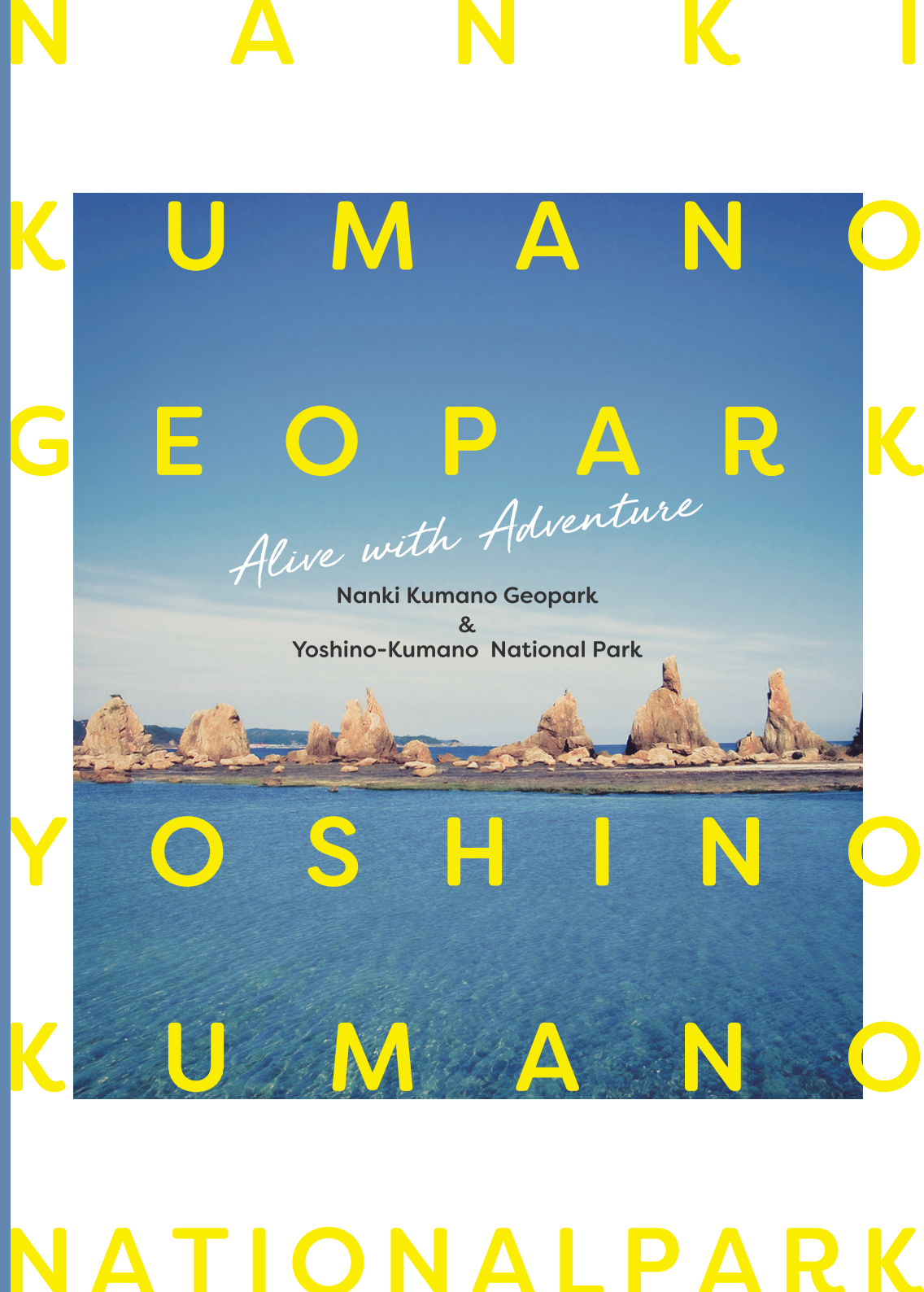


WAKAYAMA ACCESS GUIDE





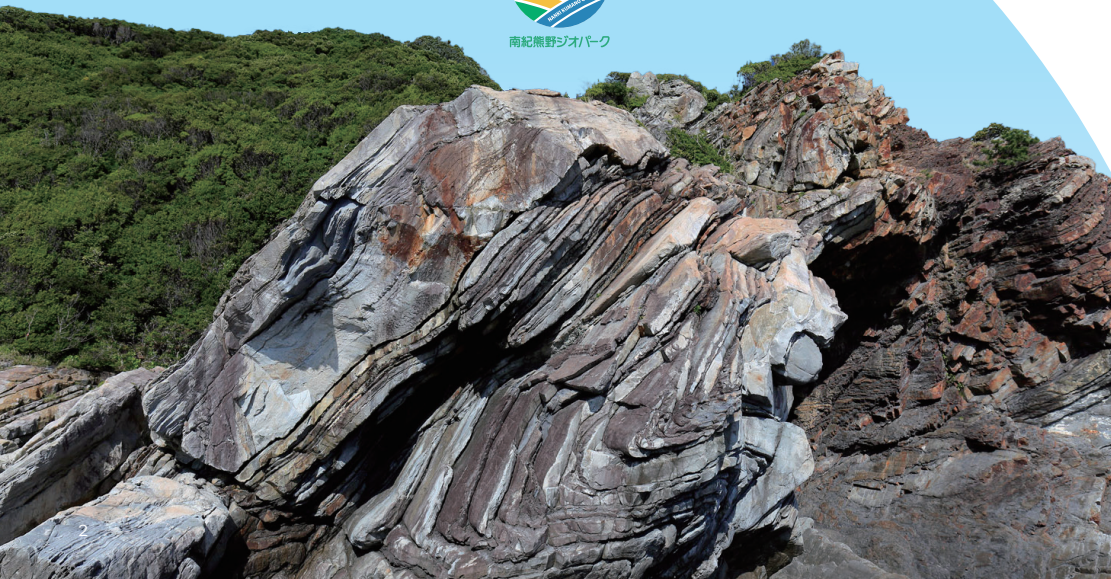
Nanki Kumano Geopark

Centuries of volcanic activity have sculpted the Kumano area into a land of mighty rivers and waterfalls, honeycomb rocks, and towering monoliths steeped in Wakayama legend.

