

Nature, Culture, Industry

Iseshima: Sacred Land Blessed by the Sea

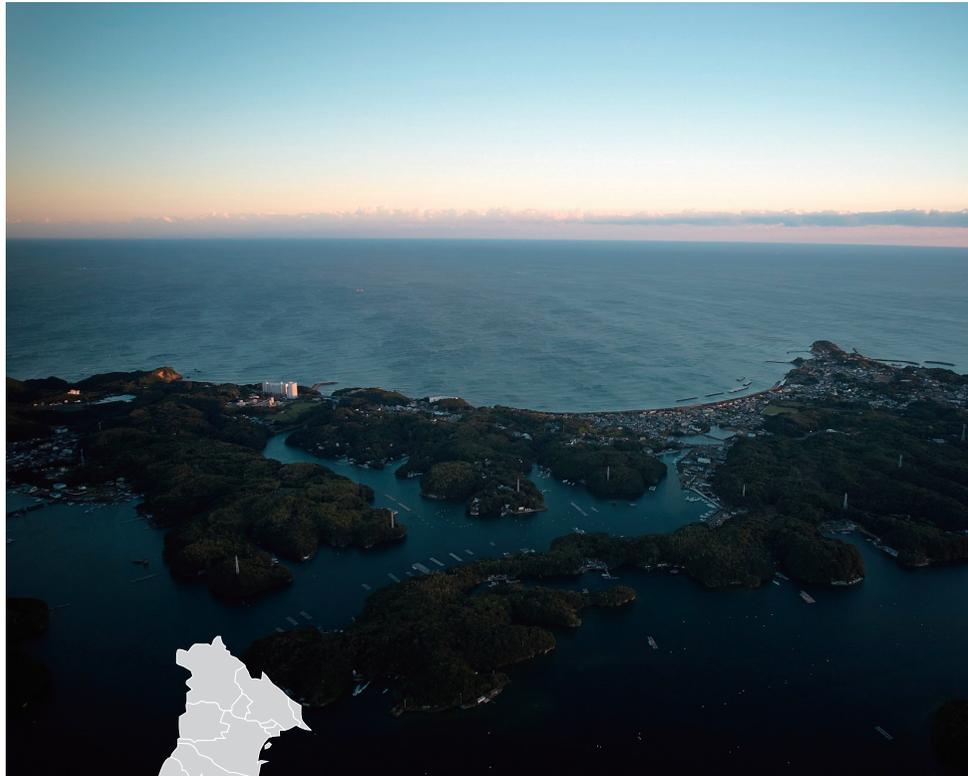
伊勢志摩

ISESHIMA

公益社団法人
伊勢志摩観光コンベンション機構
"Visit ISESHIMA" Bureau



History & Tradition, Manifest: The Allure of Iseshima

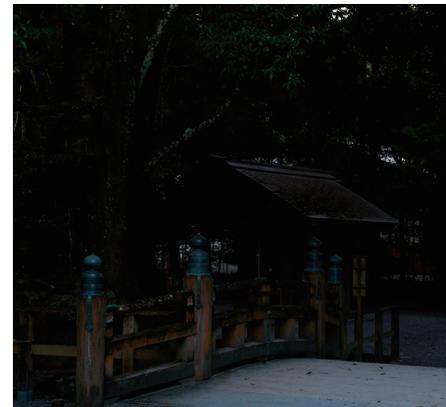


Iseshima is a region located in the southern part of Mie Prefecture that is overflowing with appeal, including historically and culturally fascinating sightseeing destinations like Ise Jingu, lush nature, beautiful coastlines, and so much more. Also designated as a national park, the area is home to a robust ecosystem and a pristine natural landscape. Here, nature and faith are deeply intertwined, and a rich cultural landscape contingent on the coexistence of humankind and nature has shaped sustainable practices relevant to the modern age, resulting in an atmosphere that is at once both nostalgic and innovative.

