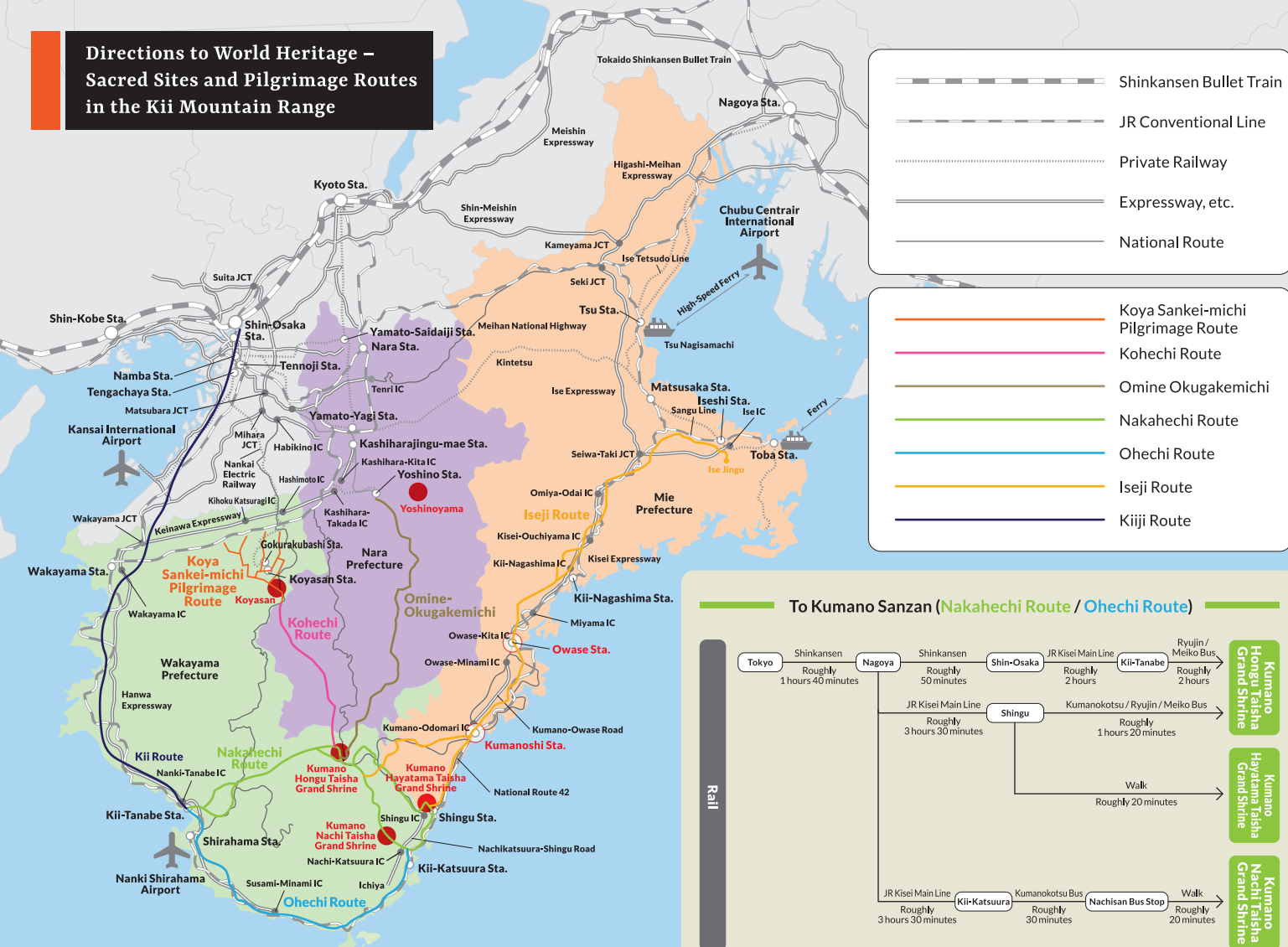


Directions to World Heritage – Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range



「紀伊山地の霊場と参詣道」
世界遺産登録15周年

To the sanctuary where
the magnificent stories are still alive.

World Heritage Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range

Magose-toge Pass (Kumano Kodo Iseji Route)



Yoshinoyama (Photo courtesy of Yoshino Visitors Bureau)

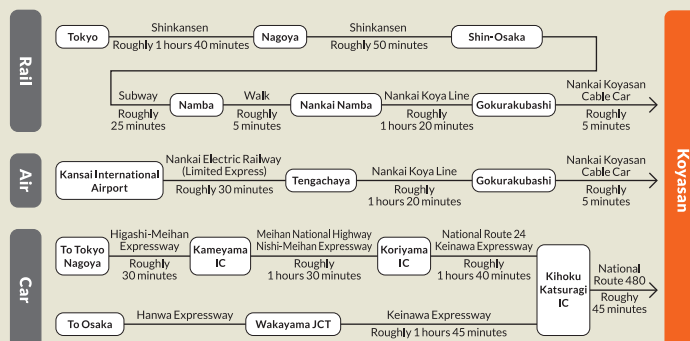


Nachi Waterfall



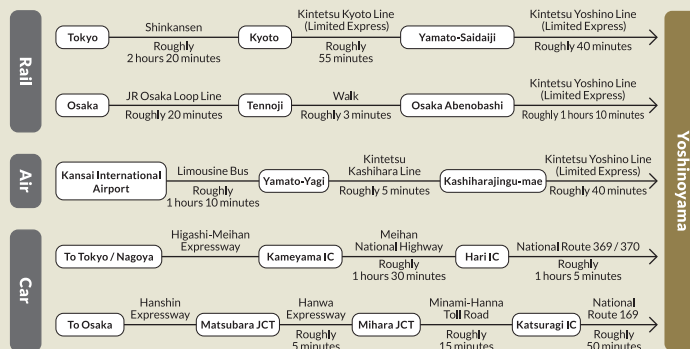
Shishi-iwa (Lion Rock) and
the Kumano Fireworks Festival