The convergence of tectonic plates has shifted and shunted much of Wakayama, forming many areas of geological interest. Much of the expansive Kumano area, the prefecture's southern region, has been established as a geopark to protect and celebrate this distinctive geology. Geopark visitors can wander along jagged coastlines, ride rafts through dramatic gorges, take in picturesque rock formations, and hike through dense forests to reach waterfalls considered to be deities.



南紀熊野ジオパーク



Yoshino-Kumano National Park

The Kumano area is dominated by a rich natural environment and imbued with cultural and spiritual heritage. The Kumano area of Wakayama joins sections of Mie and Nara prefectures to form an expansive national park.

The national park is a centre for outdoor activities and quests for spiritual enlightenment. Trekking trails thread through forested mountains and the coral reefs off Wakayama's southern coast are prime diving areas. The Kumano Sanzan—the three grand shrines of Kumano and Nachisan Seiganto-ji Temple—have long been pilgrimage destinations for those seeking spiritual fulfillment. The Kumano Kodo pilgrimage routes criss-cross Wakayama Prefecture, leading to these beautiful shrines and temple.

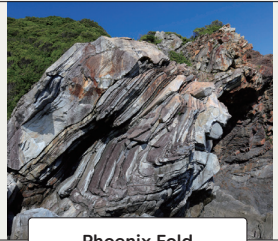


A BIRDS'-EYE VIEW OF THE PARKS

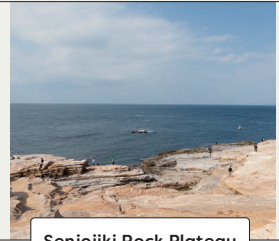
Explore Kumano's dramatic terrain and experience the area's rich spiritual connections to nature.



