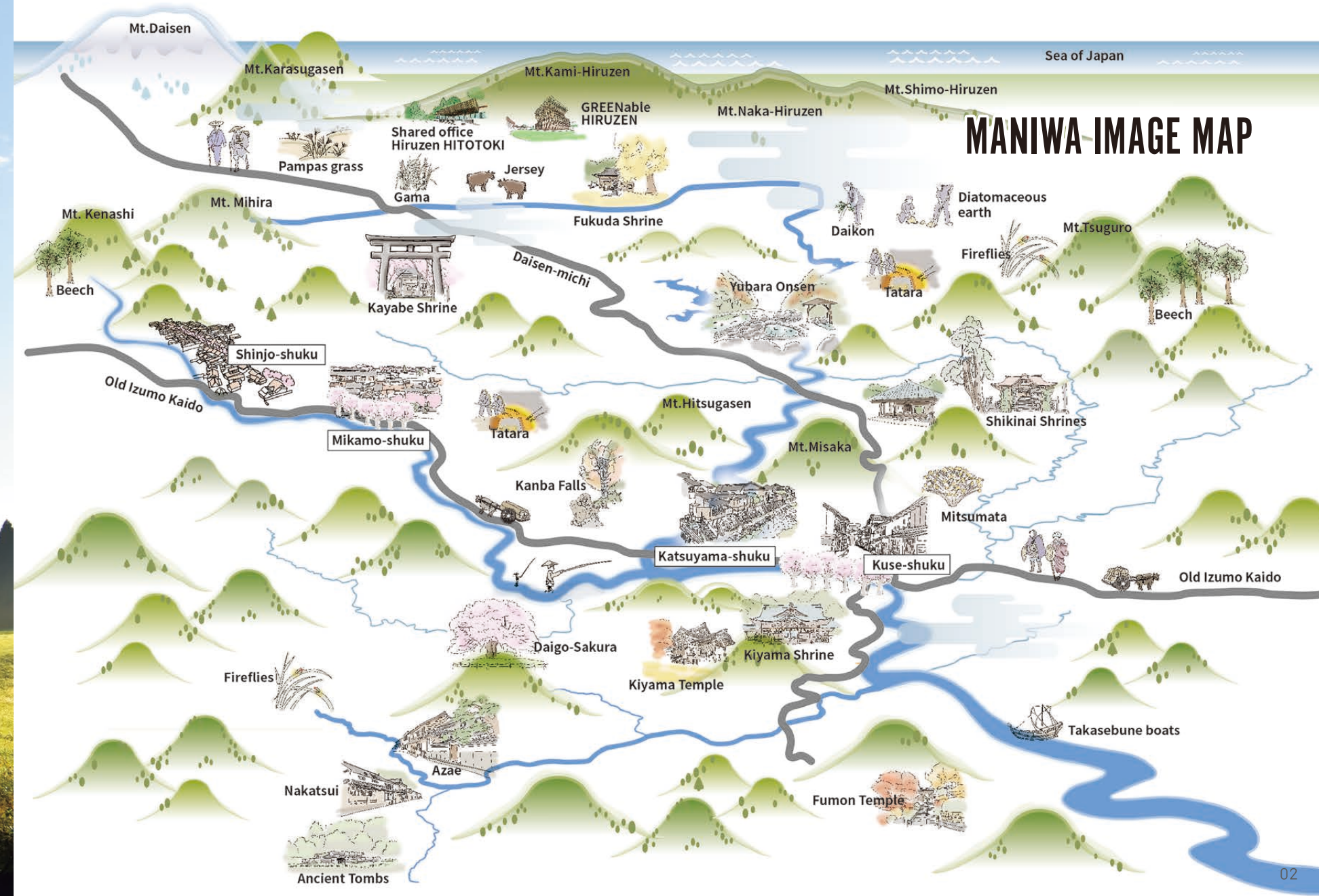


A gift that transcended a million years

Hiruzen used to be covered by a lake during the prehistoric era. However, a massive volcanic eruption one million years ago gave birth to the Hiruzen Sanza. Years later, Hiruzen Lake was formed. Mt Daisen, one of Japan's most iconic mountains was formed after 350,000 years. The rivers that flowed towards the san'in region changed direction and started flowing towards the sanyo region instead. The Hiruzen Lake disappeared and the area became the midpoint that connects the san'in and sanyo region. With a wide variety of natural vegetation and wildlife, Hiruzen developed its own unique culture and practices. The pure water from the mountains, thought to be linked to the lake, is being used in farming and agriculture. Towns nearby (Katsuyama, Yubara Onsen, Kuse, etc) developed and flourished due to the availability of healthy and delicious food. Join us in experiencing the gift of nature.





Water, the building block of civilisation

Water is a source of life.
The quality of water determines the quality of food, thereby determining the quality of life.
Blessed with clear waters, Maniwa area developed in a multitude of ways.

Hiruzen in the Snow

The snow falls and covers the area in the winter, then reaches deep inside the grounds, and eventually turns into water and brings the blessings of nature to us.



Old Izumo Kaido Shinjo-shuku

Shinjo-shuku, which thrived as an inn town on the way to and from Izumo, also benefitted from the River Shinjo.



Yubara Onsen: Outdoor Onsen Sunayu

The geothermally heated water gushes out as a hot spring, bringing relaxation to people.



Kanba Falls

The great fall is one of the largest in the Chugoku region, offering monkeys a place to rest.



The streets of Asahigawa and Katsuyama

