

A guide to the captivating isolated islands of Okinawa/Yaeyama Islands

Okinawan Remote Islands

**YAEYAMA ISLANDS**

**Ishigaki Island**

Taketomi Island, Iriomote Island, Hatoma Island, Yubu Island, Kohama Island, Kuro Island, Aragusuku Island, Hateruma Island, Kayama Island, Yonaguni Island

# 八重山諸島




Ishigaki Island, Kabira Bay

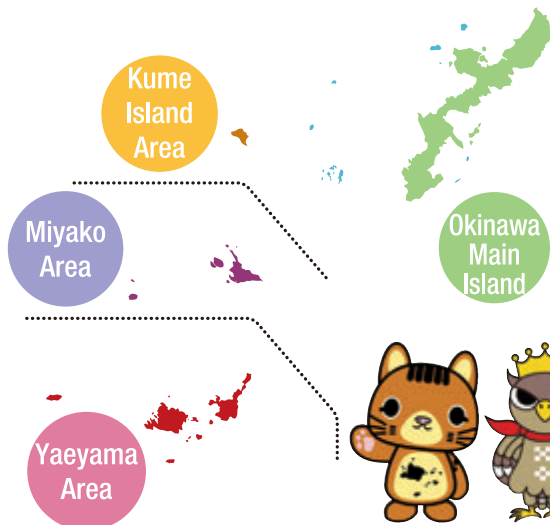
**Be.**  
**Okinawa**



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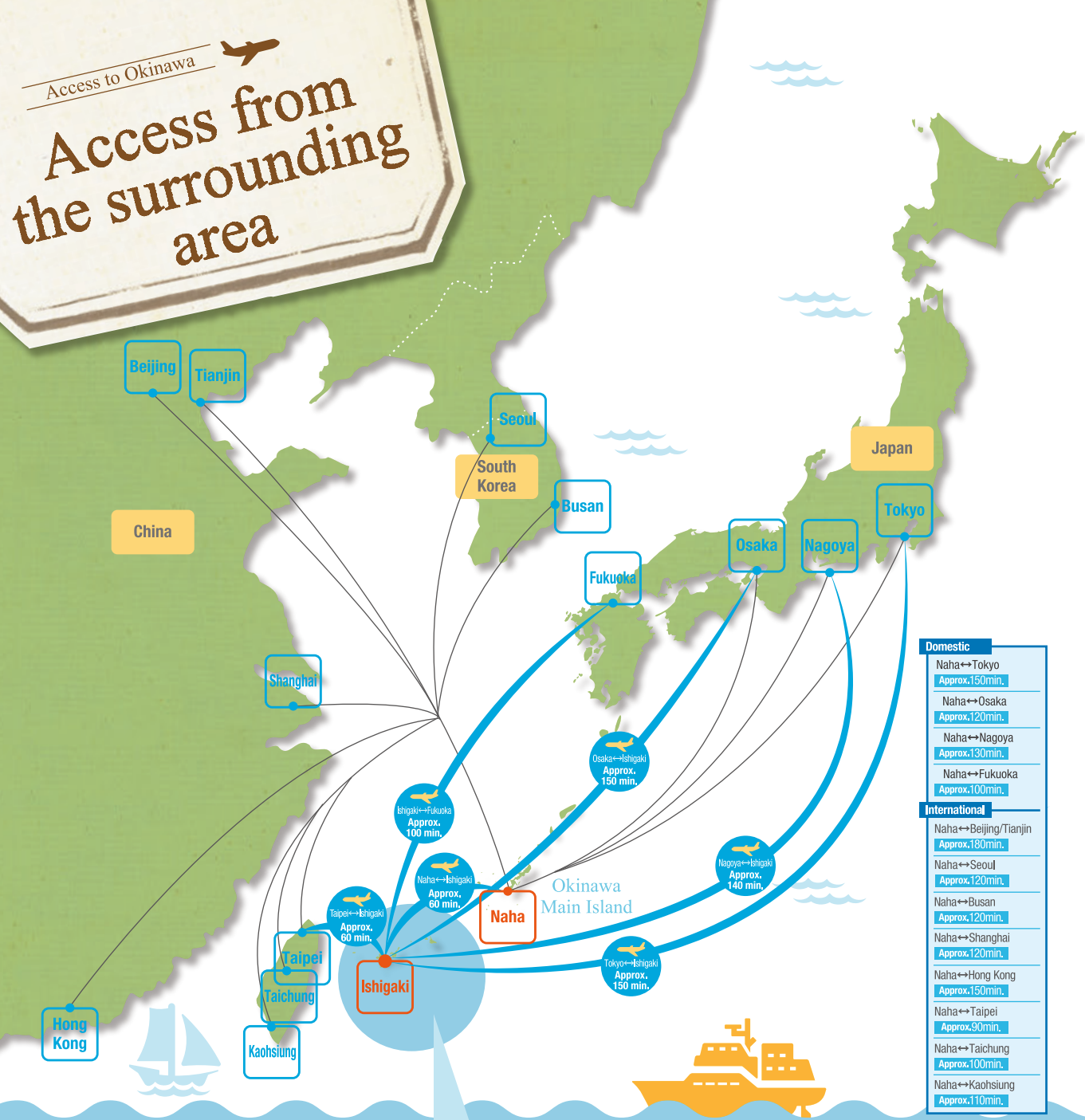
Okinawa Tourist Information



Okinawa Prefecture

Okinawa Convention & Visitors Bureau

<http://www.visitokinawa.jp>



# Ishigaki Island and many other unique islands are the source of pride!



I'll introduce the remote islands!

The mascot for Ishigaki City  
Paiguru

This male mascot is based on the image of a crested serpent eagle and carries out PR activities for Ishigaki City.

