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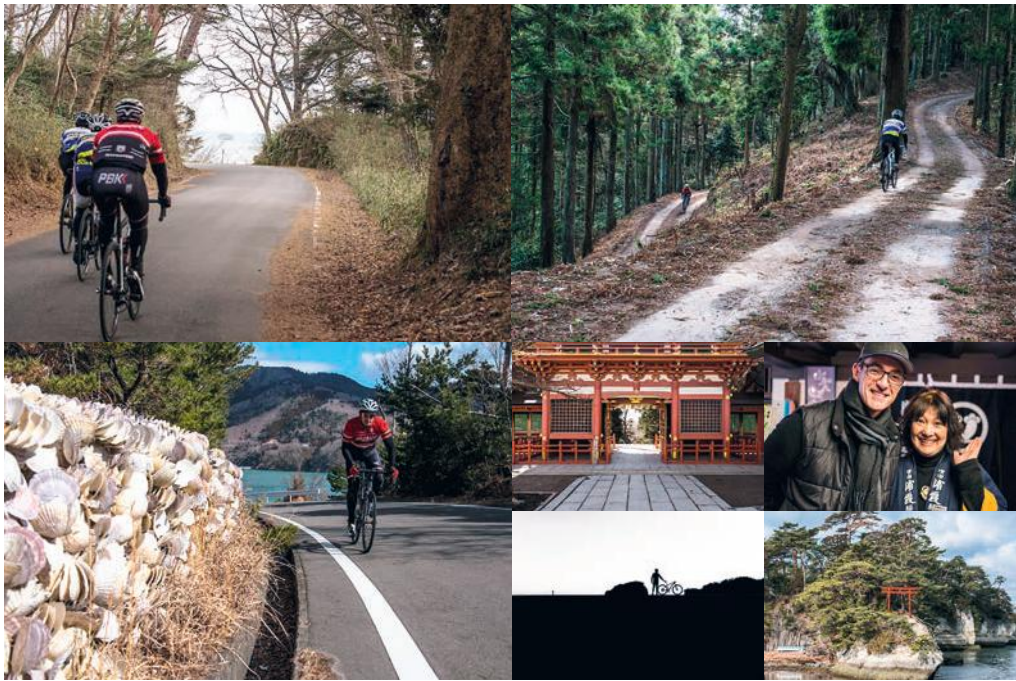
Get information on
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MIYAGI JAPAN MATSUSHIMA BAY AREA CYCLE TOURISM