Katsuyama has flourished as a post town of the Izumo road, as a castle town, and as a port for the Takasebune boats.



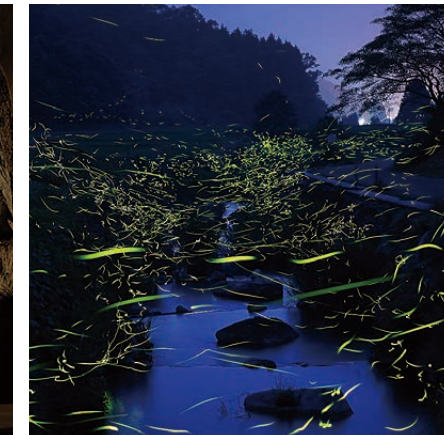
Delicious Rice

The clear water and rays of sunlight grow an abundance of rice.



Wells of Sake Breweries

The underground water drawn from the well brings out the flavors of specially produced local sake.



fireflies

The abundance of life nurtured on this land credits itself to the purity of water that flows through the area.



DAIGO-ZAKURA (Cherry tree)

In a quiet village surrounded by mountains, there stands a huge tree on a hill. Known as “Daigo-Zakura” (Daigo Cherry Blossom Tree), it is believed that the tree has lived over 1,000 years. The tree is being taken care of by people living in the region over a long period of time. Every year in spring, the elderlies in the village would organise an event around the tree with pride.



LAVENDER (HERB GARDEN HERBILL)

BOTANICAL

In the Maniwa region you can find various plants throughout the year. Cherry blossom can be enjoyed for about a whole month in spring as the temperature changes throughout the region's vast area stretching north to south. Hydrangeas in June, lavender in July, and sunflower fields in August. Then comes the season of autumn foliage, coloring the trees crimson. When that is over, a winter wonderland of mountains blanketed in snow awaits you.



FUMON-JI TEMPLE

AUTUMN FOLIAGE

Maniwa is famous for its many spots that offer great views of the autumn foliage. The leaves begin to change color once it is autumn, and the mountains burst into colors of red and yellow, delighting the eyes of many viewers. At shrines and temples, the grand trees turn into incredible autumnal colors, and the combination with the stately wooden structures creates a spectacular view.



