

Practical Travel Guide - 708

YAKUSHIMA ISLAND



日本政府観光局 (JNTO)
Japan National Tourism Organization

JNTO Website : <http://www.jnto.go.jp>



Yakushima (屋久島) is an almost circular island having a circumference of 132 km and is located approximately 60 km SSW of Cape Sata on the Osumi Peninsula of Kagoshima Prefecture. It has an area of approximately 505 km², and is mountainous. Mt. Miyanoura-dake (1,936 m) and Mt. Nagata-dake (1,886 m), said to be the highest peaks in Kyushu, stand at the center of the island and are surrounded by mountains towering over 1,800 m above sea level. One prefectural road encompasses the island, and it takes roughly 3 hours to drive around. Here and there along the prefectural road, one comes across Yakushima monkeys, ("yakuzaru"), and Yakushima deer ("yakushika"). These animals are in particular abundance along the 13 km long Seiburindo Forest Path. When the residents of Yakushima are asked about the population of their island, they invariably smile and reply, "20,000 people, 20,000 monkeys, and 20,000 deer."

The climate along the coastal area of the island is subtropical,

and this area is also part of the northernmost periphery of the band of Okinawan banyan trees. The summit area is classified as a cool temperate zone, and 3 to 6 m of snow can be seen accumulating around the distant mountains. The rainfall is most extreme around the northeastern part of the island, but the southwestern part sees the greatest number of sunlight hours in all of the Seinan Islands. Visitors can enjoy the climates of both the Japan Sea and the Pacific Ocean. In 1993, the huge Yaku Cedar trees growing in the island's mountains was designated as a World Heritage (Natural Property).

Transportation within the island is by taxi and bus, with buses coming around once every hour. A part of the road on the western side of the island is so narrow and has so many twists and turns that local buses do not operate there. You have to come back along the same road or use a taxi to go through. Please note the timetable.

Access to Yakushima Is.:

By Air

To	From	Operated by	Time required
Yakushima Airport	Kagoshima Airport	JAC	35 min.
	Itami Airport		1 hr. 35 min.

By Sea

To	From	Type of transportation	Time required	One-way Fare
Miyanoura	Kagoshima	Orita Kisen "Ferry Yakushima 2"	4 hrs.	¥4,900
Ambo		Taneyaku Jetfoil "Topy" "Rocket"	2 hrs. 40 min.	¥8,800
Miyanoura			2 hrs. - 3 hrs.	

Orita Kisen: Tel (099)226-0731, Taneyaku Jetfoil: Tel (099)226-0128

Places of Interest:

① - ⑩ correspond to those on the map on page 4/4

① Shiratani Unsuijyo Ravine (白谷雲水峽)

30 min. by taxi from Miyanoura Port, is a primeval forest located at 600-1,100 m You can see Yakusugi cedar trees in this 424 ha. area. This area is perfect for hiking and a day trip. Primeval forest courses of 60 min., 3hrs. and 4 hrs. are available within the forest recreation area. The mountain path to Mt. Miyanoura-dake, the highest peak on the island, crosses over this area and takes you to Tsuji Pass, Wilson Stump, Daio-sugi Cedar, and Jomon-sugi Cedar. This area contains many natural evergreen trees, including Yakusugi cedars, and rare ground plants like ferns and moss. You can also see the clear Shiratani River flowing through the area, giant rocks piled on top of each other, and the perpendicular rise of the gorge. This and the assortment of river bank azaleas and cherry azaleas make this area a natural garden. Admission: ¥300

② Yakusugi Land (Yakushima Cedar Land) (ヤクスギランド)