Engetsuto Island



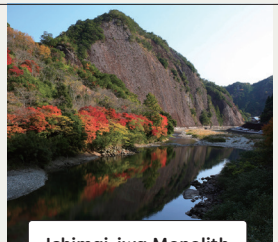
Phoenix Fold



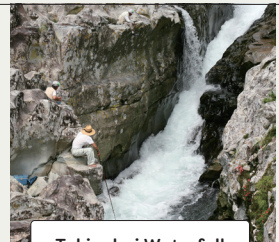
Senjojiki Rock Plateau



Hashigui-iwa Rock



Ichimai-iwa Monolith



Takinohai Waterfall

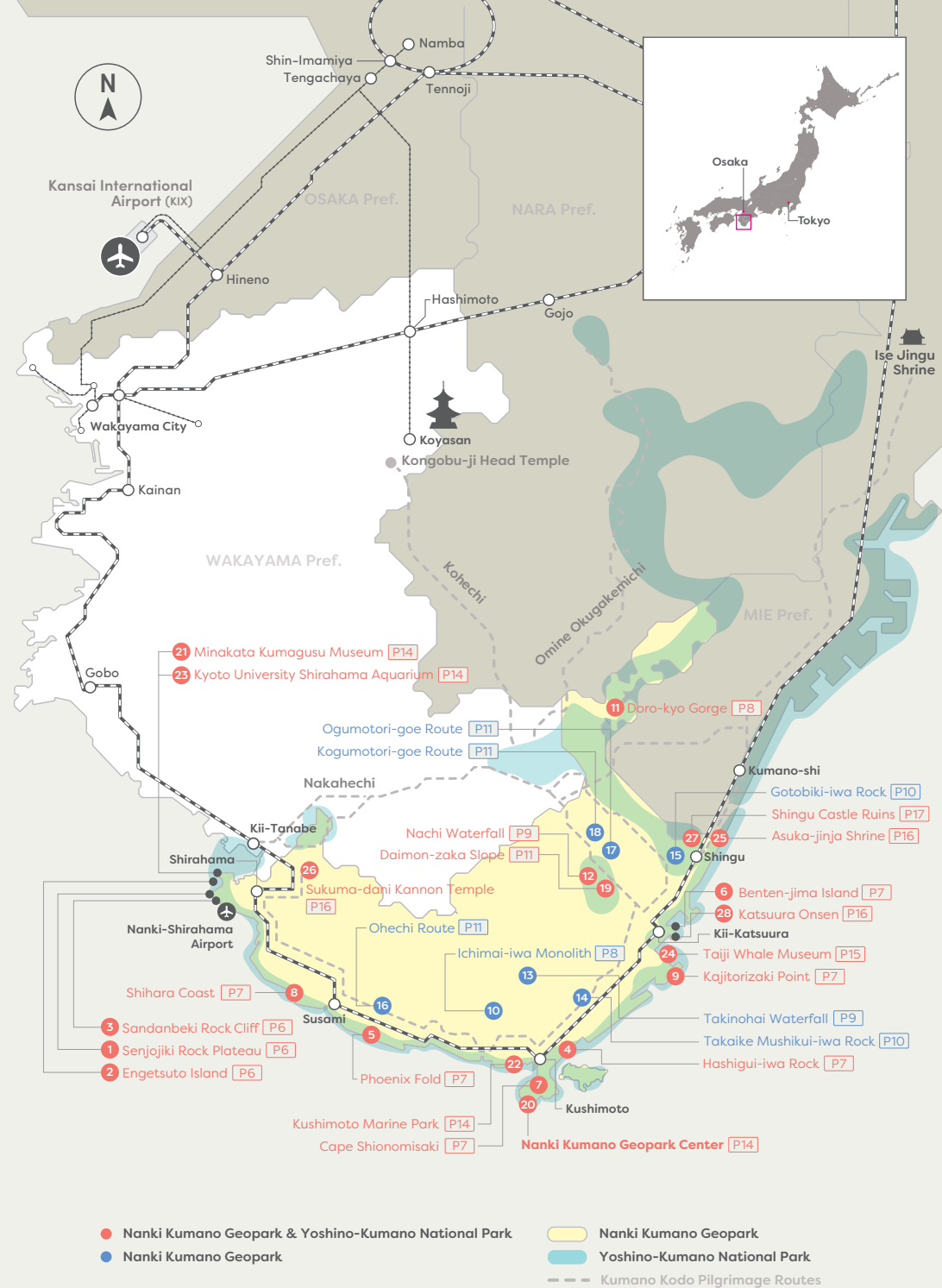
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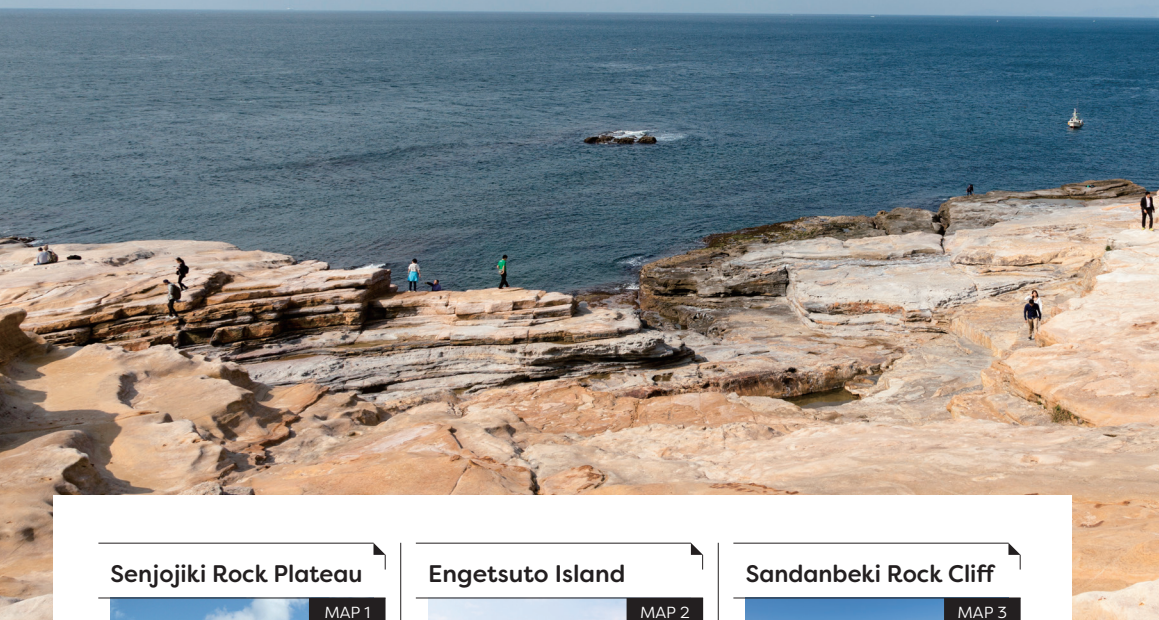


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- Nanki Kumano Geopark
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- Kumano Kodo Pilgrimage Routes

Sights to See

By the sea

Centuries of coastal erosion has sculpted the dramatic Wakayama coastline. Towering cliffs and sea caves, along with jagged monoliths and tectonic folds, are some of the natural sculptures dominating the prefecture's coastal areas.



Senjojiki Rock Plateau

MAP 1



Senjojiki Rock Plateau is a raised coastal terrace in Shirahama. Literally, 'a thousand tatami mats', the name refers to the wide, flat surface of layered sandstone and mudstone, giving the impression of an expanse of tatami floor mats. Senjojiki Rock Plateau was part of the shallow seabed more than 15 million years ago.

Engetsuto Island

MAP 2



Engetsuto (meaning 'round-moon island') is just off the coast of Shirahama. The island has a 9-metre-wide hole, through which the setting sun aligns perfectly during the spring and autumn equinoxes. It was once part of a chain of islands, but continued erosion has left only the islet we see today.

Sandanbeki Rock Cliff

MAP 3



The Sandanbeki Rock Cliff rises more than 40 metres above the sea. These sandstone cliffs were once part of the shallow seabed, but tectonic plate movement has pushed them upwards over millions of years. The cliffs are famous for their caves, which can be reached by elevator.

Hashigui-iwa Rock

MAP 4



This extraordinary formation of around 40 rocks stretches 850 metres into the ocean like a pier. Legend has it that the formation was created by Kobo Daishi (Kukai, 774–835), the famed Buddhist monk believed to be preserved in an eternal state of meditation at Okuno-in in Koyasan, in northern Wakayama.

Phoenix Fold

MAP 5



The Phoenix Fold is an excellent example of a tectonic fold. It was formed underground about 30 million years ago when one tectonic plate moved under another, forcing the fold to the surface. The distinctive shape of the fold and sandstone veins around its core results from sustained geological forces.

