

AMAKUSA and UTO PENINSULA



"Traveling through Amakusa with my friend Hakushu, we stayed at an inn in Oe that was a Christian's home." In 1907, five prominent Japanese writers and poets: Hiroshi Yosano, Hakushu Kitahara, Masao Ota, Isamu Yoshii, and Banri Hirano, visited Amakusa and wrote about their experiences in a travel note entitled *Gosoku-no-Kutsu* (Five Pairs of Shoes). A stone monument inscribed with one of Yoshii's poems stands in the shade of trees at the Oe Catholic Church. Kitahara extolled Amakusa's exotic sights in his maiden work *Jaumon*. Ota praised it in his books of poems *Amakusa Gumi*.

According to oral tradition, the Amakusa-Shimabara Rebellion (1637-1638) was an uprising of Christians, but actually it was a peasant riot not directly motivated by religious causes. It happened because the local peasants were burdened with unreasonably heavy taxes under the Tokugawa Shogunate. Even after the rebellion was crushed, Shigenari Suzuki, an official in charge of the Amakusa Islands, is said to have asked the shogun to ease the tax burden on his people, explaining that the requisite amount of rice could not be grown in Amakusa's infertile soils.

Amakusa's first deputy official, Shigenari Suzuki

Tomioaka Visitor Center
Explores the ties of the local people to the Amakusa sea through exhibits and 3-D videos. Also has a fine view of Mt. Unzen across the sea.

Tomioaka Magarizaki
a scenic sand spit and littoral plan-tifl habitat

Tomioaka Castle Site
Site of the bloodiest battle of the Amakusa-Shimabara Rebellion. Some relics of the battle still remain. The stone walls and citadel were restored recently. Splendid views of the surrounding sea and countryside.

Rinsen Spa
(with heated swimming pool)

Shimoda Hot Spring Meeting House 'Platto'
Shimoda 'Gosoku-no-yu' Hot Spring Foot Bath

Shimoda Hot Spring

Shiratsuru-hama Swimming Area

Mt. Araodake Viewpoint
(a historical lookout post)

Oe Church

Amakusa Rosario Museum

Crinum Lily habitat

The Yokabu Bay is a narrow fjord-like inlet of a kind that is fairly rare in Japan.

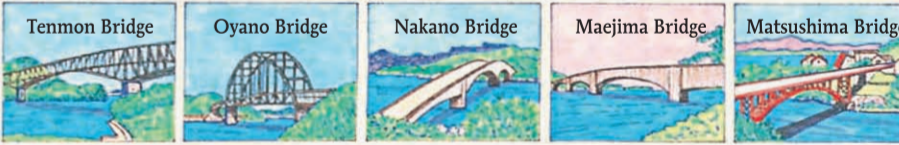
Ushibuka Park

Witness the spectacle of a sun the color of red wine setting over the Amakusa Sea.

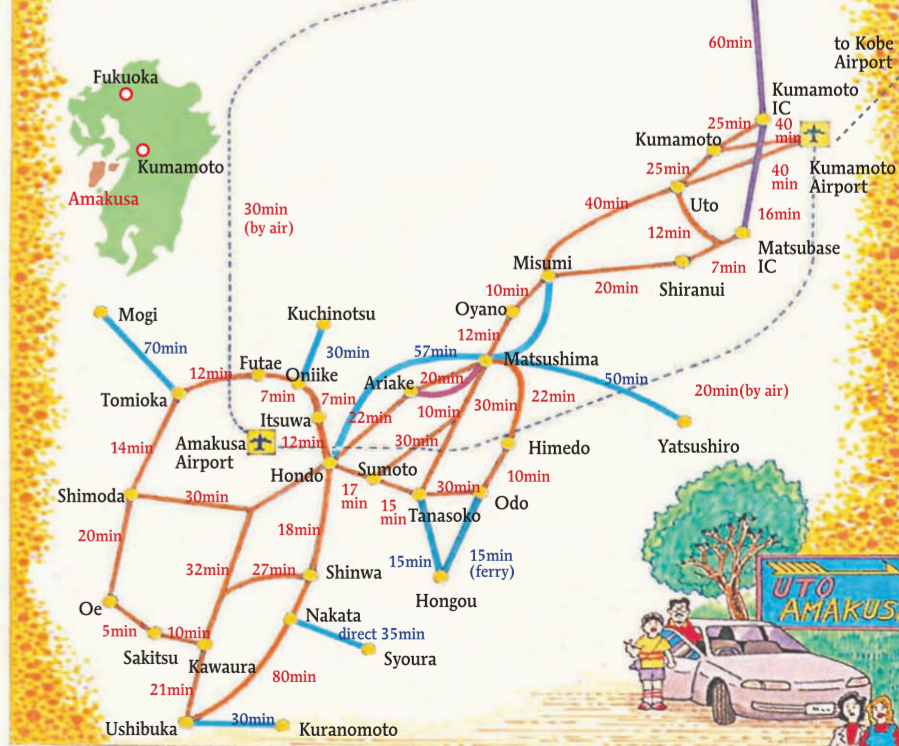
◆ Scuba diving spot
◆ Sea turtle spawning grounds