FUKUDA-JINJA SHRINE



KIYAMA-JI TEMPLE



TSUKIDA St (JR KISHIN LINE)



CULTURE

Many historical landmarks have survived as well, which have been protected through careful attention paid by the local people. Here you can experience a great variety of the good old Japanese culture that respect traditions, from crafts and festivals to cuisine taking advantage of ingredients nurtured by nature's blessings.

KATSUYAMA HISTORICAL PRESERVATION DISTRICT

HISTORICAL SITES

KATSUYAMA HISTORICAL PRESERVATION DISTRICT

Katsuyama thrived as an inn town along the Izumo Kaido route leading to the castle town. The earthen-walled storehouses dozo, white-plastered walls shirokabe, and lattice windows that have survived in the streets of Katsuyama exude an antique atmosphere of Japan's past. Moreover, the ruins of the dock of takasebune flatboats once used in water transport remain to this day along the Asahigawa River. The atmosphere brought by the murmuring of the stream, the cobbled streets and the white walls of the houses makes this place worth the visit.



SHIBORI TIE-DYEING WORKSHOP



FORMER SENKYO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Former Senkyo Elementary School is a wooden school of Renaissance architecture built in 1907. The school has a striking exterior with a perfectly symmetrical design. Though its functions as a school ceased about 30 years ago, it is now open to public as a nationally designated important cultural property. Its popular features include the "nostalgic school meal" enjoyed while dressed in school uniforms.



SHINJO SHUKU

Shinjo-shuku strongly retains its legacy as an inn town along the Izumo Kaido route. The streets exuding an ancient atmosphere make feel as though you have traveled back in time to the Edo period. The town is also home to a roughly 400m long tunnel created by a row of cherry blossom trees, which includes an ancient tree that is over 100 years old, along the waterway of a clear stream. Cherry blossom viewing is a recommended activity in spring.

ONSEN

Sunayu, an outdoor hot spring located in Yubara has been ranked 1st in an outdoor hot spring ranking. The hot water comes from artesian springs - underground water. Only 1% of hot springs in Japan uses water from artesian springs. Enjoy the beautiful scenery surrounding the hot spring while you soak in the water. Do note that since this is a mixed bath, guests are allowed to enter the bath in their swimsuit.



SUNAYU OUTDOOR HOT SPRING



HIMAWARI-KAN

OPEN-AIR BATH

Maniwa is home to lots of accommodation and bathhouses that offer hot springs and open-air baths, with Yubara Onsen being the main area. Visitors can enjoy the changing seasons in the baths that come with their own unique characters.



ONSEN YAKUSHIDO

Temple, located at the center of the Yubara Onsen Town, is worshipped as the buddha of healing that returns things that have been lost. Maybe you will get back the things you have lost, like money, health, and even a lover. The temple is worth a visit. During the annual Flower Festival on May 8, visitors can see thumb-size statues of the buddha of healing.



COTTAGES & RENTAL HOLIDAY HOMES



INNS

STAY In different areas of Maniwa, there is a wide variety of accommodation from hotels, cottages, rental holiday homes, inns, guest houses, campsites, and more. You can choose what suits you best according to your preference and budget.



SHIOGAMA CAMPING VILLAGE



YAMAZATO CUISINE



HIMENO MOCHI & GINSHIBUKI(YAM)

CUISINE The Maniwa region is rich in nature and a treasure trove of food such as vegetables from the highlands and mountains, and freshwater fish from the clear stream. Come and experience the incredible culinary culture that only the countryside of Japan can provide.



JERSEY DAIRY PRODUCTS



CHEESE

CUISINE Hiruzen area is one of Japan's foremost breeding area for jersey cattle, which are originally from the British Islands Bailiwick of Jersey. Dairy products made from what is called "golden Jersey milk" is extra rich. The red meat of Jersey cattle is rare yet soft, bright and rich in iron, and offers a rich flavor.