Benten-jima Island

MAP 6



Benten-jima Island is a small, sacred islet just off the Ojaura sea-shore. Its dramatic, craggy rock is punctuated by a red torii gate, which marks the entrance to the shrine on the island. Hakuja-benten, the white snake goddess, is enshrined here. She is the deity of all that flows, such as water, music, and art.

Cape Shionomisaki

MAP 7



Cape Shionomisaki is the southernmost point of Honshu, Japan's largest island. It is the point where the warm Kuroshio Current, originating in the Philippines, comes closest to the shore, allowing some of the world's northernmost coral communities to thrive. At the tip of the cape is Shionomisaki Lighthouse.

Shihara Coast

MAP 8



The rugged Shihara Coast near Shirahama Town is a volcanic sand beach. The terrain is made up of alternate layers of sandstone and mudstone, and fossils of worms and wave patterns can be seen imprinted into the rock. A highlight of the coastline is the Torige Caves.

Kajitorizaki Point

MAP 9



Kajitorizaki Point is a beautiful coastal lookout across the Kumano Sea in Taiji, with bright green lawns and a white lighthouse. Kajitorizaki Point once played an important role in the whaling industry. It served as a lookout and, when a whale was spotted, smoke signals were sent to alert and guide boats.

Sights to See

By the river



From the worship of thundering cascades to white-water rafting, Kumano's waterfalls and rivers are a focal point for spirituality and outdoor adventure. Rivers have also played a role in shaping the natural landscape, creating the distinctively pot-holed area around Takinohai Waterfall.

Ichimai-iwa Monolith

MAP 10



Ichimai-iwa Monolith is a towering rock on the bank of the Koza-gawa River. It is more than 500 metres wide and 100 metres tall. The earth continues to push the rock upwards, making it grow taller. Ichimai-iwa is remarkably smooth compared to other nearby rocks, which have a honeycomb texture.

Doro-kyo Gorge

MAP 11



The Kitayama-gawa River's turquoise waters run through 31 kilometres of rocky ravines known as the Doro-kyo Gorge. This picturesque gorge was formed by millions of years of erosion, leaving it with steep, forested cliffs and unusual rock formations. The river is a tributary of the Kumano-gawa River that runs through Nara, Mie, and Wakayama prefectures.

Nachi Waterfall

MAP 12



Nachi Waterfall is Japan's longest single drop waterfall, plunging 133 metres. The waterfall's hard bedrock was formed 14 million years ago when a magma chamber cooled and hardened. The weak surrounding rock layers eventually eroded, leaving a ledge over which more than a tonne of water per second flows.

Takinohai Waterfall

MAP 13



Takinohai Waterfall is a 200-metre stretch of the Kogawa River which cuts through pot-holed bedrock, forming a small waterfall. A shallow sea once covered the sandstone and mudstone riverbed. An underground magma chamber heated it, leaving it hard and brittle when it cooled. Stones rotated by the current eroded the rock and created pot-holes.

The Rivers of Nanki Kumano Geopark

Koza-gawa River



The 40-kilometre-long Koza-gawa River winds down through the Kii mountain range before emptying into the Pacific Ocean in Wakayama's southwestern corner. The crystal-clear river flows past various points of geological interest, including the Ichimai-iwa Monolith. Kayaking on the river is a popular activity.

Kitayama-gawa River



The source of the Kitayama-gawa River is deep in the Kii mountain range. The river's upper reaches are fast-flowing and the location for the traditional log-rafting activity. It winds through mountainous terrain before joining the larger Kumano-gawa River around 10 kilometres from Kumano Hongu Taisha, one of the grand shrines of Kumano.

Kumano-gawa River



The 183-kilometre Kumano-gawa River weaves through the Kii Peninsula, flowing past Kumano Hayotama Taisha before draining into the Pacific Ocean. A section of the river is a designated part of the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage routes; pilgrims on their journey to spiritual enlightenment travel along the waterway.

Sights to See

In the mountains



Densely forested mountains dominate the Kumano area, with a maze of trekking paths running through the undulating terrain. These paths are the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage routes, where for centuries pilgrims have wandered the tracks in search of spiritual enlightenment.

Takaiké Mushikui-iwa Rock

MAP 14



Takaiké Mushikui-iwa is a 60-metre-high rock in Koza-gawa Town. This rock is a remnant of an explosion that occurred 14 million years ago, leaving a circular volcanic depression. The magma cooled and hardened, forming a wide chain of rocks 22 kilometres long and 800 metres wide, now called the Kozagawa Dyke.

Gotobiki-iwa Rock

MAP 15



Gotobiki-iwa Rock is a huge boulder sitting adjacent to Kamikura-jinja Shrine on Mt. Gongenyama. Legend suggests that the deities of Kumano descended from the heavens and landed upon the rock. The boulder and shrine are located at the top of around 500 steep stone steps.

The Kumano Kodo Pilgrimage Routes

The Ohechi Route MAP 16



The Ohechi route is a 92-kilometre-long coastal route from Tanabe in western Wakayama to Nachikatsuura in southeastern Wakayama. It is one of the most popular trails on the Kumano Kodo because of its environmental diversity and ease of access from several railway stations. The steep Nagai-zaka Slope quickly climbs 350 metres, providing views over the Kushimoto coast and of Kuroshima Island. The path leads through a black ridge oak (ubamegashi; *Quercus phillyraeoides*) forest. Wild cherry (yamazakura; *Prunus serrulata*), red bayberry (yamamomo; *Myrica rubra*), and azalea all grow along the route. Most of it is a natural forest trail, but a short section is a simple path made from shaped, compacted mud in a style known as 'danchiku'.



