

Shikoku's Forest Railway and the Scent of Yuzu

Shikoku is an island in southwest Japan. It's the smallest, least developed of Japan's main islands. At the base of the Muroto Peninsula in southeastern Shikoku, the Yanase forest railway once hauled out wood for building projects all over Japan. An old man who saw the steam trains in action said they were like living creatures. The massive cedar logs produced here were used by warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi when he built a great temple to Buddha.



Today, the area is Japan's biggest producer of yuzu, the highly fragrant citrus that's finding its way into leading restaurants even in the West. The tracks are gone, but the railway now serves as a road for hauling out the fruit, and many traces of the old industry remain.

On this adventure, we trek along the trails left by the railway, exploring the traditional and modern culture and industry. The well-preserved infrastructure is designated an important cultural property, reflecting its importance and rarity.

Through interaction with local people, we learn how the region successfully transitioned from one industry to another, becoming a model for other places facing a similar challenge. We meet the people whose ingenuity enable them to create over sixty new products from yuzu, which are now sold globally.

Highlights:

- Explore the remains of the forest railway, learning about the past and future of yuzu cultivation
- Discover the local history, traditions, and culture through the medium of local guides
- Trek through forests of giant trees and relax in traditional inns with hot spring baths
- Enjoy “country sushi”, Kochi’s local speciality made with fragrant yuzu vinegar

Location: Eastern Kochi Prefecture, Shikoku Island
Main Activity: Trekking
Difficulty: 2
Tour Dates: July to November
Pax: Minimum: 2 Maximum: 16
Price: JPY 170,000 per person with 6 people inc. tax
 JPY 190,000 per person with 4 people inc. tax
 JPY 260,000 per person with 2 people inc. tax



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Route map



Day-by-Day Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive in Tosa, Kochi

You arrive in Tosa, Kochi, and check into your twin room at the Royal Hotel Tosa.

Dinner

The hotel offers a choice of local dishes featuring the bounty of the Pacific Ocean.

Day 2: Hike the Yanase Forest Railway

Breakfast

The buffet offers an extensive choice of soups, breads, and salads to suit both Japanese and western palates.

From the hotel, we drive to the start of today's hiking trail in Umaji, a village that transformed its industry from forestry to growing and marketing yuzu. First, we learn

about nine Buddhist statues carved in ancient times. Then we hike the old railway with a local guide, passing through several tunnels and over a spectacular trestle bridge.

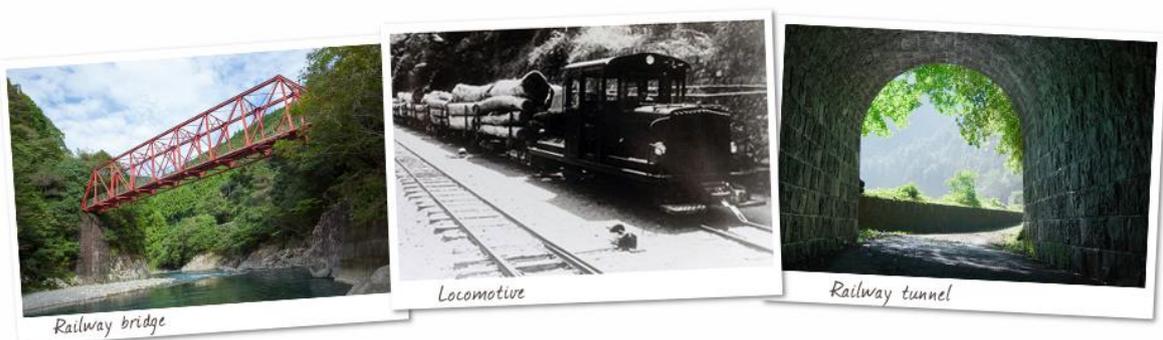
Trek along the railway

Distance: 3.8 km | Time: 1:00 | Up: 110 m, Down: 90 m



▲ **Highest Point** 130 m

▼ **Lowest Point** 70 m



Lunch

At Umaji Onsen, we enjoy a lunch of traditional Japanese fare typical of a mountainous inland region.

After lunch, we drive to Umaji village, visiting a Buddhist temple and the agricultural cooperative. Here, yuzu is processed into some sixty kinds of product, and the cooperative is regarded as a pioneer of sustainable regional business.

Dinner

Our accommodation is Umaji Onsen. Dinner features locally sourced foodstuffs and sake.

Umaji Onsen has a choice of Japanese or Western-style rooms with ensuite bath and toilet.

Activity: Village walking

Difficulty: 1

Day 3: Trek through a forest of massive trees

Breakfast

Breakfast is the traditional ryokan repast of rice, fish, and pickled vegetables.

