

Take a journey into tradition and ceremony, following the footsteps of skilled artisans.

Setouchi city is full of natural beauty and sensibility nestling around its artisans' dedication, which has long nurtured and sustained the Japanese sword in its strength and beauty.

Setouchi

瀬戸内

【Setouchi city, Okayama pref.】

Sunset in Ushimado

Photo Credit: Okayama Prefectural Tourism Federation

Ushimado's seascape is often compared to that of the Aegean Sea. The many islands of the Seto Inland Sea compose a symphony of scenic beauty.

Breathtaking views provide a backdrop to the traditions that breathe life into the town.

The Seto Inland Sea was the first in Japan to be designated as a national park. Its beauty is undisputed, captivating all visitors with the magnificence of the beautiful islands, especially when viewed against the setting sun. Not only that, the area has local crafts and traditions, the best known perhaps being the production of Japanese swords. Visitors can experience being a swordsmith at the local museum or forge. Natural beauty and traditional culture will blend together in your memorable journey into awe and excitement.

Yukie Shrine [Tennousha Shrine Sword Forest]

The patron of swordsmiths is enshrined here. The warlord Takauji Ashikaga is said to have prayed at the shrine for recovery from eye disease. His request was granted and swordsmiths began to worship at the shrine. ●1151 Osafune, Osafune-cho, Setouchi city, Okayama / Approx. 10 minutes by car from JR Osafune Station

Unique Experience Kuroshima Venus Road

When the tide goes out, a path emerges allowing access by foot to the islands of Kuroshima, Nakano-kojima and Hashinokojima. A shuttle boat service is available from Hotel Limani ●Hotel Limani 3900 Ushimado, Ushimado-cho, Setouchi city, Okayama / Approx. 20 minutes by car from JR Oku Station

Unique Experience Yacht Cruise

Cruise along the sea in full sail with the wind blowing about you! Watch the sun set into the Seto Inland Sea. Enjoy every moment of excitement and pleasure.

A Good Day Out

Ueterasan (Mt. Uetera) Yokeiji Temple Approx. 30 minutes by car

Ushimado Olive Garden Approx. 5 minutes by car

Yacht cruise Approx. 10 minutes by shuttle boat

Kuroshima Venus Road Approx. 45 minutes by shuttle boat and car

Bizen Osafune Japanese Sword Museum Approx. 5 minutes by foot

Yukie Shrine

Take a journey to learn about the sea, plants and flames, coming together to create beauty in everyday life.

Bizen city is where the Japanese desire for learning and respect for good manners were born and bred, nurtured, and spread as values to be cherished by the Japanese.

Bizen

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【Bizen city, Okayama pref.】

Hinase Islands

The locality has always placed great importance on the sea, the mountains and the cultural traditions of the area and the history regarding the former Shizutani School which has been designated as Japan Heritage.

Surrounded by natural beauty and blessed with a mild climate, Bizen's cultural heritage is soothing to the Japanese spirit.

Bizen is home to Bizen Ware, the traditional local pottery that dates back a thousand years. Bizen is also home to the Shizutani School, the first school in Japan that was opened for commoners and that still stands. The school is now a museum of educational heritage where visitors can experience how pupils were taught in the old days. The school hall has been designated as a National Treasure. Bizen has many other interesting tourist spots such as the thatched houses that line the Hattoji Furusato Village, and Hinase, which is the biggest producer of oysters in Okayama Prefecture.

Shizutani School

Built in 1670, the school is not simply a monument to the past but a special learning experience where visitors can recite the Analects of Confucius in the school hall (National Treasure) as in the old days. ●784 Shizutani, Bizen city, Okayama / Approx. 15 minutes by car from JR Inbe Station

Unique Experience Bizen Ware Pottery Experience

Bizen Ware comes from one of the Six Old Kilns in Japan. Together with busy production activities, workshops offer visitors the experience of throwing their own Bizen pots using manual or electric potter's wheels and firing the finished pots in a traditional ascending kiln or an electric kiln. ●JR Inbe Station Area

Unique Experience

●JR Inbe Station Area

A Good Day Out

Walk around Bizen Ware Pottery Village in Inbe Short walk

Bizen Ware Pottery Experience Approx. 20 minutes by car

Kakioko (oyster pancake) Short walk

Gominoichi Market Approx. 25 minutes by car

Shizutani School Approx. 35 minutes by car

Hattoji International Villa

Hattoji International Villa

With thatched houses dotted around, the Villa is set in pastoral surroundings used for the shooting of part of the movie Black Rain. Guests can relax around the open hearth and treat themselves to a soak in the old Japanese style Goemonburo bathtub. ●119 Kagami Yoshinaga-cho, Bizen city, Okayama / Approx. 30 minutes by car from JR Yoshinaga Station

Shopping Bizen Ware (Bizen Ware Traditional Industries Hall)

Gifts and souvenirs are on display downstairs. Upstairs you will find a wide variety of Bizen pottery to view and purchase, created by some 160 different masters and potteries catering for all tastes. ●1657-7 Inbe, Bizen City, Okayama / Inside JR Inbe Station

Shopping Hinase Kakioko

Okonomiyaki savory pancake topped with plenty of Hinase oysters is a local specialty. Take your fill of fresh and tasty oysters. (Frozen oysters are used in summer)

Shopping

●1891-4 Misaki, Aiko City, Hyogo / Approx. 10 minutes by car from JR Banshu-Ako Station

Shopping

●Place: Aiko City

Shopping

●Place: Aiko City

Shopping

●Place: Aiko City

Take a journey of compassion and calmness of mind.