Other Routes & Sights



MAP 17

Ogumotori-goe Route

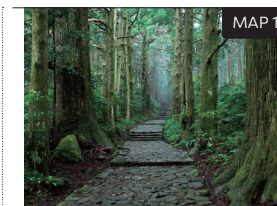
The challenging 14-kilometre section of the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage connects Nachi Waterfall with Koguchi in the peninsula's central area. The path runs through forested mountains with some steep climbs and descents. The route passes by Waroda-ishi Rock, a mythical gathering spot for the Kumano deities. Ogumotori-goe forms part of the longer Nakahechi route.



MAP 18

Kogumotori-goe Route

This 13-kilometre section links Kumano Hongu Taisha Grand Shrine with the Koguchi area. The path rises and falls through the Kumano mountains, reaching elevations of around 500 metres at its highest point, the traditional observation point of Hyakken-gura. The route is less challenging than the Ogumotori-goe route.



MAP 19

Daimon-zaka Slope

This 600-metre long cobblestone staircase in the Kumano forest runs up to Kumano Nachi Taisha and Nachisan Seiganto-ji Temple. Hikers can view thundering Nachi Waterfall near the top of the staircase. The towering cedar, cypress, and camphor trees, that line the path date back centuries.

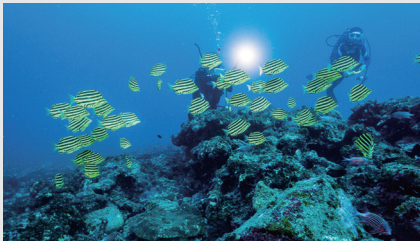
Things to Do

Outdoor Activities

The Kumano area's ocean and rivers offer opportunities for outdoor exploration and adventure. From diving and snorkeling in the waters off the coast, kayaking, and white-water rafting on the meandering rivers, to boat tours of gorges and tiny islands.

Ocean Activities

Diving at Kushimoto Diving Park



This diving park on Wakayama's southern coast provides opportunities to explore the coral communities that thrive in the warm ocean waters off the coast. More than 120 coral species have been discovered in and around the area. All necessary diving equipment is available to rent.

Sea Kayak Tour in Kushimoto



Sea kayaking allows adventure-seekers the opportunity to paddle on open water and enjoy the clear and relatively calm ocean off the Kushimoto coast. Enjoy views of tropical fish and coral from above on this family-friendly activity. The tour begins with an instructional lesson to ensure safety.

Snorkeling Lesson in Shirahama



The clear waters off the Shirahama coast in the southwest corner of the peninsula are ideal for snorkeling. Tropical fish swim amongst the colourful coral, and stretches of interesting geographical features make for an exciting snorkeling experience. All necessary equipment is available to rent.

Boat tour of the Ki-no-Matsushima Islands



The coastal waters off the coast of Katsuura are dotted with islets and rock heaps that rise from the ocean floor. By weaving in and around the rocky outcrops, the tour boats allow visitors a close-up look at these distinctive geographical features. Tours begin and end at Katsuura Fishing Port.

River Activities

Kitayama-gawa River Log-Rafting



Kitayama Village was a logging centre from the Edo period (1603–1868) through to the mid-twentieth century. Logs felled in Kitayama were sold in Shingu after being transported down the Kitayama-gawa and Kumano-gawa rivers. Villagers would fasten the logs together and create long rafts, which they would navigate downstream. Today, you can tour a section of the Kitayama-gawa River on log rafts similar to those previously constructed in the village. The rafts are steered along a relatively peaceful, scenic 5.5-kilometre stretch of the river. The rafts measure 30 metres in length and are made up of several rafts tied together.

Canyoning Tour in Kitayama



Thrill-seekers can slide down some of Kumano's geological features on a canyoning tour. The tours take place in the clear waters of the Kitayama-gawa River. Participants wear wetsuits and jump from rocks and slip down natural slides into the river basin.

White-Water Rafting in Kitayama



Outdoor adventurers can board a dinghy and ride the white water of the Kitayama-gawa River. Professional instructors provide a safety briefing before guiding the group down the choppy waters. Experience a thrilling ride on clear waters through the dramatic Doro-kyo Gorge.

Find more activities here



Things to Do

Cultural Activities

Learn more about the Kumano area's historical, cultural, and natural heritage by visiting a museum or visitor centre. Cultural experiences, such as dressing in period clothing and crafting traditional pottery, offer visitors an authentic travel experience.



MAP 20



Nanki Kumano Geopark Center

Nanki Kumano Geopark Center is a state-of-the-art facility providing in-depth information on geological formations in the Nanki Kumano Geopark, including features like the Phoenix Fold, Senjojiki Rock Plateau, the Hashigui-iwa Rock, Doro-kyo Gorge, and Ichimai-iwa Monolith.

Interactive displays suitable for both adults and children explain how the features of the geopark were formed and how these formations have impacted the people and the local culture of Nanki Kumano. The Geopark Center utilizes projection mapping, 3D models, touchscreen games, and videos to show how tectonic plate movements have shaped the area over millions of years. Exhibitions tie together disparate geological formations and create a coherent narrative, demonstrating the earth's immense power.

Minakata Kumagusu Museum



MAP 21

This museum documents the life of Wakayama-born botanist Minakata Kumagusu (1867-1941). Minakata is remembered for his environmental conservation, his expertise on slime molds, and his unconventional learning style. Minakata devoted his life to intensive research, becoming an expert in botany, folklore, philosophy, language, and anthropology.