It was established over 2,000 years ago, Ise Jingu enshrines the central Shinto deities or kami known as Amaterasu Ōmikami and Toyouke-Ōmikami, making it the most sacred site in all of Japan. The massive plot of land encompassed in the two main shrines of Ise Jingu, Naiku (inner shrine) and Geku (outer shrine), contains immaculate nature capable of calming mind, body, and soul of its visitors. After paying respects to the kami at Ise Jingu, it is popular to visit the adjacent mercantile districts "Oharai Machi" and "Okage Yokocho." The many shops that line their streets are modeled after Edo and Meiji period architecture and offer confectioneries and local cuisine like Ise-Udon, creating a charming yet sophisticated atmosphere for Shrine-goers.



Ama fishing as the prosperity of the local maritime industry. Without the use of modern equipment, these free-diving women scavenge for catches like abalone and turban shells, etc..., utilizing traditional fishing techniques in the modern age, and handing them down to the next generation. In Toba and Shima, the so-called "Ama Hut Experience" offers guests the chance to interact with these women of the sea, as well as feast on seafood freshly caught and grilled by the Ama themselves in an authentic, intimate setting. The very same region is also the birthplace of cultured pearls, and at Mikimoto Pearl Island, guests can dive into the history of the pearl industry and the technology that goes into their production. On the other hand, The region has places where tourists try "pearl picking".



The Iseshima region is brimming with charm that encapsulates the beauty of Japan's history, culture, and nature all in one. It is cherished by domestic travelers as a place that captures the heart and soul of their home country through sightseeing, gastronomy, and relaxation.

The Nature of Ise-shima



Iseshima National Park

More than just its beautiful nature-enveloped coastlines, the Iseshima National Park is coexistent home to a regional and cultural history centered around Ise Jingu and human life. For example, local traditional industries like ama diving and cultured pearls. It's one of the most precious places in Japan for visitors from all over to reset amidst verdant nature and discover captivating culture.

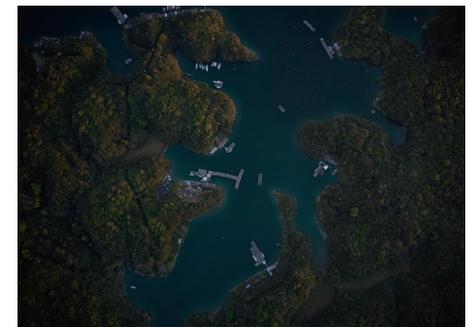
Rias Coastlines

The uniquely-shaped coastlines of the Shima Peninsula located in the southern part of Mie are one of the most distinct natural features of the Iseshima region. The Ago Bay, with its countless islets and deeply indented coastlines, offers one of the most breathtaking views in Iseshima National Park. The complexity of the bay has blessed both the tourism and fishing industries for its stunning scenery and

rich marine ecosystem. Yokoyama Observatory offers a bird's eye view of the entire bay where visitors can enjoy the juxtaposition of the blue sea with the lush green peninsula, and visiting at dusk or dawn only enhances the experience. There are even multiple resort hotels that offer a more secluded view of the bay.

Marine Resource Conservation

Blessed with the plentiful marine products of its rias coasts, Ise-shima is ripe for cultivating oysters, pearls, and abalone, however special care is given to ensure fishing practices are sustainable and the natural environment is protected. From fishing management to environmental conservation in pearl cultivation and the preservation of Ama diving culture, the wisdom of locals whose livelihood depends on a delicate balance of give and take with nature is central to the type of environmental conservation that is being incorporated into the tourism and industry of Ise-shima.