40 min. by bus from Ambo, located on a plateau between 1,000 and 1,300 m high, is an area where visitors can easily appreciate Yakushima primeval forest with its Yakusugi cedar trees of several thousand years old. It is designated as a natural recreation forest. It has an area of 270.33 ha. It offers facilities like a 9-km

hiking path (with 4 courses, of 30 min., 50 min., 80 min., and 150 min.), suspension bridges in 3 places, benches, and an observation deck, and visitors can enjoy a therapeutic walk through the forest and view the great trees, like the Buddha Cedar, as well as the stumps left over from the feudal period and the remains of experimental tree felling. This is also the entrance to Mt. Tachudake. Open: 9:00-17:00, -16:30 (Dec.-Feb.) Admission: ¥300

③ Jomon-sugi (Jomon Cedar Tree), Mt. Miyanoura-dake (縄文杉, 宮之浦岳)

50 min. by Arakawa-tozanguchi Bus from Ambo or 1 hr. 20 min. from Miyanoura to Arakawa-tozanguchi Bus Stop, then 5-6-hr. trek to Jomon-sugi (It is advised to start this trekking at about 6 a.m. from Arakawa-tozanguchi). If you come by your own car, rented car, motorbike or bicycle, you need to transfer to the Arakawa-tozanguchi Bus at Yakusugi Museum. Traffic on the Arakawa Route is restricted to protect the natural environment and reduce congestion (from Mar.1-Nov. 30). The bus ticket must be bought in advance (¥1,700 return). Although charter bus and taxi users do not need to transfer at the Yakushima Museum they still need to purchase a Jomon-sugi Arakawa Route Ticket (¥180 one-way). These ticket prices help cover the cost of managing the traffic restrictions and maintaining the parking lot and toilets of the Jomon-sugi Arakawa Route. It is pre-

ferred to have full mountain gear. You need to be prepared for emergencies, and it is recommended for a beginning climber to have a guide. You also need to register and report your trekking schedule before climbing. Jomon-Sugi is said to be 6,300 or 7,200 years old. It was well known in the Edo Period. Located at 1,300 m on the highest point of the Okabu (Great Stump) path, this is the oldest cedar tree in the world. Visitors may not touch the tree to ensure its preservation.

Mt. Miyanoura-dake is the highest mountain in Yakushima (1,936 m). The approximately 1,000-m high mountains that form the outer circumference of Yakushima Island are called the "Mae-dake" (rear mountains), and the higher peaks that rise in the center of the island are called the "Oku-dake" (far mountains). In addition to these, the three peaks of Miyanoura-dake, Nagata-dake (1,886 m), and Kurio-dake (1,867 m), are called the "Sandake" (three peaks). The flower garden with its cherry azaleas, pieris, Saigoku trefoiled azaleas that bloom in Apr. to May, and rhododendrons that bloom in early Jun., is a sight that cannot be seen elsewhere.

④Yakusugi Museum (屋久杉自然館)

40 min. by bus from Miyanoura Port or 5 min. by bus from Ambo, and built on the grass facing the sea. This museum is composed of two cylindrical buildings. You can stroll through the building, and enjoy up the smell of Yakusugi. Immerse yourself in the atmosphere created by thousands of years of coexistence between Yakusugi Island and its forest. Yakusugi Museum is a testimony to the fact that mankind and nature can coexist in one environment. **Yakusugi Cedar Trees** (屋久杉), growing naturally in the island's mountains, are well known for their longevity. Some are 1660 years old. Open: 9:00–17:00 (enter by 16:30) Closed: 1st Tue. of month & Dec. 29–Jan. 1 Admission: ¥600

⑤Ohko-no-taki (Great River Falls) (大川の滝)

1 hr. 30 min. by bus from Miyanoua Port or 60 min. by bus from Ambo Port, is the highest waterfall in southern Kyushu. Its sudden and precipitous drop of 88 m and its sheer water capacity make it the greatest waterfall on the island. When the water level increases, the falls widen to over 20 m. Visitors can walk right up to the area directly below the falls. This waterfall has been selected as one of "the best 100 waterfalls in Japan." The clear water pool in front of the waterfall has also been selected as one of "the best 100 bodies of water in Japan."