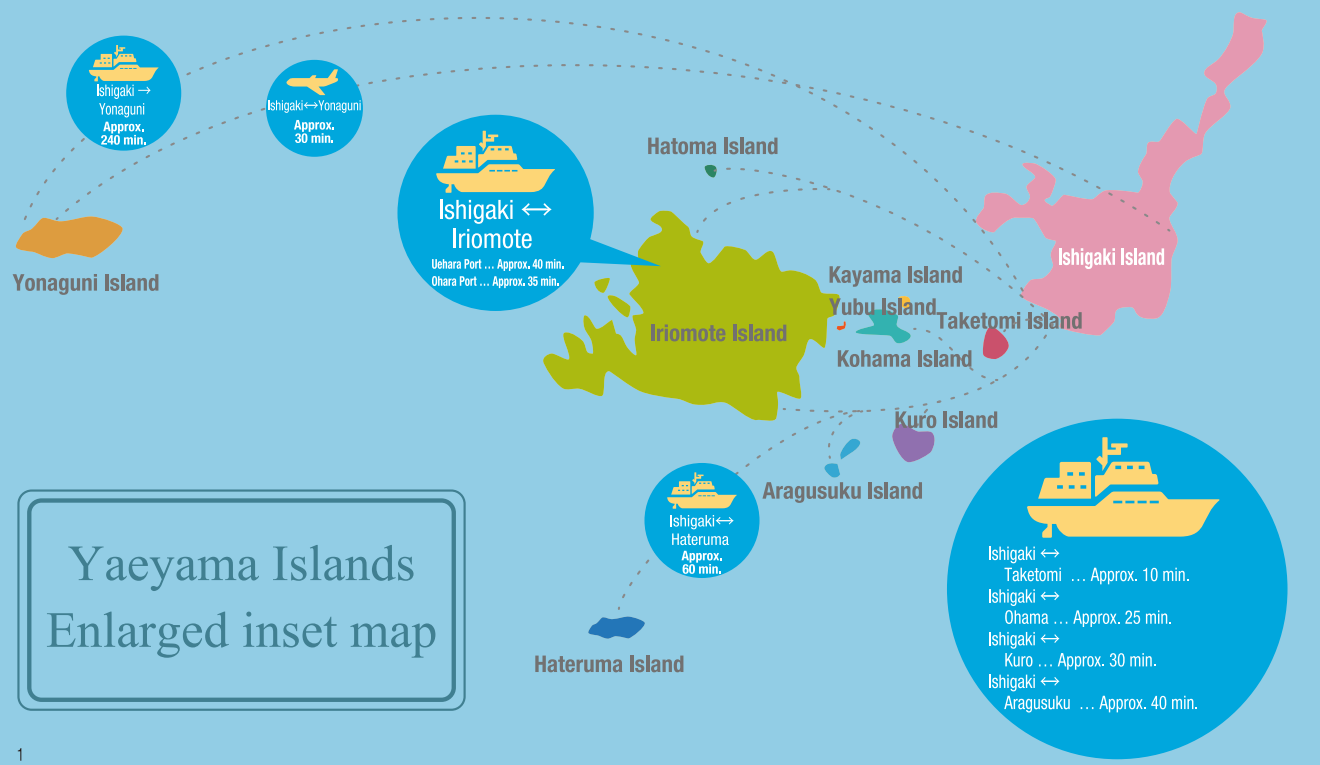


The mascot for the town of Taketomi  
Pikarya

This male mascot is an Iriomote wildcat that lives in Taketomi town. He conducts PR activities as the head of tourism promotion.

Explore the islands southwest from Naha!

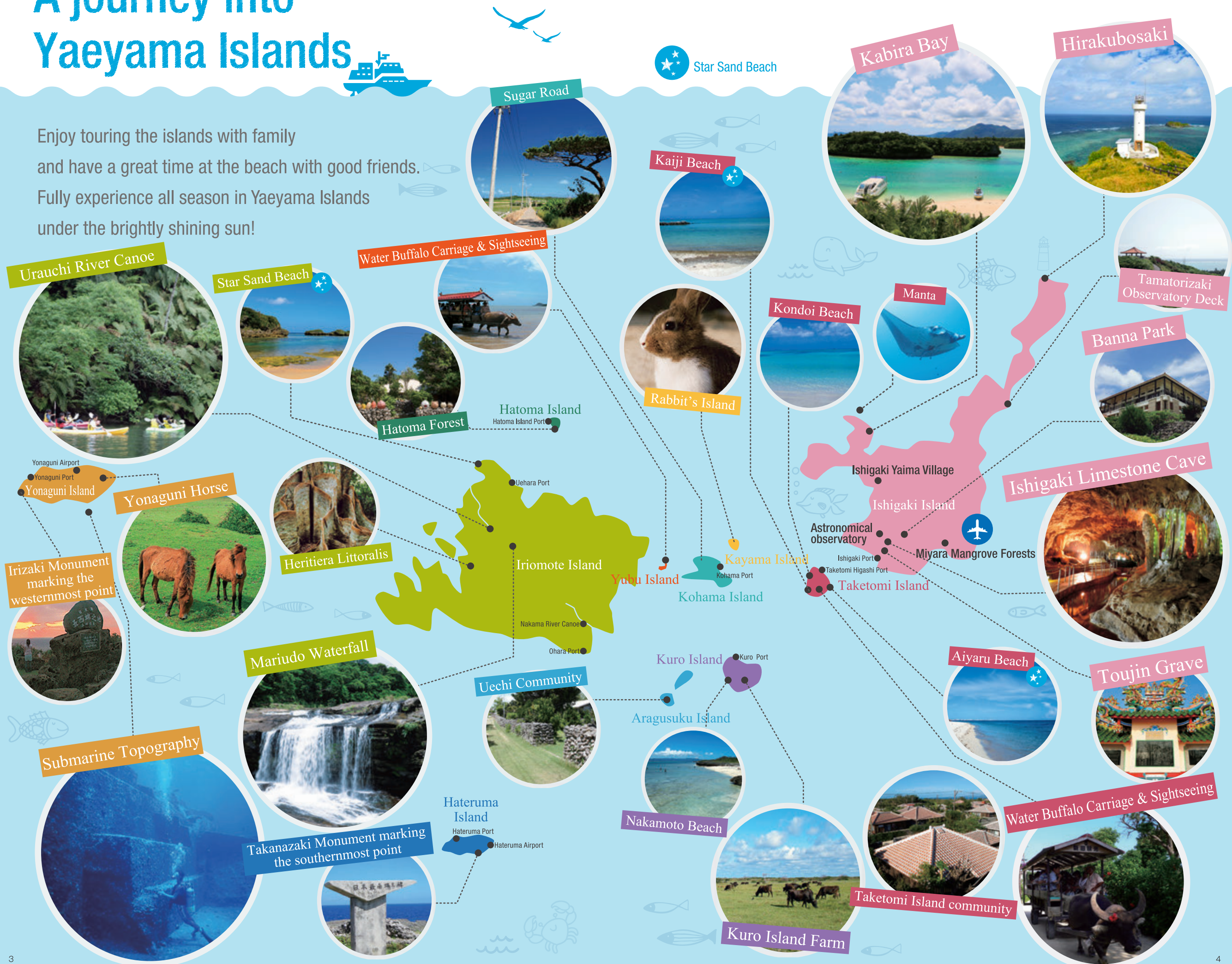
Yaeyama Islands can be reached in about an hour by airplane. They include the gateway island of Ishigaki, Taketomi Island where the beautiful and traditional townscape is accentuated with red tile-roofed homes and white sandy paths, and Iriomote Island, which is covered by a virgin forest and called the Galapagos of the East. Enjoy touring the attractive island archipelago composed of 11 inhabited and numerous uninhabited islands, each with its own distinct character. Visit Hateruma Island, which is the southernmost inhabited island in Japan, Yonaguni Island, the westernmost island which is the last place in Japan to view sunset, and Kohama Island located in the middle of Yaeyama, which offers your fill of abundant nature and first-rate resorts.



<h2>Okinawa Yaeyama Islands Introduction</h2>	<h3>Ishigaki Island</h3> <p>Kabira Bay is dotted with islets and has been designated a national place of scenic beauty.</p>	<h3>Taketomi Island</h3> <p>A cart drawn by a water buffalo strolls through a neighborhood featuring white coral sand streets, colorful flowers, and the sound of the sanshin.</p>	<h3>Iriomote Island</h3> <p>This secluded island in the East is home to rare flora and fauna that flourish amid the subtropical nature.</p>
<h3>Hatoma Island</h3> <p>The blue coral beds in the northern part of this island surrounded by coral reefs are especially amazing.</p>	<h3>Yubu Island</h3> <p>This small island boasts an abundance of subtropical plants and can be crossed by water buffalo-drawn cart from Iriomote.</p>	<h3>Kohama Island</h3> <p>Located in the center of Yaeyama Islands, this island is accented by sugarcane fields and cattle farms along its gently sloping hills.</p>	<h3>Kuro Island</h3> <p>This heart-shaped island has an idyllic landscape and is home to cattle and sea turtles.</p>
<h3>Aragusuku Island</h3> <p>As if time has stood still, old stone hedges still remain in the island communities.</p>	<h3>Hateruma Island</h3> <p>This island is a kind of natural planetarium from which the Southern cross constellation and a star-studded sky can be viewed.</p>	<h3>Kayama Island</h3> <p>Numerous wild rabbits inhabit this small island.</p>	<h3>Yonaguni Island</h3> <p>This border island located near Taiwan is the furthest western spot in Japan. It is famous for its submarine topography.</p>

# A journey into Yaeyama Islands

Enjoy touring the islands with family and have a great time at the beach with good friends. Fully experience all season in Yaeyama Islands under the brightly shining sun!