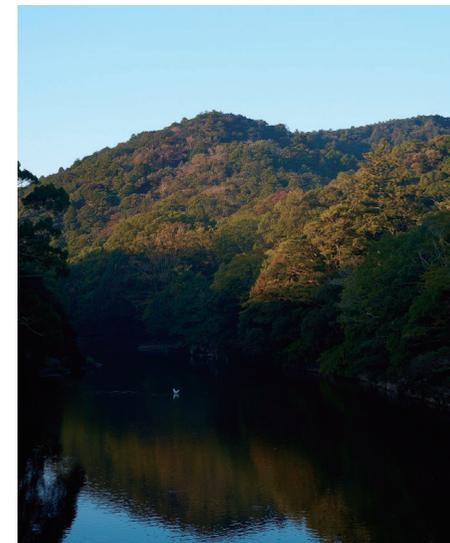


Ise Jingu

Ise Jingu, colloquially known as the proverbial home of the heart for Japanese people, contains two central shrines. The inner shrine Naiku enshrines the female kami of the sun, Amaterasu-Ōmikami, while the outer shrine Geku enshrines the female kami of agriculture, food, and industry, Toyouke-Ōmikami. While typically people pray for worldly things like love or academic success at most shrines in Japan, shrine visits to Ise-Jingu are meant for expressing gratitude in one's daily life or wishing for harmony for all.

Shikinen-Sengū

Every 20 years, the shrines, treasures, and shrine garb of Ise Jingu is remade completely from scratch in a ritual known as Shikinen-Sengū. The tradition, passed down for over 1,300 years, serves to purify the shrines of Jingu and symbolizes a sort of rebirth. The historically and culturally significant traditional techniques of skilled shrine carpenters are also passed down to the next generation during this momentous occasion. Because natural harmony is a fundamental principle of Shintoism, the wood from the dismantled shrine is reused in the construction of the torii shrine gates on either end of Uji Bridge at Naiku's entrance, as well as in the reconstruction and purification of other shrines throughout Japan. In this way, a single piece of wood will spend decades undergoing different applications and assuming different roles in its lifetime, intersecting with and subtly impacting the lives of generations of people. Additionally, the "Jingu Forest Management Plan" has been in place since 1923 when it was formulated in anticipation of future Shikinen-Sengū to produce a sustainable and self-sufficient amount of durable hinoki cypress timber that lasts 200 years.



The Ripple Effect of Iseshima Culture

The core components of Iseshima culture, uniquely Japanese traditions like the Shinto faith, ama fishing techniques, and local handicrafts, have begun to spread domestically and abroad. Ancient environmentally-conscious practices of the region have translated into modern-day ecotourism, and have even inspired architectural styles and local gastronomy.

The Industries of Iseshima



A Thriving Marine Industry

The local heritage of Ama fishing has been passed down generation after generation. Free-diving to catch abalone, turban shells, seaweed and more is a tradition that traces back thousands of years in Japan and is deeply ingrained in the local culture of Iseshima. In fact, Ama diving practices are conscious of the environment and limited marine resources, as the Ama are careful not to overfish and follow strict seasonal guidelines for each species they catch. We have these sustainable efforts to thank for the variety of marine products in circulation in the region just waiting to whet the appetites of travelers.



Cultured Pearls

Iseshima is also where the founder of the world-famous Mikimoto brand, Kokichi Mikimoto, became the world's first person to successfully cultivate pearls. The internationally-acclaimed cultured pearls of Iseshima developed from a combination of a vibrant natural environment and advanced cultivation techniques. With the perfect ocean temperature and an abundance of nutrients, Ago Bay provided the ideal conditions for pearl production. Today, the iconic pearl farming rafts afloat in Ago Bay create a landscape unlike any other. The world-class akoya oyster pearls of Iseshima are a gift born from the region's blessed natural environment and human ingenuity, and they represent not only the region's industry, but also its history, culture, and conservation efforts. Actually, Ama diver is known as a pearl diver around the world. In fact, local Ama divers support the work at the beginning of history for the cultivation pearls. However, mainly Ama divers focus on harvesting clams and seaweeds, other seafoods. Also, this is the one of the reason why Mr. Kokichi Mikimoto succeeded is that Iseshima has had Ama culture.



