keen to take part, contact the Kōchi International Association (p639), though it's best to get things sorted out early as accommodation is a nightmare to find on the day.

Sleeping

Big 1 (☎ 883-9603; www.big-1japan.co.jp in Japanese; 3-9-45 Kitahonmachi; per person ¥3700; (P) (♿) (♿) (♿)) As hinted at by its English name, this men-only capsule hotel has no shortage of big capsules, though it's the attractive extras such as swimming pool, *onsen* and relaxation space that make the Big 1 a good choice. The hotel is conveniently located just 300m west of the station along the main road.

Tosa Bekkan (☎ 883-5685; fax 884-9523; 1-11-34 Sakura-chō; per person ¥4000; (P) (♿)) The best deal in town is this homey *minshuku*, which is run by a warm family and features spacious Japanese-style rooms complete with en-suite facilities. If it's a particularly hot day, don't be surprised if the *obachan* (grandmother) offers you a frosty ice cream when you arrive! To reach the Tosa Bekkan, follow the train lines from the station and turn left when you see the English sign for the Green Hotel.

Hotel No 1 Kōchi (☎ 873-3333; www.hotelno1.jp/kochi in Japanese; 16-8 Nijūdai-chō; s/d ¥6000/8000; (P) (♿) (♿)) Three blocks north of Hirome Ichiba (see right), this spick-and-span business hotel is within stumbling distance of Kōchi's entertainment quarter. Western-style rooms are a bit on the small side, though the rooftop *rotemburo* (open-air bath) is a nice touch.

Kōchi Palace Hotel (☎ 825-0100; www.kochipalace.co.jp in Japanese; 1-18 Nijūdai-machi; s/d ¥6500/8500; (P) (♿) (♿)) Weighing in at 262 rooms, the

Kōchi Palace Hotel is the largest in the prefecture. Although the Western-style rooms are your standard sterile business offering, there is an excellent smattering of on-site bars and restaurants. The hotel is two blocks west of the north-south tram line on the south side of the river, and is fairly easy to spot (it is the largest hotel in town!).

our pick Sansuien (☎ 822-0131; www.sansuien.co.jp in Japanese; 1-3-35 Takajō-machi; per person with meals from ¥15,000; (P) (♿) (♿)) Three blocks south of the castle along Kencho-mae is this top-class ryokan, which is adjacent to a series of historic buildings on the grounds of the Kōchi *daimyō* (regional lord under the shōgun). Traditional Japanese-style rooms are refined and elegant, and guests also have free access to the attached gardens and private *onsen*.

Eating

Kōchi's top eating area is around the Obiyamachi shopping arcade, near the Harimaya-bashi junction, where the tram lines meet.

Hirome Ichiba (☎ 822-5287; 2-3-1 Obiyamachi; ☎ 8am-11pm) Even if it's not Sunday, this boisterous market just east of the castle (look for the English sign) is always a good choice for cheap eats and abundant drinks. Be on the look-out for *gomoku rāmen*, which is a nourishing mix of *rāmen* noodles and Kōchi's abundant fresh seafood.

Hakobe (☎ 822-5287; 1-2-5 Obiyamachi; ☎ 8am-11pm, closed Wed) At the eastern end of the Obiyamachi arcade, this hole-in-the-wall joint is a quick and easy way to fill up. The house special is *okonomiyake* (mixed pancake of egg, cheese, onions and meat; ¥500), which you cook yourself at the tabletop oven. If you're a bit of an aspiring chef, try to make your

INFORMATION	Sansuien 三翠園.....	9 B4	Harimaya-bashi Bus Terminal
Central Post Office 中央郵便局.....	1 C1	Tosa Bekkan 土佐別館.....	10 E2
Kōchi International Association 高知国際交流センター.....	2 B3	EATING (♿)	はりまやばし.....
Tourist Information Office		Hakobe はこべ.....	11 D2
駅観光案内所.....	3 D1	Hirome Ichiba ひろめ市場.....	12 B3
		Tokugetsurō 得月楼.....	13 D3
SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES		DRINKING (♿)	JR Kōchi Station Bus Terminal
Harimaya-bashi はりまや橋.....	4 D3	Tosa-no-izakaya Ippon-tsuru	高知駅バスターミナル.....
Kōchi-jo 高知城.....	5 A3	土佐の居酒屋一本釣り.....	14 C2
		Viva.....	15 C3
SLEEPING (♿)		こうちえきまえ.....	24 D1
Big 1 ビッグ1.....	6 E1	Kōchi-jo-mae	高知城前.....
Hotel No 1 Kōchi		こうちじょうまえ.....	25 B3
ホテルNo 1高知.....	7 C2	Saenbachō	せんぱちょう.....
Kōchi Palace Hotel		Grando-dōri	ぐらんどどおり.....
高知パレスホテル.....	8 D2	Denetsu Taminaru-biru Mae	16 D3
		デンテツターミナルビル.....	16 D3
		Grando-dōri	ぐらんどどおり.....
		高知バスターミナル	17 A4
		はりまやばし	18 D3
		Harimaya-bashi	19 D3
		Hasuike-machi	20 D2
		はすいけまち	21 C3
		Horizume ほりづめ	21 C3
		Kencho-mae	23 A3
		けんちょうまえ	23 A3
		Kōchi-eki	24 D1
		こうちえきまえ	24 D1
		Kōchi-jo-mae	25 B3
		こうちじょうまえ	25 B3
		Saenbachō	26 E3
		せんぱちょう	26 E3
		Umenotsuji うめのつじ	27 D4
		うめのつじ	27 D4

meal look as nice as the plastic food models outside.

Tokugetsurō (☎ 882-0101; 1-17-3 Minami-harimayachō; from ¥5000; ☎ lunch & dinner) Open since 1870, this is the place to come to if you have a fat wallet and want to try immaculately presented *Tosa-ryōri* (local cuisine). Unfortunately, this can be a difficult place to visit if you don't read Japanese as the kanji-heavy menu changes daily, though you can always choose which *setto-cossu* (set course) you'd like based on the price. It's in a traditional building directly across from the Dentetsu Taminaru-biru Mae tram stop.

Drinking & Entertainment

Kōchi's entertainment area is also located around the Obiyamachi shopping arcade.

Tosa-no-izakaya Ippon-tsuru (☎ 825-3676; 1-5-50biyamachi; sake from ¥450; ☎ 7pm-midnight) In the middle of the Obiyamachi shopping arcade (look for the red lanterns outside), this popular *izakaya* (Japanese pub/eatery) features sake from each of the prefecture's 19 sake producers – make sure you know how to find your way home if you intend to try all of them.

Viva (☎ 823-6362; 1-1-11 Honmachi; drinks from ¥500; ☎ 6pm-1am Sun-Thu, 6pm-5am Fri-Sat; E) On the western edge of Chūō-kōen (look for the English sign) is this trendy dining bar, which has over 100 cocktails and beers on offer from all over the world. On weekends, Viva really gets kicking when the tables are pushed to the walls and the music is turned up.

Getting There & Away

Kōchi's airport, 10km east of the city, is easily reached by bus (¥700, 35 minutes, hourly) from the front of the JR Kōchi station. There are direct flights to/from Tokyo (ANA/JAS, ¥25,800, 1¼ hours, six daily), Nagoya (JAIR, ¥21,000, one hour, three daily), Osaka (ANK, ¥13,000, 40 minutes, six daily) and Fukuoka (JAC, ¥20,500, one hour, three daily).

Kōchi is on the JR Dosan line, and is connected to Takamatsu (¥4440, 2½ hours, hourly) via *tokkyū*. Trains also run westward to Uwajima (¥4340, three hours, hourly) where you can continue north to Matsuyama, though it's faster to travel by bus (¥3800, 2½ hours, hourly).

Tokkyū Ferry (☎ 622-1826) has regular ferry connections between Kōchi and Osaka (¥5000, nine hours, daily) and Kawasaki (¥11,500, 16 hours, weekly). Ferries depart/arrive at Kōchi

port, which is a few kilometres south of the town centre, and can be reached in 15 minutes by tram (see below).

Getting Around

Kōchi's colourful tram service (¥180 per trip) has been running since 1904, and consists of carriages from all over the world, including Germany, Norway and Portugal. There are two lines – the north-south line from the station intersects with the east-west tram route at the Harimayabashi junction. Pay when you get off, and ask for a *norikae-ken* (transfer ticket) if you have to change lines.

The tourist information office (p639) has free bicycles that visitors can use from 10am to 5pm, and overnight if they book accommodation in the city.

KŌCHI TO ASHIZURI-MISAKI

There are all sorts of interesting things going on between Kōchi and Ashizuri-misaki, particularly the closer you get to the cape. You can whale-watch, kayak and canoe on the last free-flowing river in Japan, while there's an exquisite beach at Ōki-hama and, at the cape itself, intriguing history and picturesque scenery.

The train line from Kōchi parts at Wakai. The JR Yodo line heads west through the mountains to Uwajima in Ehime-ken, while the Tosa-kuroshio line heads south to Nakamura, then west to Sukumo. There is also a regular bus service that goes to Ashizuri-misaki from Nakamura station (¥1970, one hour). You can continue around the cape and on to Sukumo and Uwajima by bus or thumb.

There are **whale-watching trips** (¥5000, three hours) on offer in Saga (☎ 55-3131) and Ōgata (☎ 43-1058) from spring to autumn, but you might want to call ahead to see if they are running.