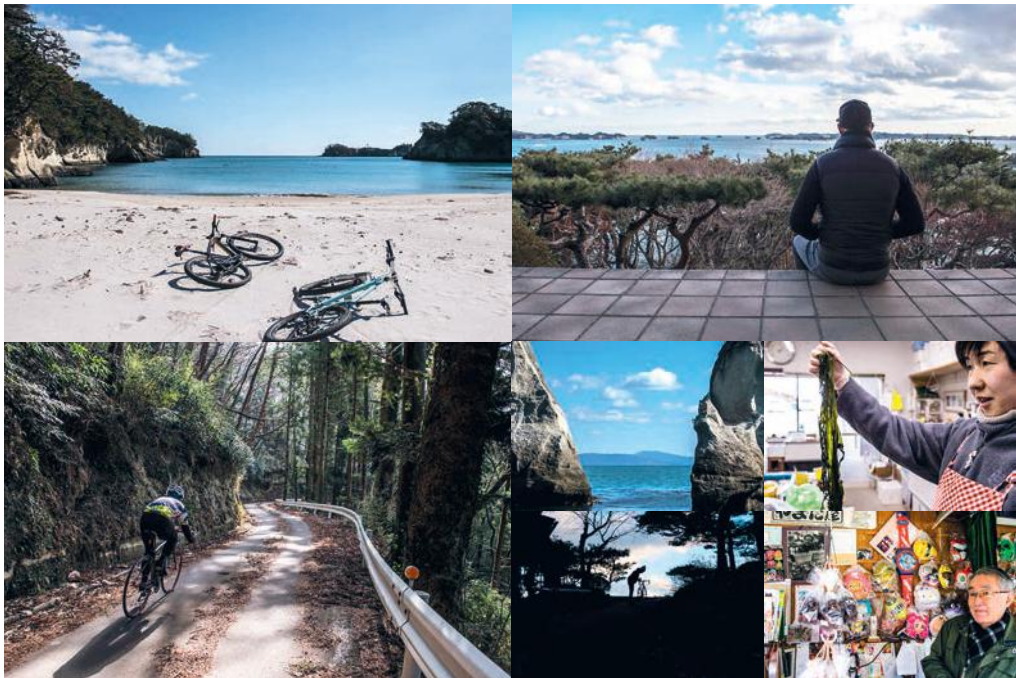
GUIDEBOOK



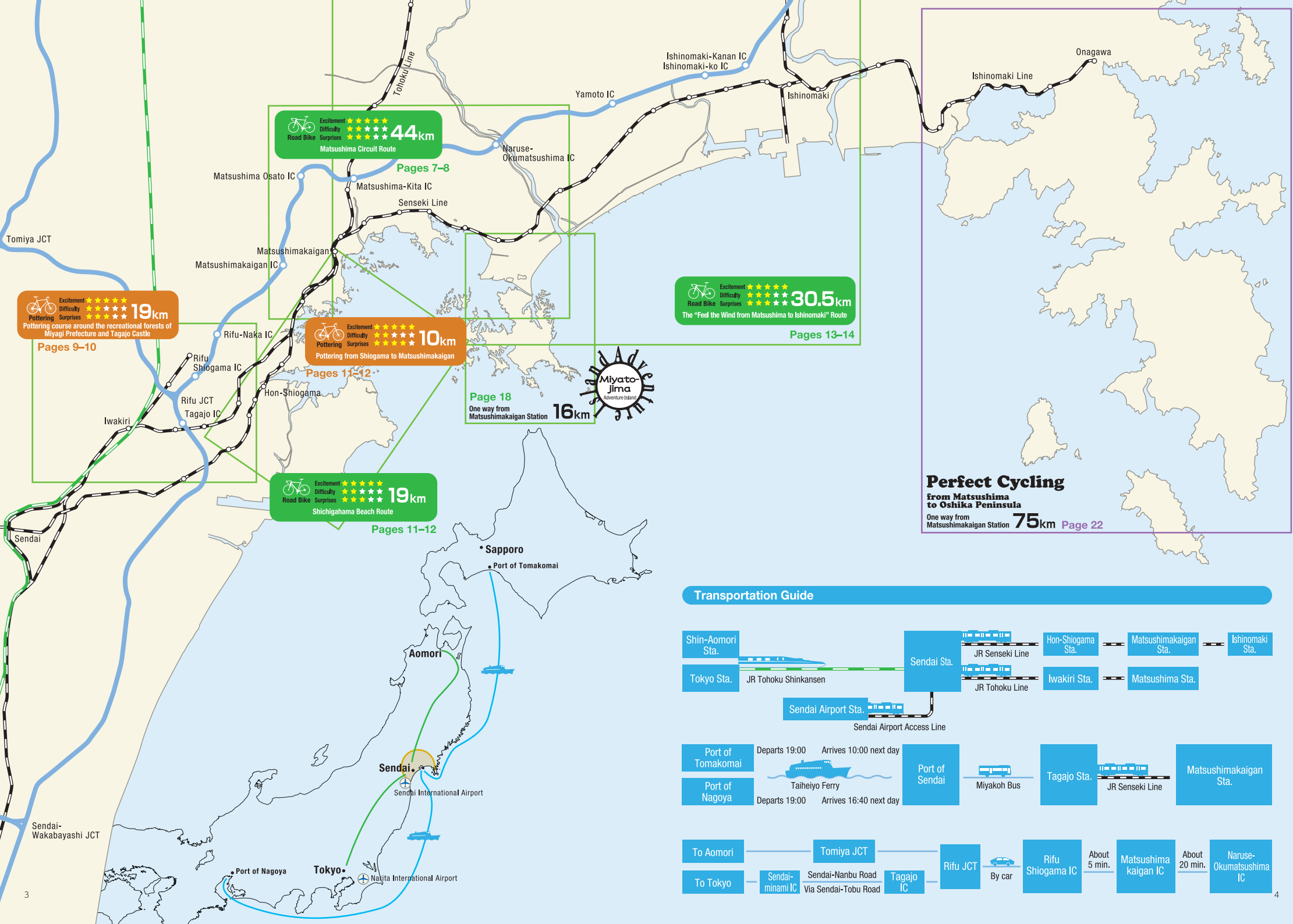


Heaven for the cyclist — This is Matsushima Bay.

These photos were taken by Paolo Penni Martelli, an Italian photographer with 20,000 followers. He came to Japan for the Matsushima Bay Area Cycle Tourism Project.



Note: Photos from the Oshika area have been included for composition purposes.



Excitement ★★★★★
 Difficulty ★★★★★
 Road Bike Surprises ★★★★★
44km
 Matsushima Circuit Route
 Pages 7-8

Excitement ★★★★★
 Difficulty ★★★★★
 Pottering Surprises ★★★★★
19km
 Pottering course around the recreational forests of Miyagi Prefecture and Tagajo Castle
 Pages 9-10

Excitement ★★★★★
 Difficulty ★★★★★
 Pottering Surprises ★★★★★
10km
 Pottering from Shiogama to Matsushimakaigan
 Pages 11-12

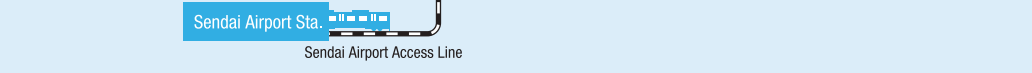
Excitement ★★★★★
 Difficulty ★★★★★
 Road Bike Surprises ★★★★★
30.5km
 The "Feel the Wind from Matsushima to Ishinomaki" Route
 Pages 13-14

Excitement ★★★★★
 Difficulty ★★★★★
 Road Bike Surprises ★★★★★
19km
 Shichigahama Beach Route
 Pages 11-12

Miyako-jima Adventure Island
16km
 One way from Matsushimakaigan Station
 Page 18

Perfect Cycling
 from Matsushima to Oshika Peninsula
 One way from Matsushimakaigan Station **75km** Page 22

Transportation Guide





Rifu Umanose

Enter the Awesome Adventure in Matsushima bay

Starting Out on Our Amazing Trek

For four days, cycling journalist Lee Rodgers and Italian photographer Paolo Penni Martelli visited Japan to take part in an adventure around the Matsushima Bay area. Takuma of JOUBON's picked them up in Shiogama and they headed out, pottering towards Matsushima to start their cycling journey.

Cyclists are clearly a happy species. When riding their bicycles, cyclists have no borders.

So, let's get started exploring Japan.



Lee Rodgers

Lee is a professional cyclist and was a member of the former CIC Continental team. In the final stage of his professional career, he was a member of the West Japan Business Group. He also won several titles in domestic road races. He is currently a journalist and concurrently serves as director of a worldwide road race. Having had many Japanese teammates, he is fluent in Japanese and is very knowledgeable about Japan.



JOUBON's

Active mainly in the Ishinomaki area, JOUBON's is an amateur cycling team. They never lose to anyone when it comes to their pride in the region, so they know the Matsushima-Ishinomaki route well. JOUBON's is familiar with a wide range of cycling styles, from road racing to cyclocross and mountain biking, and the members train no matter the season. They welcome and accept new members, as anyone who applies can participate. The members of JOUBON's are noteworthy for having won many awards in local races.



Shiwahiko Shrine & Shiogama Shrine

Left: The thoughtful Japanese wash the handle of the ladle without touching it in consideration of those who will use it next. Below: "Nade-ushi," the rubbing cow, stands within the shrine precincts.

The approach to Shiwahiko Shrine and Shiogama Shrine continues through the low green-covered hills to the west of the city.

Paolo is filming the forest: "I like trees." It seems that the darker trees of Japan's shrines and temples get a special view.

Is this a cow? The "Nade-ushi" rubbing cow brings good luck for businesses. "Indeed! In Shinto, God is in everything!" The cow, of course, is an essential creature essential to farming.

Takuma, a college student, comes down from the shrine, and he says, "There was a very interesting mom-and-pop candy store. That place has lots of masks too."

Traditional mom-and-pop candy store

Yamada-ya, founded 140 years ago, opened as a candy store 60 years ago. After continuing for four generations, the owners now say "This store will close in 4 years."



Urakasumi Sake Gallery: For only 300 yen, you can try several types of sake in a choko (small cup) and take the choko home. Why not enjoy one yourself?



Sokanzan Restaurant: Fried oyster set

Lee is also interested. Well, let's go, then!

There is no door on the roadside, but it is a long shop, appearing as a stage setting. It is only about 2 meters deep.

"Although this was originally a kimono shop, the building was scaled down when the roadway was expanded," says the owner. "So it became a candy store 60 years ago. But the business itself has been around for almost 140 years."

Paolo is engrossed in a snack that costs only 20 yen. He exclaims, "The bottle is filled with dried squid!"

Walking down the shopping area while eating a bag full of sweets, we see a sign saying "Sake." That's how we discovered the Urakasumi Sake Gallery.

"Welcome! We have a variety of things to taste," says the shop attendant.

"Wow, that's wonderful!" says Lee. Sake contains a lot of amino acids.

"Everything is incredibly delicious, the dry sake is piquant, and the fragrance of freshly squeezed sake is even fresher. Even those of the same brand can differ completely."

What's Takuma doing? He's eating sake ice cream! Lee bought a 720-ml bottle as a souvenir for his family in Taiwan. Now it's time to get back to pottering.

