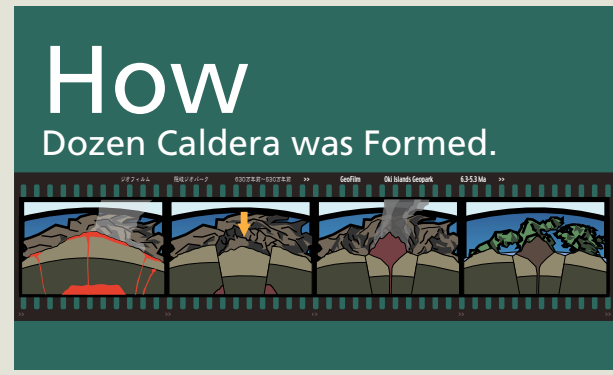


# Dozen Islands

## Nishinoshima Island

(Nishinoshima Town)

The Landscape of Collaboration with  
Dozen Caldera and Sea of Japan



### 1. Former Kurogi Palace Site

The Former Kurogi Palace Site is situated at the peak of a small hill called Mt. Tenuu that commands a view of Beppu Harbor. Emperor Godaigo was exiled to the Oki Islands during the Genko Era in 1332 after failing to overthrow the Kamakura Shogunate (military regime). He allegedly resided here for more than a year before he escaped. In the vicinity is the Senpuku-ji Temple Throne, the Sammi-no-tsuhone Oyashiki-oto (Site of the Emperor's Companion's Residence) and Oki-hangan Yakata-oto (Site of the Provisional Secretary Residence) as well as other landmarks associated with the Emperor.

### 2. Shuhaira Dance

The Shuhaira Dance is a type of Dengaku (traditional Shinto celebrations with music and dancing) that is part of the religious festival at the Mita Hachimangu Shrine and Hiyoshi Shrine. These dances were designated as a National Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property in 1951. During the celebration that occurs biannually on the 15th of September, there is a stage set up in front of the main hall of worship of the Hachimangu Shrine where the rituals of Shishimai (Lion Dance) and Kami-no-Sumo (Deity Sumo Tournament) are carried out and followed by Shuhaira Dance.

### 3. Mita Dam

The Mita Dam is located to the north of Mt. Takuhi. In the surrounding area you can see lacustrine strata from around 18 million years ago, the oldest strata in the Dozen Islands. For many years, the easily workable, green-colored rock mined from this area, known as Mita Rock, was used as wall stones and other building materials. The Mita Dam area is also a well-known firefly viewing location.

### 4. Shara-bune (Spirit Boat)

The Shara-bune are boats that are sent out on the water to carry offerings to the spirits of the dead during the Bon Festival (observed on the 13th-15th August). The keel and frame of the boats are made from wood and bamboo and the hull from straw. Thousands of pieces of

colored paper with sutras written on them are attached to the rope sail creating a beautiful collage of color floating on the water.

### 5. Yurahime Shrine

During the Heian Period this shrine was enlisted as an Ichinomiya Shrine, meaning it has the highest rank of all shrines in the Dozen Islands. It is one of the four grand shrines on the Oki Islands. In front of the torii (shrine gate) there is a shallow bay in which large shoals of squid gather. According to legend, they once nibbled on the fingers of the important deity Yurahime-no-mikoto as she was returning to Oki in a small boat. To ask for her forgiveness, every year they swim into the inlet and launch themselves on the shore.

### 6. Onimai Lookout

From here you can enjoy a panoramic view of the entire Dozen Caldera as well as the central cone, Mt. Takuhi. You can also compare the tranquil waters of the Inner Sea alongside the rough Sea of Japan. In this area are the remains of stone walls that were used to divide farmland in a unique crop rotation method known as Makihata. Makihata was developed on Dozen and carried out until the 1960s. Local residents are working to preserve these walls even now.

# Nakanoshima Island

## (Ama Town)

The Historical Island  
Brought up to the Earth

### 1. Yakumo Square

In the Meiji Period in 1892, Yakumo Koizumi (Lafcadio Hearn), a famous international author who became a Japanese citizen, went on vacation to the Oki Islands with his wife while on his search for Japan's most iconic scenery. During their vacation, the beautiful and mirror-like Hishiura Bay attracted his attention and he named it Kagami-ga-ura (Mirror Inlet). It is said that Koizumi was especially taken by the scenes of young women working in the villages and the beautiful view of the village mothers. The details of his trip to Oki are written in his book "Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan – From Hoki to Oki".