To Koyasan (Kohechi Route / Koya Sankei-michi Pilgrimage Route)



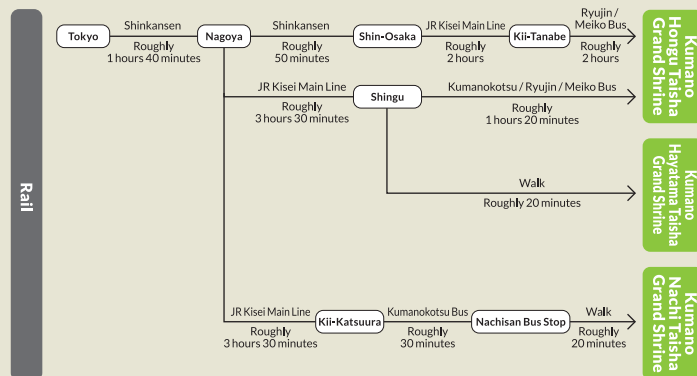
Koyasan

To Mt. Yoshino (Omine Okugakemichi)



Yoshinoyama

To Kumano Sanzan (Nakahechi Route / Ohechi Route)

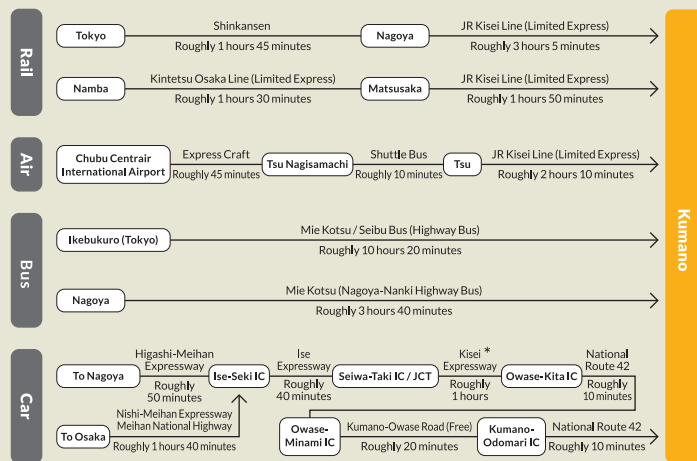


Rail

Air

Car

To Owase / Kumano (Iseji Route)



Rail

Air

Bus

Car

Kumano

*This brochure details the World Heritage "Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range" and attractive tourist destinations in the surrounding area.

*Kisei Expressway free from Kii-Nagashima IC through Owase-Kita IC

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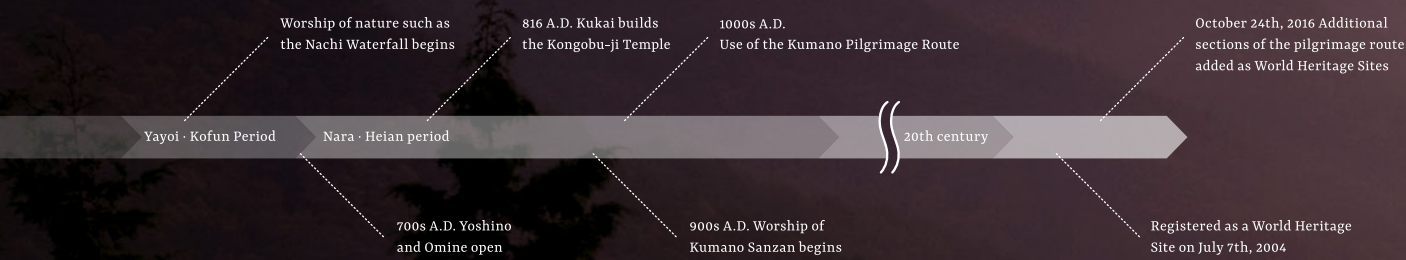


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World Heritage 15th ANNIVERSARY

Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range, a land woven from nature and time. These mountains are a tapestry of threads drawn from ancient times, forming an expansive heritage common to all humankind.

Thought to be a sacred area where Gods reside, the Kii Mountain Range spanning Japan's Mie, Nara, and Wakayama prefectures has been the site of mountain ascetic practices since ancient times. In the past, drawn in by its divine power, former emperors and empresses, aristocrats, and common people have visited the shrine alike. Standing in a mysterious landscape and filled with the spirit of life from deep within the forests, the destinations "Yoshino and Omine" "Kumano Sanzan" and "Koyasan" were common among all pilgrims on their "Pilgrimage Routes." To this day, the pilgrimage attracts people who wish to become closer to the gods and Buddha, to whatever degree they may achieve. A product of human life working on nature over time to form a unique history that endures to the present day, the "Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range" seemingly transcend time and space.



The Kii Mountain Range was the birthplace of pantheistic nature worship in ancient Japan, and its mountain peaks have long been home to Japanese mountain asceticism. Many believe the region was deified in this manner due to its unique geography in which towering mountains meet the sea, or due to the awe-inspiring, forbidding vistas of its recurring mountains. These three sacred places, each formed against a background of nature worship deeply rooted in the unique landscape, climate, and natural world, and this pilgrimage route^{*1} which ties them together were labeled as a "Cultural Landscape"^{*2} World Heritage Site in 2004.