HIRUZEN YAKISOBA



SOBA



CHEESE FONDUE



JERSEY BEEF STEAK



ACTIVITY Go river trekking to take in the cool summer breezes, or strap on snowshoes and explore silvery tapestries of fresh snow in winter. A wholesome array of activities are available to experience all that nature has to offer in these highlands. Cycling around the highlands or through traditional Japanese landscapes is a refreshing experience, no matter the season—local guides can help you discover the best spots in the region!



GREENable HIRUZEN

Sustainable Living

Hiruzen Kogen Highlands—bringing people and nature together in seamless wonder. Set amongst this natural backdrop, “GREENable HIRUZEN” was created as a link between the Satoyama countryside and urban life. Designed by world-renowned architect Kengo Kuma to showcase the true wonder of the Hiruzen Kogen Highlands, “GREENable HIRUZEN” is a tourist and cultural center providing visitors with first-hand experience of sustainable value. The “Kaze no Ha” pavilion, constructed with locally sourced Maniwa lumber, treats visitors stepping inside with sweeping breezes and forest-inspired themes.

Experience

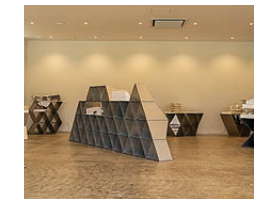
Facilities alongside the “Kaze no Ha” pavilion include a Visitor’s Center that offers services and a range of products designed with both people and nature in mind, and a uniquely styled cycling center featuring a locally grown silver grass thatched roof that appears to be placed upside-down. A range of nature and culture-inspired activities are on offer here.



Shared office Hiruzen HITOTOKI

Experience

The “Hiruzen Hitotoki” shared office space is a source of inspiration for new ideas, and was also designed architectural firm Kengo Kuma. Discover for yourself a work style that can serve as the foundation of new encounters and co-creation.





EXPERIENCE GUIDE

COUNTRYSIDE

The Maniwa Tourism Bureau coordinates “experience programs”, through which visitors can enjoy trying out a traditional way of life unique to the Japanese countryside, and interacting with the locals. Come and enjoy a wonderful time with the friendly people of Maniwa!

EXPERIENCE GUIDE

CYCLING

Hop onto the bike and cycle your way through the countryside. Enjoy the cool breeze as you cycle along the river and through the cherry blossom tunnel. In this experience, you’d get to sample delicious local cuisine, harvest vegetables or try your hands on handcraft. Let our experienced local guide show you the best places in the region.



EXPERIENCE GUIDE

GUIDE TOUR OF SHIKINAI SHRINES

Surrounded by the mountains where clear water flows through and quiet time passes by, the Yashiro district is the epitome of an unspoiled Japanese landscape. The area is scattered with historical heritage including shrines, temples, stonework, and traces of iron sand mining. Accompanied by a local guide, visitors can tour around the attractions of the Yashiro district, which is home to many unsolved mysteries.



FARMING EXPERIENCE

Staying at a farmer’s house, harvesting vegetables and fruit, interacting with the farmers while cooking the safe and reliable ingredients, enjoying their taste in the land of Maniwa, blessed by the surviving unspoiled landscape of Japan. Maniwa offers an experience you cannot find in the city.

Maniwa HACCO Tourism

The traditional artisanal techniques of fermentation have been preserved in the land of Maniwa, precisely because Maniwa rests in the countryside of Japan. Come and join the tour in which you can visit the people behind fermentation, who are committed to quality and work diligently to create products of high value.



Environmentally Friendly Initiatives



SDGs

Maniwa is selected as one of the model cities that puts the United Nation's sustainable development goals (SDGs) into practice. The city is also a Biomass Industry City, which pursues sustainable industries and lifestyles that recycle resources through the use of its local resource, the forest. The city organizes tours called "Maniwa SDGs and Biomass Tour", so that the visitors can look at some of the region's efforts.