We head east on National Highway 45. We take a side street opposite Rikuzen-Hamada Station. The road slopes up to a small cape. The surrounding trees are pines— in fact, it's pines all around. From the peak of the cape, Matsushima Bay is visible, with islands floating in the blue sea.

Lee runs ahead. "What does this sign mean?"

Takuma replies, "There are many trails leading out to the small capes around here." Among the many paths, the one recommended by Takuma is Rifu Umanose.

The trail gradually descends down towards the sea between the pine trees. They walk about 200 meters among the natural rocks sticking out as they gradually approach sea level. A trail not even a meter wide leads to a small island. At the tip of a tiny landing jutting out into the sea, a wonderful view opens up. The field of view is split horizontally between the sea and sky, making it appear as if one is flying. The wind stops; it's quiet.

"It's beautiful. We could spend an hour here, just watching the sea," says Lee.

They are at a loss for words. They remain silent while watching the sun shimmer, the color of the sea changing from blue to green, and the evening sky becoming imbued with pink.

"I'm hungry." Lee is the first to break the silence.

Takuma asks, "Shall we eat soon? The best restaurant is only five minutes from here."

It's just a small hut standing on a hill, not very big at all, but once inside, we found this to be very attractive. A mere 10 seats line a large window on the ocean side. The window offers a view over the pines of the bay extending as far as we can see. We watch the evening envelop the ocean. The color of the sea changes by the minute. Then the meal is served.

"These oysters are amazing!" says Lee, although he has eaten fried oysters many times in Japan, and he has consumed them all over the world. But these juicy oysters are packed with flavor. You may have heard that Matsushima produces the best oysters in Japan; in fact, these oysters have rightfully been called irresistible.

"I can no longer be satisfied with oysters from anywhere else," says Lee.

Today's trip has featured five things that go together well: tradition, a unique town, the warmth of the local people, walking, and great food. All of which leaves us with our thoughts for the day. Well, the meal is over and tomorrow starts early again. Off we go to the hotel.

As soon as our feet touch the pedals, we are filled again with happiness.

We can't help but think about what lays ahead.





Genroku Tunnel No. 6 earth and sand outlet
 A hand-dug tunnel from the Genroku era for the purpose of draining Shinainuma Pond. The size of the pit is surprising.



Bridge joints. Puncture risk.

A peaceful narrow route right next to Rifu Road. Originally a railway track, this is a smooth, relatively flat road. You can reach Atago Station by carefully following this route (partially unpaved) beside the Rifu-Naka interchange.



Residential areas on left and right. Lower speed.



Tomiyama Shitaikan ("View of Harmonious Beauty")

Tomiyama Kannon-do Hall
 A magnificent view of Matsushima Bay from beside Kannon-do on the mountaintop.

Halfway up are stone steps.



This section crosses over 4 hills, but the road conditions are good and gets you into a rhythm!



Agried Naruse NOBICO
 Address: 50-1 Haguro, Nobiru, Higashimatsushima City
 Hours: 10:00-17:00 (16:00 on Saturdays and Sundays)
 Closed: Open 7 days a week

An ideal route even during high winds, as the road goes alongside mountains that block the winds.



The wind is pleasant along the river and the road surface is smooth.

Map of Central Matsushima Town, p. 15-16

START GOAL

Narrow road. Watch for traffic.

Narrow national highway, no shoulder

Heavy traffic

Ogitani ("Mysterious View") Shitaikan

Sokanzan Restaurant
 Address: 16-36 Osawadaira, Matsushima, Matsushima Town
 Hours: 10:00-18:00
 Closed: Wednesdays

Rikuzen-Hamada



Sokanzan Restaurant
 Address: 16-36 Osawadaira, Matsushima, Matsushima Town
 Hours: 10:00-18:00
 Closed: Wednesdays

Veer off National Highway 45 and take the side road. This is a tranquil path that continues through the pine forest offering a nice view of Matsushima Bay.

Matsushima Circuit Route
 1 lap/44 km

Excitement ★★★★★
 Difficulty ★★★★★
 Road Bike Surprises ★★★★★

Map data

QR code

Starting from Matsushimakaigan Station in a counterclockwise direction, you can choose a variety of options including an enjoyable continuous hill climb, a pleasant road along the river, a peaceful farm road, former railway tracks, and a comfortable road through pine trees that overlooks the islands. Although the course is slightly long, there are few traffic lights so you can cruise fast.



3.11 Disaster Recovery Memorial Museum
 Address: 56-36 Kitayokei, Nobiru, Higashimatsushima City
 Hours: 09:00-17:00
 Closed: 3rd Wednesday of each month

Directions to Miyatojima Island See map p. 18

Sawaoto Hot Spring Uchimi Japanese Inn

Close to Sendai, this noted hot spring opened in the year 801. The Ezo conquest squad led by Sakanoue no Tamuramaro is believed to have stayed at the military base at Tagajo Castle, healing their wounds and calming their minds in these soothing waters.

Address: 1 Myojinzawa, Sugaya, Rifu Town
 Fee: Adults ¥550, Children ¥300 (one-day use)
 Closed: 2nd and 4th Wednesdays



Kenmin no Mori Forest and Seishonen no Mori Forest in Miyagi Prefecture

Miyagi Kenmin no Mori Forest has two-lane circuit routes that run through the forest, providing a comfortable and pleasant cycling circuit. Kenmin no Mori Forest also features many walking trails offering an enjoyable break from cycling.



Excitement ★★★★★
 Difficulty ★★★★★
 Pottinger ★★★★★
 Surprises ★★★★★

Pottinger course around Miyagi Kenmin no Mori Forest and Tagajo Castle

1 lap/19 km

The comfortable winding road without traffic lights runs through Kenmin no Mori Forest. The road surface is smooth. As it offers good view of the road ahead, those on road bikes can lean forward to enjoy the corners.

In the Tagajo Castle area, sidewalks have been improved around the site of the Mutsu provincial office that used to be located here. This is a pleasant area for slow walks. This route is close to restaurants and hot springs and is an all-round pleasant circuit.

Map data

 QR code



Warning: Narrow road with poor asphalt surface. Many large vehicles and poor visibility.

The sidewalk includes a bicycle path with a very nice view. The Shinkansen railyard can be seen from here.

Watch out for vehicles entering and exiting the mall.

Pleasant forest road

Hill climb

Nice view from the banks beside the detention pond.

Ruins of Tagajo Castle, a Special Historical Site

An administrative office was established here by the government to oversee Mutsu Province during the Nara era. The provincial office and army base also established here operated for about 300 years as a hub for politics, culture and military in Tohoku. Today, it is considered one of Japan's top three historic sites. The promenade around these sites lets you experience the rich natural surroundings.