^{*1} Sections of the pilgrimage route have been included for world heritage site nomination, but not the full length of their expanses.

^{*2} Cultural Landscapes, as defined by "The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention," are places illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal.



^{*} Kumano Pilgrimage Route (Kumano Kodo) is a generic term for pilgrimage roads leading to Kumano Sanzan (Kumano Hongu Taisha Grand Shrine, Kumano Hayatama Taisha Grand Shrine, Kumano Nachi Taisha Grand Shrine, Nachisan Seiganto-ji Temple, Fudarakusan-ji Temple)



Gyuba-doji Statue
(Kumano Kodo Nakahechi Route)



Shichiri-mihama Beach from the Matsumoto-toge Pass
(Kumano Kodo Iseji Route)



Sea of Clouds (Nosegawa Village)
(Kumano Kodo Ohechi Route)



Nyonin-do Hall
(Kumano Kodo Nakahechi Route)



Kannon-michi Pass Route
(Kumano Kodo Iseji Route)



Nishi-no-Nozoki
(Omine Okugakemichi)

Everything Is Sacred: Spiritual Power Spot Experiences

Wakayama Prefecture Area Spots Nara Prefecture Area Spots Mie Prefecture Area Spots

Within the Kii Mountain Range, mountains spread in all directions and soar to heights between 1000 and 2000 meters, while plentiful rainfall exceeding 3000 mm each year nurtures forests with pristine rivers and luxuriant greenery. Such landscapes certainly provide an ideal domain for coming face to face with the gods, nature, and one's self. Even in the present day, one can still sense why the former practitioners of mountain asceticism chose this place as a sacred site. Yoshinoyama, Omimesan, Kumano Sanzan, Koyasan all have many places of note. Yoshino and Omine is located in the Nara's Yoshino District, with the space between Mt. Sanjogatake and Yoshinoyama generally referred to as "Kimpusen." To this day, Yoshino and Omine is worshipped as a holy mountain for mountain asceticism. Located in northeastern Wakayama Prefecture, Koyasan is surrounded by the ridges of the inner and outer Hachiyo range, making it a genuine holy land in the clouds. Selected as a meditation site by the Buddhist monk and scholar Kukai, it is the holy site of the Koyasan sect of Shingon Buddhism. Even now, the mountaintop is a veritable religious settlement, with more than 100 temples in close concentration. Kumano

Hyakken-gura



This is the only point with a perfect view from the Kogumotori-goe Pass on the Kumano Kodo Nakahechi Route. Climb the steep stone stairway past gentle ridges and through a cedar grove. You'll know you've arrived when you can see the statue of the Bodhisattva Jizo. The location gives you a panoramic view of the staggering mountain behind Jizo. You won't want to miss the opportunity to capture the morning fog and evening light in a photograph.

Koya-zaka Slope



This slop is a section of gentle mountain pass road that remains on the Kodo route between Kumano Hayatama Taisha Grand Shrine and Kumano Nachi Taisha Grand Shrine. It has a view of the sea, a rarity on the Kumano Kodo Nakahechi Route. Take in the staggering breadth of the Ojigahama Coast from afar as you listen to the roar of the Kumano-nada Sea.

Niutsumihime-jinja Shrine



Located in a small basin surrounded by mountains on all sides, this shrine holds Niutsumihime-no-Mikoto as its primary deity. Granted by the great monk Kukai during the opening of Koyasan, this located is also connected with Koyasan and has been known as its tutelary shrine since ancient days. The main hall of worship's Toro-mon Gate is designated an Important Cultural Property.

Tenkawa Daibenzaiten-sha Shrine



One of Japan's three greatest holy sites dedicated to Benzaiten (a syncretic Buddhist and Shinto goddess of concepts that flow) after Itsukushima and Chikubu Island. Renowned for its tutelary deity's connection to the arts, it is also popular as a spiritual power spot. The statues of Benzaiten in the main hall of worship are not normally viewable by the public; the central statue is only unveiled during festivals and rituals, while the statue on the right is unveiled only once every 60 years.

Yoshimizu-jinja Shrine



This shrine began as the priests' temple quarters of Kimpusan-ji Temple, but that changed with the legal division between Shinto and Buddhist worship implemented at the start of the Meiji era. Afterwards, it became a shrine dedicated to Japan's ancient emperor, Go-Daigo, 14th century samurai, Kusunoki Masashige, and the Bodhisattva Soshin Hoin. The location has historical ties to Toyotomi Hideyoshi and other significant figures, and holds numerous cultural properties in its collection.

Doro-kyo Gorge



The massive ravine that is known as Doro-kyo Gorge runs through Nara, Wakayama, and Mie Prefectures, as well as Yoshino-Kumano National Park, and is itself a National Special Place of Scenic Beauty. It has been known for its beautiful scenery for hundreds of

Sanzan is home to the three shrines of "Kumano Hongu Taisha Grand Shrine," "Kumano Hayatama Taisha Grand Shrine," and "Kumano Nachi Taisha Grand Shrine," as well as the two temples "Nachisan Seiganto-ji Temple" and "Fudarakusan-ji Temple." Even now, it still shows shades of the syncretism of Shinto and Buddhism practiced in the olden days. The "Kumano Sankei-michi Pilgrimage Route" and "Koya Sankei-michi Pilgrimage Route" are among the roads that lead to these holy sites, and the "Omine Okugake-michi Pilgrimage Route" is an example of the "Shugendo" paths traveled by mountain ascetics. The Kumano Sankei-michi Pilgrimage Route is commonly known as the "Kumano Kodo," and its sub-routes – the "Nakahechi Route," Ohechi Route," "Kohechi Route," and "Iseji Route" connect their origin points to Kumano Sanzan. These routes have long been used as holy sites themselves: they are a product of nature, faith, and human effort that brought pilgrims to Kumano from all across Japan. "Holy Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range," a place where humans, Gods, and nature meet. We hope you enjoy this selection of Japan's best spiritual power spots.