The region's best accommodation option is the hard-to-get-to but often-raved-about **Shimanto-gawa Youth Hostel** (四万十川ユースホステル; ☎ 54-1352; www.16.plala.or.jp/shimanto-yh in Japanese; dm ¥3150; ☎ ☎). Accommodation is in basic Western-style dorms, though the hostel is the perfect destination for travellers who really want to get away from it all. The location is incredibly rustic and picturesque, and the hostel runs canoeing trips (¥5500 per person, including all tuition and gear). Meals and draught beer are available.

To reach the hostel, get off at Ekawasaki station, and take the bus to Kuchiyana (¥850, 30 minutes). The youth hostel is 4.5km away across the river, but the manager will come and pick you up if you call and ask nicely.

Nakamura 中村

☎ 0880

Nakamura is a good place to organise trips on the beautiful **Shimanto-gawa** (四万十川), one of the last free-flowing rivers in Japan. Staff at the **tourist information office** (☎ 35-4171; ☎ 10am-7pm) at Nakamura station can provide information on kayaking and canoe trips, camping and outdoor activities.

Dragonfly lovers will go bananas at the **Shimanto-gawa Gakuyūkan** (四万十川学遊館; ☎ 37-4111; admission ¥840; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun) where over 3000 dragonflies from Japan and around the world are on display. There's a dragonfly park where living dragonflies cruise around, and a great display of fish from Shimanto-gawa.

About 40 minutes south of Nakamura on the bus to Ashizuri-misaki is **Ōki-hama** (大岐浜), a 2km-long stretch of sandy white beach backed by pine trees that is likely to have you blinking in disbelief and reaching for your swimming gear. It's possible to camp here, and although local surfers don't want to advertise it, it is an excellent surfing spot.

THE GENTLE JAPANESE ART OF ZAZEN (坐禪) Melissa Wilson

After sushi and Sony, perhaps one of Japan's most well-known contemporary exports is that of Zen Buddhism. However, Western associations of the word Zen – with minimalist interiors, water features and trays of sand with miniature rakes – have perhaps lost the *kokoro* (heart) of Zen somewhat. For example, at the heart of Zen Buddhism is the practice of *zazen* meditation, which focuses on deep breathing from the *hara* (abdomen) with the goal of emptying your mind of its 'outer layers' in search of enlightenment, or *satori*. Overwhelmed by the endless clutter of Japan, I set out on a pilgrimage in search of some spiritual calm.

In the early evening twilight surrounded by solemn forest, we entered a great wooden temple to the sound of chirping crickets. Having neatly stowed our shoes, we sat on cushions in tidy lines across the tatami matted floor of the hall. We began by bowing to the cushions and to one another, while the monk calmly struck two bells, the first a small chiming sound, and the second, a deeply resonant dong. Night fell outside; nearby temple buildings were bathed in deep turquoise light, stoic trees so still, the air cool. Only a gentle breeze permeated the hall, where the warm light and sandalwood incense was more than enough to put me in a meditative mood.

The monk was young, fresh faced and friendly. He wore a long elegantly cut kimono made of heavy blue fabric. His head was shaven; he wore no ornamentation, and he spoke freely while pacing the room, explaining the techniques we were to practise. Sitting in either the full lotus, half lotus or with legs crossed in front, we were to keep our spines relaxed but straight, heads level, eyes half closed. It is important not to fall asleep, but through concentration to empty your mind. In a foetal state of calm, I was blithely enjoying the sound of clearing of throats, the gentle padding of the monk's feet as he paced about the room, his robes rustling.

The first session began with three chimes and presently I was aware of a sharp *thwacking* sound. From the corner of my eye, my meditative emptiness was promptly displaced by an awareness that the monk was not only pacing the room wielding a long wooden stick, but also stopping now and then to beat practitioners on the back with it. 'That's not very Zen,' I thought to myself! Alarmed, I worried that I would be his next victim.

However, what they call 'punishment' is invited by the practitioner. With hands clasped, a small bow is followed by a submissive bow, at which point the monk delivers two hits to each shoulder. Although supposed to help focus the mind of the practitioner, I was surprised to see small children and old men alike, asking for it. All the while, the monk smiled calmly. Rather than my idea of Zen, this invoked associations with masochistic Japanese game shows. Although my Japanese friends assured me it did not hurt, I was nonetheless content to meditate without motivational aid!

Melissa Wilson is a freelance writer who focuses on comparative cultures and ritualistic traditions in Asia.

ASHIZURI-MISAKI 足摺岬

☎ 0880

Like Muroto-misaki, Ashizuri-misaki is a wild, picturesque promontory that is famous for its other-worldly appearance and violent weather. Ashizuri means 'foot stamping' – the cape got its name from the story of an old monk who stamped his foot in anguish when his young disciple set off looking for the promised land of Fudaraku in a boat. Fudaraku was believed to be the blessed realm of Kannon, goddess of mercy, and many set forth from the cape in their search for paradise in this lifetime, never to be heard from again. Centuries later, Ashizuri is famous for suicides, with stories such as that of a young geisha who danced off the edge onto the beckoning rocks below.

On the cape at Ashizuri-misaki, there is a large statue and a **museum** (ジャーンマン博物館; ☎ 88-1136; admission ¥300; ☎ 9am-4pm Fri-Wed) in honour of the locally born hero John Manjiro. Born in 1836 as Nakahama Manjiro, the young fisherman was swept onto the desolate shores of Tori-shima island, 600km off Tokyo Bay, in 1841. Five months later, he and his shipmates were rescued by a US whaler, and granted safe passage to Hawaii. After moving to Massachusetts and learning English, navigation and the ways of the West, 'John' returned to Japan to become one of the country's first true statesmen. Manjiro's intrepid journey is recounted in Masuji Ibuse's *Castaways*.

Ashizuri-misaki is also home to Temple 38 or **Kongōfuku-ji** (金剛福寺; ☎ 88-0038; ☎ 7am-5:30pm), which has breathtaking views of the promontory and the Pacific Ocean. If you want to linger in these desolate and lonely surroundings, nearby is the **Ashizuri Youth Hostel** (足摺ユースホステル; ☎ 88-0324; dm ¥3200; ☎ P ☎), which has basic but well-cared-for Western-style dormitories. Meals and draught beer are available.

EHIME-KEN 愛媛県

Occupying the northwestern region of Shikoku, Ehime-ken is known to *o-henrō* as *Bodai-no-dōjō* (the place of attainment of wisdom) and has the largest number (27) of pilgrimage temples. Like Tosa, the southern part of the prefecture was always considered to be wild and remote, though *o-henrō* revel upon arrival in Shikoku's largest city, Mat-

suyama, as they know that the hard work of the pilgrimage has been done.

Perhaps the most famous temple in Ehime-ken is Temple 45, Iwaya-ji, which hangs high on a cliff-side above a valley floor. There are also large clusters of temples around Matsuyama and the Shimanami-kaidō bridge system, which links Shikoku to Honshū. However, perhaps more than other prefectures in Shikoku, Ehime-ken lures in travellers with its long list of noteworthy sights.

Prefectural highlights include the notorious sex shrine and museum in Uwajima, the immaculately preserved feudal castle and historic Dōgo Onsen in Matsuyama, and the sacred peak Ishizuchi-san (1982m), the tallest mountain in western Japan.

UWAJIMA 宇和島

☎ 0895 / pop 62,000

Were it not for its somewhat controversial sex shrine and museum, Uwajima would be just another rural town in Shikoku. Although there's not too much going on in town to hold your interest, a visit to Taga-jinja will definitely redefine your conceptions of Shinto shrines.

Information

The **tourist information office** (☎ 22-3934; ☎ 8:30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat & Sun) is across the road from JR Uwajima station, and offers free internet access. The staff can also make accommodation bookings for you and will, of course, feign surprise when you ask the way to the sex museum.

There are coin lockers at the station and, for money, international ATMs at the post office, a few blocks west of the train station.

Sights & Activities**TAGA-JINJA & SEX MUSEUM** 多賀神社

Once upon a time, numerous Shinto shrines had a strong connection to fertility rites, though this aspect was comprehensively purged when Puritanism was imported from the West following the Meiji Restoration. Nevertheless, a handful of these shrines including **Taga-jinja** survived, and today remain totally dedicated to sex. The grounds of Taga-jinja are home to tree-trunk phalluses and various other amusing statues and stone carvings, though the star attraction is the three-storey **sex museum** (☎ 22-3444; www1.quolla.com/dekoboko in Japanese; admission ¥800; ☎ 8am-5pm).

Inside, the museum is packed floor to ceiling with everything from explicit Peruvian pottery to Greek vases; from the illustrated Kamasutra to Tibetan Tantric sculptures; from South Pacific fertility gods to a showcase full of leather S&M gear; and from early Japanese *shunga* (explicit erotic prints) to their European Victorian equivalents, not to mention a healthy collection of modern porn magazines.