Pro shop information

SEKI CYCLE SHOP

Large selection of parts and clothing. Actively involved in the racing scene.
 Address: 2-18-1 Takahashi, Tagajo City
 Hours: 10:00-19:00 (18:30 on Sundays)
 Closed: Wednesday



Tohoku History Museum

Offers exhibits on Tohoku history from the Paleolithic to the Modern Age. Also features special exhibitions.
 Address: 1-22-1 Takasaki, Tagajo City
 Fee: Adults ¥460; Elementary, junior and high school students: Free
 Closed: Monday (Closed Tuesday if Monday is a public holiday.)





Shihwahiko Shrine & Shiohama Shrine

These Shinto shrines retain one of Japan's oldest traditions, the historical practice of making salt by soaking natural algae in seawater and allowing it to evaporate. It is also a cherry blossom viewing spot where a variety of these blossoms emerge in spring. Several of Miyagi's prominent sake breweries are located nearby. Enjoy searching for souvenirs!
Address: 1-1 Ichimoriyama, Shiohama City
Hours: 05:00-20:00



Sake in Shiohama



Excitement ★★★★★
Difficulty ★★★★★
Surprises ★★★★★
Pottering

Pottering from Shiohama to the Matsushima Coast

Shiohama Shrine is famous for its cherry blossoms. Closer to the beach are Shiohama Fish Market and Chiganoura Fish Market. There are many gourmet spots on this route, so you can enjoy a relaxing ride over the course of the entire day. The coastal road from Rikuzen-Hamada Station to Mt. Sokanzan features good road conditions and the wonderful fragrance emanating from the pine trees. Even if you stop for lunch at the cape restaurant, you can still easily ride down to Matsushimakaigan Station, as it is mostly downhill. We also suggest you stop at the Yunohara hot spring resort to get refreshed.

Map data
QR code



Taritsuan
A specialty restaurant offering oysters and conger eel with a breathtaking view of Matsushima Bay. If you've saved money by biking, why not enjoy a luxurious lunch?
Address: 132-2 Idojiri, Akanuma, Rifu Town
Hours: 11:00-16:00 (last order 15:30)
Closed: Irregular schedule



Shitaikan Tamonzan ("Dynamic View")

At the end of the promenade behind Bishamondo Temple is a spectacular view of the Mahanashi Channel and dotted islands. This is one of the "Four Panoramic Views" of Matsushima.

Excitement ★★★★★
Difficulty ★★★★★
Surprises ★★★★★
Road Bike

Shichigahama Loop 19 km

This route includes the Shichigahama Triathlon bike route, which is a renowned cyclist training course in the area. It passes by Shichigahama Beach, which was once a summer resort for foreign nationals employed by the Meiji government.

Map data
QR code



Shichigahama International Village

This is a coastal route. Enjoy the sandy beaches.



Art Cafe Bar SEA SAW
This café is located right next to Shobutahama. A bike rack is available.
20-8 Nagasuna, Shobutahama, Shichigahama Town
Lunch: 11:00-14:00
Tea time: 14:00-17:00 (Monday-Wednesday)
14:00-16:00 (Friday, Saturday & Sunday)
Dinner: 18:00-22:00 (Friday, Saturday & Sunday)
Closed: Thursdays



Shichigahama Umino-eki Matsushima Seafood Market Shichinoya
Offers fresh all-you-can-eat seafood (60-minute limit) as well as a food court.
Address: 75-41 Teteshita, Hanabuchiama, Shichigahama Town
Closed: Wednesdays

Rifu Umanose and surrounding walking trail
This side road can be accessed right beside National Highway 45. It's a scenic cycling road that threads through big trees while offering views of the vast ocean. Stop when you see the sign reading "Rifu Umanose" beside the road. Here you can see a natural bridge that extends toward the sea. A 5-meter section at the tip of the island is cut off, and the sea spray splashes under your gaze. It takes a bit of courage to jump onto and walk to the tip of the island.





The best way to get to Matsushima from Kashimadai. You can take in the view of the river while cycling down the road.

Good road surface. When circling Ishinomaki and Matsushima, you can use this road as the return route.

Watch out for bridge joints. Risk of falls and tire punctures.

Intersection with heavy traffic.

This section crosses over 4 hills, but the road conditions are good and gets you into a rhythm!

Pleasant road in good condition offering good visibility.

Narrow road with temporary bridge.

Watch carefully for heavy traffic in this section.

Shortcut to Onagawa area. Overpass to bike path.

Good road conditions with a view of the sea. Pleasant cruising!

Private old residence Café Kazemakase
Offers country-style lunches and pasta made with freshly-harvested vegetables. At night, it becomes a pub offering charcoal-grilled chicken. This is a nice restaurant that is also friendly to cyclists.
Address: 30-1 Barazaki, Tetaaru, Matsushima Town
Daytime: 11:00–15:00
Evenings: 17:00–22:00
Closed: Thursdays

Nori-udon noodles, a specialty of Higashimatsushima
For 80 years since the early Showa period, Higashimatsushima has focused on seaweed production. They have won numerous awards at competitions. Their unique specialty is udon noodles into which special seaweed powder is kneaded. The aroma, smooth texture and rich flavor are irresistible as they spread across the palate.
Near Yamoto Station are shops where you can enjoy a variety of dishes. Nori-udon can be enjoyed in pure Japanese style or in salads.

Bicycle icon	Excitement	★★★★★
	Difficulty	★★★★★
	Road Bike Surprises	★★★★★

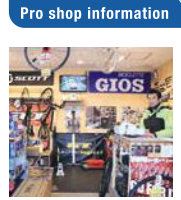
Feel the wind on the route from Matsushima to Ishinomaki
30.5 km

This route extends from Matsushimakaigan Station to Nobiru coast, passing along the Narusegawa River seawall toward Ishinomaki. Taking National Highway 45 to Onagawa and Kinkasan is the most common route, but it is also pleasant to take the road around the Matsushima Air Base of the Japan Air Self-Defense Force. You will also encounter a stand where you can enjoy fresh seafood. You can take a side trip to see the unique rocks at Miyatojima lining the Saga-kei Valley. In the vicinity of Yamoto you may be able to catch the arrival and departure of the Blue Impulse aerobatics team.

Map data

QR code

Kumagai Cycle
This is JOUBON's local bike shop. You can ask for professional maintenance service even for bikes bought at another bicycle shop.
Address: 1-2-39 Okaido-Higashi, Ishinomaki City
Hours: 10:00–19:00 (18:00 on Sundays)
Closed: Wednesdays





Reisentei Bathhouse, Yunohara Hot Spring

This quiet mountain bathhouse has been renovated. The pleasant scent of wood makes this facility quite popular.
 Address: 11 Yunohara, Matsushima,
 Matsushima Town
 Hours: 08:00-20:00
 Closed: Open year-round

Yunohara Hot Spring
 Basho-no-yu



Iyashino Yakata Bathhouse, Basho-no-yu

In addition to the neutral cold spa bath that you can enjoy for only 500 yen, there is also an ore bath. Enjoy a meal in the restaurant on the premises.
 Address: 32-1 Ishidazawa, Matsushima,
 Matsushima Town
 Hours: 10:00-20:00
 Closed: Third Wednesday of each month (Closed Thursday if Wednesday is a public holiday.)