Mitarai Valley



With its sparkling, emerald-green waters and waterfalls of all sizes, the Mitarai Valley is a scenic spot in Nara Prefecture's Tenkawa Village. Enjoy the seasonal scenery while taking a stroll on the footpath along the waters and its suspension bridges.

Yoshinoyama



Nara Prefecture's Yoshinoyama has been known as a great sight for cherry blossom viewing for ages, and the area is divided into Shimo-sembon, Naka-sembon, Kami-sembon, and Oku-sembon cherry blossom tree areas. It currently has 30,000 cherry trees and draws numerous patrons to view their blossoms in the spring.

Hana-no-Iwaya Shrine



Hana-no-Iwaya Shrine is located in Kumano City, and is the oldest shrine in Japan, even appearing in the "Nihon Shoki" ancient historical record. It primarily enshrines the deities Izanami-no-Mikoto and Kagutsuchi-no-Mikoto. It lacks the worship hall (building) that typical shrines feature, and venerates a 45-meter-tall massive rock (iwaya) as its object of worship. The shrine holds an "Otsunakake-shinji" ritual twice annually as its Rei-taisai Grand Festival. In this festival, the roughly 170-meter-long rope that marks the object of worship is transferred to a sacred tree on the shrine grounds. This ancient ritual has continued from time immemorial and still draws numerous visitors.

Kumano Fireworks Festival



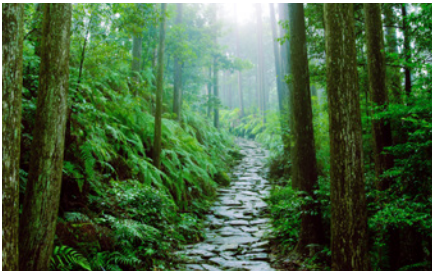
Held annually on August 17th on the Shichiri-mihama Beach coastline, this event paints the sky with about 10,000 colorful explosions from self-detonating fireworks on the water and fireworks setups from Oniga-jo Rock. It has a long history, with its origins said to go back to "Hatsubon" first obon following the death of a family member summer festival rituals.

Tsuzurato-toge Pass



This pass takes its name from the length of its sharp, zig-zag (or "tsuzura") slope. This is also the first point at which pilgrims traveling from Ise to Kumano would lay eyes on Kumano' s sea. It is popular both for the beauty of the stone paths and of the view it provides.

Magose-toge Pass



Although Owase boasts one of the heaviest annual rainfall levels even within rainy Japan, the natural stone paths have protected this path against erosion and continue onward into gorgeous Owase hinoki wooded areas. This site lets you enjoy the characteristic Kumano Kodo beauty and atmosphere.

Mt. Binshiyama



When traveling from Magose-toge Pass to Mt. Binshiyama, you will come upon a point on the way known as "the elephant's back." With an appearance similar to its namesake, unusual rock formations drop off at an angle on each side and present a remarkable view for thrilling photographs.



A Oyunohara

The massive, cut-and-placed stone altar previously used in a massive temple complex is still visible from when the 12 sites of Kumano Gongen Shrine were so closely clustered as to take damage from floods in 1889. Legends say the deity of Kumano took the form of three crescents and descended to an earthly Japanese yew tree here.



B Kamikura-jinja Shrine

This shrine is located atop the sheer precipices of Mt. Kamikurayama, where the God of Kumano is said to have descended to earth. The main object of worship enshrined here is a massive boulder known as Gotobiki-Iwa Rock. Accounts hold that this shrine is the "Ame-no-Iwatate" mentioned in the ancient "Nihon Shoki" historical record of Japan, and that the stairway from the foothills to Gotobiki-Iwa Rock was donated by historical leader Minamoto-no-Yoritomo.



C Nachi Waterfall

Mt. Nachisan is home to four mountain streams and a plethora of waterfalls known as the "Nachi 48 Falls." The Nachi Waterfall is one of these falls. It is the tallest waterfall in Japan at 133 meters in height, and the basin is a full 10 meters in depth. The massive, near-vertical falls are an awe-inspiring sight.

1 Kumano Hongu Taisha Grand Shrine



The general shrine for Kumano-jinja Shrines across Japan, it was relocated to its current position after flooding in 1889. The three worship hall towers that now stand over the shrine were the ones that could be saved from being washed away. A stone altar now stands at Oyunohara, revering the two towers that were lost. The three worship hall towers are designated Important Cultural Properties.

2 Kumano Hayatama Taisha Grand Shrine



Its beginnings lie in the year 128 CE, when a vivacious temple was first constructed to welcome the gods. It houses sacred national treasures over 1200 years old, some of them on display in the hall of sacred treasures. They say that ancient leader Taira-no-Shigemori planted the sacred tree, a Nagi conifer, on the grounds to celebrate the shrine's completion around the 12th century.