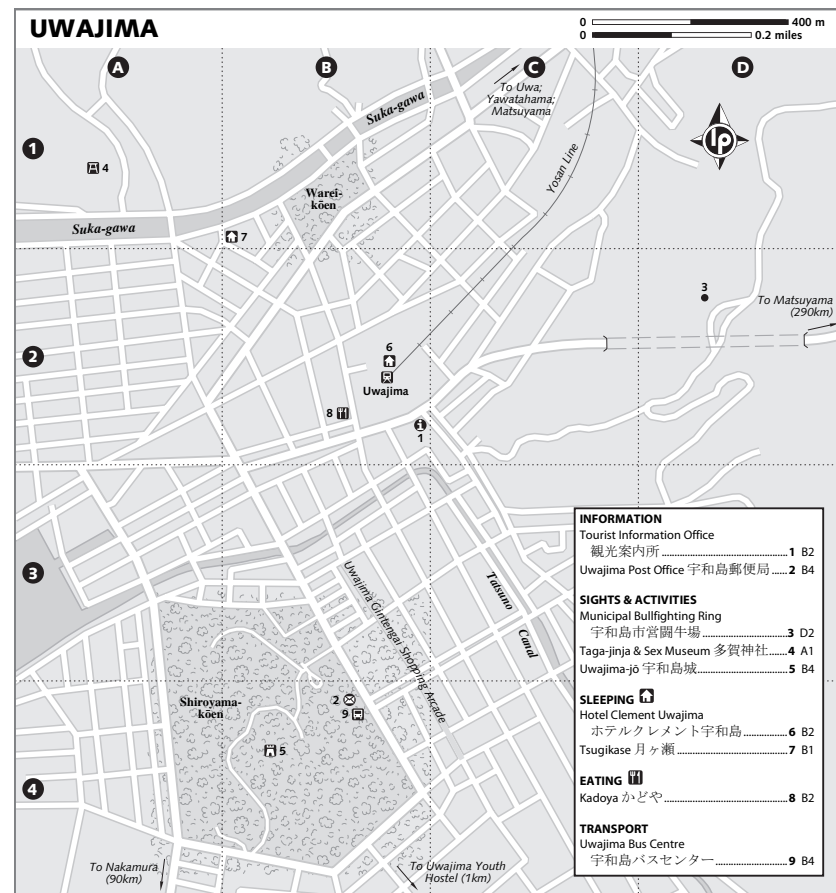
Watching the reactions of Japanese visitors here is almost as interesting as inspecting the intriguing exhibits. Even if you're sick to death of temples and shrines, this is one to put on the 'to visit' list. For a sneak preview, check out the website.

In case you're too embarrassed to ask for directions, fear not as the shrine is well signed

(in English and Japanese), and is just across the bridge over the Suka-gawa.

UWAJIMA-JŌ 宇和島城

Dating from 1601, **Uwajima-jō** (☎ 22-2832; admission ¥200; ☎ 9am-4pm) is a small but interesting three-storey castle atop an 80m-high hillock in the middle of town. This castle once stood by the sea, and although land reclamation has moved the water well back, it still has good views over the town. Inside the castle grounds are photos of its restoration and of other castles in Japan and overseas. The surrounding park, **Shiroyama Kōen** (城山公園), is open from sunrise to sunset, and is a pleasant place for an afternoon stroll or relaxing picnic.



BULLFIGHTS

Tōgyū is a sort of bovine sumō where one animal tries to shove the other out of the ring (actually, victory is achieved when one animal forces the other to its knees, or when one forces the other to turn and flee from the ring). Fights are held at Uwajima's **municipal bullfighting ring** (admission ¥3000), and you can sometimes hook up with a tour group that's paid for a special performance (see the tourist information office). Otherwise, fights are held on: 2 January, the first Sunday of April, 24 July, 14 August and the fourth Sunday of October.

Sleeping & Eating

Uwajima Youth Hostel (宇和島ユースホステル; ☎ 22-7177; www2.odn.ne.jp/~cfm91130 in Japanese; dm ¥3300; P ♻️ ♻️) Although it's about a 2km hike from the station, this friendly spot boasts clean dorms, stunning hilltop views of the town and a tranquil location near a clutch of temples. To reach the hostel, follow any of the town's main thoroughways southeast until you reach Uwatsuhiko-jinja (English sign). From here, a small path leads up the hill to the hostel.

Hotel Clement Uwajima (☎ 23-6111; fax 23-6666; www.shikoku.ne.jp/clement-uwajima/index.shtml in Japanese; s/d ¥6400/8400; P ♻️ ♻️) Conveniently located within the new JR Uwajima station complex, this newish business hotel has fair-sized Western rooms and a good offering of bars and restaurants. It's a great option if you only want to stop in Uwajima for a few hours, especially since it'll save you from having to haul your bags too far.

Tsukigase (☎ 22-4788; fax 22-4787; r per person with 2 meals ¥9500; P ♻️ ♻️) Between Warei-kōen park and the bridge to Taga-jinja is this family-run ryokan, which features a handful of traditionally decorated tatami rooms. Guests can take advantage of the stunning on-site *onsen* complete with mountain views, as well as the delicious country-style cooking of the welcoming hosts.

Kadoya (☎ 22-1543; ☎ 11am-9pm) Across the street from the train station is this popular spot, which specialises in the local delicacy, *tai-meishi* (steamed snapper with rice; ¥1600). Look for the plastic models and the wooden baskets (which are used to steam the snapper) outside the restaurant.

Getting There & Around

You can reach Uwajima by train on the JR Yosan line from Matsuyama via Uchiko

(¥2030, three hours, hourly) and on the JR Yodan line from Kōchi via Kubokawa (¥3190, four hours, hourly). You can hire bicycles (¥100 per hour) from the tourist information office.

UWAJIMA TO MATSUYAMA

The stretch of Shikoku's western coast between Uwajima and Matsuyama is peppered with interesting towns such as Ōzu, with its newly reconstructed castle, and Uchiko, with its interesting old street, Yōkaichi. If you've come from points further south, you're back in the land of trains. From Uwajima, there's a choice of the JR Yodo line heading back to Kubokawa and Kōchi, or the JR Yosan line heading north to Matsuyama.

Yawatahama 八幡浜

☎ 0894

Through the centuries, 88-Temple pilgrims from Kyūshū traditionally arrived in Yawatahama by ferry, and then started and ended their pilgrimage at nearby **Meiseki-ji** (明石寺).

At the port, be sure to check out Yawatahama's fish market, **Dōya-ichiba** (どや市場; ☎ 24-7147; ☎ 7-11am Sun-Fri), which is comprised of a lively set of 26 fish shops. There is a huge and fascinating variety of fish and other sea life on offer and up for sale here – get there early for the good stuff.

There are still ferry services with **Nankai Ferry** (☎ 0120-732-156) from Yawatahama to Beppu (¥1770, 2½ hours) and Usuki (¥1320, 2¼ hours) on Kyūshū, though they are infrequent and slowly dying out. Yawatahama-kō port is a five-minute bus ride (¥150) north of Yawatahama station.

Just north of Yawatahama, Sada-misaki extends about 50km towards Kyūshū, and from Misaki, near the end of the cape, car and passenger ferries (¥610 per person) make the crossing a few times daily to Saganoseki (near Oita and Beppu) in just over an hour.

Ōzu 大洲

☎ 0893

On the Yosan line northeast of Yawatahama is Ōzu, where traditional **cormorant river fishing** (うかい; *ukai*) takes place on the Hiji-kawa from 1 June to 20 September. **Sightseeing boats** (やかた船; *yakata-bune*; ☎ 24-2029; cruises per person ¥3000; ☎ 6.30-9pm Jun-Sep) follow the fishing boats down the river as the cormorants catch fish. Reservations are required.

Ōzu also boasts Japan's newest castle, **Ōzu-jō** (大洲城), which was recently reconstructed using as much of the original material as possible. At the time of research it was not open for inspection, though the castle makes an impressive sight above the river at the southern end of town.

The region's most popular accommodation option is the **Ōzu Kyōdōkan Youth Hostel** (大洲郷土館ユースホステル; ☎ 24-2258; http://homepage3.nifty.com/ozuyh; dm ¥3200; P ♻️ ♻️), which has spick-and-span Western-style dorms and a friendly, communal atmosphere. The hostel is in the southwest part of town near the castle and adjacent to the Honmachi bus stop. Meals and draught beer are available.

Uchiko 内子

☎ 0893

During the late Edo and early Meiji periods, Uchiko was an important centre for the production of a vegetable wax known as *rō*, which has numerous industrial applications ranging from cosmetics to polishes. As the town began to prosper, wealthy *rō* merchants constructed a number of exquisite houses along Yōkaichi street, the majority of which are still standing today.

INFORMATION

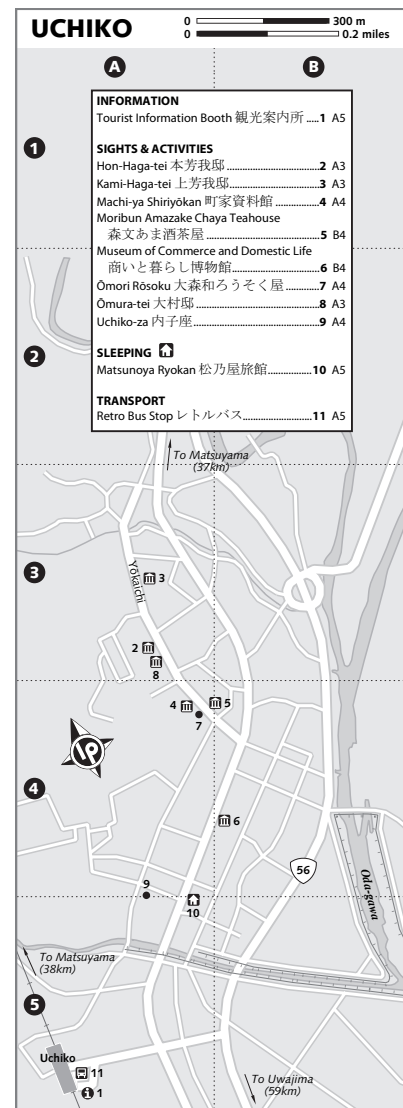
There's a **tourist information booth** (☎ 43-1450; ☎ 9am-4pm Thu-Tue) on your right as you leave JR Uchiko station where you can pick up an English brochure/map on the town. If you're hauling your luggage, there are coin lockers at the station.