Entsuin Temple

This building was built and opened in 1647 as the mausoleum of Date Masamune's grandson, Mitsumune. It is the oldest mausoleum in Miyagi Prefecture and is designated as an Important National Cultural Asset. It has been regarded as a treasure for three and a half centuries. In the building adjoining the Daihitei Main Hall, you can enjoy making a bead bracelet while viewing the garden.
 Address: 67 Chonai, Matsushima, Matsushima Town
 Hours: April-November: 08:30-17:00
 December-March: 09:00-16:00



Zuiganji Temple (Designated as a National Treasure)

This temple was built in 1600 by Date Masamune who was the first lord of Sendai Domain. The main building was embellished at the hands of great craftsmen such as the family of Umemura Hikozaemon Ietsugu and Osakabe (Tsuru) Saemon Kunitsugu, creating a gorgeous result. It is a designated national treasure.
 Address: 91 Chonai, Matsushima, Matsushima Town
 Hours: Opens at 08:00
 Closing time varies by season. Winter: 15:30, Summer: 17:00



! Traffic is heavy and the road is narrow. Be on the lookout for sudden movements from distracted sightseeing motorists!

! Watch out for cars entering/exiting the roadside restaurants!



Foot bath (in front of Hotel Ubudo)

The foot bath contains simple alkaline spring water from the Matsushima Onsen hot spring. Free of charge.
 Address: 5-3 Higashi-hama, Matsushima,
 Matsushima Town
 Hours: 10:00-16:00



Café ALBERT

Located close to Zuiganji Temple. From the large window of the café you can view the garden. The open atmosphere and sunshine make for a pleasant setting. You can also bring in bread purchased at the adjacent "Panya Aizawa" bakery.
 Address: 156 Chonai, Matsushima,
 Matsushima Town
 Hours: 10:00-17:00
 Closed: Mondays
 (Closed Tuesday if Monday is a public holiday.)



M Pantry

Oysters and rice flour are used to prepare the "oyster and rice" rice crackers, which emit the aroma of the sea. You can eat freshly baked items on the benches in front of the shop, which also sells processed foods made with products caught off the Miyagi coast.
 Address: 10 Senzui, Matsushima,
 Matsushima Town
 Hours: 09:30-18:00
 Closed: Wednesdays



Fukuura Bridge

Fukuura Island has a walking trail where you can easily enjoy a magnificent view of Matsushima Bay dotted with islands from the sea side. Fukuura Bridge suffered major damage in the Great East Japan Earthquake, including damage to the bridge piers, but it was restored with donations from Taiwan.
 Fee: Adult (high school students and older): ¥200
 Children (elementary and junior high school students): ¥100
 Hours: March-October: 08:30-17:00
 November-February: 08:30-16:30



ILE CAFE

This café is located at the side the rotary of Matsushimakaigan Station. It offers coffee and fresh juices using seasonal fruits from local or Tohoku farms. Relaxing at the counter facing the street is a great way to pass the time.
 Address: 10-4 Namiuchihama, Matsushima,
 Matsushima Town
 Hours: 11:00-18:00
 Closed: Wednesdays



Matsushima Yukitakeya

Shokado Kashiten is a café with a nice atmosphere on the second floor where castella sponge cakes are made, but for cyclists we recommend a big hand-baked rice cracker available on the first floor. The combination of the soy sauce-flavored rice cracker and the sweet soft ice cream is also a treat.
 Address: 109 Chonai, Matsushima,
 Matsushima Town
 Hours: 10:00-18:00
 Closed: Irregular schedule

