

Let's learn! Let's explore!

石見銀山

Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine

World Heritage Site

Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape

SILVER

A bat who lives
in Iwami Ginzan

I'll guide you
through the mine!

Join us and learn
about Iwami Ginzan
Silver Mine!!

GINNA

SŌMA

What is a "World Heritage Site"?

I often hear about "World Heritage Sites," but I'm not sure what they are.

A world heritage?

A World Heritage Site is a precious *cultural property or nature that everyone in the world promises to protect forever.

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

The World Heritage Committee has inscribed

Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine on the World Heritage List

Inscription on this List confirms the exceptional and universal value of a cultural or natural site which requires protection for the benefit of all humanity

DATE OF INSCRIPTION: July 2007

MINISTER GENERAL OF TOURISM

World Heritage Site Certificate (Iwami Ginzan)

So it belongs to everyone in the world. We have to look after it!

I see, so Iwami Ginzan is also a World Heritage Site.

Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine became the 14th World Heritage Site in Japan. It's the first "mine site" in Asia to become a World Heritage Site.

The famous Egyptian pyramids are also a World Heritage Site.*

Japan's World Heritage Sites

As of July 2019



Buddhist Monuments in the Horyu-ji Area [1993]



Hiroshima Peace Memorial (Genbaku Dome) [1996]



Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape [2007]



Himeji-jo [1993]



Itsukushima Shinto Shrine [1996]



Shiretoko [2005]



Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding and Coal Mining [2015]



Shirakami-Sanchi [1993]



Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara [1998]



Ogasawara Islands [2011]



The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier, an Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement [2016]



Yakushima [1993]



Shrines and Temples of Nikko [1999]



Hiraizumi - Temples, Gardens and Archaeological Sites Representing the Buddhist Pure Land [2011]



Sacred Island of Okinoshima and Associated Sites in the Munakata Region [2017]



Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto (Kyoto, Uji and Otsu Cities) [1994]



Gusuku Sites and Related Properties of the Kingdom of Ryukyu [2000]



Fujisan, sacred place and source of artistic inspiration [2013]



Hidden Christian Sites in the Nagasaki Region [2018]



Historic Villages of Shirakawa-go and Gokayama [1995]



Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range [2004]



Tomioka Silk Mill and Related Sites [2014]



Moze-Furuichi Kofun Group: Mounded Tombs of Ancient Japan [2019]

What did people do at Iwami Ginzan?

Silver, you said Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine is a "mine site"...

But what exactly is a mine?

A mine is a place where people dig out things like gold, silver, bronze, and coal.

At Iwami Ginzan, they used to dig out silver.

Tools for extracting silver

This is a picture of the mine in action.

A miner called a "kanahori"

①Digging

The "kanahori" would dig for silver ore in a pitch-black mine shaft.

②Crushing

The silver ore was placed on a cornerstone and crushed using a hammer.

③Sifting

It was then placed in water and shaken to separate the silver.

④Separating

Lead was added to the silver ore and the mixture was melted, separating the silver.

"Otoriosame-chogin" oval-shaped coin

The miners used a method called "cupellation"※ to extract the silver from the crushed silver ore.

*Kamiya Iutei

I introduced cupellation to the mine. Spreading from Iwami Ginzan to all over Japan, the country was now able to extract large amounts of silver.

※Cupellation : a type of refining process

Vocabulary *Kamiya Iutei: A merchant from Hakata. It is said that he found the silver mine

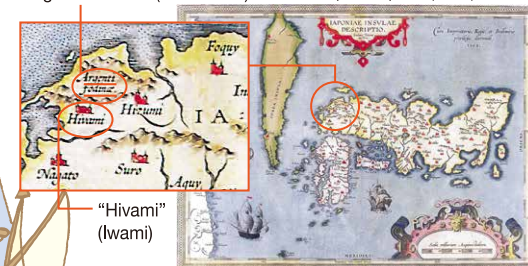
Iwami Ginzan was famous because you could extract lots of high-quality silver.

European Age of Discovery

Around 400 years ago...

"Argenti fodinae" (Silver Mine)

"Map of Japan" (1595) Teixeira



It was so famous that at the time, "Iwami Ginzan" was always on maps made by the Portuguese who came to Japan looking for silver.