SIGHTS

Note that a combined ticket to Kama-Hagetei, Uchiko-za and the Museum of Commerce & Domestic Life costs ¥700 (a ¥200 saving).

Yōkaichi 八日市

Uchiko's picturesque main street, which extends for around 1km, has a number of interesting old buildings including houses, museums, souvenir stalls, craft shops and tea-houses. Buildings on the street have cream-coloured plaster walls and 'wings' under the eaves that serve to prevent fire spreading from house to house. In recent years, residents have banded together to preserve the street, and to make sure that any renovations strictly comply with the traditional characteristics of the buildings.



Opposite the Moribun Brewery at the end of the street is **Moribun Amazake Chaya Teahouse** (☎ 44-3057; ☎ 9am-5pm), where you can sample the local sake. A bit further up the street is **Ōmori Rōsoku** (☎ 43-0385; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Thu & Sat & Sun), Uchiko's remaining traditional candle maker, which has demonstrations of *rō* candle-making.

As the road makes a slight bend, there come into view several well-preserved Edo-era buildings, such as **Ōmura-tei** (Ōmura residence) and **Hon-Haga-tei**, a fine example of a wealthy merchant's private home. The Hon-Haga family established the production of fine wax in Uchiko, winning awards at World Expositions in Chicago (1893) and Paris (1900).

Further on is the exquisite **Kami-Haga-tei** (☎ 44-2771; admission ¥400; 🕒 9am-4.30pm), a wax merchant's house within a large complex of wax-making related buildings. Admission includes entry to the Japanese Wax Museum at the same location.

Uchiko-za 内子座

About halfway between the station and Yōkaichi is **Uchiko-za** (☎ 44-2840; admission ¥300; 🕒 9am-4.30pm), a magnificent traditional kabuki theatre. Originally constructed in 1915, the theatre was completely restored in the mid-1980s, complete with a revolving stage. Call ahead to find out if performances are being held during your visit.

Museum of Commerce & Domestic Life

商いと暮らし博物館

A few minutes' walk further north along the main road is the interesting **Museum of Commerce & Domestic Life** (☎ 44-5220; admission ¥200; 🕒 9am-4.30pm), which exhibits historical materials and wax figures portraying a typical merchant scene of the early 20th century.

SLEEPING & EATING

Matsunoya Ryokan (☎ 44-5000; www.dokidoki.ne.jp/home2/matsunoya in Japanese; per person without/with 2 meals ¥8000/12,000; 📍 🕒) While Uchiko is probably best visited on a day trip, this traditional Japanese ryokan is a pleasant place to spend the night. It has a large number of well-appointed tatami rooms as well as a small attached restaurant that serves simple dishes such as *zaru-soba* (cold *soba*, ¥600) during the day. Matsunoya is located midway between the station and Yōkaichi along the main road.

GETTING THERE & AROUND

You can reach Uchiko by train on the JR Yosan line from Matsuyama (¥740, one hour, hourly). Yōkaichi is 1km walk north of Uchiko station, and is well signposted in English. Although it's a pleasant enough stroll, you might want to consider taking the **Retro Bus** (レトルバス;

☎ 43-1450; tickets ¥800; 🕒 9.30am-6pm), a 1920s English bus that seats nine and shuttles back and forth from the station. You can also rent bikes (¥500 for two hours, plus a ¥2000 deposit) from the tourist information office.

MATSUYAMA 松山

☎ 089 / pop 513,000

Shikoku's largest city is a bustling transport hub that boasts all the chic and flair of its sister cities on Honshū. However, Japanese and foreign tourists alike are principally drawn to Matsuyama for its famous sights, namely Matsuyama-jō, one of the country's finest feudal-era castles, and Dōgo Onsen Honkan (see boxed text, p649), a multi-level public bath house. If you're journeying around the 88 Sacred Temples, Matsuyama is home to seven temples, including Ishite-ji, one of the most famous stops on the pilgrimage. Matsuyama is also well set up for foreign visitors, easy to navigate via its historic tram system and home to two of the island's most enjoyable youth hostels.

Orientation

Most visitors arrive at the JR Matsuyama station, which is about 500m west of the castle's outer moat. From here, the city centre is immediately south, and is centred around the Matsuyama City station on the private Iyotetsudō line. Dōgo Onsen Honkan is 2km east of the city centre in the suburb of Dōgo, while the ferry port is north of Matsuyama in the city of Takahama.

Information

The main **tourist information office** (☎ 931-3914; 🕒 8.30am-8.30pm) is the JR Matsuyama station branch. The helpful staff can help you book accommodation and offer a good English brochure on the city. There is also an excellent **tourist information office** (☎ 921-3708; 🕒 8am-4.45pm) near the tram terminus for Dōgo Onsen as well as a small information counter at the ferry terminal (see p654 for information on hydrofoils).

Another good spot for information on the city is the **Ehime Prefectural International Centre** (EPIC; ☎ 943-6688; www.epic.or.jp; 🕒 8.30am-5pm Mon-Sat), which provides friendly advice, free internet access and English newspapers. EPIC is near the Minami-machi or Kenmin Bunkaikan-mae tram stop. Although it is set back off the main road, it's easy to spot if you look for the giant red question mark.

AN INSIDER'S GUIDE TO DŌGO ONSEN 道後温泉

According to legend, Dōgo Onsen was discovered during the ancient age of gods when a white heron was found healing itself in the spring. Since then, Dōgo has featured prominently in a number of literary classics, and garnered a reputation for the curative properties of its waters. The mono-alkaline spring contains sulphur, and is believed to be particularly effective at treating rheumatism, neuralgia and hysteria.

The main building, **Dōgo Onsen Honkan** (道後温泉本館; ☎ 089-921-5141; 5-6 Dōgo-yunomachi; 🕒 6am-11pm), was constructed in 1894, and designated as an important cultural site in 1994. The three-storey, castle-style building incorporates traditional design elements, and is crowned with a statue of a white heron in commemoration of its legendary origins. Although countless famous people have passed through its doors, Dōgo Onsen Honkan rose to popularity following its inclusion in the famous 1906 novel *Botchan*, which was authored by Sōseki Natsume, the greatest literary figure in Japan's modern age.

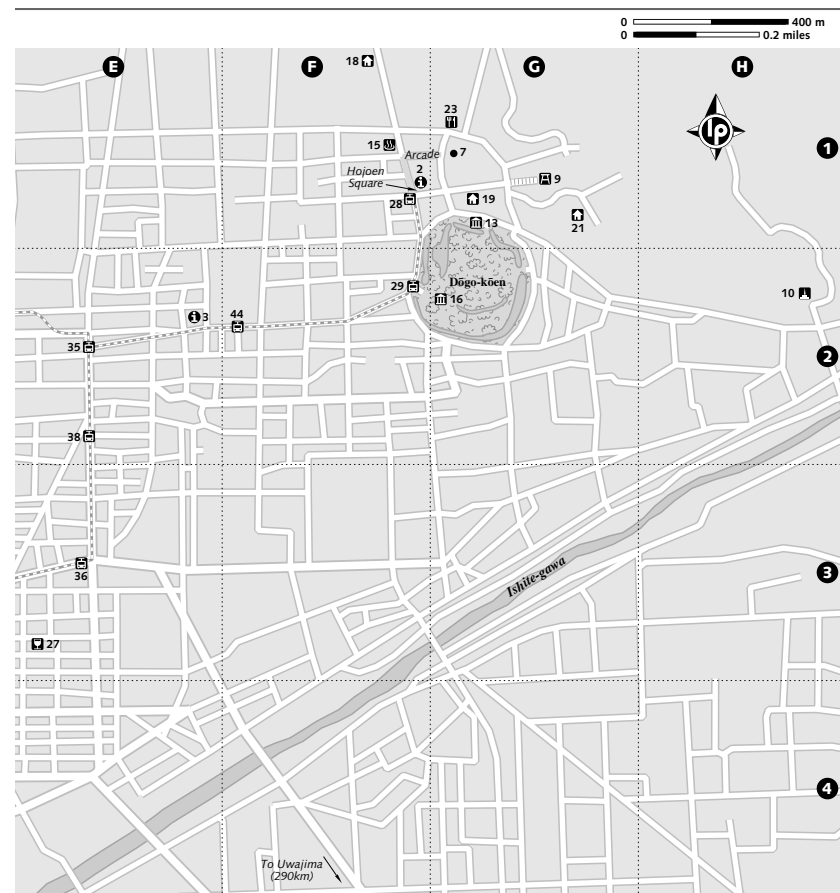
Even if you're well versed in the ins and outs of *onsen* culture, Dōgo can be a bit confusing as there are two separate baths (and four pricing options) to choose from. The larger, and more popular of the two baths, is the *kami-no-yu* (Water of the Gods), which is separated by sex and adorned with heron mosaics. A basic bath costs ¥300, while a bath followed by tea and *senbei* (rice crackers) in the 2nd-floor tatami room costs ¥620, and includes a rental *yukata* (light cotton kimono). A rental towel and soap will set you back a further ¥50. The smaller and more private of the two baths is the *tama-no-yu* (Water of the Spirits), which is also separated by sex and adorned with simple tiles. A bath followed by tea and *dango* (sweet dumplings) in the 2nd-floor tatami room costs ¥980, while the top price of ¥1240 allows you to enjoy your snack in a private tatami room on the 3rd floor. In case you're confused about which path to follow, Sōseki Natsume writes in *Botchan* that it's always wise to go 1st class.