## Visit Hateruma Island where family memories and the Southern Cross dazzle!

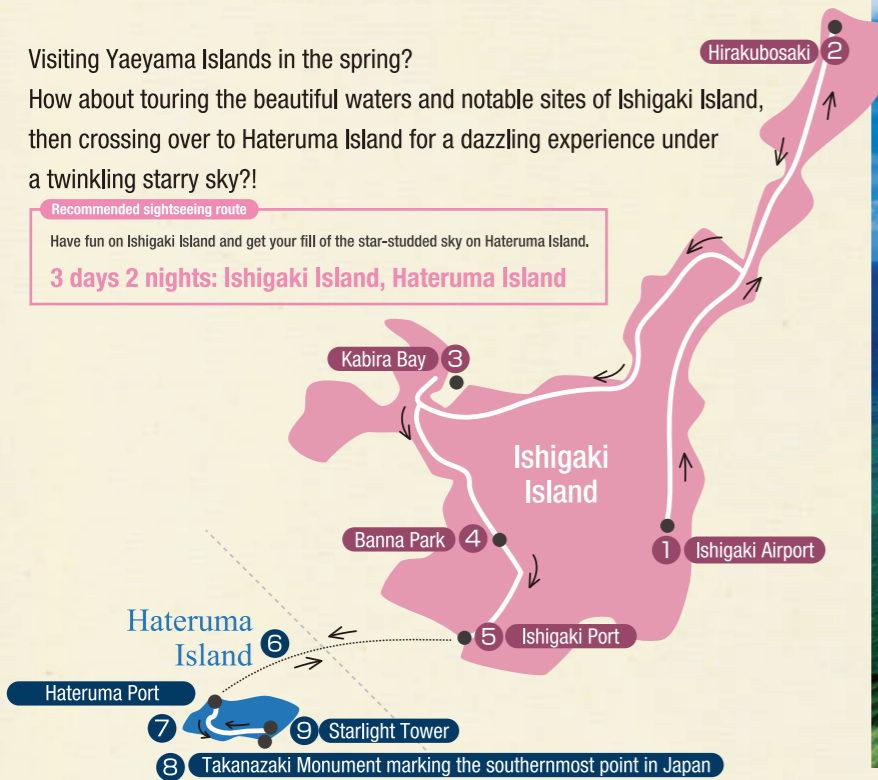
Visiting Yaeyama Islands in the spring?

How about touring the beautiful waters and notable sites of Ishigaki Island, then crossing over to Hateruma Island for a dazzling experience under a twinkling starry sky?!

**Recommended sightseeing route**

Have fun on Ishigaki Island and get your fill of the star-studded sky on Hateruma Island.

**3 days 2 nights: Ishigaki Island, Hateruma Island**



Other highlights

### Yaeyama fireflies

(Yaeyamahimebotaru) around mid-March to late May

**Places to view fireflies**

Fireflies can best be viewed for about an hour after sunset.

Iriomote Island: Shirahama Road, Sonai Furusato no Mori, Nakamagawa Road, etc.

Ishigaki Island: Banna Park/Maesedake (Ishigaki Island astronomical observatory), etc.

\* Guided tours, hotels, and guesthouses will also direct you to viewing places.

**Note:**

Please do not catch or take home fireflies. To view fireflies, participate in a local guided tour or accompany an individual knowledgeable about the local area since yellow-spotted pit vipers and other dangerous creatures are found in locations with poor visibility, such as bushes and thickets. Strong light such as from cameras, cell phones, and flashlights can impact the fireflies, so please turn off lights when not needed.



Hirakubosaki

**Day 1**

**Ishigaki Island**

**1 Ishigaki Airport**  
Start your trip to Yaeyama Islands from this pleasant, new airport!

**Ishigaki Island** (Approx. 45 min.)

**2 Hirakubosaki**  
The white lighthouse and blue sea at the northernmost cape of Ishigaki Island create picturesque scenery!

**Ishigaki Island** (Approx. 60 min.)

**3 Kabira Bay**  
Don't miss the constantly changing colors of the ocean waters at one of the best scenic spots in Yaeyama Islands!

**Ishigaki Island** (Approx. 25 min.)

**4 Banna Park**  
The park features subtropical nature and an observation deck offering a sweeping view of the townscape.

**Ishigaki Island** (Approx. 25 min.)

**5 Ishigaki Port**  
Depart from Rito Terminal on Ishigaki Island for the surrounding remote islands.

**Day 2**

**Hateruma Island** (Approx. 60 min.)

**6 Hateruma Island**  
Visit the southernmost island in Japan where the ocean, sky, and stars shine!

**Hateruma Island** (Approx. 35 min.)

**7 Island cycling**  
Take a tour by bicycle to experience the tranquil island atmosphere.

**Hateruma Island** (Approx. 5 min.)

**8 Takanazaki Monument marking the southernmost point in Japan**  
Located in southern Hateruma Island.

**Hateruma Island** (Approx. 60 min.)

**9 Starlight Tower**  
Because this tower is located on the shoreline with a view of a horizon free of homes and streetlights, visitors can see the skies at night through a telescope and a celestial map under the star-filled heavens. The Southern Cross is also visible from late April to mid-June when the weather is clear.

**Ishigaki Island** (Day 3)

**Ishigaki Port**  
After fully enjoying Hateruma Island, return to Ishigaki Island!



**Iriomote Island Barringtonia**

These ephemeral flowers begin blooming in the evening and by morning have fallen from the trees. There are now tours by canoe that allow visitors to view them falling onto the water's surface. The fantastic sight is a must see.

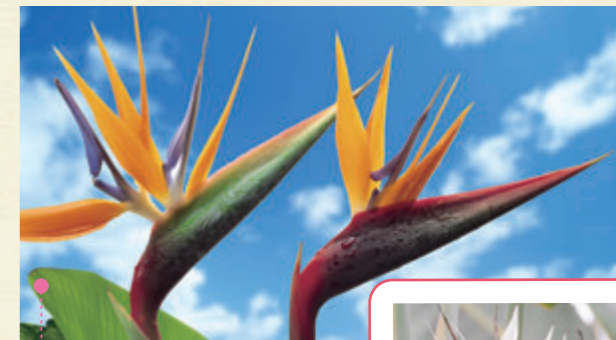
**Ishigaki Island Tamatorizaki Observatory Deck**

This superb spot gives a view overlooking the Pacific Ocean and East China Sea. The breezy observation deck is surrounded by a myriad of blooming hibiscus.



**Seishika flowers**

The name written in Japanese uses the characters for "holy" and "violet." The mysterious name is appropriate for these beautiful flowers, which are called phantom flowers because they bloom in secluded places, such as along mountain streams.



**Strelitzia**

Hibiscus and bougainvillea come to mind when thinking of tropical flowers, but the fascinating Strelitzia is also exotic and unforgettable.



**Bird of Paradise Tree**

A relative of the bird of paradise flower (Strelitzia reginae), these imposing flowers are notable for resembling the crown of a white bird. The tree grows to around 5-meter-high.

**Delight in the spring season**

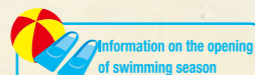
**on the sun-filled southern islands!**

Be captivated by the dazzling fresh green season and the sweet fragrance of beautifully blooming flowers.

Spring in Yaeyama Islands is warm and pleasant, and a time to enjoy a variety of sports, music, and nature-themed events, including the Ishigaki Triathlon and Iriomote Music Festival.