Ako city is famous for the story of loyalty of the 47 Ronin of Ako, which has touched the hearts of the Japanese over the ages. Ako is also well known for the soothing powers of its hot spring.

Ako

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【Ako city, Hyogo pref.】

Ako Misaki

The story of the Ako-gishi (the 47 Ronin) whose loyalty has been told in countless works.

Ako city embodies their indomitable spirit as the backdrop to this famous historical episode.

Ako city preserves part of its former appearance as a town built around Ako castle. The city is known for the Ako 47 Ronin Incident that took place in the Edo Era and has been celebrated since in many plays and movies. Kagakuji Temple, Ako Castle Remains, and Ako Oishi Shrine are just some of the tourist spots with historical associations. Ako enjoys sunny weather throughout the year, making it suitable for salt production. A wide range of salt products are popular and available for sale.

Kagakuji Temple

The Temple has the graves of the 47 ronin, a treasure hall and a display of wooden statues of the 47 ronin. ●1992 Kanya, Ako City, Hyogo / Approx. 10 minute by foot from JR Banshu-Ako Station

Shopping

●Place: Aiko City

Shopping

●Place: Aiko City

Shopping

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Shopping

●Place: Aiko City

Ako Misaki

One of the most scenic spots in Ako city, this viewpoint in front of the Iwatsuhime Shrine affords a tranquil view of the sea. ●Misaki, Ako City, Hyogo / Approx. 15 minutes by car from JR Banshu-Ako Station

Ako Hot Springs

The spa of Ako boasts one of the best quality hot springs that aid recuperation of health and beauty of skin in Japan. The view of the Seto Inland Sea here is the very best in Japan. ●Misaki, Ako City, Hyogo / Approx. 15 minutes by car from JR Banshu-Ako Station

Ako Oishi Shrine

This shrine is revered for its power to grant wishes because it enshrines the 47 ronin, including Kuranosuke Oishi, who was the leader of the Ako Incident. ●Kamkanya (formerly on the castle grounds), Ako City, Hyogo / Approx. 15 minutes by foot from JR Banshu-Ako Station

Shopping

●Place: Aiko City

Shopping

●Place: Aiko City

Shopping

●Place: Aiko City

Shopping

●Place: Aiko City

Take a journey of food and culture, fulfilling and nurtured by nature.

Aioi city has been featured in old Japanese poems for its tranquil seascape and its fame as a port good for waiting for favorable winds.

Aioi

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【Aioi city, Hyogo pref.】

Aioi Peron Festival

Peron (dragon boat)

In Aioi city, visitors enjoy delicious local produce and experience the rich gifts of the sea and mountains.

The sea has nurtured good food and culture. The landscape is rich in greenery, and the city is full of interesting local history.

To the south of Aioi city lies the Setonaikai National Park with its wonderful scenery, and spreading to the north is the Hyogo Prefectural natural park with its lush green landscape. On offer to visitors are sword forging, pottery, woodwork and farming experiences, not to mention the dragon boat rowing. Seasonal delights in food tempt the taste buds throughout the year: a special treat in the summer is the Yano melon, with its beautiful smell and sweet flavor, and in winter the oysters from the Aioiwan Bay are delicious.

Rakan no sato Village [arhat statues]

Visit the cave with 16 stone statues of Rakan the arhat, or achiever of Nirvana. Also on the premises is a Japanese sword workshop which welcomes visitors. Campsite and cottages are available here. ●28 Rakanguchi, Uryu Yano-cho, Aioi City, Hyogo / Approx. 20 minutes by car from JR Aioi Station

Unique Experience Dragon Boat Experience

The dragon boat race is an exciting event, with wooden boats that race to the sound of gongs and drums. Between April and October, visitors can experience rowing a dragon boat in the Peron Kaikan Hall (booking essential).

Unique Experience Furusato Koryu Kan Handicrafts Center

Try your hand at making traditional toys for family fun. Visitors can also take part in Bizen Ware pottery classes and farming trials. Accommodation is available in a wooden building with a delicate natural feel. ●129 Yano-cho, Nakano, Aioi City, Hyogo / Approx. 15 minutes by car from JR Aioi Station

Unique Experience Aioi Fish Market

Eat fresh oysters and other fish and shellfish caught in the Harima-nada Sea. Grilled conger eel is extremely popular - it's both tender and juicy. ●Aoi 6-cho, Aioi City, Hyogo / Approx. 10 minutes by car from JR Aioi Station

A Good Day Out

Manyo Cape Approx. 10 minutes by car

Seafood grill at Aioi Fish Market Approx. 3 minutes by car

Peron Kaikan Hall Short walk

Aioi Peron Castle Approx. 20 minutes by car

Rakan no sato Village Approx. 6 minutes by foot

Visit swordsmith

JR Aioi Station [Shinkansen]

JR Aioi Station (Shinkansen) has become popular with foreign tourists for spotting the bullet trains that pass through at 300 kmph. Don't miss your chance to view the high-speed spectacle!

Aioi Peron Castle

Under one roof are all the special attractions of Aioi - gifts and local produce, good food at the restaurant, a dragon boat exhibition, plus a spa facility. ●8-55 Nabaminamihonmachi, Aioi City, Hyogo / Approx. 8 minutes by car from JR Aioi Station

Peron Kaikan Hall

The Hall is sited within Peron Castle and is the boathouse for the dragon boats. Available here are information and exhibits on the history and structure of these boats.

Shopping

●Place: Aiko City

Shopping

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Shopping

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Shopping

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