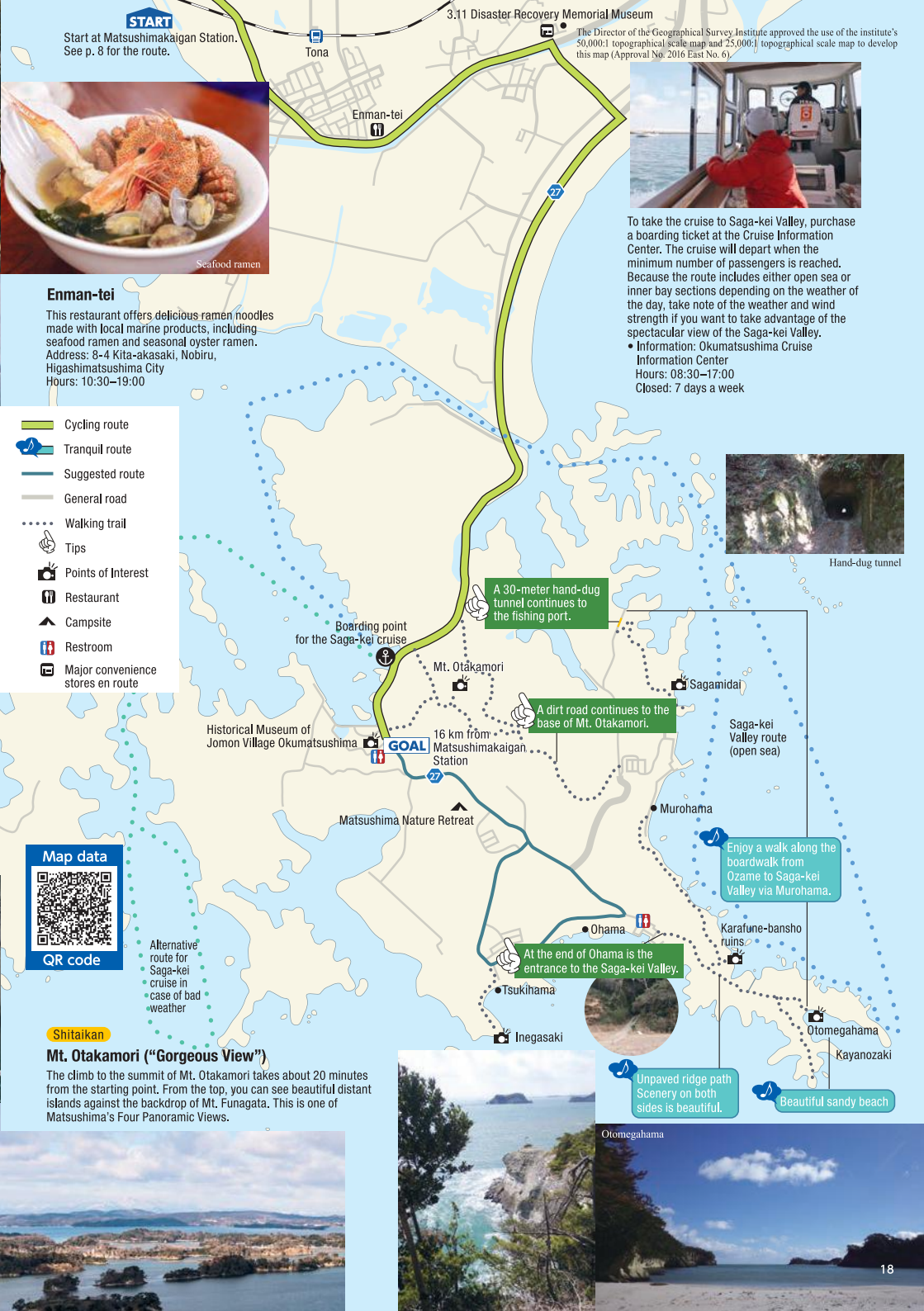


Mutouya

This shop is fun even just to look at, because of the abundant selection of Miyagi's local sake grouped by type and assorted by brewery that are on display. They also sell sake-related items such as choko (small cup), dice and cut glass.
 Address: 23 Fugendo, Matsushima,
 Matsushima Town
 Hours: 09:00-18:00
 Closed: Open throughout the year

- Cycling route
- Tranquil route
- Danger
- Caution
- General road
- - - - Walking trail
- 👉 Tips
- 🏯 Shrine
- 🏛️ Temple
- 📍 Points of Interest
- 🏛️ Museum, etc.
- 🍽️ Restaurant
- ☕ Café
- 🐟 Fish market, etc.
- 🚻 Restroom
- 🏪 Major convenience stores en route

The Director of the Geographical Survey Institute approved the use of the institute's 50,000:1 topographical scale map and 25,000:1 topographical scale map to develop this map (Approval No. 2016 East No. 6).





from Matsushima to Oshika Peninsula Perfect Cycling

Lee Rodgers Former Continental Road Professional @ JOUBON's Ishinomaki Cycling Team

From Matsushima to Ishinomaki, the quick route

As we left the hotel that morning, it felt cool enough to make us want to bring an extra jacket. On today's schedule is a big adventure, a ride of up to 75 kilometers from Matsushima to the Oshika Peninsula. We're in a hurry to get underway.

The line of cars disappeared once we passed through the traffic in front of Matsushimakaigan Station and reached the outskirts of town. Visibility also improved, so it was time to pick up the pace. JOUBON's and Lee formed a single file or "train," which helped to add some speed by decreasing the wind resistance. Our train of five cruised across the plain, climbed the hill, descended, and climbed another hill.

A side street appeared to the left of the road on the way to the hill climb by Tataru Station.

"Who said KOM [king of the mountain]?" someone shouted.

We proceeded up the steep slope among cedar trees at a moderate pace, competing with each other until the paving ended.



Lee is riding a Bond bike, a new aluminum bike brand.



Stairs to Tomiyama Kannon-do hall
The view from Kannon-do hall is known as one of Matsushima's Four Panoramic Views.



Agriread Naruse
NOBICO Baum Studio
Note: No drinks available here.



Along the middle of the ridge the paved road ended and some old stone steps appeared.

Is it the habit of cyclists to continue the competition even when they are off their bicycles and rush up the stairs? Eventually the roof of a building located at the summit appears. It's Tomiyama Kannon-do hall.

This crimson red hall, resembling an arrowhead piercing the deep blue sky, appears directly ahead of us.

"Lee, that building is God's place of residence. Since we're here, let's pray," said one member of our group.

A small cottage stands on the edge of the cliff opposite the hall. On the other side of the guardrail is the town of Matsushima and the broad arc of the bay. On the right is the Zao Mountain Range. The shadow piercing the shining sea is Miyato Island. The unexpected sight spreading before our eyes is breathtaking.

We enjoyed our group travels, and we also enjoyed a superb hill climb. Now, we are getting hungry. We decide to stop at a bakery along our route that bakes baumkuchen, a German cake.

We headed down the mountain and decided not to go to Ishinomaki by the Nobiru coast; instead, we turn left until we reach NOBICO Baum Studio.

“ To cover distance,
keep your arms relaxed.
Don't 'shake' your bike.
Focus on smooth pedaling. ”

Right: Side road next to Matsushima Air Base of the Japan Air Self-Defense Force
Lee Rodgers at full acceleration.

His upper body still shows no movement at all.

Bottom: The mountain in the distance is Mt. Joubon, which provided the inspiration for the team name "JOUBON's."



Sunlight drenches the bench in front of the shop. Though it's not a fancy café, it's enough. When that freshly baked sweet melts in one's mouth, it delivers energy to every cell in the body. Canned coffee and baumkuchen. Well, it's a long road to our destination. It's time to head west.

Aside from the Matsushima Air Base of the Japan Air Self-Defense Force, an unbroken stretch of road lies ahead. The team continues to cruise ahead smoothly. The first to take the lead is Shinomiya! Lee reacts as well.

Lee accelerates to the max and dashes ahead, overtaking the whole team at once! Even though he's just having fun, Lee's pedaling is smooth and his upper body doesn't sway at all.

"Don't put any energy into your shoulders or arms while pedaling, as it wastes energy and you lose power," Lee advises.

England has a 120-year history of cycling, and Lee has had a professional itch since the age of 15. He claims to have been taught how to race by someone over 60 years of age. JOUBON's has been looking forward to racing with real athletes in pelotons.



Perfect Cycling

From Matsushima to Oshika Peninsula

The Oshika Peninsula — A glittering sea road

At long last, we pass Ishinomaki, and the Oshika Peninsula looms into view. Finally we arrive at the entrance to the peninsula.

While taking in the view of Watanoha to Mangokuura, we enter the Oshika Peninsula and cruise on, veering right and left on the winding road along the western coast. On the downhill run we overtake the car, with our road bikes passing Paolo who is taking pictures from the car's passenger seat. We resemble a flock of swallows!

As noon approaches, the sun is like a spotlight beaming through the cedar forest. We ride across the patchwork pattern of shadows on the road.

A stone monument stamped with an inscription comes into view on the side of the road.

Lee asks, "What does it say?"

It is a monument to commemorate the opening, 430 years ago, of the temple located behind it.

"Wow, it has been here for such a long time!" Lee exclaims.

Every little cove has its own story — that is the charm of the Oshika Peninsula. Since ancient times, this land has held an important place in the hearts of the people of the Sanriku Coast. A splendid cedar forest welcomes us as we approach the temple, and a deep carpet of fallen leaves make the forest seem even darker.

Do we all want to climb this steep slope? Lee pedals on with apparently little effort, while JOUBON's appear desperate and struggle in low gear. The difference between the pro and amateur is evident at such times.

The western coastal road continues southward, crossing many beautiful small coves. We sit down on a quay overlooking the bluish bay and take a commemorative photo of everyone lined up side by side. What wonderful weather! Cycling on a sunny day without wind just adds to the word "perfection," and it would make no sense to add anything else.