Although there are English-language pamphlets on hand to clarify the correct sequence of steps, Dōgo Onsen can still be a bit intimidating if you don't speak Japanese. After paying your money outside, you should enter the building and leave your shoes in a locker. If you've paid ¥300, go to the *kami-no-yu* changing room (signposted in English) where you can use the free lockers for your clothing. If you've paid ¥620 or ¥980, first go upstairs to receive your *yukata*, and then return to either the *kami-no-yu* or *tama-no-yu* (also signposted in English) changing room. After your bath, you should don your *yukata* and retire to the 2nd-floor tatami room to sip your tea and gaze down on the bath-hoppers clip-clopping by in *geta* (traditional wooden sandals). If you've paid ¥1240, head directly to the 3rd floor where you will be escorted to your private *tatami* room. Here, you can change into your *yukata* before heading to the *tama-no-yu* changing room, and also return after your bath to sip tea in complete isolation.

Regardless of which path you choose, you are allowed to explore the building after taking your bath. On the 2nd floor, there is a small **exhibition room** that displays artefacts relating to the bath house including traditional wooden admission tickets. For an extra ¥210, you can also take a guided tour (in Japanese) of the private **imperial baths**, which were last used by the royal family in 1950, though they have been preserved for the public interest. On the 3rd floor, the corner *tatami* room (which was the favourite of Sōseki Natsume) has a small **display** (in Japanese) on the life of the celebrated author.

Dōgo Onsen is 2km east of the centre of Matsuyama, and can be reached by the regular tram service, which terminates at the start of the spa's shopping arcade. This arcade is lined with small restaurants and souvenir stores, and leads directly to the front of the Honkan.

Note that Dōgo can get quite crowded, especially on weekends and holidays, though dinner time is usually empty as most Japanese tourists will be dining in their respective inns. If you really want to escape the crowds, however, one minute on foot from the Honkan (through the shopping arcade) is **Tsubaki-no-yu** (椿の湯; admission ¥300; 🕒 6am-11pm), which is Dōgo Onsen's hot-spring annex, and is frequented primarily by locals. If you don't want a full bath, there are also nine free **ashi-yu** (足湯; foot baths) scattered around Dōgo Onsen where you can take off your socks and shoes and warm your feet. The most famous one is located in Hojoen Sq just opposite the station at the start of the arcade. Here, you can also check out the **Botchan Karakuri Clock** (坊ちゃんからくり時計), which was erected as part of Dōgo Onsen Honkan's centennial in 1994, and features figures that re-enact a scene from *Botchan* each hour from 8am to 10pm.



ATMs that accept international cards can be found at the central post office and at the post office a couple of minutes' walk north of JR Matsuyama station.

There are coin lockers and a left-luggage counter at JR Matsuyama, from where you can also hire bicycles (see p654).

English-language books can be found on the 4th floor of the **Kinokuniya bookshop** (☎ 932-0005; ☎ 10am-7.30pm), near Matsuyama City station.

Sights

MATSUYAMA-JŌ 松山城

Picturesquely sited atop a hill (Katsuyama) that virtually erupts in the centre of town, **Matsuyama-jō** (☎ 921-4873; admission ¥500; ☎ 9am-

5pm) is one of Japan's finest original surviving castles. However, it only squeaks by with the 'original' label as it was restored just before the end of the Edo period.

Although the original castle was built in 1602-03 with five storeys, it burnt down and was subsequently rebuilt in 1642 with only three storeys. In 1784, the castle burnt down once again after being struck by lightning. Surprisingly, the decision to rebuild the castle was not made until 1820, and it took another 34 years for the reconstruction to be completed! Between the years 1968 and 1986, the castle was completely restored to its present grandeur.

If the summer sun is particularly oppressive, you don't have to climb the steep hill up to the

castle – a ropeway (¥160 return) will whisk you up the hill. However, there is a pleasant path to the top of the summit that starts from the ropeway building. Also consider walking down the back slopes of the castle hill to stroll around the **Ninomaru Shiseki Tei-en** (☎ 921-2000; admission ¥100; ☎ 9am-5pm) gardens, which were built in the outer citadel of the castle, and consist of various pools, gardens, rockeries and waterfalls. From here, it's a short wander to the **Ehime Museum of Art** (☎ 932-0010; 3-3 Ichibanmachi; admission ¥500; ☎ 9.40am-6pm Tue-Sun), which features rotating exhibitions of 20th-century Japanese art.

ISHITE-JI 石手時

About 2km east of Dōgo Onsen is **Ishite-ji**, number 51 of the 88 Sacred Temples, noted for

its Kamakura architecture. *Ishite* means 'stone hand', and is derived from a legend about a Matsuyama lord born with a stone in his hand. The temple has a three-storey pagoda, and is overlooked by a Buddha figure on the hill. It's said to be the second busiest of the 88 temples after Zentsū-ji (p655) in Kagawa-ken, which was Kōbō Daishi's boyhood home.

OTHER SIGHTS

Just south of Matsuyama City station in the temple grounds of Shoshu-ji is **Shiki-dō** (☎ 945-0400; admission ¥50; ☎ 8.30am-5pm), a replica of the humble house of the legendary haiku poet Shiki Masaoka (1867-1902).

Shiki Memorial Museum (☎ 931-5566; 1-30 Dōgo-kyōen; admission ¥300; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun) is dedicated

to Okayama (¥3810, 2½ hours, hourly) on Honshū. Trains also run southwest from Matsuyama to Uwajima and then east to Kōchi (¥5080, four hours).

There are also frequent JR Highway buses that run to/from Osaka (¥7800, seven hours) and Tokyo (¥12,200, 12 hours). Note that the JR Pass is not valid for these connections.

There are regular hydrofoil connections with **Super Jet** (☎ 575-1020) between Matsuyama and Hiroshima (¥6300, 1¼ hours, 15 daily). The Hiroshima to Matsuyama ferry (¥2500 to ¥2900, 2¼ hours, 10 daily) is also a popular way of getting to/from Shikoku. To reach Matsuyama port, take the Iyo-tetsudō private train line from Matsuyama City or Ōtemachi stations to the end of the line at Takahama (¥400, 25 minutes, hourly). From Takahama, a connecting bus (free) whisks you to the port.

Getting Around

Matsuyama has an excellent tram service costing a flat ¥150 (pay when you get off), though purchasing a day ticket for ¥300 is definitely your best option. There's a loop line and major terminus at Dōgo Onsen and outside Matsuyama City station. The Ōkaidō stop outside the Mitsukoshi department store is a good central stopping point.

Lines 1 and 2 are loop lines, running clockwise and anticlockwise around Katsuyama (the mountain the castle is on). Line 3 runs from Matsuyama City station to Dōgo Onsen, line 5 goes from JR Matsuyama station to Dōgo Onsen and line 6 from Kiya-chō to Dōgo Onsen.

If you're lucky with timing, you can ride the Botchan Ressha (坊ちゃん列車), the original small trains that were imported from Germany in 1887, and ran continuously for 67 years. They're back in use, and are named after Sōseki Natsume's famous novel.

For a more self-propelled option, the left-luggage counter at the JR Matsuyama station rents out **bicycles** (☎ 943-5002; per day ¥600; ☎ 8.50am-6pm Mon-Sat).

AROUND MATSUYAMA

There are a number of interesting day trips to be had from Matsuyama.

Kashima 鹿島

☎ 0899

Kashima is a pleasant little island popular with locals, and makes an easy day trip from

Matsuyama. It's so close that you could virtually swim there, but there is a return **ferry** (☎ 93-3010; ☎ 7am-9pm) for ¥300. The island has resident deer, an *onsen*, a nice beach, camping and several *minshuku* if you plan to stay overnight. Hourly trains from JR Matsuyama station reach Iyo-Hōjō station (¥240) in 20 minutes; from here it's a short walk to the ferry (fashioned with a plastic deer on top).

Saijo 西条

☎ 0897

Saijo is home to the **Asahi Brewery** (アサヒビール 四国工場; ☎ 53-7770; ☎ 9.30am-3pm) where visitors can tour the factory and sample freshly brewed Super Dry for free. Call ahead as reservations are required.

The **Asahi beer garden** (アサヒビール園; ☎ 53-2277; ☎ 11am-9pm) next door has all-you-can-eat barbecued mutton, and beer. There are various *tabe-nomihōdai* (all-you-can-eat, all-you-can-drink) options, ranging in price from ¥3200 to ¥4000.

Saijō matsuri (西条祭り), the annual festival held from 14 to 17 October, is a rollicking affair that attracts visitors from all over Japan. About 80 teams push and pull *danjiri* (festival floats) and carry *mikoshi* (portable shrines) around town. For more information, check out www.city.saijo.ehime.jp/english/index.htm.

Hourly trains from JR Matsuyama station reach Iyo-Saijo station (¥240) in 20 minutes.

Ishizuchi-san 石鎚山

At 1982m, Ishizuchi-san is the highest peak in western Japan, and is considered by many to be a holy mountain. Ishizuchi attracts pilgrims and climbers alike, particularly during the July and August climbing season. During the winter (late December to late March), Ishizuchi also serves as a popular local ski slope.

To get to the Nishi-no-kawa cable-car station (on the northern side of the mountain), take the direct bus (¥990, 55 minutes, four daily) from Iyo-Saijo station.