**Swimming season at the southernmost beaches in Japan**

Swimming season at beaches on Yaeyama Islands begins as early as March. Around the time spring is in full swing in the Japanese archipelago, the earliest summer in Japan starts on the southern islands. Be the first to have a wonderful time on the southern beaches!



Information on the opening of swimming season

Summer comes first to the southern islands! Frolic in the sparkling cobalt blue waters of the ocean surrounded by warm sunshine and southern breezes!

- Ishigaki Island: Sukuji Beach around mid-March
- Kohama Island/Haimurubushi Beach around mid-March
- Ishigaki Island/Maesato Beach around mid-March



**Iriomote Island Iriomote Music Festival**

A magnificent music festival is held around the time the sugarcane harvest is over. Visitors enjoy impressive performances by a variety of artists and lively events! (around mid-April every year)



**Iwasakikusa cicada (Mogannia minuta)**

This is the smallest cicada in Japan, growing to 1.5 cm–2 cm in length. Found on the leaves of plants such as pampas grass and sugarcane, their cries signal the arrival of summer.



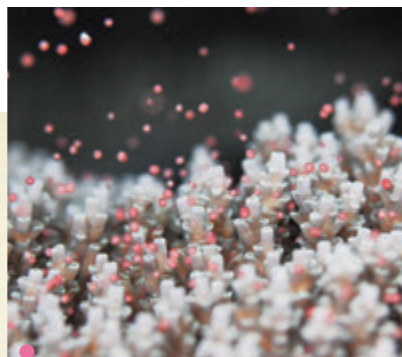
**Yaeyama palm grove**  
\*Ishigaki Island Tourism Navi

This Yaeyama palm grove is found in the Maibara District on Ishigaki Island. It is a very tranquil sightseeing spot.

**Kuro Island Cow Festival**

Enter the drawing to win a cow! This festival is held every year on Kuro Island, which has a population of cows approximately 10 times greater than the human population. Buy a ticket for the Cow Festival (comes with a ticket for beef soup and a lottery ticket for the cow drawing) and take the Yaeyama Kanko Ferry (Anei Kanko) to join!





### Coral spawning

From May to September, the coral reefs extending along the sea bottom spawn at night around the phase of the full moon. Why not dive under the water at night to experience this magical world enveloped in the mystery of life?

### The Southern Cross

Of the 88 constellations, 84 can be seen in the night sky above Yaeyama, which is called the most beautiful sky in Japan. Visitors never forget how they were moved when they see the Southern Cross, which can only be viewed this clearly in the southern hemisphere (from December to June).

## Blue ocean waters, starry skies, and the flowers of the southern isles.

## Enjoy the excitement of Yaeyama Islands to your heart's content!

Swimming season begins around mid-March on Yaeyama Islands, the southernmost point in Japan!

On clear, sunny days the temperature rapidly rises.

Spring is gone and in an instant you can enjoy your first swim of the summer at Yaeyama Islands!

Visitors can fully enjoy the allure of the great outdoors, including coral reef spawning and the Southern Cross lighting up the night sky.

### Diving

There are plenty of diving spots that can be readily enjoyed even by novice divers. In the clear blue coral reef waters where schools of colorful tropical fish swim, you may even encounter creatures such as manta rays, sea turtles, and giant squid!



### Ryukyu Ruddy Kingfisher

This red bird comes to the southwest islands in early summer. It is distinctive for its bright-red plump bill, brilliant scarlet body, violet feathers on its back, and its chirp!



### Island sweets

Yaeyama pineapples are carefully grown under the ample sun of the southern islands. The ripe pineapples have a high sugar content and an excellent balance of sweet and sour! Delight in the sweet, juicy southern island sweets made with an abundance of seasonal pineapple, the king of tropical fruit!



### Hama Island

This phantom island of white sand lies between Kohama Island and Taketomi Island, and only appears at low tide. Even children can enjoy the beach in safety on this sandbank!



### Ishigaki beef

This high-grade brand of beef, Ishigaki beef is Wagyu that have been born and bred on Yaeyama Islands, the southernmost part of Japan. It is tender, rich, and juicy. Each bite fills the palate with a sumptuous flavor.

### Monument marking the westernmost point in Japan

This hill is the very last place in Japan to view the setting sun. Below the hill is a beautiful land formation, and further in is the legendary Kubura cliff.





**Summertime!**  
**The ocean!**  
**Yaeyama paradise!**

High summer in Yaeyama Islands is alive with coral reef waters. Visitors can take trips to Kabira Bay on Ishigaki Island and the waters off of Hatoma Island and Barasu Island. The diving experience at Yonaguni Island is also amazing!

**Recommended sightseeing route**

Travel from Ishigaki Island to the waters off of Hatoma Island, Barasu Island, and Yonaguni Island!

**3 days 2 nights: Ishigaki Island, Hatoma Island, Yonaguni Island**



**Other highlights**



**Angama**

Angama has been passed down through the generations in the Ishigaki region. On the night of the Bon Festival celebrated according to the lunar calendar, Ushumai (an old man) and Umi (an old woman), messengers from the other world play the sanshin, drums, and flute, and sing and dance while chanting Buddhist prayers!



Hatoma Island Nishi Beach

**Day 1**



**1 Ishigaki Airport**

Arrive at Ishigaki Island looking forward to a great time!

Approx. 80 min.



**2 Kabira Bay glass-bottomed boat ride**

**2 Kabira Bay glass-bottomed boat ride**

Kabira Bay was selected as one of the 100 best scenic spots in Japan. Enjoy the treasure trove of coral reefs, colorful tropical birds, and unique underwater seascapes from a glass-bottomed boat.



**3 Diving**

There are many spots that can only be experienced in the sea off Ishigaki Island!

Approx. 25 min. from Kabira Bay



**4 Offshore Sukuji Beach**

You'll be surprised at what lies under the water!! Coral reefs stretch out as far as you can see! With the sun's rays shining down, it looks just like the Dragon Palace.

**Day 2**



**5 Ishigaki Port**

Depart from "Rito Terminal" on Ishigaki Island for the surrounding remote islands.

Approx. 40 min.



**6 Iriomote Island**

Most of the island is covered with subtropical jungle. The realm of island and animals is waiting in the mangrove.

Approx. 20 min.

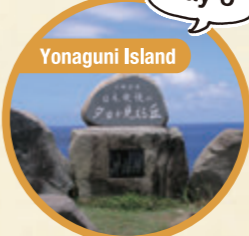


**7 To Barasu Island**

Board a glass-bottomed boat to tour the island (see TV filming locations, etc.) and explore the coastal waters of Hatoma Island and Barasu Island.

Iriomote Island → via Ishigaki Island, approx. 280 min.

**Day 3**



**8 Yonaguni Island**

Go to Yonaguni Island, the westernmost point in Japan



**9 Kita Bokujo/ocean floor topography**

See the Yonaguni horses at Kita Bokujo, and experience the ocean floor landscape through diving and a glass-bottomed boat ride.

Approx. 240 min.



**Ishigaki Port**



**Yonaguni Island Yonaguni horses**

In summer, visitors can have fun at the beach riding a Yonaguni horse.



**Experience all that the blue ocean, star-filled sky, and island attractions have to offer!**

Enjoy the sense of freedom offered by the beaches of pure white sand and the sparkling blue ocean!

Gaze at the tranquil scenery and be soothed by the slow passing of "island time." When the beautiful sunset gives way to a night sky filled with stars, you'll lose track of time as you gaze up into the shining stars stretching into infinity.

**Ishigaki Island Kabira Bay**

This picturesque site was selected as one of the 100 best scenic spots in Japan and is a must-see in Yaeyama Islands. You'll be astonished by the beauty of the ocean, which is said to change into all the colors of the rainbow.