4 Nachisan Seiganto-ji Temple



This temple primarily reveres an image of the Bodhisattva of mercy, Kannon, that appeared in Nachi Waterfall, and was originally called "Nachi Nyorin-do Hall" as a Kannon temple. The current main temple hall was built by historical counselor Toyotomi Hideyoshi on orders from Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Visitors to the shrine grounds gain a view of both Nachi Waterfall and Nachi Primeval Forest, the site where Kumagusu Minakata conducted significant research on slime molds.

3 Kumano Nachi Taisha Grand Shrine



This shrine is located on the slopes of Mt. Nachisan and reveres 13 sites, including the 12 sites of Kumano Gongen Shrine and Takinomiya. Climb the steep stone stairway to the temple, and the vermilion shrine hall will rise to greet you. Also known as "Isamiya" or "connecting palace," it is revered for its influence over ties between people and all sorts of wishes. The stunning view out over Nachi Bay from the overlook point is a must-see.

5 Jison-in Temple



This temple was built at the foot of Koyasan during the Heian era, within a government office built to oversee Koyasan's construction and administration. Jison-in Temple was also the site of Kukai's mother's residence, and a personal mausoleum was constructed in her honor after her passing. The temple also enshrined Miroku-bosatsu or the Maitreya Buddha at the same time, drawing a large number of female pilgrims and earning it the nickname "NyoninKoya" or "Women's Koya."

6 Niukanshobu-jinja Shrine



Formerly the traditional shrine to the regional tutelary deity within the temple grounds for Kongobu-ji Head Temple's manorholding, Niukanshobu-so Shrine. In time, it adopted the same tutelary deity as Nutsuhime-jinja Shrine and is said to be the shrine established by Kukai himself. Enshrined at the entryway to the Koyasan Pilgrimage Route Choishi-michi at the plateau atop the 119 stone steps from Jison-in Temple, Koyasan can be worshipped from afar from within the temple grounds.

7 Dai-mon Gate



The general gate to the entirety of the mountain, located at the southwestern edge of Koyasan. At the time, it was said to begin from a torii shrine gate located a distance of about 500-600 meters or 5-6 Choishi stones down Tsuzuraori-dani Valley from its current location. It is said to have been converted to a gate like the present one in the mid-12th century, when two fierce Kongorikishi warrior statues were enshrined on each side.

8 Kongobu-ji Head Temple



The head temple for the Koyasan sect of Shingon Buddhism. It is home to numerous stunning sights, including one of the largest rock gardens in Japan, the "Banryu-tei Garden" . The name Kongobu-ji was originally bestowed by Kukai, and was originally intended to refer to all of Koyasan.

What is the Kumano Kodo?

The routes that pilgrims traveled to Kumano Sanzan form the "Kumano Kodo" , and were called the "Kiji" at the time. The route that proceeds up the western coast of the Kii Peninsula splits into the Nakahechi and Ohechi Routes at Tanabe. The Nakahechi Route is a difficult and mountainous journey, but passes by numerous high points like the Oji Ruins. It has always been heavily traveled by pilgrims, and was at times even called the "Kumano ant procession" for its heavy traffic. The route that continues along the seaside past Tanabe is known as the "Ohechi Route," and it offers magnificent views of the sea. The route that connects Koyasan with Kumano is known as the "Kohechi Route," and it presents a genuine trial for travelers as it passes over numerous thousand-meter-high mountain passes. The "Iseji Route" connects Ise with Kumano; it remains well-paved with flagstones from the Edo era, letting travelers experience the pilgrimage as it was in times of old.



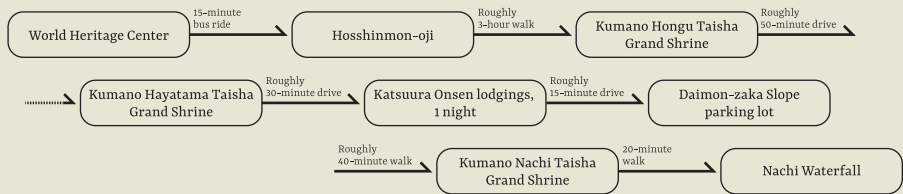
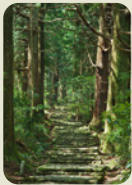
What is the Koya Sankei-michi Pilgrimage Route?

There are seven entrances into Koyasan, and all roads to Koyasan meet around those seven entrances. The "Koya Sankei-michi Choishi-michi Pilgrimage Route" was registered as World Heritage in 2004, with "Mitani-zaka Slope," "Kyo Osaka-michi Fudo-zaka Slope," the "Kuroko-michi Pilgrimage Route," and the "Nyonin-michi Pilgrimage Route" all additionally registered as World Heritage in 2016. The Choishi-michi Pilgrimage Route is a path said to have been forged by the revered monk Kukai and was the most heavily used route into the mountains during the ancient and medieval eras. Mitani-zaka Slope is a path that goes by Mitani in Katsuragi Town, Niusakadono-jinja Shrine, and Nutsuhime-jinja Shrine before joining with the Choishi-michi Pilgrimage Route. It is shorter than the Choishi-michi route, and has been in use since ancient times. The Kyo Osaka-michi Fudo-zaka Slope is a road toward Koyasan formed when three routes from Kyoto and Osaka converge at Kawachi-Nagano and pass through Hashimoto City. The Kuroko-michi Pilgrimage Route is believed to have been used by a large number of pilgrims from across Japan, and even historical ruler Hideyoshi himself. Meanwhile, the Nyonin-michi Pilgrimage Route connects the women' s guest halls that stood at each entry to Koyasan in the era when entry was prohibited to women. The route encircles the city. The Koya Sankei-michi Pilgrimage Route is a path that has connected pilgrims arriving from every direction as they sought out holy sites. Each route has its own legend, as does each pilgrim who traveled it.