REMARE Co., Ltd. is a company involved in the entire process of resin recycling, from marine plastic collection to product development. Intent on solving the nationwide issue of used fishing equipment, which accounts for 60% of Japan's marine plastic waste, REMARE has partnered with fishermen all over Japan to reduce CO2 emissions by recycling waste plastic that would have been incinerated otherwise.

REMARE Co., Ltd.



CULTIVERA Co., Ltd. is a company that works on developing environmentally adaptive farming technology. After extensive research, they became the first business to successfully cultivate vegetables with "seawater farming." Their next lofty initiative is aimed at unlocking the true potential of the ocean by developing cutting-edge technology required for "maritime agriculture" as a means of solving social issues like global warming and the global refugee crisis.

CULTIVERA Co., Ltd.

Getting to Iseshima

Japan

Japan is a fascinating country where ancient tradition and cutting-edge technology coexist. Historical architecture on a backdrop of beautiful seasonal landscapes, from cherry blossoms in spring to maple leaves in autumn.

Matsusaka

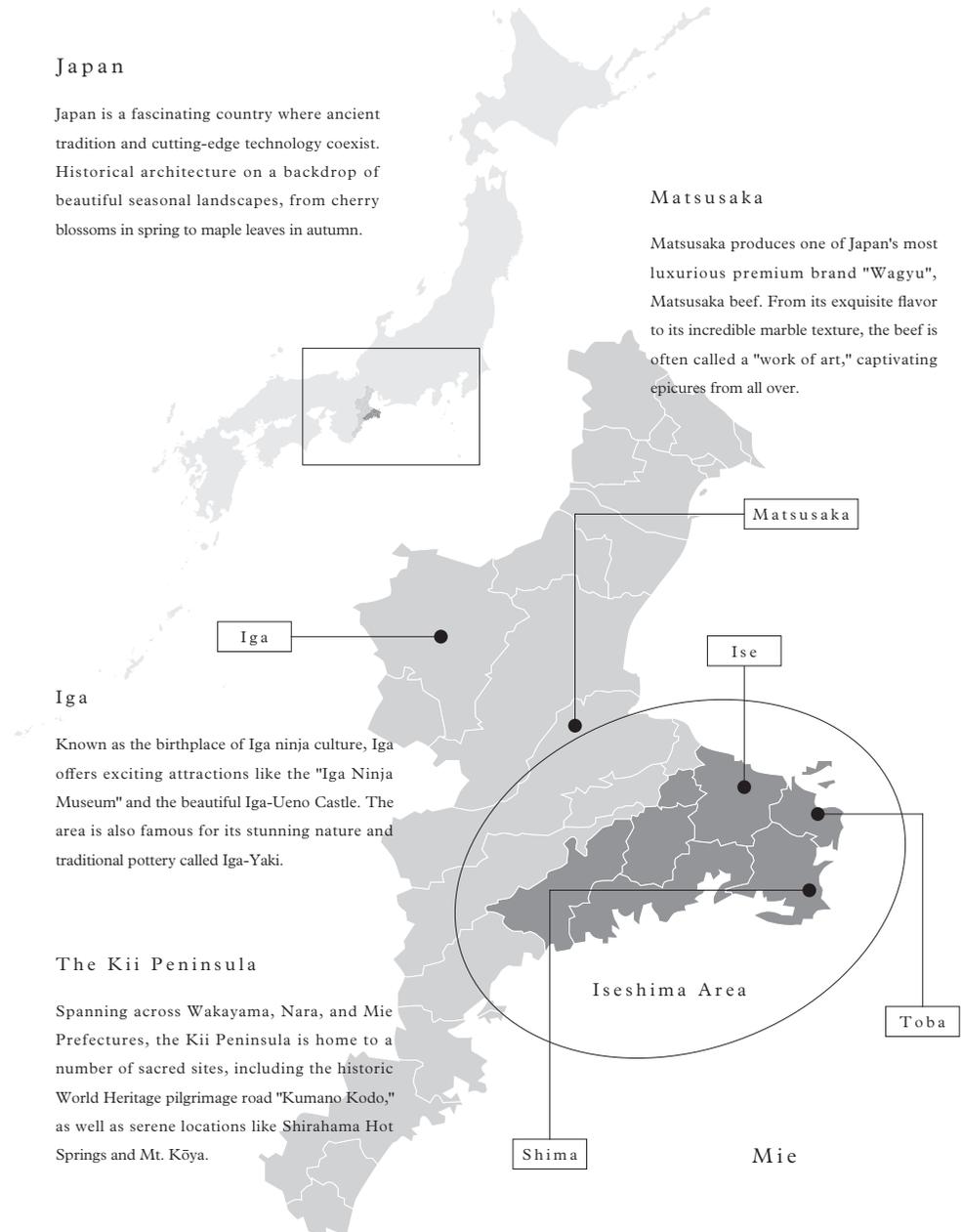
Matsusaka produces one of Japan's most luxurious premium brand "Wagyu", Matsusaka beef. From its exquisite flavor to its incredible marble texture, the beef is often called a "work of art," captivating epicures from all over.