"I'm hungry and my legs don't work anymore," says Lee, as the afternoon seems to arrive too soon.

Shinomiya notices something, saying, "The one on the top of that hill is Hamaguri-do."

It's a café! We finally reach it. Cyclists have a weakness for sweets and caffeine.

We quickly leave the port and rush to the café, a remodeled old house. We jump in line. Today is a holiday, so the place is packed, but maybe we can use the benches outside?

We ask at the café and are told that, of course, we can buy anything on sale at the cash register and eat it outside. Great, just what we wanted! Crispy cookies and cheese buns. We could eat as much as we want, but decide we'd better leave some for the other customers!

A crystal blue sea, and sweets. Someone asks Paolo, "How is it?"

Paolo replies, "These wheat cookies are similar to those in my city Barcelona, but you can find them only in a couple of places."

But here they are, made Japanese-style, small and delicate.

Has everyone finished? Well, we have only 25 kilometers to go. Let's cruise.



Café Hamagurido: When crowded, there is no coffee take-out but cider can be purchased.

Climbing the steep slope on our way out of the fishing port, we join the main road. The traffic gets heavier from here on. We need to overcome this section before we can go back to a leisurely cycle.

On this run we take turns leading the group. With our minds set on the run, the 20 km to Ayukawa goes by quickly.

We reach Ayukawa. Here, Shinomiya has a great idea, suggesting a good noodle shop in the new shopping area.

"Ramen? OK, let's go!" says Lee who is living in Taiwan. He is eager to try Japanese ramen, finally looking forward to a familiar meal.

The hospitality at this restaurant is amazing, with our server suggesting, "You should also try the fresh boiled wakame that just arrived today!"

With our bodies now refueled, we head on to our final destination. The sun steadily leaves the mountain slopes to our east. The sea glows, with small ripples shining like a golden carpet.

This is our destination; we arrive at the park. The sun is about to fade behind the mountain. That one there is Mt. Zao.

The sea extends in front of our eyes, shifting between gold and blue from moment to moment, and stillness befalls us as the wind dies down. We all ponder the special day we have just experienced. Such perfect cycling is rare, indeed.

"The travel, food, everything, was just perfect," says Lee. He will never forget this trip.



📍 Matsushima Pleasure Cruise

Niomaru route

Departure time

9 : 00 10 : 00 11 : 00 12 : 00
13 : 00 14 : 00 15 : 00
16 : 00 (Not in operation during winter: 11/1-3/19)

Fee	Adults	¥1,500
	Children	¥750

Note: 10% discount for groups of 15 or more.
2nd Deck Green Class: Additional ¥600 for adults and ¥300 for children

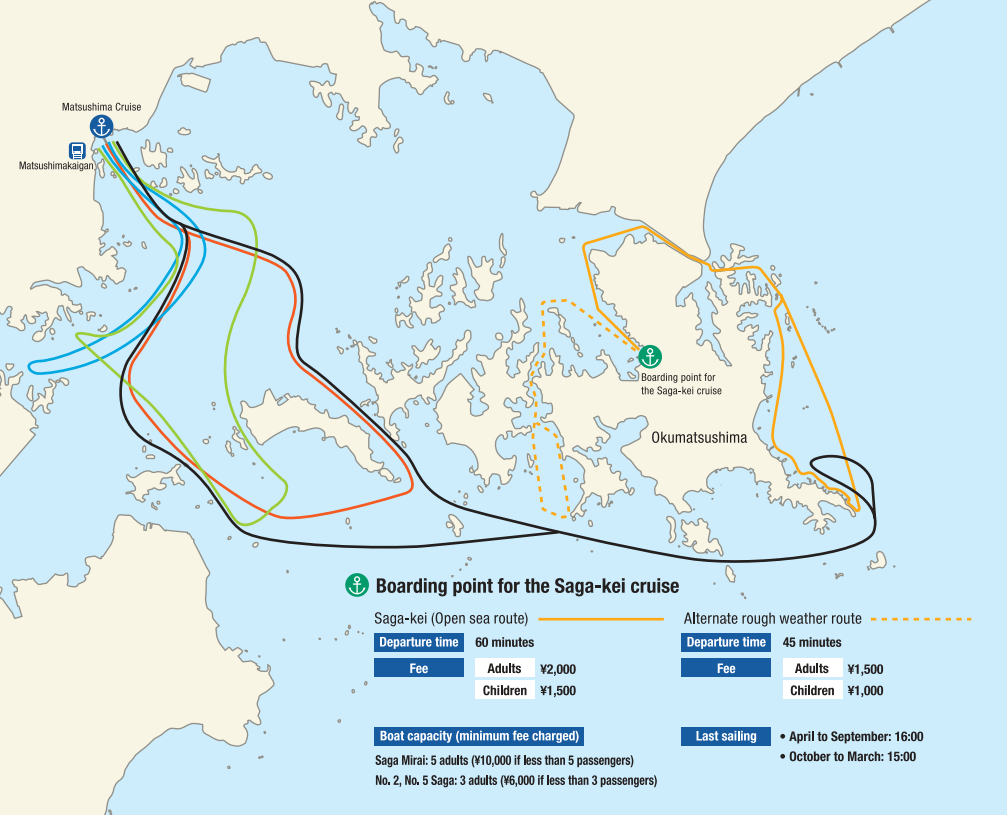
B route
C route

Departure time Reserved cruises depart at the customer's requested time (within usual business hours).
Note: Because this is a smaller vessel, cruises can be canceled due to weather or for reasons related to navigation.

Fee	B route (About 30 minutes)	¥6,000 for 5 passengers ¥1,200 yen for each additional passenger
	C route (About 50 minutes)	¥10,000 for 5 passengers ¥2,000 yen for each additional passenger

How can I take a bay cruise to Matsushima?

Matsushima sightseeing cruise are offered by several operators. Sightseeing on Matsushima Bay is offered at four locations near Matsushimakaigan Station and the pier. Cruise information for the Saga-kei cruise is available at the information counter adjacent to the landing.



Saga-kei route

Seasonal operation

Operates Saturdays, Sundays, holidays and Mondays (seasonal operation)
This is a seasonal cruise operating from the 4th Saturday of April to the last Sunday of October. In operation daily during Golden Week. Open for the entire school summer vacation period.

Departure time First cruises 10:10-12:00 Second cruises 12:30-14:20
Cruise is about 1 hr 50 min.

Fee	Adults	¥3,000
	Children	¥1,500



📍 Matsushima Cruise
● Ticket sales office

📍 Boarding point for the Saga-kei cruise

Saga-kei (Open sea route)

Departure time 60 minutes

Fee	Adults	¥2,000
	Children	¥1,500

Alternate rough weather route

Departure time 45 minutes

Fee	Adults	¥1,500
	Children	¥1,000

Boat capacity (minimum fee charged)

Saga Mirai: 5 adults (¥10,000 if less than 5 passengers)

No. 2, No. 5 Saga: 3 adults (¥6,000 if less than 3 passengers)

Last sailing

• April to September: 16:00

• October to March: 15:00



How can I connect to Free Wi-Fi Spots in the Matsushima area?