Recommended Route

Kumano Kodo Nakahechi Route

This route takes you past popular destinations on the Sankei-michi and Nakahechi Routes. While offering a wide variety of scenery, it is a relatively gentle path from Hosshinmon-oji to Kumano Hongu Taisha Grand Shrine. It also takes you past Kumano Hayatama Taisha Grand Shrine, and to a night of rest at Katsuura Onsen. Finally, stroll through the cedar groves and stone stairways of the popular Daimon-zaka Slope, then make your way to Nachi Waterfall.



Local Cuisines



Shojin-ryori Buddhist Vegetarian Cuisine

Shojin-ryori is a type of vegetarian cuisine based on Buddhist dietary strictures. There are also restaurants available that serve classic Koyasan dishes like Koya-dofu dried tofu, kinzanji wasabi, and fresh, seasonal vegetables in casual and affordable settings.



Mehari-zushi

A traditional comfort food in the Kumano and Yoshino regions, mehari-zushi is made by wrapping a ball of barley and rice or plain rice in a takana leaf (a variety of mustard green). Some say the dish gets its name from the way you go wide-eyed (" mehari ") from deliciousness when eating it.

Local Specialties



Goma-dofu Sesame Tofu

A shojin-ryori vegetarian dish made by peeling and pulping sesame seeds before solidifying the mixture with a combination of water and kudzu starch. Savor the flavor at its most authentic at Koyasan.



Usukawa-manju Buns

The town of Kushimoto, Wakayama produces its signature usukawa-manju buns with a thin layer of white dough around refined, perfectly semi-sweet "an" red bean paste. They make the perfect souvenir item to bring back from your Kumano pilgrimage.

Recommended Onsen



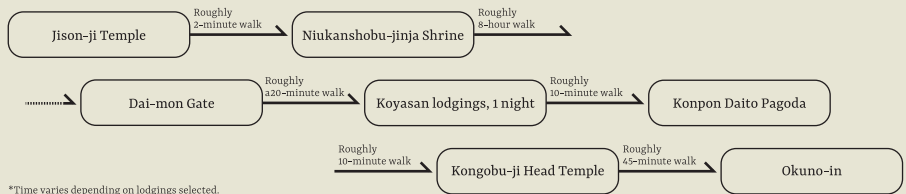
Kumano Hongu Onsen-kyo/ Katsuura Onsen / Shirahama Onsen

The Kii Peninsula is a geographical rarity – despite its lack of volcanoes, it has numerous onsen. It offers a plenitude of renowned hot spring baths, from the "Kumano Hongu Onsen-kyo" that soothed weary pilgrims in ancient times, to Katsuura Onsen, bubbling by the sea near Nachisan. That list even includes Shirahama Onsen, one of Japan' s three oldest.

Recommended Route

Koya Sankei Choishi-michi Pilgrimage Route

The "Koya Sankei Choishi-michi Pilgrimage Route" is a course of shrine visits stretching from Jison-in Temple to Okuno-in Temple. The "Choishi" from the name refers to stone pillars erected along the route as landmarks. The 180 choishi stones that stand along the route' s full 24 km length guide travelers on their journeys to holy sites.



*Time varies depending on lodgings selected.