SOY SAUCE & MISO PASTE



WINE

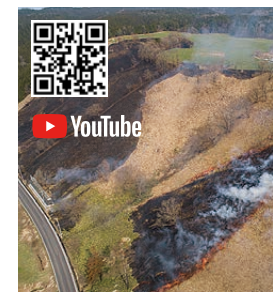


SAKE



FERMENTED FOODS OF MANIWA

The culture of fermentation thrives in Maniwa, a city that draws on the benefits of its clear water. From sake, miso, soy sauce, and vinegar to wine, beer, and even cheese. Their delectable character is emphasized further through the rich natural environment and artisanal prowess.



YAMAYAKI

After the snow thaws, something that reminds us of the arrival of spring, the "Mountain Burning," is held. This is allowed only in the villages with the purpose of the conservation of the rare flora, fauna, and the landscape of the grasslands.



FORESTRY



AGRICULTURE



STOCK RAISING

The Satoyama Countryside of Maniwa: Bringing People and Nature Together

Growing crops in the field and keeping warm with firewood and charcoal while tasting the bounty of nature. That is the beauty of countryside lifestyle that the city cannot offer. People have come closer together as they protect their ancient wisdom and clever inventions and develop their community by making the most of their satoyama resources.



FESTIVAL

OMIYA DANCE FESTIVAL

[Nationally Designated Important Intangible Folk Cultural Properties]

Omiya Dance Festival is a type of traditional dance festival of the Hiruzen region, performed during the Obon season. Omiya-odori starts around the end of July every year, and culminates between August 13 and 19, during which the performances can be seen throughout the region. Washi paper adorned with delicate paper cutouts called shirige dangle from the hanging lanterns, as the circle of the dance expands around the light in the quaint, spiritual atmosphere. It is said that the dance performances represent the wishes of the predecessors that arose in their daily lives, such as commemoration of ancestors, prosperity of descendants, and bountiful harvests.



Katsuyama Kenka Danjiri Festival [The Three Danjiri of Okayama]

Katsuyama has long thrived as a key location along the Izumo Kaido route. The venue is mainly in the area designated as a townscape preservation area, and excitement blazes in the area during the fighting festival Kenka Danjiri, which is held annually on October 19 and 20. Kenka Danjiri is said to have started in the late Edo period, and in it nine danjiri floats clash with each other violently in four fighting areas. The audience gets caught up in the excitement as they watch the youths of Katsuyama colliding in the most heated event of the year.



Kuse Festival Danjiri Kenka [The Three Danjiri of Okayama]

Kuse Festival is said to have started in the Genroku era (1688–1704), and is held annually on October 25 and 26. The greatest highlight is Danjiri Kenka, in which danjiri floats are bumped against each other. Danjiri are modeled on takasebune flatboats, which used to be a mode of transport. The crowd on both sides undulate left to right as they crash into each other again and again in the hope of creating momentum to pierce the opponent's float with the pointed tip of their danjiri. You may even see sparks flying from the impact of the crash!



Unusual Festival of Okayama

Hanzaki Festival is a seasonal feature of summer in the Yubara area. “Hanzaki” refers to giant Japanese salamanders, which are protected as the country’s “special natural monument”. Known as the unusual festival of Okayama, the event is an annual tradition held on August 8 of every year. The festival features floats carrying giant salamanders and illuminated salamanders, as well as instrumental performances of dochu bayashi, filling Yubara Onsen with salamander vibes.



HANZAKI

Hanzaki is another name for the Osansho-uo (Adrias japonicas / Great salamander), also known as a living fossil which hasn't evolved for the past 30 million years, and has been designated as a national special natural treasure. There are not many places where they inhabit, and it can be seen at the “Hanzaki Center” at the Yuhara region in Maniwa.



[Traditional Crafts Designated by Okayama Prefecture]

GOBARA LACQUERWARE

This daily-use lacquerware featuring beautiful grain patterns has a history of about 600 years and has been produced in the Gobara area, which thrived as an inn town where people passing back and forth along the Daisen Michi route gathered. The unprocessed, wild Japanese chestnut trees are cut into round slices then shaped. Diatomaceous earth from Hiruzen is used for the base. Glazed with the lacquer of locally grown trees, this traditional craft is a rare and valuable find.