You can climb up one way and down the other or make a complete circuit from Nishi-no-kawa to the summit, down to Tsuchi-goya and then back to Nishi-no-kawa. Allow all day and an early start for the circuit. For detailed information on hiking Ishizuchi-san mountain, snap up a copy of Lonely Planet's *Hiking in Japan*.

KAGAWA-KEN 香川県

Formerly known as Sanuki, Kagawa-ken is the smallest of Shikoku's four regions, and the second smallest of the country's 47 prefectures. To *o-henrō*, Kagawa-ken is known as *Nehan-no-dōjō* or 'the Place of Completion' as it has the last 22 of the 88 pilgrimage temples.

The region's hospitable weather and welcoming people have always been of great comfort to *henrō* as they complete their journey. However, if you're following the pilgrimage properly, remember that the journey is not complete when you get to Ōkubo-ji, Temple 88 – it's still a 40km journey back to Temple 1 in Tokushima to complete the circle.

Kagawa-ken also serves as the major arrival point on Shikoku since the only rail link with Honshū is via the Seto-Ōhashi bridge to Okayama. Highlights of the region include the celebrated shrine of Kōpira-san at Kotohira, the beautiful gardens of Ritsurin-kōen at Takamatsu and the folk village of Shikokumura at Yashima.

MATSUYAMA TO TAKAMATSU

This stretch of country is home to a few noteworthy temples on the pilgrimage circuit including Kanonji, the boyhood home of Kōbō Daishi.

The JR Yosan line runs around the coast between Takamatsu and Matsuyama. At Tadotsu, the JR Dosan line splits off it and runs south to Zentsū-ji and Kotohira, through the Iya Valley (p632) and eventually to Kōchi (p638). Most trains for the Dosan line start in Takamatsu, can be joined in Tadotsu and end their journey at Kotohira; to continue south on the line will require a change of trains there.

Kanonji 観音寺

☎ 0875

If you've come from Ehime-ken on the pilgrimage or on the train, the first town of consequence in Kagawa-ken is Kanonji, noted for having two of the 88 temples in the same place: Temple 68, **Jinne-in** (神恵院) and Temple 69, **Kanon-ji** (観音寺). It's also known for **Zenigata** (銭形), a 350m-circumference outline of a square-holed coin dating from the 1600s. The coin's outline and four kanji characters are formed by trenches, which it is said were dug by the local population as a warning to

their feudal lord not to waste the taxes they were forced to pay him. The huge coin is beside the sea, at the foot of Kotohiki Hill in Kotohiki-kōen park, 1.5km northwest of Kanonji station.

Tadotsu 多度津

☎ 0877

Tadotsu is known throughout Japan as the national headquarters for the martial art of **Shorinji-kempo** (諸臨時健保). If you're extremely keen to watch training, call ☎ 33-1010 (in Japanese) and ask politely.

Tokkyu Ferry (☎ 088-622-1826) offers direct ferry connections from Tadotsu to Fukuyama (¥1530, 1¼ hours, six daily) in Hiroshima-ken. The ferry terminal is about 15 minutes' walk west of the station.

Marugame 丸亀

☎ 0877

An interesting detour from the 88-Temple circuit is in Marugame, which is home to the unique **Marugame-jō** (丸亀城; ☎ 24-8816; admission ¥100; ☎ 9am-4.30pm). The castle dates from 1597, and has one of only 12 original wooden donjon (heavily fortified central tower) remaining of more than 5000 castles in Japan. The castle also contains stepped-stone walls, which tower over 50m high.

In the streets just to the north of the castle, there is a weekly **market** (☎ 7am-4pm Sun) with local produce, delicacies and arts and crafts for sale.

At the **Uchiwa-no-Minato Museum** (うちわの港ミュージアム; ☎ 24-7055; admission free; ☎ 9.30am-5pm Tue-Sun) there are displays and craft demonstrations of traditional Japanese *uchiwa* (paper fans). Marugame is responsible for about 90% of the country's paper-fan output, making it a logical place to pick one up.

Zentsū-ji 善通寺

☎ 0877

Zentsū-ji (善通寺; ☎ 62-0111) is Temple 75 of the 88 Sacred Temples, and holds a special significance as the boyhood home of Kōbō Daishi. It is also the largest temple – most of the other 88 could fit in its car park. The temple boasts a magnificent five-storey pagoda and giant camphor trees. To get into the Buddhist spirit, visitors can venture into the basement (admission ¥500) and traverse a 100m-long passageway in pitch darkness: by moving along with your left hand pressed

to the wall (which is painted with mandalas, angels and lotus flowers), you are said to be safely following Buddha's way.

Zentsū-ji's other claim to fame is as the home of the cube watermelon, an ingenious square-sided Japanese modification that enables watermelons to fit into refrigerators more efficiently. Of course, convenience comes at a price, so you can expect to dig deep into your pockets if you want to sample this bizarre creation.

Kotohira 琴平

☎ 0877

The small mountain village of Kotohira is home to Kompira-san, a Shintō shrine that is dedicated to seafarers, and is one of Shikoku's most famous tourist attractions. If you mention to a Japanese person that you've visited Kotohira, you will almost certainly be asked if you made it to the top of the shrine. Although it's not a major mission (the official count is 1368 steps), half the fun of visiting Kompira-san is exaggerating its difficulty while psyching yourself up for the climb.

ORIENTATION

Kotohira is small enough to make navigation quite straightforward. Beginning a few streets southeast of the two stations, a busy shopping arcade lined with the inevitable souvenir shops stretches to the shrine entranceway. Those seeking to truly immerse themselves in the Japanese experience might like to buy a walking stick at one of the shops for the trek up to the shrine.

INFORMATION

There is a **tourist information centre** (☎ 75-3500; ☎ 9:30am-8pm) along the main road between JR Kotohira station and Kotoden Kotohira station. Staff can provide an English-language brochure and accommodation information. They also rent out bikes (¥100/500 per hour/day).

There are coin lockers at the station, and the ATMs at the post office accept international money cards.

SIGHTS

Kompira-san 金刀比羅宮

Kompira-san or, more formally, Kotohira-gū, was originally a Buddhist and Shintō temple dedicated to the Guardian of Mariners, though it became an official Shintō shrine after the Meiji Restoration. The shrine's hill-top position affords superb views over the

countryside, and there are some interesting reminders of its maritime connections.

A big fuss is made about how strenuous the climb is to the top but, if you've got this far in Japan, you've probably completed a few long ascents to shrines already. If you really blanch at the thought of climbing all those steps, you can always dish out ¥6500 and be carried up and down in a palanquin.

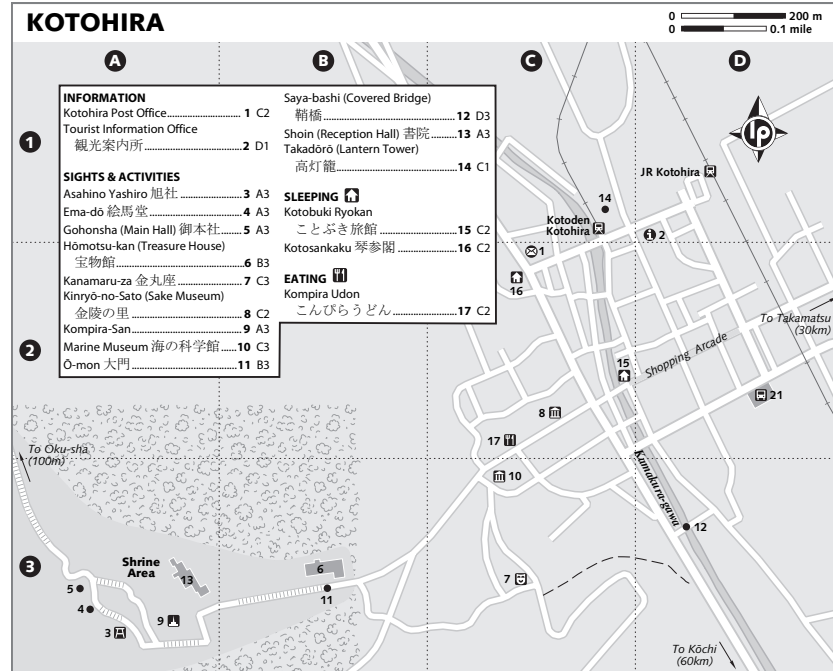
The first notable landmark on the long climb is the **Ō-mon**, a stone gateway that leads to the **Hōmotsu-kan** (Treasure House; admission ¥500; ☎ 8:30am-4:30pm). Nearby you will find five traditional-sweets vendors at tables shaded by large white parasols. A symbol of ancient times, these *Gonin Byakushō* (Five Farmers) are the descendants of the original families permitted to trade within the grounds of the shrine. Further uphill is the **Shoin** (Reception Hall; admission ¥500; ☎ 8:30am-4:30pm), a designated National Treasure that dates from 1659 and has some interesting screen paintings and a small garden.

Continuing the ascent, you eventually reach the large **Asahino Yashiro** (Shrine of the Rising Sun). Built in 1837, this large hall is dedicated to the Sun Goddess Amaterasu, and is noted for its ornate woodcarving. From here, the short final ascent, which is the most beautiful leg of the walk, brings you to the **Gohonsha** (Gohon Hall) and **Ema-dō** (Ema Pavilion). The latter is filled with maritime offerings ranging from pictures of ships and models to modern ship engines and a one-person solar sailboat hull donated to the shrine after its round-the-world navigation. From this level, there are spectacular views that extend right down to the coast and over the Inland Sea.