Transportation within Yakushima Island:

Taxi (English not spoken)

Matsubanda Kotsu (Miyanoura Ambo, Airport) Tel. (0997)43-5000
Ambo Taxi Tel. (0997)46-2311

⑥Senpiro Falls (千尋の滝)

30 min. by taxi from Yakushima Airport or 1-hr. walk from Toroki Falls, has a 60-m crest, and the water normally falls down the center, but when it rains, water falls over the entire rock face, creating a spectacular display. From the observation deck right in front of the waterfall, one can see the villages and fields spread out in front, the views of the town, the beautiful coastline, and the vast sweep of the Pacific Ocean beneath.

⑦Toroki Falls (トロキの滝)

20 min. by bus from Ambo Port get off at Tainokawa Bus Stop, is a rare waterfall in Japan because the river falls directly into the ocean. When the water rises, the waterfall sounds like thunder from the sky, so it is called Todoroki (meaning "roar" in Japanese) Falls.

⑧Yakushima Fruit Garden (屋久島フルーツガーデン)

50 min. by bus from Ambo, get off at Nakama Bus Stop and walk 20 min. About 1,600 types of tropical fruits and plants grow thickly here. You can enjoy the seasonally harvested fruits. Recommended as a gift are the original homemade preserves. Open: 8:30–16:30 Admission: ¥500

⑨Nagata Inaka-hama Beach (永田いなか浜)

35 min. by bus from Miyanoura Port, is a weathered granite shoreline in Nagata. This is the spot on Yakushima Island where most sea turtles come up on land, and scientists have confirmed that this is one of the major sites in the world for the spawning of loggerhead turtles and green sea turtles (peak spawning season is from late-May to July). Camping is forbidden in the area. The tide here has a strong pull, so visitors should be careful about letting children bathe in this area. The sand here has very little black mica content.

⑩Shitoko Gajumaru-en Banyan Garden (志戸子ガジュマル園)

15 min. by bus from Miyanoura Port get off at Shitoko Bus Stop and walk 5 min. to Yakushima's the biggest Banyan park on the coral reefs. It began with a 15-m high great Banyan tree that's said to be 300 years old, mandarin oranges, big Alocasia odara, and you can see many other sub-tropical plants. Open: 8:30–17:30 Admission: ¥200

Yakushima Kotsu Taxi (Miyanoura) Tel. (0997)42-0611
(Ambo) Tel. (0997)46-2321
(Onoaida) Tel. (0997)47-2018

Excursion Tour Buses (Guided in Japanese)

Operated by	Course	Sights to be visited	Departure time / area	Time required	Fare (children)	Operated Season
Yakushima Kotsu Tel: 0997-46-2221 Fax: 0997-46-3171	A	Shiratani Unsuikyo Ravine, Shitoko Gajumaru-en, Senpiro Falls, and more	10:00 / Miyanoura	8hrs.	¥4,000 (¥2,000)	Apr. 1 to Sept. 30
	B	Botanical Research Park, Yakusugi Land, Kigen-sugi Cedar, and more	8:20 / Ambo	5hrs.	¥3,000 (¥1,500)	
	C	Senpiro Falls, and more	15:20 / Miyanoura	2hrs.	¥2,500 (¥1,300)	
Matsubanda Kotsu Tel: 0997-43-5000 Fax: 0997-43-5281	A	Yakusugi Land, Yakushima Museum, Senpiro Falls, Ohko-no-taki, Nagata Inaka-hama Beach, and more (including lunch)	8:10 / Miyanoura	10hrs.	¥4,500 (¥4,000)	Mar. 1 to Dec. 31 (except 1st Tue.)
	B	Yakusugi Land, Yakushima Museum and more	8:10 / Miyanoura	4hrs.	¥2,000 (¥1,500)	
	C	Senpiro Falls, Ohko-no-taki, Nagata Inaka-hama Beach, and more	13:20 / Ambo	5hrs.	¥3,500 (¥3,000)	

- Reservation is required.