*Francis Xavier

In a letter, Saint Francis Xavier once wrote that "the Spanish call Japan the 'Silver Island.'"



"Minas de plata" (Silver Mine)

"Map of Tartaria" (1570) Drawn by Abraham Ortelius

Silver Island!

What a pretty name...

Of course, Iwami Ginzan was not only famous in Europe, but in Japan as well. There was a time when the famous Tokugawa Ieyasu also controlled Iwami Ginzan!

Tokugawa Ieyasu

Vocabulary *Francis Xavier: The person who brought Christianity to Japan

Why did it become a World Heritage Site?

Now I know that Iwami Ginzan produced a lot of high-quality silver, and was even famous overseas.

But why was it registered as a World Heritage Site?

There are **3** reasons why!

- ① The silver from Iwami Ginzan had a big effect on the world's economy and cultural exchange.
- ② The mine shafts and workshops used to produce the silver remain even today.
- ③ The main roads and harbor used to transport the silver remain; even today, people still live in the old mining and harbor towns.

It's a bit complex, no?

I see!
① is what we just learned, right?

The "Silver Island"...
The Portuguese map of Japan...

Iwami Ginzan was also praised for living with nature. Let's take a look from the sky.

It's covered in green, even now.

Wow!
It's beautiful!

Sen-no-yama
(Mine)

Omori
(Mining Town)

In the Edo period, to manage the mine, an 8-kilometer fence was built, centered around Sen-no-yama. Its size was 2.2 kilometers east-west, and 2.5 kilometers north-south, with an area of 300 hectares!

Amazing!

Now I want to go visit Iwami Ginzan.

Let's go to Iwami Ginzan!

Silver Mine

Mineshafts for extracting silver are called "mabu." There are over 900 mineshafts here, and this is one of the largest. It is open to visitors on limited paid tours.

First, let me introduce "Okubo Mabu"



In the winter, many of my friends hibernate here.

Eastern long-fingered bats in hibernation.



Wow!
It's so big!



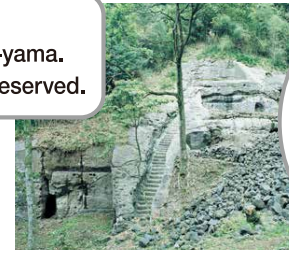
"Ryugenji Mabu" Mineshaft is open to the public. On the walls, there are still chisel marks from when the tunnel was dug.



To travel the 5-kilometer path from Omori Town to Ryugenji Mabu Mineshaft, it's convenient to use the rental bicycles or the slow-paced electric vehicle called the "Ginzan Cart" currently in trial operation!



People also lived on top of Sen-no-yama. The site is well preserved.



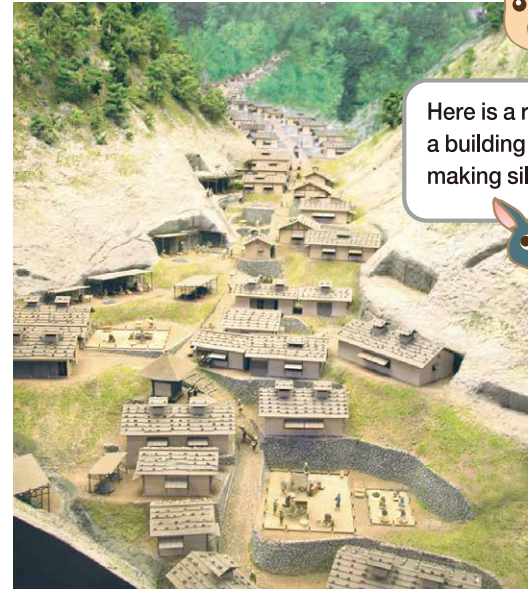
Near Kamaya Mabu Mineshaft

Wow, you can still see the stairs. This is part of reason ② that we just learned.