### 2. Oki Shrine

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After quarrelling with the envoy Fujiwara-no-Tsunetsugu, the vice-envoy to T'ang China, Ono-no-Takamura, feigned illness to avoid boarding the boat that was headed towards T'ang. This avoidance of duty incurred the anger of the retired Emperor Saga who exiled him to Toyoda, Ama Town in 838. While Ono-no-Takamura was on the island, he retired to the Rokusha-gongen Shrine on Mt. Kinkoji where he made a statue of Buddha while praying for his reinstatement to the capital.

This is one of the four most important shrines in the Oki Islands, and has been dedicated to Uzuka-no-mikoto, the deity of good harvest, naval safety and safe childbirth. This deity is unique to the Oki Islands and has been worshipped since ancient times.

### 4. Uzuka-no-mikoto Shrine

According to the creation myth of the Akiya Coast, in order to marry the deity of neighboring Nishinoshima, Hinamaji-hime-no-mikoto, Uzuka-no-mikoto had a test of strength against the deity of Oyama Shrine. The Akiya Coast and the surrounding geological features are named according to these events.

### 8. Akao Lookout

Akao Lookout is located on the south-side of the Kuniga Bay (an eroded inlet), and is a vantage point for stunning panoramic views of the Matengai Cliff, the most sacred site of the Oki Islands during the Genko Era in 1332 after failing to overthrow the Kamakura Shogunate (military regime). He allegedly resided here for more than a year before he escaped. In the vicinity is the Senpuku-ji Temple Throne, the Sammi-no-tsuhone Oyashiki-oto (Site of the Emperor's Companion's Residence) and Oki-hangan Yakata-oto (Site of the Provisional Secretary Residence) as well as other landmarks associated with the Emperor.

### 9. Kuniga Coast

The Matengai Cliff (257m) commands a breathtaking view of the Kuniga Coast. Visitors can observe the interesting rock formations that are the result of volcanic activity and subsequent erosion from the rough Sea of Japan. The 2km walking track along the Kuniga Coast is listed as one of Japan's Top 100 walking courses. It takes you from the top of Matengai Cliff down along the coast to a group of strangely shaped rocks known as Tenjū-ka (Heavenly Worlids) and a natural rock arch called the Tsutenkyo Arch (Bridge to Heaven).

On this cruise you can get up close to the impressive eroded cliffs and see the many strangely shaped rocks of the Kuniga Coast. On the eastern side you will see the 'Tsubane-goten (Swallow Palace), a resting spot for large numbers of swallows, and the Byobu-ga-dera (Folding Screen Peak), rocks that look like a folding screen in a line. On the western side you will see Oni-ga-jima (Demon Island), Kanabo-iwa (Metal Rod Rock), Tsutenkyo Arch, Kannon-iwa (Buddhist Deity Rock) and many other interestingly shaped rocks, as well as the towering Matengai Cliff.

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The Funabiki Canal is a narrow 130m long canal that cuts through central Nishinoshima. Before the canal was made the boats had to be laboriously transported overland in order to reach the Sea of Japan from the Inner Sea. This is said to be the inspiration for naming the surrounding town 'Funakoshi' (Boat Crossing). The canal had an original width of 3.3m when it was constructed in the Taisho Period in 1915, but it was later widened to its current width of 12m.

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### 12. Mt. Takuhi

This is the tallest mountain in the Dozen Islands area (452m) and is the central cone of the Dozen Caldera. Close to the summit of the mountain is the main building of the Takuhi Shrine, which is the oldest shrine in the Oki Islands, and has been designated as National Important Cultural Property. This shrine is dedicated to the deity of safe sea voyages, and has been used as a calling point for boats at sea since ancient times.