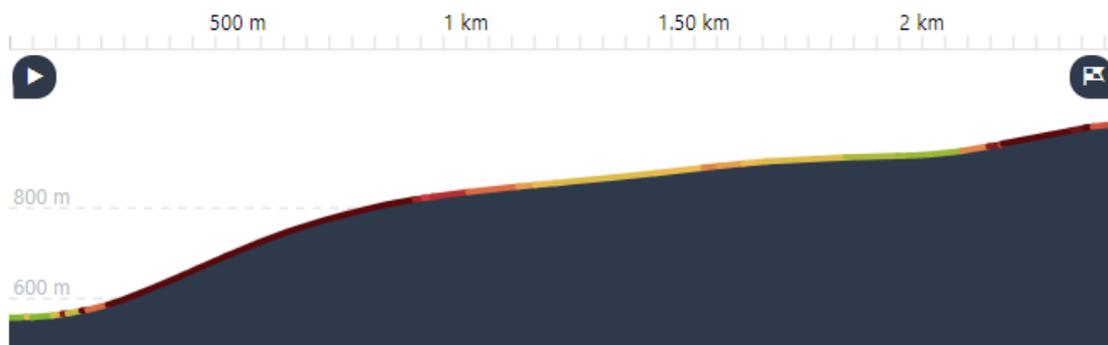
We depart from the onsen and drive to Yanase Maruyama Park. After a brief talk on safety, we drive to the trailhead for the climb up Senbonyama, the mountain of a thousand trees. The name refers to massive natural cedar trees, which are thought to be over 300 years old.

Lunch

We eat a packed lunch of mountain delicacies beside the trail.

Woodland trekking

Distance: 4.8 km | Time: 5:30 | Up: 430 m, Down 430 m



▲ **Highest Point** 980 m

▼ **Lowest Point** 560 m

Dinner

We stay at Umaji Onsen again. Dinner is a gibier hotpot with wild boar, pheasant, local vegetables, yuzu, and sake.

Activity: Trekking

Difficulty: 2

Day 4: Making country sushi and yuzu farm visit

Breakfast

Breakfast is the traditional ryokan repast of rice, fish, and pickled vegetables.

We drive to Kitagawa village where we make country sushi using yuzu vinegar. This kind of sushi is popular in inland regions where seafood is unavailable, substituting ingredients such as mushrooms and plants for fish.



Lunch

We enjoy the healthy sushi that we make in the morning.

After lunch, we visit a farm where yuzu has been cultivated from the late Edo period. We meet the farmer who explains about production, and walk on the Yuzu Road. We also visit Fudo Falls, consisting of three separate waterfalls with pure, clear water.

Dinner

We stay at Kitagawamura Onsen Yuzu no Yado where we eat sweetfish and other produce from the nearby river and mountains.

Our accommodation is a ryokan overlooking the forest railway, with Japanese-style rooms and shared onsen bath and toilets.

Activity: Sushi making and waterfall walk

Difficulty: 2

Day 5: Monet's Garden and marine sports

Breakfast

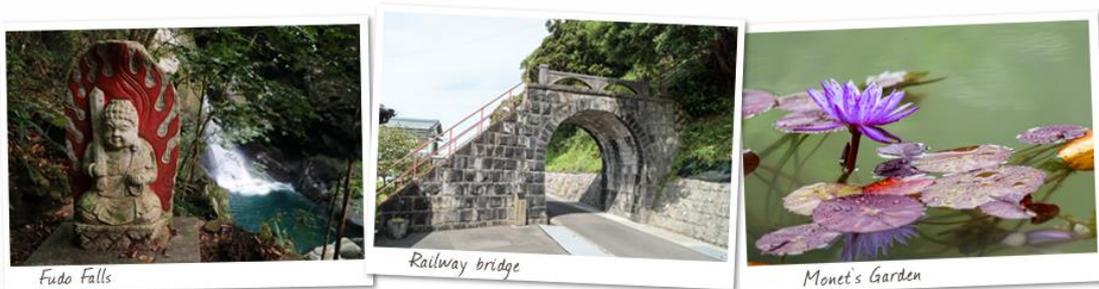
Breakfast is the traditional ryokan repast of rice, fish, and pickled vegetables.

We drive to Monet's Garden, where the scenery of Monet's varied paintings is brought to life through the gardener's art. Here, yuzu saplings are also cultivated.

Lunch

Lunch is a Western-style meal using locally sourced produce with yuzu accents.

The forest railway extended into this region, and we walk from a pretty bridge on the old railway to visit the yards where timber was stored before being shipped on the Pacific Ocean.



Then we drive to Hanna, an aroma therapy workshop to make a variety of beauty and health products scented with natural yuzu oil.

From here, we take the train back to Tosa to stay at the Royal Hotel Tosa.

Dinner

Creative Japanese cuisine using local ingredients devised by the chef.

Activity: Walking

Difficulty: 1

Day 6: Onward travel

The morning finds you on the southern edge of Shikoku near the vast Pacific Ocean.

Breakfast

A choice of Western and Japanese breakfast foods.

Now it's time to say goodbye to your guide and travel on to your next destination. You've seen some of the best of Shikoku and learned about the history and traditions that set the island apart from other regions of Japan. We hope you've enjoyed the expansive scenery, the delicious food and sake, and the simple hospitality of the people. And we hope you'll be back some day to experience some of the many other adventures that remain to be discovered here.

