

石見銀山



What is a World Heritage Site?

Based on the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, executed by 190 countries, a World Heritage Site is a cultural or natural property that is deemed to be worthy of preservation for the benefit of humanity and registered on the World Heritage List. UNESCO aims to protect sites from the threat of destruction and deepen human understanding of natural ecosystems and beauty with its ongoing work.

The Value of Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine as a World Heritage Site

It gave birth to an economic and cultural exchange of global importance

As Europeans expanded their activities across the globe in their effort to seek out more sources of gold, silver, and spices, Iwami Ginzan was the chance for them to enter into Asian commerce, thanks to the mine's large production of high quality silver. On top of that, the silver production techniques used at Iwami Ginzan spread through Japan and were integral in the rise of domestic silver production.

The silver production method based on traditional techniques is well preserved in many remaining areas.

At Iwami Ginzan the entire process, from digging to refining, was carried out manually. This is clearly shown by over 900 remaining areas of outcroppings and mine shafts in the mountains, along with over 1,000 small flat tracts of land in the vicinity where refineries and dwellings were built.

The complete industrial system, from silver production to shipment, is on display in its entirety.

Iwami Ginzan is not just the remnants of silver-producing mines, but also the fortresses, magistrate buildings, merchant and samurai residences that make up the mining towns, as well as the trade routes used to transport silver, the ports, and the port towns—in other words, the entire industrial system has been well preserved. Even today, people are living and working in these areas in various capacities.



TOKYO 4h 13h 8h
OSAKA 3h 6h 5h
HIROSHIMA 3h

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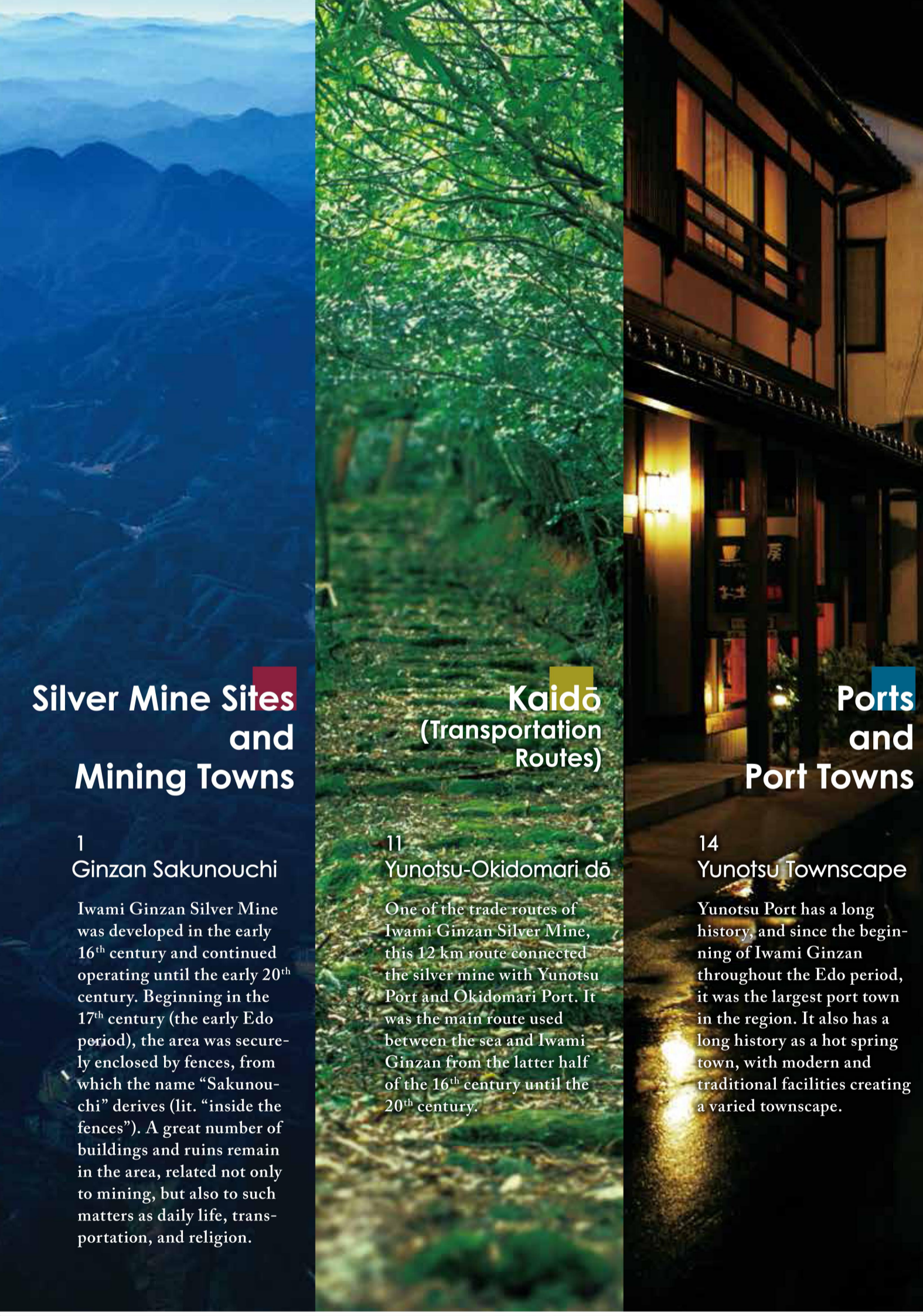
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石見銀山
世界遺産
センター