### 13. Dozen Kagura (Sacred Shinto Dances)

Among the kagura dances (entertainment for the gods) on the Dozen Islands, there are the well-known kagura performed biannually at Takuhi Shrine, as well as the Kagura of the Yurahime Shrine that take place on board a boat. The kagura dances on the Dozen Islands are quite different to those on Dogo (the largest island of Japan). While the latter are performed to the slow and leisurely pace of the Hayashi (Japanese festival music), Dozen Kagura are fast-paced and energetic. The vanquishing of a giant serpent Yaegaki also only features on Dozen and carried out until the 1960s. Local residents are working to preserve these walls even now.

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### 5. Saburo-iwa Rocks

The three Saburo-iwa Rocks look like three brothers standing in a row in the sea north-east of Hishiura Port. On the top of these sea-eroded basaltic rocks are small groves of green trees that resemble bonsai trees. You can enjoy watching the three rocks become two, and then one as you pass by on a sightseeing boat, the AMANBOW Underwater Viewing Boat.

### 6. Akiya Coast

The splashes of bright red on the steep cliff face contrast beautifully with the blue of the sea along the Akiya Coast. The coast gets its name from a legend that Hinamaji-hime, the deity of Nishinoshima, gave birth here. On the trail running alongside the cliff you can observe the results of volcanic eruption such as pyroclastic material (scoria) and other volcanic matter.

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### 6. Sekiheki (Red Cliff)

On this appropriately named Red Cliff, splashes of vivid red, as well as yellow and brown decorate the cliff face over an expanse of about 1km. This cliff can also be viewed from the sea. The red color in the cliff was created by splashes of hot magma ejected from the volcano that oxidized upon contact with the sea. A different color also cuts across the center of the pyroclastic cone.

### 7. Tengawa-no-mizu Spring (Water of the Heavenly River Spring)

When invited to Oki in the Nara Period, the Buddhist Priest Gyoki heard the sound of running water from a cave in the forest. He felt the aura of the spring water and named it Tengawa-no-mizu, water from the heavenly river. Springs like this can be found throughout Ama Island because of abundant sources of underground water. It has been designated one of the Top 100 Exquisite and Well-Conserved Waters of Shimane by the Ministry of the Environment and is one of the blessings of a land created by volcanic activity.

### 8. Miho Shrine

Emperor Gotoba was exiled to Oki in 1221 after losing the Jokyu-no-ran Rebellion. Due to the very stormy seas his departure from the capital, they made an emergency landing at Kirogasaki Cape and the Emperor waited close by at what is now known as the Rock Gotoba and his group ended up spending the night at Miho Shrine.

### 9. Grave of the Famous War Horse 'Su-Go'

During the Russo-Japanese war when Japan seized control over Lushunkou in 1905 (Siege of Port Arthur), the Russian Army General Stessel surrendered to General Nogri Maresuke and presented him with his beloved horse. General Nogri named the horse 'Su-Go' after the Russian General. Su-Go was later taken to the Oki Islands where he died at the age of 23. His grave is still maintained by the local people.

### 10. Kirogasaki Cape

At the southern tip of Nakanoshima Island you can see Mt. Takuhi (the central cone of the Dozen Caldera), the surrounding mountains, Chiburijima Island and the outer rim of Nakanoshima Island that form the inner sea of the Dozen Caldera. It is a popular spot for watching the sunset and the glow of fishing boats at night, and is also part of the geo-tourism course.

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### 14. Shoyo-ji Temple

Exiled Emperor Godaigo stayed at this temple after arriving on Chiburijima Island. It was originally located on Mt. Akahage and called Urumi-bo until the Emperor renamed it Shoyo-ji Temple after his impressive pine trees. The wooden carving of the Bodhisattva at the temple is said to have been gifted by the Emperor, and is designated as an Important Cultural Property of Shimane Prefecture. The tomb of the Emperor's descendant Prince Kyogen is also located at the temple grounds.

### 15. Ikku Shrine

The official name of this shrine is Ikku-no-mikoto Shrine, but the local people have nicknamed it Ikku Shrine meaning the best shrine on the island. It is also the Ichinomiya (highest-ranking shrine) on the island. There is a legend about the deity of this shrine and Okuninushi (Onamuchi). On the grounds are the Rock (Seat) of Emperor Godaigo and the Rock (Seat) of Kenkyo, the temple administrator who was banished to Oki in 1674.