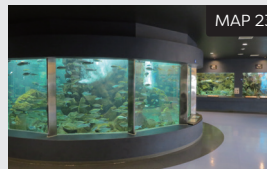
Kushimoto Marine Park



MAP 22

Kushimoto's waters are home to some of the world's northernmost stable coral communities. Tropical fish and corals can survive here because of the Kuroshio Current, which brings warm waters from the southern oceans. Kushimoto Marine Park includes a research centre, an aquarium, an undersea observation tower, and an underwater sightseeing boat.

Kyoto University Shirahama Aquarium



MAP 23

This aquarium showcases a selection of marine flora and fauna discovered off the Shirahama coast. Browse various exhibits ranging from a tank of sharks to hundreds of invertebrates, including species rarely displayed in other aquariums. Other exhibits highlight diverse marine habitats from tidal flats to the ocean floor.

Taiji Whale Museum



MAP 24

Visitors to this coastal museum can observe various whale and dolphin species up close in the outdoor pools. Exhibits inside the main building highlight the history and traditional culture in the Taiji area. The small aquarium displays a range of local marine life.

Washi paper lamp workshop



Create a colourful souvenir of your time in the laidback coastal town of Shirahama. Craft a rustic, signature lamp from local, naturally warped twigs and Japanese washi paper. The result is a stunning, simple piece. Reservations for this artistic workshop are not necessary but are preferred.

Heian period clothing experience



Wander a section of the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage route in authentic Heian period (794-1185) garb. The cultural experience occurs around the Daimon-zaka Slope area of the Kumano Kodo, the long cobblestone staircase that leads to Nachi Waterfall, Kumano Nachi Taisha Grand Shrine, and Nachisan Seiganto-ji Temple.

Aroma extraction experience



Capture the ancient Kumano Kodo atmosphere with a signature essential oil extracted from the plants that grow in the Kii Mountains. Transport yourself back to the beauty of the sacred Kumano Kodo pilgrimage trails, every time you savour your personally extracted aroma.



Find more activities here



Things to Do

History & Culture

Explore regional history and spiritual culture by visiting Wakayama's centuries-old shrines and temples, castle ruins, and historical hot springs towns. Discover foods with a distinctive local twist and witness vibrant festivals that celebrate Shinto deities through water and fire.



MAP 25



Asuka-jinja Shrine

Asuka-jinja Shrine is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and an ancient place of worship. It is located at the foot of Mt. Horai on the banks of the Kumano-gawa River. It is considered one of the most important sites of the Kumano faith, an ancient fusion of Shinto and Buddhism rooted in nature worship. Asuka-jinja venerates Mt. Horai, a mountain with a history of worship spanning two millennia. The shrine and mountain are on the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage route between Kumano Hayatama Taisha Grand Shrine and Kumano Nachi Taisha Grand Shrine, two of the faith's three grand shrines. The Chinese scholar Jofuku (Xu Fu) is enshrined here, at Asuka-jinja. Over 2,200 years ago, he was ordered by the Chinese emperor to sail east to discover the elixir of eternal life on Mt. Horai. He is celebrated locally for introducing new farming and fishing methods.

Oto Matsuri Festival



Every year on 6 February, the grounds of Kamikura-jinja Shrine are wreathed in flame as around 2,000 men, clad in white, charge down the shrine's steep stone staircase wielding flaming torches. The festival, which dates back over 1,000 years, has a reputation as one of the country's most vibrant fire festivals.

Mifune Matsuri Festival



Kumano Hayatama Taisha Grand Shrine, one of the three Kumano grand shrines, holds its annual Mifune Matsuri Festival on 16 October at the estuary of the Kumano-gawa River. During the festival, a portable shrine carrying the deity enshrined at Kumano Hayatama Taisha is transported to an ancient ritual site on a red ceremonial vessel.

Nachi-no-Ogi Matsuri (Nachi Fire Festival)



Daimon-zaka Slope, the cobblestone staircase that leads between Nachi Waterfall and Kumano Nachi Taisha Grand Shrine, is the stage for this annual festival that takes place on 14 July. During the event, men in traditional costumes carry large flaming torches down the steps to purify the route.

Sukuma-dani Kannon Temple

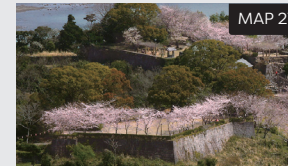
Sukuma-dani Kannon is a temple on top of a small mountain. It was established by En no Gyoja (634–706 CE), the founder of Shugendo, a folk religion based in mountain worship that involves ascetic practices. En no Gyoja and other practitioners abandoned village life to settle in a cave here, where they practiced Shugendo. En no Gyoja is believed to have lived in this cave for more than 30 years.

The temple was built around the mountain's rock formations, incorporating them into its structure. Although it has its roots in Shugendo, the temple is now Buddhist. Several Shinto shrines are also within the precinct. These remain from the Edo period (1603–1868) before Buddhism and



MAP 26

Shintoism were formally separated as part of nationwide reforms carried out during the Meiji era (1868–1912). The Buddhist deity Bato (Horse-Headed) Kannon is enshrined here. The Bato Kannon bodhisattva is considered a protector of animals and is also worshipped to ward off misfortune.



MAP 27

Shingu Castle Ruins

The ruins of Shingu Castle are located in a municipal park in Shingu. It is a popular picnic spot, especially during the cherry blossom season, from late March to early April. Little remains of the castle other than stone walls and steps. The castle that once stood here was constructed between 1619 and 1633.