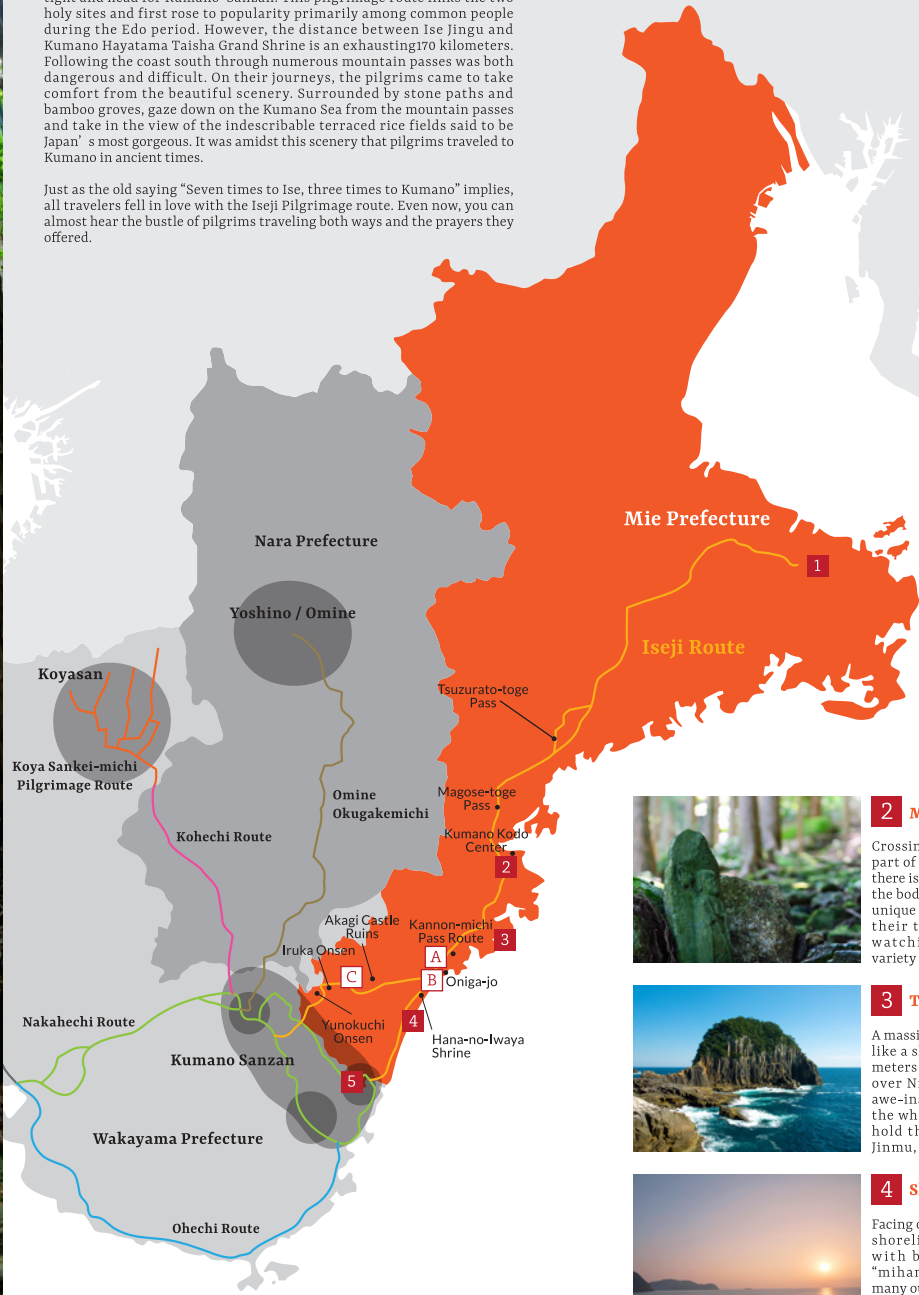
A Matsumoto-toge Pass

Connecting Odomari in Kumano City with Kinomoto, this pass soothes travelers with its magnificent bamboo groves and stone paths. There is a gazebo with a view of the surroundings located along the way, providing a view of Shichiri-mihama Beach, Japan's longest gravel beach.

What is the Iseji Route?

After finishing worship at Ise, travelers in the past would pull their cloaks tight and head for Kumano Sanzan. This pilgrimage route links the two holy sites and first rose to popularity primarily among common people during the Edo period. However, the distance between Ise Jingu and Kumano Hayatama Taisha Grand Shrine is an exhausting 170 kilometers. Following the coast south through numerous mountain passes was both dangerous and difficult. On their journeys, the pilgrims came to take comfort from the beautiful scenery. Surrounded by stone paths and bamboo groves, gaze down on the Kumano Sea from the mountain passes and take in the view of the indescribable terraced rice fields said to be Japan's most gorgeous. It was amidst this scenery that pilgrims traveled to Kumano in ancient times.

Just as the old saying "Seven times to Ise, three times to Kumano" implies, all travelers fell in love with the Iseji Pilgrimage route. Even now, you can almost hear the bustle of pilgrims traveling both ways and the prayers they offered.



1 Ise Jingu

Commonly called "O-Ise-san," this shrine is properly titled "Jingu" as an imperial-linked shrine. Broadly divided into an inner and outer shrine, Ise includes 125 auxiliary shrines. It has seen countless pilgrims from all across Japan since ancient times.



2 Mt. Yaki-yamajizo Statue

Crossing Mt. Yakiyama is a difficult part of the Iseji Route, and the road there is home to numerous statues of the bodhisattva Jizo. There are even unique Jizo statues that are sticking their tongues out, or otherwise watching over pilgrims with a variety of expressions on their faces.



3 Tategasaki

A massive rocky outcropping shaped like a shield ("tate") and almost 70 meters in height, Tategasaki looms over Nigishima-wan Bay. It is an awe-inspiring sight towering over the white-capped waves. Legends hold that Japan's first Emperor, Jinmu, arrived on earth here.