### 6. Sekiheki (Red Cliff)

On this appropriately named Red Cliff, splashes of vivid red, as well as yellow and brown decorate the cliff face over an expanse of about 1km. This cliff can also be viewed from the sea. The red color in the cliff was created by splashes of hot magma ejected from the volcano that oxidized upon contact with the sea. A different color also cuts across the center of the pyroclastic cone.

### 11. Shimazushima Island

Shimazushima Island has a number of interesting features. Firstly, trace fossils from 5-15 million years ago of prehistoric creatures such as sea urchins and clam worms can be found along the shore. This shore is also a popular swimming location. Further inland, there is a stone monument to a pine tree that is said to have been planted by the Emperor, and is designated as an Important Cultural Property of Shimane Prefecture. The tomb of the Emperor's descendant Prince Kyogen is also located at the temple grounds.

### 12. Chiburijima Lighthouse

The Chiburijima Lighthouse is on the east side of the island on Mt. Takahira (149m) and lights up the Kii Strait for naval safety. Previously the lighthouse lodgings were next to the lighthouse but they were closed to make a parkland area. Here you can enjoy scenery such as Shimazushima Island.

# Dogo Islands

## Dogo Island

(Okinoshima Town)

The Connection of Three Stories  
Human, Life and Geology

# Obsidian

### 1. Misaki-no-bakuretsu-kako (Misaki Explosion Crater)

On the west side entrance to Saigo Port is a 50 – 100m long cliff that has a gently sloping plateau at the top. When seen from the sea the cliff looks like a giant bowl cut in half. This is the site of a volcanic eruption of steam about 5.5 million years ago.

### 2. Kishihama Obsidian Outcrop

Obsidian, perlite, pitchstone and other types of volcanic glass were formed on the volcanic vent of the Kishihama Ridge due to the rapid cooling of rhyolitic magma flows. As magma rises and cools, the low water content core becomes obsidian, the high water content middle layers become perlite and pitchstone, and the outermost layer becomes crushed pyroclastic rock.

### 3. Oku-tsudo Coast Walking Track

You can see the strange combination of plants peculiar to the Oki Islands growing alongside the walking track. In recent years this area has been frequently used as for geo-tours and environmental study workshops.

### 4. Tsuma Traditional Boat Houses

Twenty boat houses in Tsuma are lined up neatly in the surroundings of a quiet fishing village, with a view of Mt. Takada, a place of worship. Nearby is a pine grove said to have been planted by Yao-bikuni Buddhist nuns. The area has been designated one of the Top 100 White Sand and Green Pine Tree locations in Japan. A dazzling luminescent firefly display can be enjoyed along the coast from early summer to autumn.

### 5. Ozuku Conglomerate Rock

Along the slope to the right of the Ozuku Port, you can see many round green colored rocks embedded in the rock layer. The rock layer is about 20 million years old and due to the number of the rocks it is assumed that a river carried them there. The color of the rocks changed to green as the rocks changed to green as a result of contact with water of a high temperature after the rock layer formed.

### 6. Katakuri Flower Park

In this area from March to April many Katakuri Dogtooth violet (*Erythronium japonicum*) blossom with pinkish purple to white flowers. Though the flower is a subalpine plant, it is found close to the coast. These flowers were previously endangered due to over-picking, but now volunteers from the region are protecting them in the Katakuri Flower Park.

### 7. Dangyou-no-taki Waterfall

Since long ago the water of the Dangyou-no-taki Waterfall has been revered as sacred. It is said that if you drink the water before a moon contest, you will win, and so even today before a traditional sumo match or a baseball game, the water is involved in the competition will go to drink the water. Ono-no-Takamura, the envoy who was exiled to the Oki Islands, is said to have come here to pray for his repatriation to the capital.

### 8. Nagu-misaki Cape

Nagu-misaki Cape has been a historically important place for marine trading, and is also associated with the legend of the Empress Jingū. On the side of the observation platform is an old garden lantern that was used by the lighthouse keeper in the past. The area is known for its beautiful sunsets as well as its view of the Dozen Islands right in front of the cape.