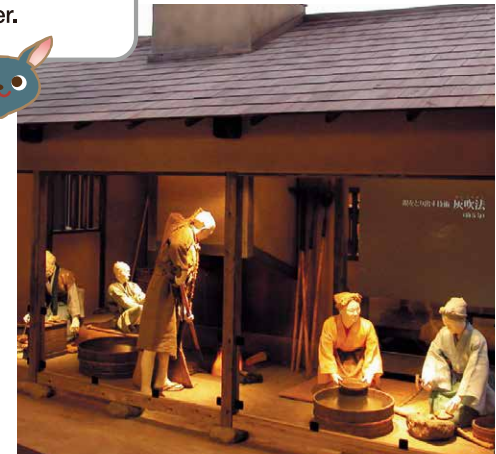


Flat tiers of land like a hina doll stand.

Here is a recreation of a building with workers making silver.

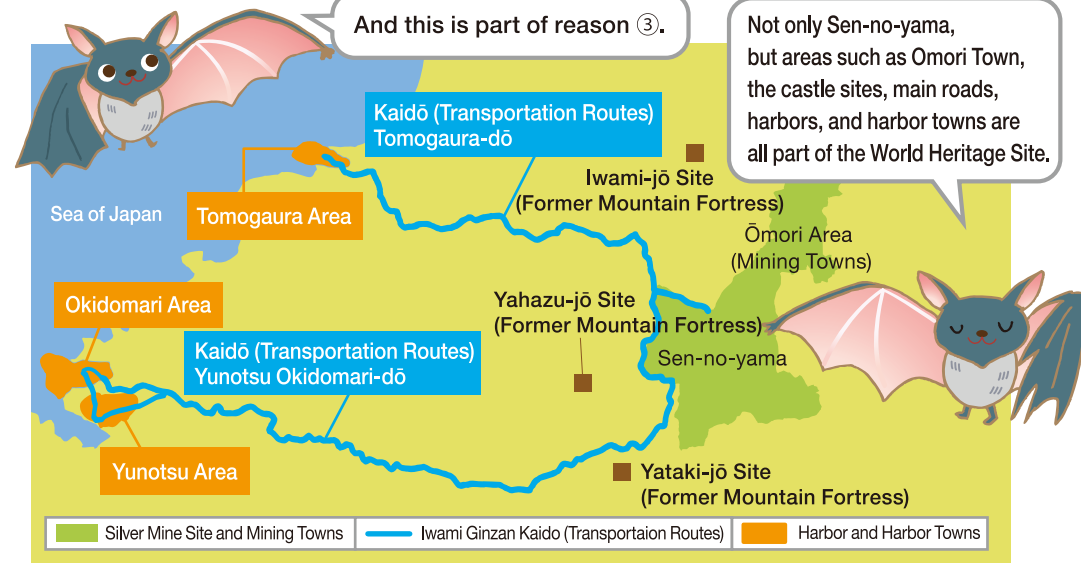


Model recreation (Iwami Ginzan World Heritage Center)



And this is part of reason ③.

Not only Sen-no-yama, but areas such as Omori Town, the castle sites, main roads, harbors, and harbor towns are all part of the World Heritage Site.



Okubo Mabu Mineshaft Tour Registration required

TEL : +81-0854-84-0750

Time required 2 hrs.

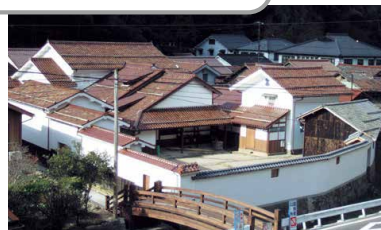
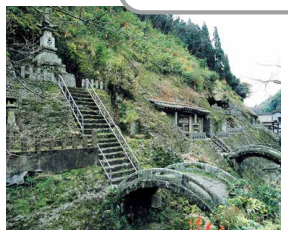
Iwami Tourism Co., Ltd. Okubo Mabu Mineshaft Reservation Center

General 3,700 yen

Elementary and junior high school students 2,700 yen

* May be closed in winter * Please contact for tour days.

In Omori Town, you can still feel the atmosphere of a mining town.