If you're still feeling *genki* (energetic), incurable climbers can continue for another 500-odd steps up to the **Oku-sha** (Inner Shrine), which features stone carvings on the side of a cliff.

Other Sights

Built in 1835, the **Kanamaru-za** (☎ 73-3846; admission ¥300; ☎ 9am-5pm) is Japan's oldest kabuki playhouse, though it had a lengthy stint as a cinema before being restored in 1976. Inside, you can wander backstage and see the changing room, an old wooden bath, the revolving-stage mechanism, basement trap doors and a tunnel out to the front of the theatre. The playhouse is 200m west of the main approach to Kompira-san.



Also of interest is the **Marine Museum** (☎ 73-3748; admission ¥400; ☎ 9am-5pm), situated along the main approach to Kompira-san, and displaying numerous ship models and maritime exhibits. If your throat is feeling a little parched, the **Kinryō-no-Sato** (☎ 73-4133; admission ¥310; ☎ 9am-4pm) sake museum, located outside the shopping arcade along the main approach, offers sake tasting for ¥100 – but don't be surprised if a few drinks sap your will for the climb. Finally, note the curious 26.7m-high **Takadōrō** lantern tower beside the Kotoden Kotohira station, which was traditionally lit in times of trouble.

SLEEPING & EATING

Our pick **Kotobuki Ryokan** (☎ 73-3872; www.town.kotohira.kagawa.jp/onsen/kotobuki/kotobuki.html in Japanese; r per person with/without 2 meals ¥7000/4500; P ☎) Conveniently situated by the riverside and next to the shopping arcade, this historic ryokan blends traditional design elements with congenial service. This is a great place to spend the night as Kotohira really starts to work its magic once the day-trippers leave.

Kotosankaku (☎ 75-1000; www.kotosankaku.jp/index_en.html; r per person with 2 meals ¥12,000; P ☎)

Weighing in at nearly 225 rooms, Kotosankaku is one of the island's largest ryokans, though it's still an immensely elegant place. Attractive Japanese-style rooms are complemented by a rooftop pool and a stunner of an *onsen*.

Kompira Udon (☎ 73-5785; ☎ 8am-5pm) This place is just short of the first set of steps leading up Kompira-san (look for the giant *udon* bowl outside). Here you can watch the noodles being made a few minutes before you consume them. The house speciality is *shōudon* (¥650), which is *udon* served with a hot dipping sauce.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

You can reach Kotohira by train on the JR Dosan line from Kōchi (¥3810, 1¼ hours, hourly) and on the private Kotoden line from Takamatsu (¥610, one hour, hourly). The JR Kotohira station is about 500m north and 500m east of the town centre, while the Kotoden station is just 200m west of the JR station.

TAKAMATSU 高松

☎ 087 / pop 425,000

Takamatsu was founded during the rule of Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–98) as the castle

town of the feudal lord of Kagawa, though the city was virtually destroyed during WWII. As a result of its rail link to the island of Honshū, Takamatsu is a popular entry point for Shikoku, and it serves as a good jumping-off point for the last group of temples. The city is also home to Ritsurin-kōen, which is arguably one of the country's most spectacular Edo-style walking gardens. The city also serves as a base for a number of unique day trips.

Orientation

Takamatsu is surprisingly sprawling – it's nearly 2km along the main street, Chūō-dōri, from the JR Takamatsu station to Ritsurin-kōen. A busy shopping arcade extends across Chūō-dōri, and then runs parallel to it to the east, passing through the entertainment district. The main shopping area is further south near Kotoden Kawaramachi train station.

The area around the impressive JR Takamatsu station is changing rapidly due to 'Support Takamatsu', a massive reclaimed-land project that is modernising the port. The new Takamatsu Symbol Tower dominates the skyline just north of the station.

Information

The city is well set up to help foreign visitors. There's an excellent **tourist information office** (☎ 851-2009; ☎ 9am-6pm) directly outside the station where the helpful staff provide useful leaflets and maps, and can help you book accommodation.

In the northwest corner of Chūō-kōen is the **Kagawa International Exchange** (I-PAL Kagawa; ☎ 837-5901; www.i-pal.or.jp in Japanese; 1-11-63 Bancho; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun). This superb resource centre has a message board, foreign books and magazines, international phone and fax access, satellite TV and free internet access.

Visitors can pick up the free Kagawa Welcome Card at Kagawa International Exchange and the tourist information office (you'll need to show your passport). The card provides minor discounts around town, and comes with a mini-guidebook and fold-out city map.

There are coin lockers and a left-luggage office at JR Takamatsu station, and international ATMs available at the central post office (located near the northern exit of Marugame-machi Arcade).

English-language books and magazines can be found on the 5th floor of **Miyawaki Shoten Bookstore** (☎ 851-3732; ☎ 9am-10pm).

Sights

RITSURIN-KŌEN 栗林公園

Although not one of Japan's 'big three' gardens, **Ritsurin-kōen** (☎ 833-7411; admission ¥400; ☎ sunrise-sunset) could easily be a contender. Dating from the mid-1600s and taking more than a century to complete, this Edo-style walking garden winds around a series of ponds with lookouts, tearooms, bridges and islands. To the west, Shiun-zan mountain forms a backdrop to the garden, but to the east there is some much less impressive 'borrowed scenery' in the form of dull modern buildings. (In Japanese garden design, 'borrowed scenery' refers to a view of distant scenery that is revealed at some place along the path.)

Enclosed by the garden are a number of interesting sights including the **Sanuki Folkcraft Museum** (admission free; ☎ 8.45am-4.30pm), which displays local crafts dating back to the Tokugawa dynasty. If you're a fan of *matcha* (powdered green tea) and traditional sweets, there are a number of teahouses in the park including the feudal-era **Kikugetsu-tei** (菊月亭; Chrysanthemum Moon Pavilion) and the lovely thatched-roof **Higurashi-tei** (日暮亭; Sunset Pavilion), which dates from 1898.

The easiest way to reach Ritsurin-kōen is to take the frequent direct bus (¥230, 15 minutes) from the JR Takushima station

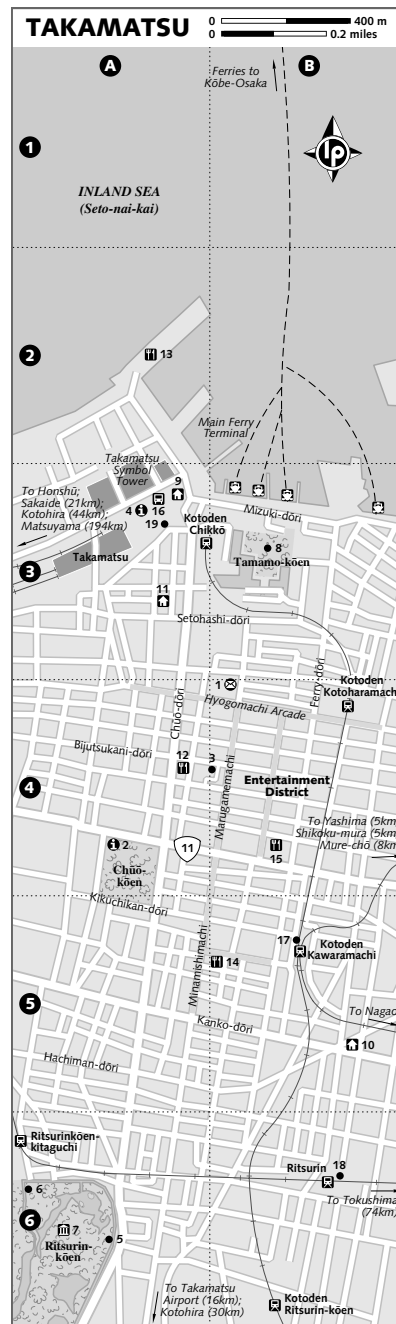
TAKAMATSU-JŌ 高松城

Although little remains of Takamatsu's castle, the castle grounds form a pleasant park, **Tamamo-kōen** (高松公園; ☎ 851-1521; admission ¥200; ☎ sunrise-sunset), which are only one-ninth of their original size. When the castle was built in 1588, the moat was filled with sea water, with the sea itself forming the fourth side. The castle ruins are next to Kotoden Chikkō station.

Sleeping

Hotel No 1 Takamatsu (☎ 812-2222; www.hotelno1.jp/takamatsu in Japanese; 2-4-1 Kankō-dōri; s/d ¥5140/7740; ☎) Three blocks east and three blocks south of Kotoden Kawaramachi station, this sparkling business hotel is our top pick. Although smallish rooms are pretty much your standard business issue, the rooftop *rotemburo* affords a sweeping view of the city, particularly when the neon lights are blazing at night.

Takamatsu Terminal Hotel (☎ 822-3731; www.webterminal.co.jp in Japanese; 10-17 Nishinomaru-chō; s/d



INFORMATION

Central Post Office 中央郵便局	1 B4
Kagawa International Exchange (I-PAL Kagawa) アイバル香川 国際交流会館	2 A4
Miyawaki Shoten Bookstore 宮脇書店	3 B4
Tourist Information Office 観光案内所	4 A3

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Ritsurin-kōen East Gate 栗林公園東門	5 A6
Ritsurin-kōen North Gate 栗林公園北門	6 A6
Sanuki Folkcraft Museum 讃岐民芸館	7 A6
Takamatsu-jō 高松城	8 B3

SLEEPING

ANA Hotel Clement Takamatsu 全日空ホテルクレメント高松	9 A3
Hotel No 1 Takamatsu ホテル No1 高松	10 B5
Takamatsu Terminal Hotel 高松ターミナルホテル	11 A3

EATING

Kanaizumi かな泉	12 A4
Mikayla ミケイラ	13 A2
Tokiwa Saryō ときわ茶寮	14 B5
Udonya Goemon 鰻純屋五右衛門	15 B4

TRANSPORT

Bus Terminal バスターミナル	16 A3
Takamatsu-shi Rental Cycles 高松市レンタサイクル	17 B5
Takamatsu-shi Rental Cycles 高松市レンタサイクル	18 B6
Takamatsu-shi Rental Cycles 高松市レンタサイクル	19 A3

¥6500/8500; ☎) Just two blocks south and three blocks east of the JR Takamatsu station, this attractive business hotel is notable for its offering of simple Japanese-style tatami rooms, which are a nice change from the usual Western-style cubicle. There is also a good selection of on-site restaurants if you're not up for venturing into town.