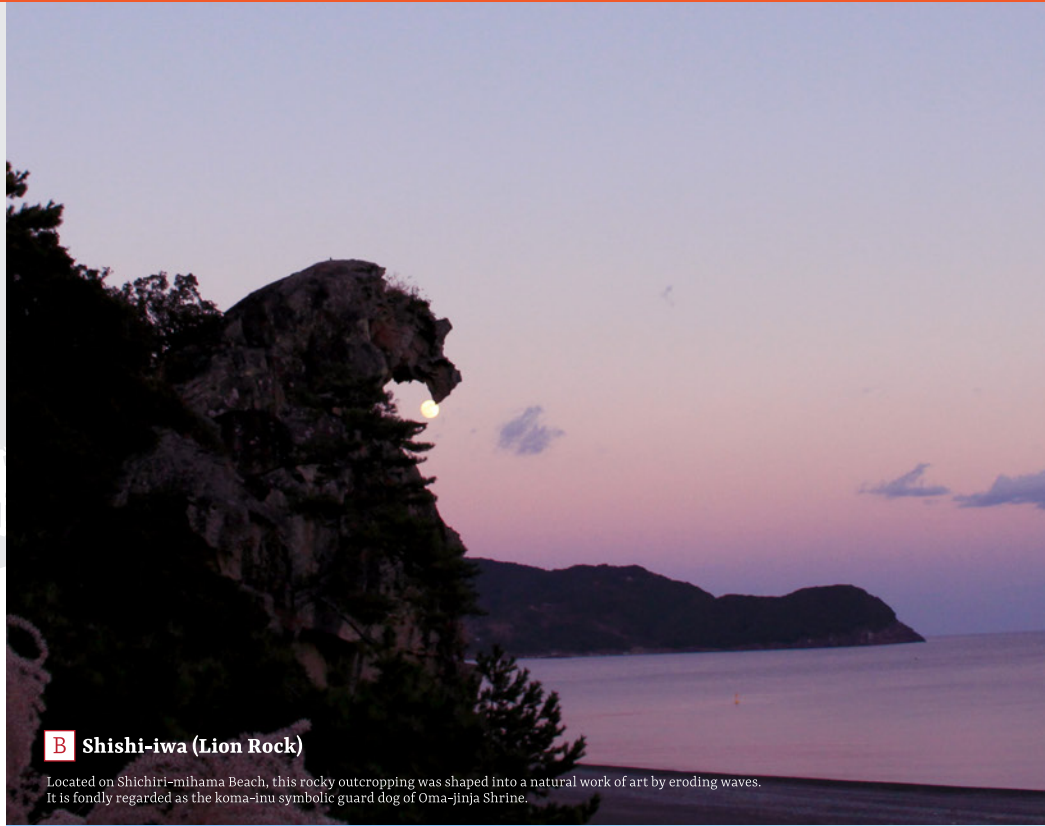
4 Shichiri-mihama Beach

Facing out onto the Kumano Sea, the shoreline in this area is covered with beautiful pebbles called "mihamakoishi." It also features many outstanding highlights such as the Oniga-jo and Shishi-iwa (Lion Rock). It is renowned as a site where loggerhead sea turtles come ashore.



5 Sandanbo Riverboat

A past method of transit on the Kumano-gawa River that was also known as the "River Pilgrimage Route," it has been registered as World Heritage. The Sandanbo allows you to experience river ferries as they existed in ancient times when they were a critical part of life, and carried pilgrims to their destinations.



B Shishi-iwa (Lion Rock)

Located on Shichiri-mihama Beach, this rocky outcropping was shaped into a natural work of art by eroding waves. It is fondly regarded as the koma-Inu symbolic guard dog of Oma-Jinja Shrine.



C Maruyama Senmaida Rice Terraces

The Maruyama Senmaida Rice Terraces are said to be the most beautiful in Japan, with endless rows of layered rice paddies built into the mountain's face. The local residents continuously maintain and preserve the 1,340 paddies.

Model Plan

Iseji Route 3 Days / 2 Nights Plan

This plan will take your mind back to the pilgrims of old, as they made their way from Ise Jingu to Kumano Hongu Taisha Grand Shrine. After first enjoying a visit to Ise at locations like Ise Jingu and Okage Yokocho, make your way to the Iseji Route. The scenery is typical of the Kumano Kodo Pilgrimage Route, with grand boulders and bamboo groves along the way along with breath-taking views of the majestic Kumano Sea from the mountain passes. Take the time to enjoy beautiful seaside vistas, gaze out on the most beautiful terraced rice fields in Japan, and savor the full experience of the Iseji Route pilgrimage.

Day 1

Ise Jingu

Okage Yokocho

Hajikami Terrace

Magose-toge Pass Walk

Lodgings inside Kihokuchō town or Owase City

Day 2

Owase Fish Market Visit

Visit the market where a huge assortment of different fish, ranging from tuna to skipjack, are caught and sold! There is also a morning market that may be held.



Kumano Kodo Center

The perfect place to learn, it holds displays related to the Kumano Kodo Pilgrimage Route and its region's history, environment, and culture.



Day 3

Yumekodo Owase

Oniga-jo

A roughly 1-kilo meter walking course along the Kumano Sea. Take a stroll down a corridor of mysteriously-shaped massive stones formed by nature.



Matsumoto-toge Pass Walk

Shishi-iwa (Lion Rock) Shichiri-mihama Beach

Hana-no-Iwaya Shrine Otsuna Chaya

Lodging in Kumano City

Akagi Castle Ruins

Akagi Castle was a creation of master castle-builder Takatora Todo, in the hirayama-jiro (castle on a hill amid plains) style. The ruins are particularly beautiful in the pre-dawn light. Also popularly known as a castle in the clouds.



Yunokuchi Onsen, Iruka Onsen

Kumano Hongu Taisha Grand Shrine

Local Cuisines



Shrimp and Prawn Assortment

With its recurring, intricate rias coastline and waters fed by the Kuroshio (Japan) Current, the Kumano Sea is a perfect fishing area. Trawlers bring freshly-caught spiny lobster, fan lobster, squat lobster, and more from the coastal waters for you to enjoy.



Kumano Kodo Yakuso Herbal Bento Lunch / Sanma Sushi

We recommend local cuisine for your lunches while hiking on the Kumano Kodo, such as herbal bento lunches packed with nutrition from the mountains and the sea, or sanma (Pacific saury) sushi.



Watari-kaki Oysters

Raised in brackish lake water, watari-kaki oysters are distinct in their sweet flavor and lack of unpleasant aftertaste. They're delicious both raw and cooked, although we do recommend them with olive oil.

Local Specialties



Owase Wappa Bento Boxes

Owase Wappa boxes are hand-made using excellent Owase cypress. You can feel the warmth and affection in this traditionally-crafted masterpiece.



Nachi Guroishi Stones

Nachi Guroishi Stones can only be found in Kumano City, and they are popular in accessories like earrings, pendants, and similar items. They also make great inkstones, or board game pieces for the game Go.



Ichigi Cotton

Ichigi cotton is so soft and readily breathable that it can easily be woven into threads so fine they break when pulled. Popular as a material for cushions, azuma-bukuro folded tote bags, book covers, charms, and more.