**Hibiscus**

The islands are alive with blooming semitropical flowers, such as the crimson hibiscus framed against the blue sky. The southern island landscape is captivating!



**Kayama Island Rabbit**

Known as Rabbit Island, wild rabbits inhabit every corner of this island. Visitors feel relaxed and soothed by the adorable rabbits. This popular site offers recreational ocean activities in the summer such as beaches!



A cobalt blue ocean ♪

**Yonaguni Island**

**The last place in Japan that the sun sets**

Yonaguni Island is the westernmost place in Japan and located near Taiwan. Visitors can enjoy being the last in Japan to view the magnificent sight of the sun setting over the expansive sea.

**Hateruma Island Star gazing guides**

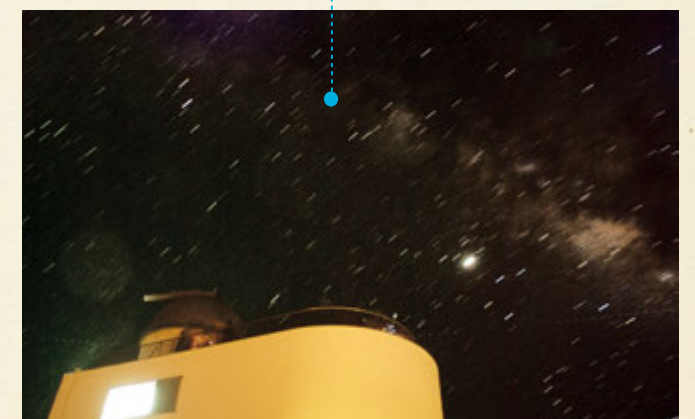
Take advantage of star gazing guides and celestial observation with a telescope under a star-studded sky visible from a shoreline that offers a view of a horizon free of homes and streetlights.

Contact: Hateruma Island Star Observation Tower



**Hatoma Island Maehama Beach**

There are plenty of beautiful beaches on the small island of Hatoma! Relax and enjoy Maehama Beach, which is right outside the community near the port.



**Ishigaki Island Southern Island Star Festival**

Yaeyama Islands are islands of the stars where 84 of the 88 constellations such as the Southern Cross can be viewed. The Star Festival is held on Ishigaki Island during the Tanabata (Festival of the Weaver) period, which is celebrated according to the lunar calendar. Lights on the island are extinguished so that the sparkling starry sky can be enjoyed. The Milky Way emerges in the midsummer night sky and is breathtakingly beautiful!







## Come to the paradise islands and experience impressive nature and stunning surroundings!

Make the most of the summer at Yaeyama Islands. Play, eat, and soak up the tropical aura! Immerse yourself in the gorgeous tropical holiday of your dreams. Take advantage of various beach activities in the endless cobalt blue ocean waters, a boat barbecue, and a nighttime cruise.

### Hateruma Island Nishi Beach

Sparkling "Hateruma blue" waters that mesmerize and pure white sands—this spectacularly beautiful beach is known as the best in Yaeyama Islands.



### Iriomote Island Barasu Island tour

Why not view the star-filled sky on Barasu Island, a tiny island created by a fragment of coral reef floating on the ocean waters? Both the Milky Way and shooting stars can be seen!



### Kohama Island Night time tour

Looking up at the night sky in the silent darkness, you'll see countless stars. The magical mood offers a different experience from daytime.

### Hateruma Island Mushama

The largest festival on Hateruma takes place during the Bon Festival celebrated according to the lunar calendar. A service for ancestors is held and prayers are made for a prosperous year. There are many entertaining sights to see, including a costume parade led by the Miruku goddess, dances, and the martial art of bojutsu.



### Yubu Island Water buffalo-drawn carts

Traverse over a shoal in a water buffalo-drawn cart to get to Yubu Island! The water buffalo takes a leisurely break at the water buffalo pond on the island.

### Yonaguni Island Ocean floor topography

Are the strange geographical features and ruins found on the ocean floor off Yonaguni Island manmade or natural? The topic has been the subject of much debate.



### Iriomote Island Semitropical jungle Urauchi River star night tour

View the last sunset and a sky filled with stars from Urauchi River, the longest river in Okinawa Prefecture! Experience a tranquility that makes you feel as if time has stood still!

### Island fruits

Summer in the southern islands offers an array of delicious fruits! Savor the seasonal tropical fruits, including the small but very sweet island bananas, juicy sweet-and-sour pineapples, ripe mango that is so sweet it's almost as if it melts in your mouth, and the impressive looking dragon fruit that has a slightly sweet, refreshing flavor.





## Relax with beautiful Mother Nature and island beauty treatments

Dive into the ocean off Ishigaki Island and enjoy the allure of beauty treatments and handicrafts. Women will love traveling to Iriomote Island to appreciate the subtropical forest and river, and revel in all that Yaeyama Islands has to offer in the fall.

**Recommended sightseeing route**

Visit Ishigaki Island and Iriomote Island! Experience Mother Nature and soothing beauty treatments.

**3 days 2 nights: Ishigaki Island, Iriomote Island**



### Other highlights

Places to view manta rays

Kabira Ishigaki in the northern part of Ishigaki Island is also called Mantra Scramble and is a popular diving spot. Get a close look at the manta rays that glide through the water as if flying in the sky.



Iriomote Island



**Eat, play, relax, and experience festivals...Feel refreshed by the island delights found only here!**

Fall in Yaeyama Islands is full of relaxation and fun! The spa beauty treatments available in the southern islands will benefit body and mind with therapies that utilize local natural ingredients. Don't miss the exhilarating nature activities, such as canyoning in the subtropical jungle!



**Iriomote Island Pool and spa**

Iriomote Island is full of the greenery of a virgin forest, but visitors can also have a good time at the resort facilities including swimming pool and spa. Enjoy the ultimate in relaxation surrounded by nature with a Thai massage or aromatherapy body treatment.



**Kohama Island Spas**

Visitors can take full advantage of the spas in the best settings at resort hotels. Reinvigorate the body through a relaxing experience that utilizes the blessing of Okinawan nature, such as hibiscus, brown sugar, coral, island vegetables, and marine clay called Ryukyu kucha.

**Fishing**

On the islands of Yaeyama, you too can become one of the much-talked about "fishing girls." Try your hand at a fishing experience that gets you close to an abundance of subtropical fish, including the prefectural fish of Okinawa, the gurukun (takasago).



**Iriomote Island Star Sand Beach**

It is said that your wish will come true if made on this romantic star-shaped sand. Enjoy searching for lucky star sand at this natural beach while gazing at the emerald green ocean.



**Iriomote Island Canyoning**

Canyoning is an outdoor activity that makes the most of the natural force of water. Slip, slide, and jump on in! You'll be taken to out-of-the-way spots only known to your guide!!

**Ishigaki Island Mineral therapy**

Visitors shouldn't miss out on the spas and beauty treatments only available here. They use natural sea salt and water full of minerals from the beautiful ocean waters of Yaeyama Islands. Take advantage to obtain moisture-rich, beautiful skin and a benefit from a healthy, soothing effect.



**Yonaguni Island Yonaguni horses**

These horses are native to Yonaguni Island. They are strong but small, placid animals that grow to be 110cm—120cm tall. Ride on these delightful horses and take a stroll through the island!



**Iriomote Island Sundari Tree**

The plant community of looking-glass mangroves is a natural monument in Iriomote Island. The large trees produce an awe-inspiring atmosphere. They radiate a sense of the eternal flow of time and instill you with the power of nature.