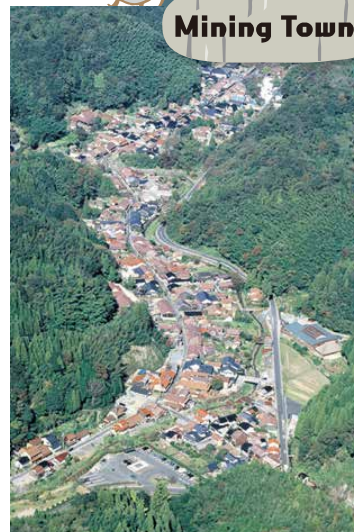
Rakan-ji Temple Ghohyakurakan

*House of the Kumagaiki Family



*Daikansho Site (Iwami Ginzan Archives & Museum)

Omori Mining Town



Omori Mining Town

Mining Towns



Matsuyama Guidepost

There are many things here from the past.

You can still walk down the old main road.



Kaidō (Transportation Routes) Yunotsu Okidomari-dō

Silver and silver ore was piled onto horses or oxen, who carried it down steep mountain roads to the harbor.



Vocabulary

*House of the Kumagaiki Family: A merchant family from the past

*Daikansho: A government office that managed the silver

Castle Sites

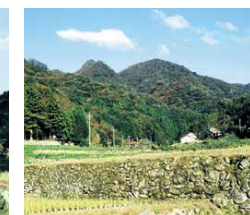
These are castle sites. The castles were built to protect the silver mine.



Iwami-jō Site (former mountain fortress)



Yataki-jō Site (former mountain fortress)



Yahazu-jō Site (former mountain fortress)

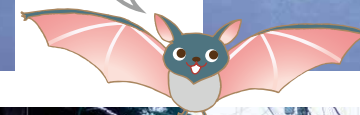
Harbor and Harbor Towns



Okidomari Area

A castle?

And, the silver was shipped from these two harbors!



Tomogaura Area

I heard they have a hot spring here!

This is the harbor town of Yunotsu.



Yunotsu Area

People still live in this historic town.



Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine is really amazing!

I want to learn more!

Then let's go to the World Heritage Center!



Iwami Ginzan World Heritage Center

Information

- Center hours and exhibition room hours
8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
 - Paid exhibition room
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Admission ends at 4:30 p.m.
(30 min. extended hours from March - November)
 - Closed on the last Tuesday of each month and during the New Year holiday
 - **Admission to exhibition room** * For groups of 20 or more
General ¥310 yen (Group ¥260)
Elementary & Junior High School Students ¥150 (Group ¥100)
Non-Japanese ¥200 (Elementary & Junior High School Students ¥100)
- The center provides discounts for non-Japanese visitors.
Please present your passport or Residence Card at reception.



Iwami Ginzan World Heritage Center was established to provide insight into the Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine. In addition, exhibitions are held where excavated artifacts are put on display.

I 1597-3 Ōmori-cho, Ōda-shi, Shimane-ken 694-0305
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FAX : +81-0854-89-0089



A recreation of "Okubo Mabu," one of the largest mineshafts at Iwami Ginzan!

* Fee required (Exhibition room ticket required)



"VR Silver Mine" Experience Corner
Experience full 360° panoramic video of "Okubo Mabu" Mineshaft, Shimizudani Smelter Site, and more!

* Fee required (Exhibition room ticket required)



Find the silver! "Silver Sifting" Experience
Participants may keep the silver that they find and place it in a small glass bottle as a keepsake. (Required time: 20 min.)

* Fee required * Reservation required



What is this??

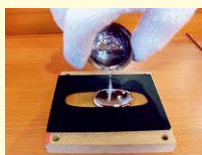


Chogin Coin Making Workshop

Experience making a "chogin" oval-shaped coin made of metals that melt at low temperature (tin and bismuth) and shrink plastic. (Required time: at least 20 min.)

Experience workshop days: every Wednesday and Thursday / Hours: 1:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

* Fee required * Reservation required for groups of 8 people or more



You can also try touching a model of a chogin oval-shaped coin



Enriching Oda City and Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine guides

Oda City Tourism Association

562 3 Nima, Nima-cho, Ōda-shi,
Shimane-ken 699-2301
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Enjoy touring a World Heritage Site

Iwami Ginzan Guide Group

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◇For questions about this pamphlet, please contact:

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