Iga

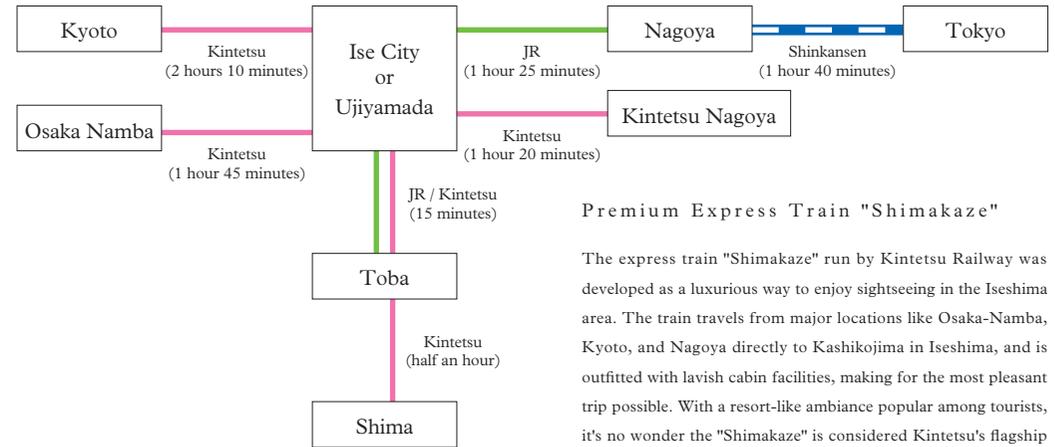
Known as the birthplace of Iga ninja culture, Iga offers exciting attractions like the "Iga Ninja Museum" and the beautiful Iga-Ueno Castle. The area is also famous for its stunning nature and traditional pottery called Iga-Yaki.

The Kii Peninsula

Spanning across Wakayama, Nara, and Mie Prefectures, the Kii Peninsula is home to a number of sacred sites, including the historic World Heritage pilgrimage road "Kumano Kodo," as well as serene locations like Shirahama Hot Springs and Mt. Kōya.



When using the Shinkansen (Nozomi) or Kintetsu (Limited Express)



Premium Express Train "Shimakaze"

The express train "Shimakaze" run by Kintetsu Railway was developed as a luxurious way to enjoy sightseeing in the Iseshima area. The train travels from major locations like Osaka-Namba, Kyoto, and Nagoya directly to Kashikojima in Iseshima, and is outfitted with lavish cabin facilities, making for the most pleasant trip possible. With a resort-like ambiance popular among tourists, it's no wonder the "Shimakaze" is considered Kintetsu's flagship express train.