The Amakusa Five Bridges (Amakusa Goko)



Travel Times by Car



For more information, contact <http://www.t-island.jp/>
Treasure Islands Amakusa Tourism Association
 15-7 Chuo-Shinmachi, Amakusa City, Kumamoto Pref. 863-0023 phone: 0969-22-2243

Uto City was founded by Yukinaga Konishi, an autonomous warrior baron. The main tower of Uto Castle, originally called *Tsuru-no-Shiro* (Crane Tower), presently stands as *Uto-Yagura* (Uto Tower) at the Kumamoto Castle.

In medieval times, Amakusa used to be divided into five areas: Amakusa, Oyano, Shiki, Kotsuura, and Sumoto, and governed by powerful clans collectively called the 'Amakusa Goninshu'. It is said that some members of these clans traveled overseas and introduced foreign culture to Amakusa. In 1591, a theological school called the Amakusa Colegio was founded by visiting Portuguese missionaries.

The most straightforward way to approach Amakusa is via the Five Bridges that link Amakusa to Uto Peninsula and mainland Kyushu. To arrive at the first bridge, most travelers use National Highway 57, which winds along the north coast of the peninsula. National Highway 266, which follows the peninsula's south coast and connects to the Kyushu Expressway at Matsubase Interchange, is an alternative approach route. The ferry ride from Yatsushiro is an enjoyable way to approach Amakusa by crossing a picturesque inland sea with silhouettes of Amakusa's mountains visible on the horizon. Ferries connect Amakusa to Nagasaki Prefecture in the north; Kagoshima Prefecture in the south can be reached via another convenient ferry departing from the town of Ushibuka. Amakusa can also be reached expediently via a short and scenic flight from either Kumamoto or Fukuoka.

Dolphin Watching
About 300 dolphins are said to live offshore Itoyama. Guided by local fishermen, dolphin watching tours offer you an amazing opportunity to see dolphins swimming and jumping up close.
Amakusa Dolphin Information phone: 0969-26-4500

Amakusa Road Map

天草ロードマップ

Legend

- Expressway
- National Road, Trunk Road
- Narrow Road
- Prefectural Road, Main Road
- Local Road
- Ferry Route
- 10 Distance in kilometers
- Administrative Boundary
- Tourist Bureau
- ♿ Barrier-Free Restrooms
- ♾ City Hall, Town Hall
- ♾ Castle, Castle Ruins
- ♾ Spa with Accomodation
- ♾ Day Use Spa
- ♾ Golf Course
- ♾ Swimming Area
- ♾ Campground
- ♾ Sunset Viewing Point
- ♾ Port, Ferry or Cruise Boat Embarkment Point
- ♾ Tunnel



Tomioaka Castle Ruin
Tomioaka Castle Ruin
Reihoku Product Exhibition Hall
Tomioaka Visitor Center

Reihoku Town Tourism Association
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Reihoku Town Tourism Association
Reihoku Town Tourism Association
Reihoku Product Exhibition Hall

Itsuwa Visitor Center
Itsuwa Visitor Center

Amakusa Christian Museum
Amakusa Christian Museum
Amakusa Folk Museum

Amakusa City Hall
Amakusa City Hall

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Tororo Scenic Coast (A-4) Kikagaura Lookout (A-4) Nishibira Camella Park (A-4) Kuroshi Scenic Coast (A-5) Komori Scenic Coast (A-6)

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