### 9. Yui Pond

The Yui Pond is an area with a precious ecosystem. Looking at the 250m long circular shape of the pond and the surrounding topography, you might assume that it was created by volcanic activity, however a recent study has revealed that this pond was created by a large landslide. Around the pond there is a viewing platform and walking track. Eco-tours and environmental workshops are held here.

### 10. Yui Maenosu Intertidal Shore Platform

This intertidal shore platform formed due to wave erosion and is the largest in Dogo at 170m x 220m. It is composed of lacustrine strata that was deposited about 20 million years ago and is still being eroded by wind and waves. Hakoima Island (about 300m away, is also an eroded intertidal shore platform.

### 11. Kumi Coast

Along the beautiful Kumi Coast you can observe white alkaline rhyolite and the beautiful flow structure of igneous rocks. You can also observe the unusual plant distribution peculiar to the Oki Islands. There are plants endemic to Oki, such as the Oki-no-azami

### 15. Vegetation of Funaoroshi, Kumi

On the river-side in Kumi at 20m above sea-level, a wide variety of plants can be seen in the same habitat. The beautiful alkaline rhyolite rocks here are speckled with red and white.

### 16. Shirashima Coast Lookout

The Shirashima Cape, Shirashima Island, Okinoshima Island along with other small islands in the area are collectively referred to as the Shirashima Coast. The contrasts of the blue of the sea, the stark white of the rock face, and the bright green of the pine trees on the coast leave a lasting impression on visitors. Beautiful blue (hydrangeas) along the walking trail bloom well into autumn. Here you can also observe the rare combination of southern and northern as well as continental plants growing in the same place, a phenomenon peculiar to the Oki Islands.

### 17. Mura-Matsuri-Furyu Festival

This festival takes place biannually on the 19th of October and is one of the three big festivals of Oki Dogo. For the festival, the Hachioji Shrine that enshrines the god of the sun, and the Ichinomiya Shrine that enshrines the god of the moon come together to celebrate the meeting of the cosmic dual forces. As part of the festival proceedings, go-shintai (an object which contains the spirit of a deity) are hoisted up in the sky and carried three and a half times around the festival area. The sun takes the form of a three legged crow, and the moon takes the form of a white hare.

### 18. Noritabana Coast

At the tip of the Noritabana Coast you can find strangely shaped rocks such as Kabuto-iwa (Helmet Rock) and Yoro-iwa (Armor Rock). These protruding basalt rocks are so named because they look just like the armor of a samurai warrior. There is a legend that a fallen warrior's helmet and armor turned into stone here. In 1938 this coast was designated as a Place of Scenic Beauty as well as a National Natural Monument.

### 19. Jodogaura Coast

The name 'Jodogaura' originated from a kyoka (Japanese comic poem) written by the famous kyoku Sojun, a quick-witted and mischievous Zen Buddhist monk. Along the coast you can see geological features from when Oki was at the bottom of a lake, and observe southern, northern and continental plants that coexist in the same environment. It was chosen as the design for one of the National Park Special Issue stamps and is one of Oki's most scenic locations.