### Canoeing and women mountain enthusiasts

Don't miss eco tours unique to Yaeyama Islands that offer leisurely enjoyment of an abundance of nature through activities that include canoeing and bird watching. There are fulfilling trekking experiences for women mountain enthusiasts on Ishigaki Island, which has the highest mountain in Okinawa.

### Marine sports

When you think of the allure of isolated islands, a beautiful ocean seascape comes to mind first. Experience diving and snorkeling, and become an avid ocean lover! Hands-on experiences are available that take things slow and easy, so even novice enthusiasts can join.

### Yonaguni Island marathon

On this border island located at the westernmost tip of Japan, participants can run amid superb scenery as they take a lap around this island, as well as enjoy interacting with the island residents. Two courses are available: 24 km and 10 km.



### Paragliding

If you want to become a devoted admirer of the sky, then this paragliding experience offering a bird's eye view of the awesome coral reefs is just right for you. A veteran skydiver in charge of the controls accompanies you, so you can fly with peace of mind.

### Iriomote Island Activities

Iriomote Island has loads of activities that allow visitors to get close to nature, including trekking, canoeing, and snorkeling. Called the Galapagos of the East, Iriomote Island is a great place for active women-only groups that are looking to experience the power of the forest.



### Kohama Island Spas

The island is full of nature that soothes the spirit. There are also facilities where you can listen to the sound of the breeze and ocean waves while receiving stress care, relaxation care, resort anti-aging experiences, and resort beauty experiences that utilize Okinawan herbs, traditional plants, and fruits.

## Actively experience the seasonal

## power of Yaeyama through

## the ocean, sky, nature, and island ingredients!

Be awed by a sweeping view of the coral reef ocean from the vast skies while paragliding! Actively revel in the ocean, sky, and forests by canoeing in a river surrounded by a mangrove forest, and explore natural caverns!

Get your fill of delicious seasonal flavors by trying sweets and dishes made with the bounty of the southern islands.



### Iriomote Island Caving

Explore unbelievable natural caverns and limestone caves through the popular activity, caving. You'll encounter an underground world you didn't know existed!! There are many caving tours to choose from!



### Brown sugar sweets

The extravagant brown-sugar ice cream is made with pure brown sugar containing a wealth of minerals. The mild flavor features a superb, refreshing sweetness and an aroma unique to brown sugar.



### Yaeyama sweets

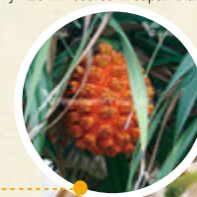
Visitors will encounter slow food and sweets, such as goya cheesecake and coconut pudding, made with seasonal ingredients exclusive to Yaeyama Islands. Once you try them, you'll be hooked.

### Southern island seaside cafés

Only on the islands can you take pleasure in a meal or café in the best locations right next to the ocean. Listen to the waves, take your time over tea, and barbecue while watching the sunset... There are many places to enjoy a wonderful lunch or dinner in a fashion unique to the southern islands.

### Adan chanpuru

This stir-fry dish is made from the tender sprouts of the adan (pandanus fruit), an island plant that greatly resembles the shape of a pineapple. It is distinctive for healthy island vegetables unique to Yaeyama Islands, such as owataniwatari (spleenwort) and hego (tree fern).



### Taketomi Island Tanadui Festival

This small island is home to less than 300 people, but on this occasion the population swells to many times that. The two-day festival features entertainment, and singing and dancing that last until dawn.



### Ishigaki Island Earth Ride

If you love sports and bicycling, then why not join the Ishigaki Island Earth Ride and take pleasure in the incredible scenery found at the southernmost tip of Japan. Participants can experience a refreshing bicycle ride along the only 120 km course in Japan that doesn't have a single stoplight.





Other highlights



### Winter cherry trees

Places to view winter cherry trees

The cherry blossom season lasts in Okinawa from January to February! The Okinawan cherry blossom, the kanhizakura differs from the kind found on the mainland and is notable for its dark pink flowers resembling plum blossoms that bloom facing down.

## Come to the islands in winter for a warm, leisurely journey!

Ishigaki Island has numerous picturesque nature spots and historic sites. From Iriomote Island cross over the ocean by water buffalo-drawn cart to Yubu Island, and take things slow on Taketomi Island, soaking up the atmosphere on “island time.”

Recommended sightseeing route

Tour Ishigaki Island, then set off for Iriomote Island and Taketomi Island

3 days 2 nights: Ishigaki Island, Iriomote Island, Yubu Island, Taketomi Island





## Discover a wealth of traditional culture and mystical nature, including subtropical scenery and creatures.

While northerly winds blow in a cold winter, at Yaeyama Islands the cherry blossoms are in full bloom! Enticed by the warm sun's rays that herald an early spring, visitors come to see and experience the nature, lifestyles, and traditional crafts unique to this island. Be sure to gaze at the beautiful Southern Cross that lights up the night sky!



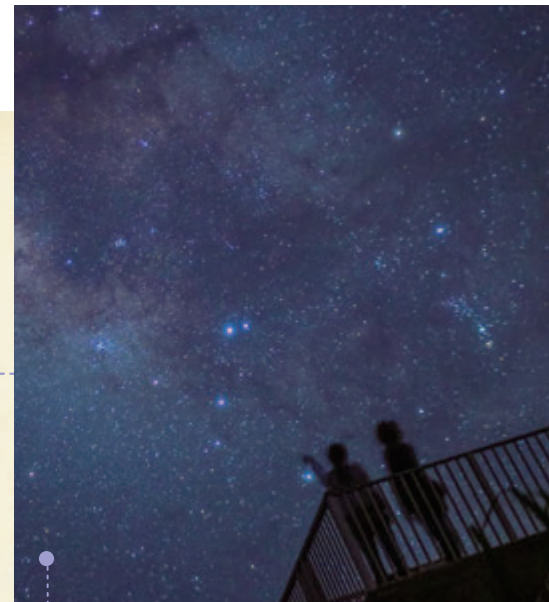
**Ishigaki Island**  
Ishigaki Island limestone caves

These limestone caves were created from coral reef and extend up to 3.2 km in length. Approximately 660 m are open to the public. Experience the fantastic world of pure white stalactites and colorful illumination.



**Iriomote Island** Mariyudu Waterfall

Try making the traditional Okinawan guardian deity, the shisa to remember your trip by. Staff provide thorough instructions, so even visitors making the craft for the first time will enjoy the experience.



**The Milky Way**

The brightly shining Milky Way can be seen from Yaeyama Islands.



**The earliest blooming cherry tree blossoms in Japan**

In January, cherry tree blossoms in Okinawa are the first to bloom in Japan! The winter cherry trees (kanhizakura) bloom beautiful, dark pink blossoms on Yaeyama Islands. Visitors will thoroughly enjoy spring a little early through cherry blossom viewing parties in Yaeyama Islands.



**Boat sightseeing tours**

Ride on a magnificent boat and enjoy the greenery of the mangrove forest while slowly making your way upstream, taking in the rich nature of the southern island.

**Yonaguni Island** Yonaguni horses

These horses are native to Yonaguni Island. They are strong but small, placid animals that grow to be 110 cm–120 cm tall. Ride on these delightful horses and take a stroll through the island!



**Iriomote Island** Trekking

Fulfill your desire for adventure by joining a trekking tour to waterfalls deep in the jungle and relish being immersed in a forest surrounded by subtropical nature.



**Glass-bottomed boats**

Gaze at the pretty coral reefs and schools of colorful tropical fish swimming in the clear ocean waters of Yaeyama Islands. You'll feel as if you're swimming along with the fish in the blue waters!