Access over
150,000 FREE Wi-Fi SPOTS

Available at major convenience stores, railway stations, airports and many other locations.



Easy

Just tap
"Connect"



Just tap "Connect"



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Melayu/français/español/Deutsch/Italiano/Русский язык

<http://www.ntt-bp.net/jcfw/>



Electrical outlets in Japan are Type A, 100 Volts

Some digital cameras, personal computers and other electronics have AC adapters that accommodate from 110 V to 240 V, so please check your device manual.

Adapters that convert plugs from outside Japan to Type A plugs are sold only in electric appliance stores in large cities. We suggest purchasing such adapters before entering Japan.



Obtaining a license to drive in Japan

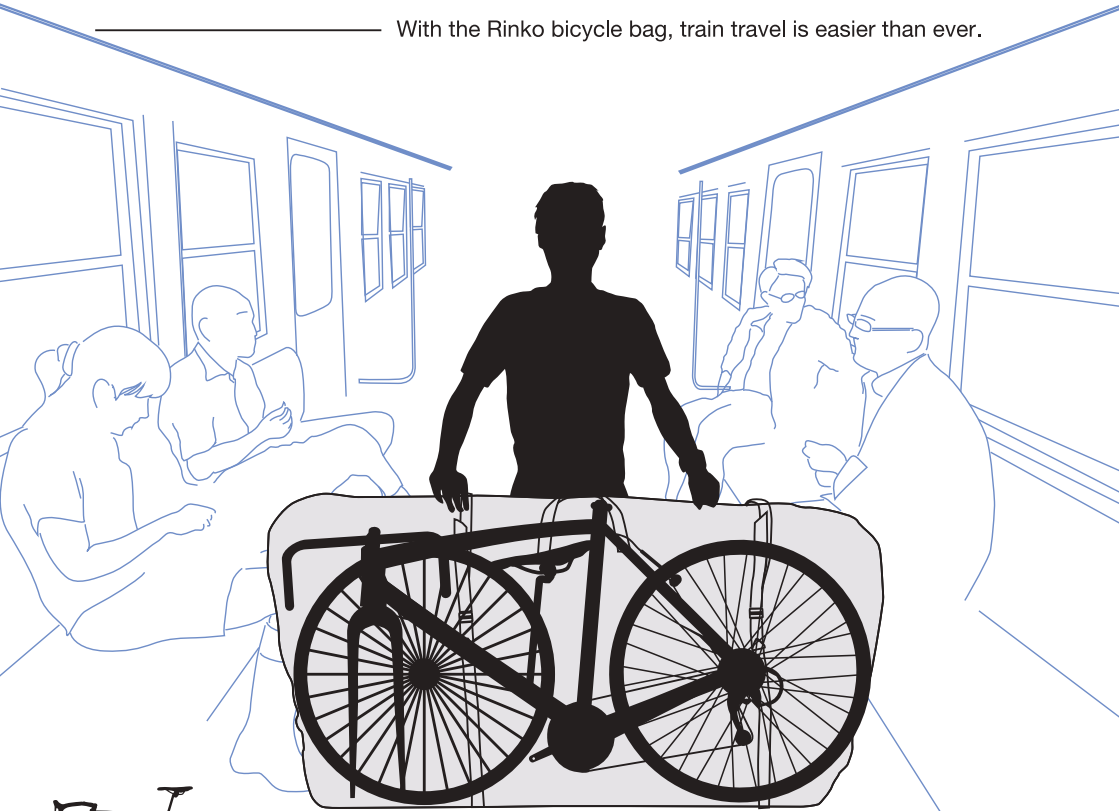
Visitors to Japan holding a valid International Driving Permit issued outside Japan under the Convention on Road Traffic (Geneva Convention of September 19, 1949) can legally drive a motor vehicle in accordance with Japanese law.

Please note that an international driving permit issued under a convention other than the above (1968 Vienna Convention, etc.) is not valid for use in Japan.

Such permits are valid for a maximum of one year from the day of entry into Japan.

Cycle Off From Matsushima and Explore the Sanriku Coast

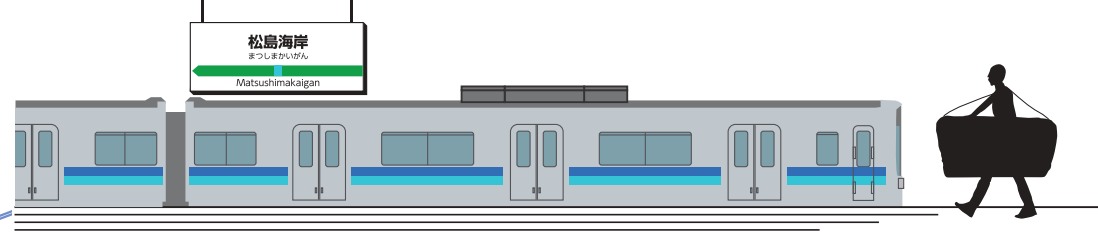
With the Rinko bicycle bag, train travel is easier than ever.



The Rinko bicycle bag is a unique way to travel with your bicycle in Japan. Bicycles are generally not permitted on public transportation in Japan without being covered. By using the simple, compact bicycle bag, cyclists will be able to bring their bicycles onto public transportation.

Simply remove the front wheel, pedals and seat post of the bicycle and place them in the bag. No excess baggage or delivery fees apply to the Rinko bicycle bag when you are traveling.

The lightweight Rinko bag is made of synthetic fiber for easier folding. It is sold at major bicycle stores in Japan.



“Matsushima is a world-renowned sightseeing town. It’s also the gateway to a beautiful nature preserve you can access by bicycle and by train.”

☆☆☆ from “MICHELIN Voyager Pratique Japon”

Matsushima sits at the entrance to Sanriku Fukko National Park. While cycling along the beautiful coastline within the park, you can sample sushi, sashimi and other fresh seafood delicacies, visit small towns, villages, and solemn temples. From the larger towns along the route, you are also free to return to Matsushima by train.



4 hours Train and BRT
145 km Ride at coast line road

Traveling from Matsushima to Ofunato by bicycle takes about 3 days. Although road conditions are good, it crosses several peninsulas, resulting in many uphill climbs, some of which are rather steep.



Sanriku Fukko National Park Nature Reserve Area



The Tohoku Shinkansen high speed rail connects Tokyo and Sendai in roughly 90 minutes.

SENDAI
Sendai International Airport
connect to SENDAI station by Airport Access Train line - 25 min

Port of Sendai Ferry Terminal
The ferry departs for the Port of Nagoya and Port of Tomakomai. At the Port of Tomakomai, buses are available for Sapporo and Toyoko Hot Spring.