### 20. Kasuga Shrine

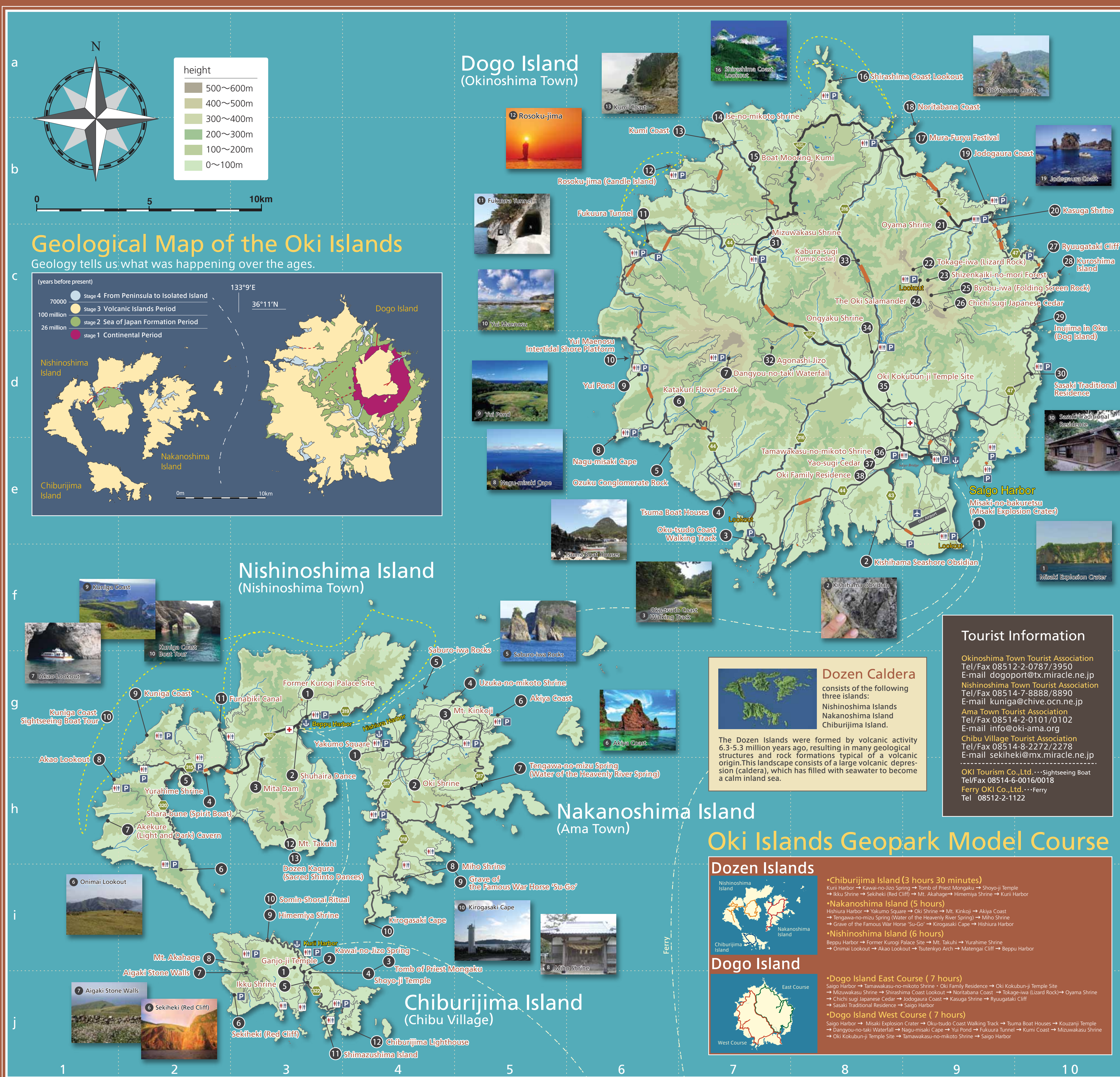
During the spring and autumn equinoxes, the sun will rise right in the middle of the gate in front of this shrine, creating a breathtaking sight. There was once a giant pine tree within the grounds that was around 60m tall. The tree's stump is now on display in a small hut.

### 21. Oyama Shrine

The giant Japanese cedar tree here is so tall it seems to be touching the sky. It is the where the deity of the Oyama Shrine resides and is said to be 800 years old. During the Yama-matsuri festival that occurs here biannually, participants must tie a hardy vine around the tree seven and a half times. It is said to be the model of the ancient mountain festival in Japan. Also in the area are two giant Japanese Zelkova trees (*Zelkova serrata*) that have a similarly awe inspiring presence.