**Yaeyama Minsa weaving**

Visitors can try their hand at weaving the traditional handicraft, "kaori minsa" and "Yaeyama jofu." In times past when couples lived apart and "wife visiting" was common, a woman presented a minsa sash to her man as a token of love.



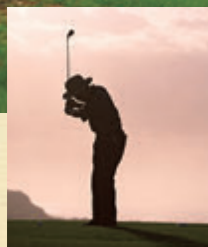
**Taketomi Island** communities

Traditional red tile-roofed homes and white sandy paths. The unspoiled landscape of Okinawa stretches in front of you at Taketomi Island. Change into island sandals and join in a tour of the communities.

**Yubu Island** botanical garden

Reached by water buffalo-drawn cart from Iriomote Island, this entire island is a botanical garden. Subtropical flowers and trees blanket the small island, creating a paradise brimming with a tropical aura.





**Kohama Island Golf**

Resort golf can be enjoyed even in winter on Kohama Island because of its warm climate. It is truly refreshing to play under the warm sun while looking at the expanse of greenery in front of you and the sparkling, azure coral reef ocean!

Visit the green forests and ocean, and dine on your fill of seasonal flavors.

Savor the abundance of enchantments Yaeyama Islands can offer in winter.

Enjoy resort golf from a course that overlooks the ocean and experience the power of nature by trekking in a majestic forest. Then, experience the flavors of winter found only in Yaeyama Islands, including swordfish from the waters of Yonaguni Island and wild boar from Iriomote Island. There are endless pleasures to be had!



**Iriomote Island Jungle trekking**

A deep green forest, a freely flowing river, and the power of nature demonstrated in the force of the water flowing into the waterfall pool—come to Iriomote Island for an experience amid imposing nature that you'll never forget!



**Ishigaki Island Mountain climbing**

There are many mountains where visitors can enjoy mountain climbing, including the tallest mountain in Okinawa, Mt. Omotodake. Climb at your leisure while observing the subtropical plants, insects, and birds, and be amazed at the scenery awaiting you at the top!



**Iriomote Island Kayaking**

Paddle your way slowly up stream along the large river flowing amid a mangrove forest, breathing deeply of the negative ions emitted by the water and greenery. What a way to refresh the body.

**Pottery**

Create a plate or dish to your liking crafted after the image of Mother Nature on Ishigaki Island. Try making Ishigaki pottery that is accented with the beautiful azure color of the ocean.



**Weaving**

This is a hands-on experience weaving minsa, the traditional handicraft of Yaeyama Islands. The pattern of 5 and 4 square dots was woven and given to one's beloved with the hope of eternal love.

Looks fun!



**Wild boar chanpuru**

For 3 months every winter in Iriomote Island, the ban on hunting wild boar is lifted. The meat is free of strong smells and tastes delicious, so give the wild boar dishes a try.



**Yonaguni Island kamaboko**

This kamaboko (steamed fish paste) made from swordfish is unique to Yonaguni Island, which is famous for swordfish. It has a heavy flavor and is perfect for a snacks and side dish.



**Swordfish steak**

The water off Yonaguni Island, which has a strong black current, is filled with swordfish. It is said to be particularly tasty in the winter when it is fatty. Try the flavorful swordfish steak served with seasonal vegetables!



**Ishigaki Island Ishigaki Island Marathon**

The aim of Ishigaki, which strives to be a city of sightseeing, is to "contribute to vivid, rich urban development of the southernmost point of Japan."

**Yonaguni Island Hammerhead Sharks**

Yonaguni Island has the highest rate of encounter with hammerhead sharks! Visitors are most likely to see them when the water temperature drops, from around December to the start of the Golden Week holidays.

# Yaeyama Calendar

# Island Festivals, Events, and Scenery

Festival events may change on occasion.  
Traditional ceremonies are held according to Chinese calendar. Please confirm ahead of time.  
See the back cover for contact information for each island.

	March	April	May	June	July	August
<b>Events</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ishigaki Coral Week (Ishigaki Island)</li> <li>Beach-Opening Maezato Beach (Ishigaki Island)</li> <li>Beach-Opening Sokochi Beach (Ishigaki Island)</li> <li>Beach-Opening Haimurubushi Beach (Kohama Island)</li> <li>Sanizu [Seashore visit] (Yaeyama Islands)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Iriomote Music Festival (Iriomote Island)</li> <li>Funauki Music Festival (Iriomote Island [Funauki])</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Folk Arts (Special Performance for Children's Day) (Ishigaki Island)</li> <li>Hatoma Island Music Festival (Hatoma Island)</li> <li>Coral Spawning</li> <li>Ishigaki Island Triathlon (Ishigaki Island)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diving Festa Ishigaki Island (Ishigaki Island)</li> <li>Haari Boat Festival (Uminchu Festival) (Ishigaki Island)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yonaguni Island International Swordfish Fishing Tournament (Yonaguni Island)</li> <li>Orion Beer Fest in Ishigaki (Ishigaki Island)</li> <li>Puri (Harvest Festival) (Ishigaki Island)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ohara Festival (Iriomote Island)</li> <li>Hateruma Paradise Festival (Hateruma Island)</li> <li>Southern Island Star Festival (Ishigaki Island)</li> <li>Seaside Arts Festival (Iriomote Island)</li> <li>Mushama (Hateruma Island)</li> </ul>
<b>Seasonal Flowers and Foods</b>	<p>Hibiscus / bougainvillea (all year)</p> <p>Peregrina / seishika flower</p> <p>Ishigaki beef (all year)</p>	<p>Golden trumpet vine</p>	<p>Jungle flame</p>	<p>Peacock flower</p> <p>Yaeyama fruits: mango, pineapple, island banana, dragon fruit</p> <p>Yaeyama Sweets gelato</p>		
<b>Seasonal dress</b>	[Long sleeves] The spring is glorious, but long sleeves are a must at night.	[Thin long sleeves or short sleeves] The most comfortable time of year. T-shirts, jeans, etc.	[Short sleeves] Daily heat and humidity. Short sleeves, shorts.	[Short sleeves] Arrange to avoid the sun. Thin shirts, sunglasses, etc.	[Short sleeves] Avoid sunburn with thin shirts, sunglasses, etc.! Keep an eye on typhoon forecasts.	[Short sleeves] Hats, sunglasses, thin long-sleeved shirts to avoid the sun. Seasonal dress.
<b>Temperature / Humidity</b>	18.9°C Max, 21.7°C / Min, 16.5°C / Average 18.9°C Average humidity 73%	21.4°C Max, 24.1°C / Min, 19.0°C / Average 21.4°C Average humidity 76%	24.0°C Max, 26.7°C / Min, 22.8°C / Average 24.0°C Average humidity 79%	26.8°C Max, 29.4°C / Min, 24.8°C / Average 26.8°C Average humidity 83%	28.9°C Max, 31.8°C / Min, 26.8°C / Average 28.9°C Average humidity 78%	28.7°C Max, 31.5°C / Min, 26.6°C / Average 28.7°C Average humidity 78%