[Traditional Crafts Designated by Okayama Prefecture]

GAMA-ZAIKU

Gama-zaiku is the art of weaving southern cattail growing wild in the wetlands of the Hiruzen area, using the cords made from the Japanese linden bark. Making use of the excellent waterproof and thermal qualities of cattail, craftsmen carefully weave every product by hand, mainly daily items such as handbags, zori sandals, and snowshoes.

TRADITION



[Traditional Craft Designated by the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry]

KATSUYAMA BAMBOO WORK

Traditional craft produced in the Katsuyama region. The craft dates back to around the end of the Edo period (1853-1869), when people made sieves and baskets that they used in farming and at home. In modern times, contemporary designs are incorporated into items such as sundries and vases. Rustic yet impressive, these items are resilient and simple to use.

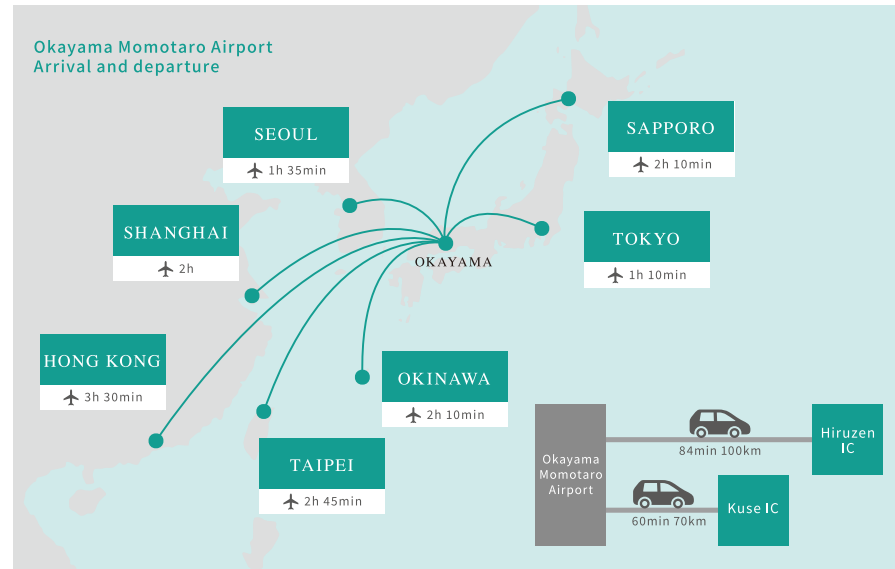


[Traditional Crafts]

KASHINISHI WASHI PAPER

Kashinishi washi paper is a type of handmade Japanese paper made of paperbush produced in the Kashinishi district. The paperbush from this region, which began serious production in the Meiji period, is of good quality, and was used in Japan's 10,000 yen bill. Kashinishi Tesuki Washi Kobo ("Kashinishi Handmade Washi Paper Studio"), produces and sells a wide variety of washi products, from traditional paper to original pieces dyed in colorful colors.

BY PLANE



Access by car from each airport

Yonago Kitaro Airport

Hiruzen IC 60min 50km
Kuse IC 80min 80km

Izumo Enmusubi Airport

Hiruzen IC 80min 90km
Kuse IC 95min 120km

Tottori Sand Dunes Conan Airport

Hiruzen IC 85min 70km
Kuse IC 100min 90km

CLIMATE



Maniwa is located in the north of Okayama Prefecture, with ideal access to both the Setouchi and San'in regions. Depending on the seasons, there are spectacular sceneries to be seen here. However, please take note that the climates differ drastically between the southern regions (Kuse) and the northern areas (Hiruzen). The average temperatures for each are shown in the table below.

Highest recorded temperature Kuse Area 39.3°C
Lowest recorded temperature Hiruzen (Kaminagata) -20.2°C

BY TRAIN