### 22. Tokage-iwa (Lizard Rock)





# Guide Map

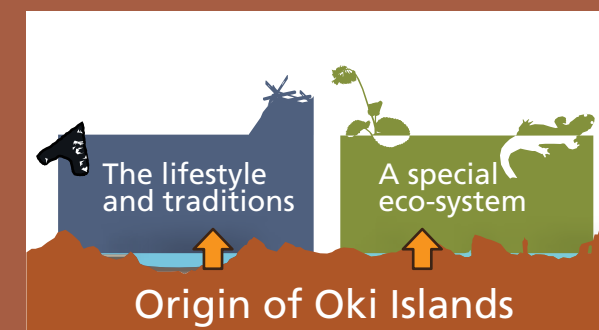


## Message from the Oki Islands Geopark "Discover Connections"

The small world of the Oki Islands is isolated from mainland Japan by the Sea of Japan. Despite being small, on Oki you can experience first-hand some of the strong connections between the earth, living things and humankind.

### Special Features

The Oki Islands have developed through a series of changes: from being a part of the Eurasian Continent, to the bottom of a lake, to the bottom of a deep sea, to being connected to the mainland Shimane Peninsula, to finally becoming a group of remote islands. Through this transformation from continent to small islands, a diverse ecosystem and unique cultural traditions have developed in this region.



**Area** The Oki Islands Geopark encompasses the Oki Islands Archipelago, which consists of four inhabited islands and 180 uninhabited islands located 40 – 80 km north of Shimane Prefecture (south-west of mainland Honshu). The total area of the geopark is 628km<sup>2</sup> (land area 346km<sup>2</sup>, marine area 282km<sup>2</sup>). The fishing industry and marine organisms that inhabit the sea area around Oki are vital to the way of life of its people, so coastal areas up to 1km from the shoreline have been included in the geopark area. The geographical environment of these remote islands and the lifestyle of the people are important aspects of this geopark.

**What is a Geopark?** The geoparks program is supported by UNESCO. It recognizes unique areas for their special geological significance and outstanding natural and cultural landscapes. The Oki Islands Geopark became a member of the Japan Geoparks Network (JGN) in 2009.



## Information

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Help Protect Oki's Natural Beauty  
<http://www.oki-geopark.jp>

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### Dozen Caldera

consists of the following three islands:  
Nishinoshima Islands  
Nakanoshima Island  
Chiburijima Island.

The Dozen Islands were formed by volcanic activity 6.3-5.3 million years ago, resulting in many geological structures and rock formations typical of a volcanic origin. This landscape consists of a large volcanic depression (caldera), which has filled with seawater to become a calm inland sea.

## Oki Islands Geopark Model Course

### Dozen Islands

**•Chiburijima Island (3 hours 30 minutes)**  
Kuri Harbor → Kawal-no-Jizo Spring → Tomb of Priest Mongaku → Shoyoji Temple → Ikku Shrine → Sekihei (Red Cliff) → Mt. Akahage → Himemiya Shrine → Kuri Harbor

**•Nakanoshima Island (5 hours)**  
Hishura Harbor → Yakumo Square → Oki Shrine → Mt. Kinkoji → Akiya Coast → Tengawa-no-mizu Spring (Water of the Heavenly River Spring) → Miho Shrine → Grave of the Famous War Horse 'Su-Go' → Kirogasaki Cape → Hishura Harbor

**•Nishinoshima Island (6 hours)**  
Beppu Harbor → Former Kurogi Palace Site → Mt. Takuhi → Yurahime Shrine → Onimai Lookout → Akao Lookout → Butenkyo Arch → Matengai Cliff → Beppu Harbor

### Dogo Island

**•Dogo Island East Course (7 hours)**  
Saigo Harbor → Tamawakasu-no-mikoto Shrine → Oki Family Residence → Oki Kokubun-ji Temple Site → Mizuwakasu Shrine → Shirashima Coast Lookout → Noritabana Coast → Tokage-iwa (Lizard Rock) → Oyama Shrine → Chichi sugi Japanese Cedar → Jedogaura Coast → Kasuga Shrine → Ryuugataki Cliff → Saigo Harbor

**•Dogo Island West Course (7 hours)**  
Saigo Harbor → Misaki Explosion Crater → Oku-tsudo Coast Walking Track → Tsuma Boat Houses → Kousanji Temple → Dangyou-no-taki Waterfall → Nagu-misaki Cape → Yui Pond → Fukura Tunnel → Kumi Coast → Mizuwakasu Shrine → Oki Kokubun-ji Temple Site → Tamawakasu-no-mikoto Shrine → Saigo Harbor