ANA Hotel Clement Takamatsu (☎ 811-1111; fax 811-1100; 1-1 Hamano-chō; per person from ¥12,000; ☎) This ultra-modern business hotel is certainly eye-catching, especially since it's one of the first buildings you see as you exit the JR Takamatsu station. Spacious rooms incorporate chic minimalist design elements, and there is a top-notch offering of sophisticated bars and restaurants that all boast sweeping views of the Inland Sea.

Eating & Drinking

Restaurants and bars cluster in the covered arcades and entertainment district to the west side of the tracks between Kotoden Kotoharamachi and Kawaramachi stations.

Udonya Goemon (☎ 821-2711; 13-15 Furubaba-chō; ☎ 6pm-3am Mon-Sat) Just around the corner from the southern exit of the Hyōgomachi

Arcade, this no-nonsense spot is perfect for sampling the region's famous *sanuki udon* noodles – our favourite is the delicious *asari udon* (shellfish *udon*; ¥650). Although there's no English menu, there is a fairly detailed plastic food model display outside, which also makes finding this spot a breeze.

Kanaizumi (☎ 822-0123; 9-3 Konyamachi; 🕒 11am-9pm, closed Wed) *Sanuki udon* noodles are serious business in Takamatsu, and it's considered *de rigueur* to sample a few different dishes of the stuff before leaving the region. Four blocks north of Chūō-kōen, this popular spot offers self-service noodles (¥500) on the 1st floor and table service (¥1000) on the 2nd floor. As with Udonya Goemon, this place is pretty easy to spot – just look for the almost edible plastic food model displays outside.

Mikayla (☎ 811-5357; 8-40 Sunport; from ¥1500; 🕒 11am-10pm) At the northern end of the Sunport Takamatsu (north of the station), this seaside restaurant has an outdoor terrace and serves fresh fish straight out of the Inland Sea. If you're after the freshest fish, just ask for *kyou-no-osusume* (today's catch).

Tokiwa Saryō (☎ 861-5577; 1-8-2 Tokiwa-chō; drinks from ¥450; 🕒 11am-10pm) This historic ryōkan, which occupies a traditional building one block south of the Tokiwa Arcade, now functions as an atmospheric *izakaya*. After indulging in an ice-cold sake (or two), be sure to explore the premises, particularly the stunning banquet room.

Getting There & Away

Takamatsu airport, 16km south of the city, is easily reached by bus (¥740, 35 minutes, hourly from the front of the JR Takamatsu station). There are direct flights to/from Tokyo (ANA/JAS, ¥24,500, one hour, six daily) and Fukuoka (JAC, ¥28,500, 70 minutes, two daily).

The rail line crossing the Seto-Ōhashi has brought Takamatsu much closer to the main island of Honshū. From Tokyo, you can take the *shinkansen* (bullet train) to Okayama (four hours), where you can change trains for Takamatsu (¥1470, 55 minutes, hourly). From Takamatsu, the JR Kōtoku line runs southeast to Tokushima (¥2560, one hour, hourly), the JR Yosano line runs west to Matsuyama (¥5500, 2½ hours, hourly) and the JR Dosan line runs to Kōchi (¥4440, 2½ hours, hourly). The private Kotoden line also runs direct to Kotohira (¥830, one hour, hourly).

There are frequent direct bus services that operate to/from Tokyo (¥12,500, 9½ hours), Yokohama (¥11,500, nine hours) and Nagoya (¥7550, 7¾ hours).

There are regular daily hydrofoil connections with **Goshima Sangyo Kisen** (☎ 821-9436) between Takamatsu and Osaka (¥6000, two hours) and regular ferry services to various ports in the Inland Sea including Kōbe (¥6400, four hours). Ferries depart/arrive from Takamatsu port, which is several kilometres east of the town centre, and can be reached by free shuttle bus (35 minutes, hourly) from the front of the JR Takamatsu station.

Getting Around

The easiest way to navigate the city is by using the JR Kōtoku line or Kotoden line. The main Kotoden junction is Kotoden Kawaramachi, although the line ends at Kotoden Chikkō, near JR Takamatsu station.

Takamatsu is flat and excellent for rental bikes. The city offers a great deal on its 'blue bicycles' (¥100 per day; photo ID required), and there are four 'bicycle ports'; you can pick up at one port and drop off at another. Easiest is to pick up at **Takamatsu-shi Rental Cycles** (☎ 821-0400; 🕒 7am-10pm), underground outside JR Takamatsu station. The other ports are at JR Ritsurin station, Kotoden Kawaramachi station and at Kajiyamachi.

AROUND TAKAMATSU

There are a number of interesting day trips from Takamatsu.

Yashima 屋島

About 5km east of Takamatsu is the 292m-high tabletop plateau of Yashima, which is the home of **Yashima-ji** (屋島寺; ☎ 841-9418), number 84 of the 88 temples. As this was the site of the 12th-century titanic struggle between the Genji and Heike clans, the temple's **Treasure House** (admission ¥500; 🕒 9am-5pm) exhibits artefacts relating to the battle. Just behind the Treasure House is the **Pond of Blood**, where victorious warriors washed the blood from their swords.

At the bottom of Yashima, about 500m north of the station, is **Shikoku-mura** (四国村; ☎ 843-3111; 9-1 Shimanaka; admission ¥800; 🕒 9am-6pm), an excellent village museum that houses old buildings brought from all over Shikoku and neighbouring islands. The village's fine kabuki stage came from Shōdo-shima (p465),

SEA KAYAKING ON THE INLAND SEA

For a bit of adventure, physical exertion and an enjoyable day out, you might like to try sea kayaking off the northeast coast of Kagawa-ken on the Inland Sea. **Noasobiya** (☎ 0879-26-3350; www.noasobiya.jp/noasobi/en/index.html) runs a thoroughly professional operation out of Ōchi, east of Takamatsu. Head guide Ryū holds New Zealand sea kayak-guiding qualifications and spends his off-seasons guiding in New Zealand's Abel Tasman National Park. Noasobiya ventures out to small uninhabited islands in the Inland Sea and offers half-/full-day options for ¥7350/12,600, including all gear.

The operation is run out of a large log cabin that was once used as a rest house for Emperor Hirohito, and there are cabins next door where visitors can stay (¥16,000 for up to four people). There is also a hotel nearby with a large *onsen* for an after-trip soak. Tours can be run in English, and staff will pick you up at the JR Sanbonmatsu station if you pre-request it. Depending on the weather, trips run from April to November; check out the English website for details.

which is famed for its traditional farmers' kabuki performances. Other interesting buildings include a border guardhouse from the Tokugawa era (a time when travel was tightly restricted) and a bark-steaming hut that was used in paper-making. There's also a water-powered rice-hulling machine and a fine old stone storehouse. English displays are present.

Hourly trains from Kotoden Chikkō station connect Takamatsu to Yashima station (¥270, 15 minutes). From here you can take the funicular railway to the top (¥700/1300 one way/return, five minutes), or hike up in about 30 minutes. At the top you can rent a bicycle (¥500) to pedal around the attractions.

Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum

イサムノグチ庭園美術館

Consider an excursion to the town of Murechō, east of Takamatsu, to witness the legacy of noted sculptor Isamu Noguchi (1904–88). Born in Los Angeles to a Japanese poet and an American writer, Noguchi set up a studio and residence here in 1970. Today the **complex** (☎ 870-1500; www.isamunoguchi.or.jp; 3-5-19 Murechō; admission ¥2100) is filled with hundreds of Noguchi's works, and holds its own as an impressive art installation. Inspiring sculptures are on display in the beautifully restored Japanese buildings and in the surrounding landscape.

Entry is decidedly worth it, but you've got to get your act together early if you want to visit here. One-hour tours are conducted at 10am, 1pm and 3pm on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday; visitors should fax or email ahead for reservations at least two weeks in advance (check out the website).

To reach the museum, take the Kotoden train to Yakuri station (¥330, 30 minutes, hourly), from where the museum is a 20-minute walk towards the town centre or a five-minute taxi ride.

Megi-jima 女木島

Just offshore from Yashima is the small island of Megi-jima (population 250), also known as Oniga-shima, or Demon Island. Several homes on the island are surrounded by picturesque *ōte*, which are high stone walls built to protect a house from waves, wind and ocean spray. It was here that Momotaro, the legendary Peach Boy (p444), met and conquered the mythical demon. You can tour the impressive **caves** (☎ 873-0728; admission ¥500; 🕒 8.30am-5pm) where the demon was said to have hidden, but they've been a bit ruined by the fake demons put there, supposedly to make it more realistic. Five or six boats a day run to Megi-jima from Takamatsu (¥340, 20 minutes), departing from the docks on the northern edge of the city.

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