Accommodation:

Day 1: Royal Hotel Tosa, single room with bath + toilet, onsen

Day 2 and 3: Umaji Onsen: Japanese or Western room bath + toilet, onsen

Day 4: Yuzu no Yado, Japanese room, shared bath + toilet, onsen

Day 5: Royal Hotel Tosa, single room with bath + toilet, onsen

All accommodation is non-smoking, with free Wi-Fi. Coin laundry is available in some accommodation.

What's included

- All road transport during the trip.
- A professional tour guide for the duration of the trip, and qualified, experienced activity guides.
- All accommodation, meals, and drinks, including alcoholic drinks.
- All cycling and canoeing equipment.

We provide & What to bring

We provide

For hiking:

- Transport to and from the trails

For marine activities:

- Necessary equipment such as canoe and paddle
- Life jacket

What to bring

For hiking:

- Clothing suitable for hiking, change of clothes (quick drying)
- Breathable rainwear (upper and lower)
- Hiking poles
- Water bottle
- Sunscreen, sunglasses
- Knapsack or rucksack

Nice to have:

- A compact, waterproof camera. This could be a smartphone with a suitable case.
- A map app that works in Japan.

About us

Shikoku Tours was established with the goal of introducing adventurous people to the wonders of the smallest of Japan's main islands, and to help preserve its unique heritage and culture. We work closely with local stakeholders to craft tours that satisfy our international customers while contributing to regional economies.

We're constantly learning, from our partners and friends in Shikoku, and from the feedback that we receive from our customers. Our website is the most comprehensive library of Shikoku travel content, reflecting our decade-long effort to document and promote the island we call home.

ShikokuTours.com

Guides

These are the professional guides who will be leading the activities.

Kiyooka Hiroyuki – Walking guide

Hiroyuki developed these courses in eastern Kochi as a means to introduce visitors to the fascinating history of the region, and the ongoing efforts to achieve a sustainable lifestyle. He enjoys showing people the remains of the forest railway which became a footpath for local people, and the yuzu groves of Umaji Village that came to replace forestry as the region's industry.

“When I'm guiding, I think what's important is to have a conversation with visitors.”



Hamazu Chisato – Aromatherapist

Chisato learned of the healing power of plants when she sought a cure for her husband's protracted illness. Aromatherapy proved efficacious, without the unpleasant side effects of the commercial medicines he was taking. Since then, she's studied aromatherapy and other plant-based treatments widely, and has taught her craft all over Japan. “Aroma is a natural medicine box. I hope that you can incorporate it into your daily life and spend your days smiling and healthy with the power of aroma.”



We look forward to seeing you in Shikoku!

Information and Requirements

Dietary Restrictions

We may be able to accommodate allergies to specific foods, but we're unable to accommodate vegans and vegetarians on this tour. Please note that uncooked fish is a major element of Shikoku eating and it features in many of the planned meals. It's a taste that most people acquire very quickly.

Emergency Response Plan

The tour activities are conducted in areas with road access and cell phone reception. Support vehicles are also on hand. The guides are trained to handle rescue and emergency medical situations, and they can respond to any equipment issues that may occur.

Information about you required in advance

Please provide us with the following information when you book:

- Nationality, passport number, date of birth
- Height, weight
- Emergency contact information
- Chronic conditions, medications taken, allergies, dietary restrictions, etc.

Reservation & Cancellation Policy

Payment Methods

We will send a booking confirmation by email with an invoice for full payment by 30 days before the start of the tour. If we do not receive the payment by the due date, the booking will be cancelled. We accept payment by all major credit cards and by TransferWise.

Cancellation

If you must cancel, please let us know by email. The following fees apply.

- 20 days before the day of the start of the tour: 20% of the total fee
- 7 days before the day of the start of the tour: 30% of the total fee
- The day before the day of the start of the tour: 40% of the total fee
- The day of the start of the tour: 50% of the total fee
- After the start of the tour or no-show without notice: 100% of the total fee

Disclaimer

Shikoku Tours reserves the right to cancel or change the itinerary of a tour. In the event of the tour being cancelled due to exceptional or unavoidable circumstances, we will refund all your costs. Shikoku Tours is not responsible for compensating any additional costs such as flights.

Our liability, and compensation for damages

In the performance of the travel contract, we will compensate you for any damage caused to you intentionally, or due to a mistake by us or our agents. However, you must notify us of the damage within two years from the day after the damage occurs.

Regarding damage to baggage, if you notify us within 14 days from the day after the damage occurs, we will pay compensation with a limit of JPY 150,000 per traveler (except in cases of damage caused intentionally or due to serious negligence by us).

We are not liable for compensation if you suffer damage due to the following reasons.

- i. Damage caused by natural disasters, wars, riots, government decrees, fires, and suspension of accommodation services
- ii. Food poisoning
- iii. Damage caused by your own wilfulness or negligence
- iv. Damage due to other reasons beyond our control or of our agents

Tour Operator / Contact

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Please address enquiries to Rod Walters, CEO.

Partner Companies

Umaji Village Guide Club

Local guides. [Website](#)

Hanna

Aroma therapy workshop. [Website](#)