- Admission expenses are not included in the fare.

Rent-a-Car

Toyota Rent a Car (Miyanoura, Ambo)

Tel.(03)5954-8020

Nippon Rent a Car (Airport)

Tel.(03)3485-7196

Recommended Activities:

A hiking tour to enjoy fully the natural beauties of Yakushima Island. There are five courses where you can see many kinds of animals and plants, as well as World Heritage sites (Natural Properties). Other eco-tours are also available for canoeing, mountain stream climbing, caving, snorkeling, etc.

YNAC Eco-Tour

Time required: roughly 8 hrs.

Participation fee: ¥15,860 (including lunch)

Minimum number of people in each group: 1

Yakushima Nature Activity Center: Tel. (0997)42-0944

(Reservations required)

Trekking Eco-Tour (English is available)

Time required: roughly 9 hrs.

Participation fee: ¥13,000 (including lunch)

Minimum number of people in each group: 1

Shizen-no-Pocket: Tel. (0997)47-3310 (Reservations required)

Specialty Products:**Yakushima Tankan** (屋久島タンカン)

Tankan is a fruit that is juicier and sweeter than a Ponkan orange (shaddock). Many people who visit the island during the harvest season, from Feb. to Mar., enjoy its delicious taste. This fruit is a cross between a Ponkan orange and an orange.

Kame-no-te

Kame-no-te is a type of shellfish. People of the island call it by the familiar name of "Se." It is in season from Apr. to Jun., and it looks like a turtle's paw, so it was given the name "turtle's paw," or "kame-no-te." Boiled in salt water or added to miso soup, it also makes a delicious soup stock with an aroma of the sea. It is also added to rice, making a dish called "Kame-no-te Gohan."

Yomegasa

Yomegasa is a type of shellfish that can be harvested in Yakushima. They adhere closely to the wave-battered rock faces and are difficult to see clearly. Their numbers have dwindled recently. They are delicious when eaten raw or grilled.

Tankan, Passion Fruit Juice

These drinks are sold very cheaply at "Yakusugi Land", "Pontankan" and other places.

Yaku-saba (mackerel) (屋久さば)

Yaku-saba has been decreasing recently, but it is one of the tastiest mackerels in Japan. To preserve their freshness, their necks get broken as soon as they are caught, and this "Kubiore Saba" (Broken Neck Mackerel) is well known for its use as sashimi. "Saba-bushi" is one of the specialty products that is produced from the Yaku-saba. They are also used to make soup broth in the Kanto area.

Yakushima-age (屋久島揚げ)

Yakushima-age is a food made from deep-fried, minced flying fish.

Tobiuo (Flying Fish) no Ichiya-boshi (とびうおの一夜干し)

Tobiuo fishing is in season from spring through summer. This food is made by drying out flying fish overnight.

Yakusugi Cedar Handicrafts (屋久杉工芸品)

Yakusugi handicraft items like flower vases, urns, plates and dolls are made from "Domaiboku" which is the wood from Yakusugi cedar trees that have fallen on the forest floor and have not rotted.

Accommodations:

Name of facilities	Tel.	Room rate (¥)	Name of facilities	Tel.	Room rate (¥)
Miyanoura:			Ambo:		
① Minshuku Takesugi (M)	(0997)42-0668	¥	⑩ Minshuku Sugi-no-sato (M)	(0997)46-2919	¥
② Minshuku Yakusugi-so (M)	(0997)42-0023	¥	⑪ Minshuku Suimei-so (M)	(0997)46-2078	¥
③ Seikoudoku (M)	(0997)42-2070	¥	⑫ Yakushima Green Hotel (H)	(0997)46-3021	¥¥
④ Minshuku Yaedake Honkan (M)	(0997)42-2552	¥	⑬ Shisuikan (R)	(0997)46-2018	¥¥
⑤ Miyanoura Portside YH (Y)	(0997)49-1316	¥	⑭ Ryokan Kamome-so (R)	(0997)46-2544	¥¥
⑥ Wa no Cottage Sen no ie (G)	(0997)42-1006	¥	Onoaida / Hirauchi:		
⑦ Seaside Hotel Yakushima (H)	(0997)42-0175	¥¥	⑮ Hirauchi Kaichu Onsen-so (M)	(0997)47-2403	¥
⑧ Tashiro Bekkan (R)	(0120)52-1818	¥¥	⑯ Chinryu-an (G)	(0997)47-3900	¥
Shitoko:			⑰ Yakushima YH (Y)	(0997)47-3751	¥
⑨ Minshuku Yakusaba-so (M)	(0997)44-2250	¥	⑱ Shikinoyado Onoaida (M)	(0997)47-3377	¥¥
			⑲ Yakushima Iwasaki Hotel (H)	(0997)47-3888	¥¥¥
			⑳ JR Hotel Yakushima (H)	(0997)47-2011	¥¥¥

Remarks:

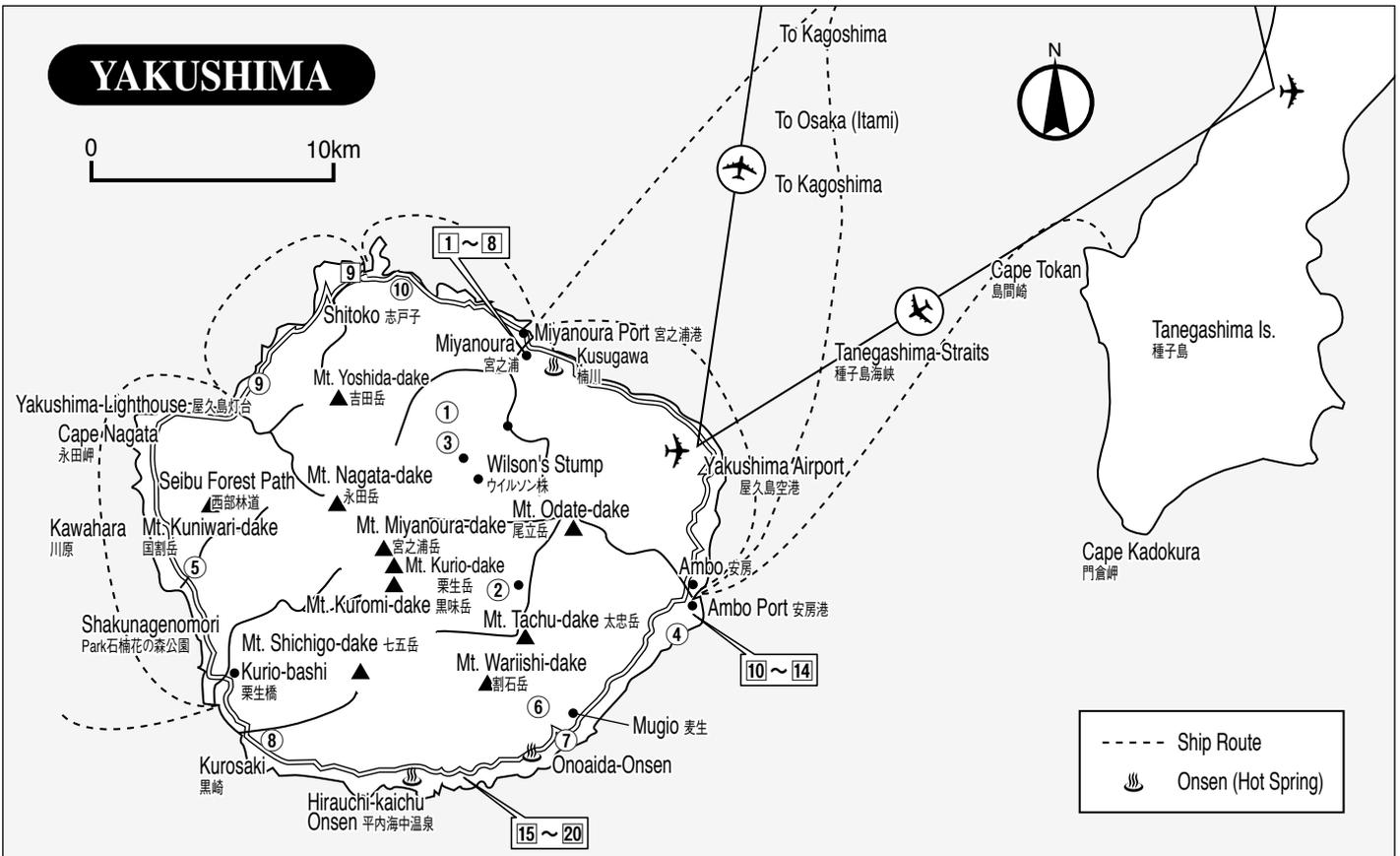
① - ⑳ correspond to those on the map on page 4/4