Katsuura Onsen

Katsuura Bay has almost 200 hot springs, with water bubbling to the surface at 40 degrees Celsius. This bath-perfect temperature has made Katsuura a popular onsen town for generations. Ships from Osaka started docking at the port during the Meiji era (1868–1912), bringing crowds of visitors. The shipping line stopped operating in 1938, but the town's popularity has endured.



MAP 28

Jabara citrus

Jabara citrus is a seedless, natural hybrid between yuzu (*Citrus junos*) and kunenbo (*Citrus nobilis*). It was discovered in the village of Kitayama, Wakayama Prefecture. Jabara was registered as a new fruit variety in 1979 and, until recently, agricultural regulations stipulated that this was the only region that could produce the fruit, making it a highly localized specialty.



Inobuta

Inobuta is a local delicacy. The boar (inoshishi) and pig (buta) hybrid was bred at a local agricultural research centre. The meat is sold at local restaurants, farm shops, and festivals. Inobuta meat is savoury and has a rich fatty flavour, without the toughness of wild boar. It is served stewed, roasted, and sliced or grilled over charcoal.



Find more activities here



General Information

Wakayama is easily accessible from Japan's major cities, and a network of reliable public transport makes getting around within the prefecture simple. There are accommodations to suit all budgets, an abundance of natural hot springs, and many eateries serving authentic local cuisine.

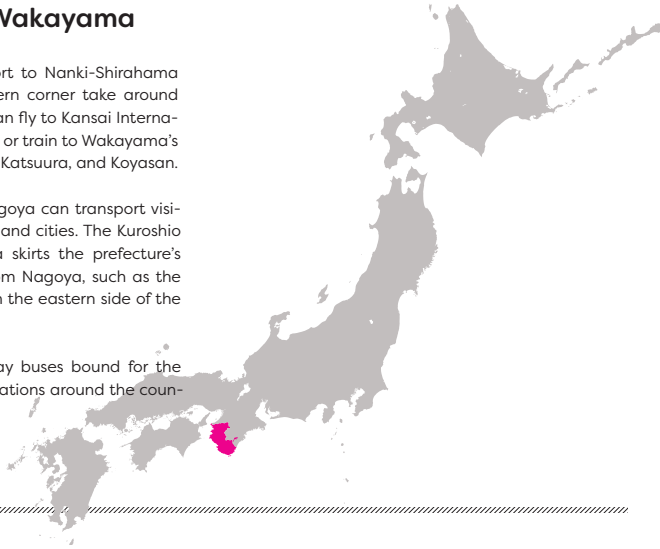


Getting to Wakayama

Flights from Tokyo's Haneda Airport to Nanki-Shirahama Airport in Wakayama's southwestern corner take around 90 minutes. Alternatively, visitors can fly to Kansai International Airport (KIX) and board a bus or train to Wakayama's major locations, such as Hongu, Kii-Katsuura, and Koyasan.

Express trains from Osaka and Nagoya can transport visitors to Wakayama's coastal towns and cities. The Kuroshio Limited Express train from Osaka skirts the prefecture's coast from west to east. Trains from Nagoya, such as the Nanki Limited Express, travel down the eastern side of the peninsula.

Daytime and overnight expressway buses bound for the Wakayama region depart from locations around the country.



Getting around

A network of bus services criss-crosses the peninsula, opening up its inland areas for exploration. Many multi-day travel passes are available for bus travel; research online or visit a tourist information centre to learn more. Visitors wishing to explore the area without relying on public transport timetables should consider renting a private vehicle. There are car rental options at most major locations.

Wakayama's coastal paths and mountain roads are ideal for cycling, and there are multiple options for bicycle rental. An 800-kilometre network of cycle paths, known as Wakayama 800, weaves through the region. Blue road markings denote cycle paths, and designated Cycle Stations along the routes are available for repairs or simply to take a break.



Where to stay

There is a variety of accommodation options within the Wakayama region, from Western-style hotels to traditional lodgings. For the most authentic experience, choose to stay at a traditional-style hot spring inn. They are generally located on the coast or deep in the mountains. Campsites are an alternative to hotels, and some of the region's sites are in prime locations for viewing the area's distinctive geology, including a site near the Ichimai-iwa Monolith.



Hot springs

Volcanic activity has not only shaped the Kumano landscape; it has created opportunities for relaxation. The natural hot spring water that flows underneath the Kumano terrain is piped into the tubs of the region's hot spring resorts. While some of the mineral-rich onsen baths are reserved for staying guests, there are plenty of options for day-bathers. There are hot spring areas on the coast, such as Shirahama and Katsuura, and in the mountains, such as Ryujin Onsen.



Shirahama Onsen



Katsuura Onsen



Eat & Drink

Wakayama's eateries offer opportunities to enjoy seasonal delicacies and regional twists on traditional cuisine. Many restaurants in the prefecture's port towns serve freshly caught seafood, while visitors to mountain locations are likely to find local game such as deer or wild boar on the menu. Local ramen styles and dishes accentuated with Wakayama-grown citrus like yuzu add to the gastronomic experience.



Wakayama Ramen



Mehari Zushi Rice Ball



Tuna Rice Bowl



Souvenirs

Visitors wishing to take home a memento of their stay in the Kumano region should head to one of the region's many souvenir outlets. Railway stations, Michi no Eki road-side stations, and designated souvenir shops offer a wide variety of local goods, including craft items and local snacks. These facilities often provide information for visitors, such as pamphlets detailing the local area.



Suzuyaki Cake



Kumano Aroma Oil



Yuzu Honey Juice



Usukawa Manju Dumpling



Whale Ornament



Kumano Whisky



Emergency Facilities

Wakayama has several English-speaking hospitals and medical centres that can serve the needs of non-Japanese-speaking visitors. In cases where urgent medical attention is required, dial 119 for ambulance, fire, or emergency rescue. To contact the police, dial 110.