IWAMI GINZAN
WORLD HERITAGE
CENTER



Silver Mine Sites and Mining Towns

1 Ginzan Sakunouchi

Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine was developed in the early 16th century and continued operating until the early 20th century. Beginning in the 17th century (the early Edo period), the area was securely enclosed by fences, from which the name "Sakunouchi" derives (lit. "inside the fences"). A great number of buildings and ruins remain in the area, related not only to mining, but also to such matters as daily life, transportation, and religion.

Kaidō (Transportation Routes)

11 Yunotsu-Okidomari dō

One of the trade routes of Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine, this 12 km route connected the silver mine and Yunotsu Port. It was the main route used between the sea and Iwami Ginzan from the latter half of the 16th century until the 20th century.

Ports and Port Towns

14 Yunotsu Townscape

Yunotsu Port has a long history, and since the beginning of Iwami Ginzan throughout the Edo period, it was the largest port town in the region. It also has a long history as a hot spring town, with modern and traditional facilities creating a varied townscape.

World Heritage Site

Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape

Site Number	Site Name	Description
1	Ginzan Sakunouchi	Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine was developed in the early 16 th century and continued operating until the early 20 th century. Beginning in the 17 th century (the early Edo period), the area was securely enclosed by fences, from which the name "Sakunouchi" derives (lit. "inside the fences"). A great number of buildings and ruins remain in the area, related not only to mining, but also to such matters as daily life, transportation, and religion.
2	Daikansho Site (Site of the Magistrate's Office)	The central facility of the government at Iwami Ginzan. From the 17 th century onwards, a magistrate was sent to Iwami Ginzan by the Edo shogunate to manage the region.
3	Yataki-jō Site (Mountain Castle Site)	One of the mountaintop castles, which was built to defend Iwami Ginzan in the 16 th century. It sits atop a mountain 480 m tall. Yataki-jō can be seen from here, on the opposite side of the Yunotsu-Okidomari dō Road.
4	Yahazu-jō Site (Mountain Castle Site)	One of the mountaintop castles, which was built to defend Iwami Ginzan in the 16 th century. It sits atop a mountain 480 m tall. Yataki-jō can be seen from here, on the opposite side of the Yunotsu-Okidomari dō Road.
5	Iwami-jō Site (Mountain Castle Site)	One of the mountaintop castles, which was built to defend Iwami Ginzan in the 16 th century. It sits atop a mountain 153 m tall. It was built in a strategic location along the road toward Nima Town.
6	Omori Townscape	This town adjoins the silver mine and developed along with it, and was the heart of government, economics, culture, and religion in the region during the mine's heyday. Many historic buildings from the early 19 th century remain here.
7	Miyano-mae Silver Smelting Refinery	This silver smelting refinery was founded near the Daikansho site. It was active between the late 16 th and early 17 th centuries.
8	House of the Kumagai Family	This is a representative merchant house in the silver mine area. It was built in the early 19 th century and is the largest-scale remaining merchant house in Iwami Ginzan.
9	Rakan-ji Gohyakurakan	This shrine is set across three stone caves, which contain five-hundred seated arhats, which were crafted in the mid-18 th century.
10	Tomogaura Road	One of the trade routes of Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine, this 7 km route linked Ginzan Sakunouchi with the Tomogaura Port.
11	Yunotsu-Okidomari dō	One of the trade routes of Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine, this 12 km route connected the silver mine and Yunotsu Port. It was the main route used between the sea and Iwami Ginzan from the latter half of the 16 th century until the 20 th century.
12	Tomogaura	This port is believed to have been used in shipping silver and silver ore since the mine's early development, especially in the early 16 th century. The hanaguri-iwa (mooring devices for ships) in the sea cliffs and the narrow streets lined with houses provide a unique glimpse into what the town would have looked like in medieval times.
13	Okidomari	This was an important port, largely used in the latter half of the 16 th century. This port was not just used to dispatch silver and silver ore, but also to import various supplies and act as a military base. Not only the remaining hanaguri-iwa mooring stones, but also the traditional look of the buildings and the remains of defensive structures provide a glimpse of what the town would once have looked like.
14	Yunotsu Townscape	Yunotsu Port has a long history, and since the beginning of Iwami Ginzan throughout the Edo period, it was the largest port town in the region. It also has a long history as a hot spring town, with modern and traditional facilities creating a varied townscape.