H = Hotel Rate for a twin room
 R = Ryokan Rate per person
 M = Minshuku (family-run inn) Rate per person
 Y = Youth Hostel Rate per person
 G = Guesthouse Rate per person

¥¥¥ = more than 15,000 yen

¥¥ = 8,001 yen - 15,000 yen

¥ = 8,000 yen or less



1 - 20 correspond to those on the accommodations list on page 3/4
 ① - ⑩ correspond to those on page 1/4 & 2/4

Local Bus Routes

Bound for	Major bus stops for each place of interest & Time required
Miyaura Port Shiratani Unsui-kyo	Miyaura Port 10 min. Miyaura (downtown) 30 min. ① Shiratani Unsui-kyo Ravine
Miyaura Port Arakawa-tozanguchi Kigen-Sugi	Miyaura Port 5 min. Miyaura (downtown) 20 min. Airport 15 min. Ambo (downtown) 5 min. ④ Yakusugi Museum 35 min. ② Yakusugi Land 35 min. ③ Arakawa-tozanguchi (Mar. 1-Nov.)
Ohko-no-taki Fall Kurio-bashi Onoaida Gocho-mae Miyaura-sho-mae Miyaura Port Nagata	⑨ Nagata 35 min. Miyaura Port 25 min. Airport 15 min. Ambo Port 10 min. ⑥⑦ Hirano 15 min. Onoaida 25 min. ⑧ Nakama 10 min. ⑤ Ohko-no-taki Fall (Two services a day to Ohko-no-taki)

Please check timetable before you visit. ① - ⑨ correspond to those on page 1/4 & 2/4

TOURIST INFORMATION

Yakushima Tourism Association:
 310-1 Koseda, Yakushima-cho, Kumage-gun, Kagoshima
 Open: 8:30-18:00 Tel. (0997)49-4010

Tourist Information Center (TIC)

TIC of Japan National Tourism Organization is your helping hand while in Japan. Its main services are providing travel information and free literature on Japan such as tourist spots, transportation, and suggesting tour itineraries, etc.

1st Fl., Shin Tokyo Bldg., 3-3-1, Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0005 Tel. 03-3201-3331
 Open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Closed: Jan. 1st)
<http://www.jnto.go.jp/eng/arrange/travel/guide/tic.html>

Note: Transportation expenses, admission fees and other charges may change due to the increase in the consumption tax rate to 8% from April 2014.

All information, including transportation schedules, fares, prices and accommodation charges, which is contained in this leaflet is based on data as of December 2013, and is subject to change without notice. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of all information, regrettably errors do occasionally occur. Therefore, you should check with organizations concerned for updated and accurate information on your chosen destination. JNTO shall not be liable for any loss or damage of whatever nature that may arise as a result, directly or indirectly, from the use of any of the information or material contained in this leaflet.

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