	September	October	November	December	January	February
<b>Events</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Itashikibara (Shi-sa-Iiondog Dance) (Ishigaki Island)</li> <li>Yunkai Ritual (Taketomi Island)</li> <li>Tubarama Song Contest (Ishigaki Island)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kafunu Island Churasan Festival / Kohama-bushi Festival (Kohama Island)</li> <li>Yaeyama Classical Folk Song Contest (Ishigaki Island)</li> <li>Ishigaki Island Earth Ride (Ishigaki Island)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ishigaki Island Festival (Ishigaki Island)</li> <li>Teedun Muni Dialect Festival (Taketomi Island)</li> <li>Yonaguni Island Marathon (Yonaguni Island)</li> <li>Shichi Festival (Iriomote Island)</li> <li>Tanadul Harvesting Festival (Taketomi Island)</li> <li>Machiri Festival [Kanbunaga] (Yonaguni Island)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ceramic Ware Festival (Ishigaki Island)</li> <li>Southern Island Ice Lantern Festival (Ishigaki Island)</li> <li>Euglena Mall Christmas Festival (Ishigaki Island)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Muuchii Bisa [Winter ricecake season] (Yaeyama Islands)</li> <li>Ishigaki Island Marathon</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chiba Lotte Marines (Japanese professional baseball) Spring Training (Ishigaki Island)</li> <li>Taketomi-cho Yamaneko (Wildcat) Marathon</li> <li>Kuro Island Cow Festival</li> </ul>
<b>Seasonal Flowers and Foods</b>	<p>Hibiscus / bougainvillea (all year)</p> <p>Red flamingo</p> <p>Ishigaki beef (all year)</p> <p>Ishigaki beef shabu-shabu</p> <p>Brown sugar flan / brown sugar ice cream / coconut flan</p>	<p>Hong Kong orchid tree</p> <p>Yonaguni Island kamaboko</p> <p>Wild boar chanpuru</p>	<p>Powder-puff tree</p> <p>Swordfish steak</p>	<p>Okinawa cherry blossom</p>		
<b>Seasonal dress</b>	[Short sleeves] The heat is past its peak, but you can still go to the beach. Sunglasses are needed.	[Long or short sleeves] You'll need a light jacket for mornings and evenings.	[Long sleeves] All-weather gear, light cardigans etc.	[Long sleeves] The winter is warm compared to the mainland. Sweatshirts, jeans, etc.	[Long sleeves and sweaters] A strong seasonal wind brings a sharp windchill. Wear a light jacket.	[Long sleeves and sweaters] Nights are still chilly. Wear a spring coat or similar jacket.
<b>Temperature / Humidity</b>	27.6°C Max, 30.4°C / Min, 25.5°C / Average 27.6°C Average humidity 76%	25.2°C Max, 27.9°C / Min, 23.1°C / Average 25.2°C Average humidity 71%	22.1°C Max, 24.6°C / Min, 19.9°C / Average 22.1°C Average humidity 69%	18.7°C Max, 21.2°C / Min, 16.3°C / Average 18.7°C Average humidity 66%	17.0°C Max, 19.5°C / Min, 14.6°C / Average 17.0°C Average humidity 67%	17.1°C Max, 19.8°C / Min, 14.8°C / Average 17.1°C Average humidity 70%












# Okinawa Tourism Risk Management Information Site

<http://okinawa-crisis-mgt.info>



## The following information is available on disasters in Okinawa Prefecture.

The information can be viewed on the internet browser of a computer or smartphone, or with a special app.

-  **Evacuation**
-  **Earthquake**
-  **Typhoon**
-  **Record Rainfall**
-  **Tsunami**
-  **Landslide Warning**
-  **Weather**  
(heavy rain warnings, flood warnings, storm warnings)

## Information on the smartphone app

Disaster information is provided for individuals in the tourism industry and tourists to ensure the safety of tourists through prompt evacuation guidance in times of major natural disasters, such as earthquakes and tsunamis, in Okinawa Prefecture.

**Category: Travel (App Store) Travel & Local (Google Play) Price: Free**

Please note that expenses related to communications such as packet transmission and data transmission fees will be the responsibility of the user.

Airplane	
Routes	Routes
Tokyo (Narita/Haneda) - Ishigaki	JTA/SKY
Osaka - Ishigaki	JTA/ANA/Peach
Nagoya - Ishigaki	ANA
Kobe - Ishigaki	SKY
Naha - Ishigaki	JTA/ANA/SKY
Naha - Yonaguni	RAC
Miyako - Ishigaki	ANA/RAC
Yonaguni - Ishigaki	RAC
Taipei - Ishigaki	CAL

Contact  
**JAL / JTA / RAC**  
 0570-025-071  
 Tokyo TEL: 03-5460-0522  
 Osaka TEL: 06-6344-2355  
 Naha TEL: 098-863-8522

**ANA** (Naha did (Innsmouth switchboard service))  
 0570-029-222  
 Naha TEL: 098-861-8800

**SKY** Reservation Center  
 050-3116-7370

**Peach** Contact Center  
 0570-200-489

**CAL** (China Airlines)  
 Reservation Center 0570-200-489  
 Okinawa TEL: 098-863-1013  
 Taipei TEL: (0)2-412-9000

Bus/Taxi	
• Bus	
Ishigaki / Azuma Transport	TEL0980-82-2054,2055
Taketomi / Taketomijima Kotsu	TEL0980-85-2154
Kohama / Kohama Kotsu	TEL0980-85-3830
Iriomote / Iriomote-jima Kotsu	TEL0980-85-5303,5305
Yonaguni / Saiseitan Kanko	TEL0980-87-2441
• Taxi	
Ishigaki / Kyoudou Musen Taxi	TEL0980-83-3355
Ishigaki / Tokai Kotsu	TEL0980-82-3585
Ishigaki / Maruchi Taxi	TEL0980-82-3265
Ishigaki / Misaki Taxi	TEL0980-82-3258
Ishigaki / Maruhachi Taxi	TEL0980-82-3453
Ishigaki / Mitsuboshi Taxi	TEL0980-82-3755
Ishigaki / Ishigakijima Kotsu	TEL0980-82-4955
Ishigaki / Ishigaki Taxi	TEL0980-82-3088
Ishigaki / Nansen Taxi	TEL0980-82-1566
Ishigaki / Sakishima Kotsu	TEL0980-82-3988
Ishigaki / Kabira Kanko Kotsu	TEL0980-88-2660
Ishigaki / Kawarayama Kotsu	TEL0980-82-4649
Ishigaki / Iriomote-jima Kotsu	TEL0980-85-5305
Ishigaki / Iriomote Sightseeing Company	TEL0980-85-5333
Ishigaki / Azuma Taxi	TEL0980-82-5553

\* Please contact the information service or view the homepage of each transportation company for information on the operating schedule for airplanes and ferries.  
 \* If you call from overseas, please add country code as follows; +81(0)980-XX-XXXX

Ferry	
Ferry service to remote islands in Yaeyama Islands	
• Ishigaki - Taketomi/Kohama/Kuro/Hatoma/Iriomote	
Anei Travel, Ishigaki Reservation Center	TEL0980-83-0055
Ishigaki Island Dream Travel	TEL0980-84-3178
Yaeyama Island Sightseeing Ferry	TEL0980-82-5010
• Ishigaki - Hateruma	
Anei Travel Ishigaki Reservation Center	TEL0980-83-0055
• Ishigaki - Yonaguni	
Fukuyama Kaiun	TEL0980-82-4962

<b>Ishigaki City Tourism Exchange Association</b> TEL: 0980-82-2809	<b>Taketomi Town Tourist Association</b> TEL: 0980-82-5445	<b>Yonaguni Town Tourism Association</b> TEL: 0980-87-2402
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<b>Okinawa Convention &amp; Visitors Bureau</b> 1831-1 Oroku, Naha City, Okinawa (Okinawa Industrial Support Center 2F) TEL: 098-859-6123 (main switchboard)	<b>Naha Airport Visitor Information Center</b> 150 Kagamizu, Naha City, Okinawa (Domestic Line Passenger Terminal 1F) TEL: 098-857-6884 (main switchboard) open year-round 9:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m.	<b>Naha Airport International Terminal Bldg. Visitor Information Center</b> 174 Kagamizu, Naha City, Okinawa TEL: 098-859-0742 (main switchboard) open year-round 10:30 a.m.–7:30 p.m.
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