Name	Phone	Address
Minami Wakayama Medical Center	0739-26-7050	27-1 Takinaicho, Tanabe
Shingu Municipal Medical Center	0735-31-3333	18-7 Hachibuse, Shingu
Shirahama Hamayu Hospital	0739-43-6200	1447 Shirahama, Nishimuro



◀ Japan Safe Travel Information



The official Wakayama Travel Guide ▶



Enjoying the park

The forested mountains and volcanic terrain of the geopark and national park are fun to explore. To ensure the safety and enjoyment of all visitors, we ask you to follow our regulations and advisories.

- 1 Dress appropriately and carry enough water for your journey.
- 2 Graffiti ruins the natural landscape for everyone—please don't do it.
- 3 Keep the natural environment clean and take all rubbish home with you.
- 4 Light fires only in areas designated safe to do so.
- 5 Bathrooms are not always available in the great outdoors, so make sure you know where they are before embarking on an outdoor adventure.
- 6 Stick to designated pathways.
- 7 Make sure wild animals stay wild—don't feed them if you encounter them.
- 8 All plants, rocks, and animals belong to the park. Leave them where they are.

When Cycling

Cycling is a great way to explore Wakayama's natural scenery. When taking to two wheels, be sure to abide by the rules of the road. Ride on the left side of the road and be careful of traffic. Make sure you are covered by adequate insurance in case of any accidents.



Flora & Fauna in the Parks



Visitors exploring the Nanki Kumano Geopark and Yoshino-Kumano National Park can discover a diverse range of flora and fauna on their travels. The region has a warm climate with plenty of rainfall—ideal conditions for a variety of plant, fungus, and animal species.

The coastal areas are dominated by evergreens, with black ridge oak (*ubamegashi*; *Quercus phillyraeoides*) and Japanese cheesewoods (*tobera*; *Pittosporum tobira*) growing in the forests. Keen-eyed visitors may discover luminous fungus in these areas. Many deciduous trees thrive in the mountain forests, and visitors to these locations are likely to find beech trees and several endemic varieties such as Kinokuni-suzukake (*Veronicastrum tagawae*).

The forests and marshlands provide a habitat for rare wildlife. Listen for the trills of Styan's grasshopper warblers in the woods and look for eastern bent-wing bats, for which the area is a large breeding ground. The Japanese serow, a large goat-antelope endemic to Japan, lives in the dense Kumano forests. Giant mottled eels thrive in the Nanki Kumano marshes.

Both subtropical and temperate-zone marine life can be found off the coast. Large coral communities thrive in the warm, nutrient-rich coastal waters and, on occasion, visitors can spot sperm and humpback whales. Loggerhead turtles that live in these waters come ashore to nest on the Kumano beaches.



Be Aware

Note that some wildlife can be dangerous if disturbed or antagonised. Bees, wasps, hornets, snakes, and centipedes live within the parks' boundaries. Carry a suitable cream or lotion in the case of bites or stings. Wild boar, monkeys, and deer also live in the Kumano mountains. While they are likely to flee in the presence of humans, be aware that unexpected encounters may aggravate them.



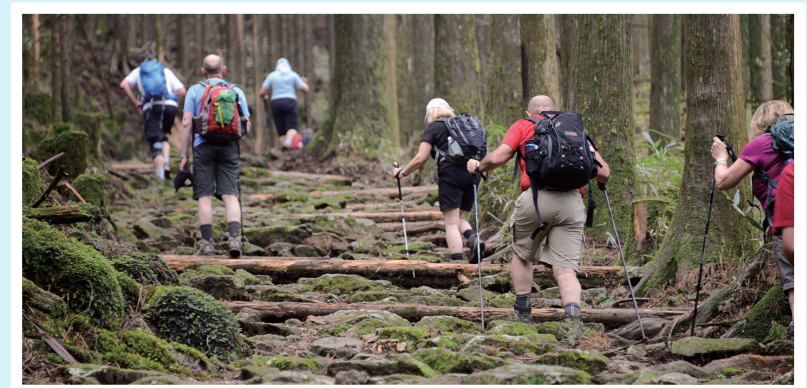
Disaster Prevention

Volcanic activity has shaped the otherworldly rock formations in the geopark and heats the rejuvenating hot spring water that fills the area's onsen resorts. However, these destructive forces of nature must be respected, and preparations in the event of a disaster must be taken seriously. Over the centuries, the coastal areas have succumbed to powerful tsunamis and earthquakes, and typhoons have caused landslides and flooding across the region.

The local community continues to work on a range of preventative measures, such as diverting rivers away from towns and farmland, improving evacuation facilities, and shoring up the base of mountains in the case of falling rocks and landslides. Visitors to Kumano should be aware of the potential hazards and plan accordingly.

Safety Tips

- Don't panic in the event of an earthquake
- If a tsunami warning is issued, head to higher ground
- If a typhoon is approaching, avoid going outside
- Know the location of evacuation facilities in the area where you are exploring
- Carry water and food in the case of an emergency
- Inform your accommodation of your hiking plan before leaving
- Consider downloading the Safety Tips app from the Japan Tourism Agency (jnto.go.jp/safety-tips/eng/app.html)



Have any thoughts or tips you'd like to share?

Share your experiences in the Nanki Kumano Geopark and Yoshino-Kumano National Park. Add your thoughts, feelings, and recommendations to help all visitors have an enjoyable time in the parks.

