

Ise-Shima National Park



National Parks of Japan



A national park is designated by the Japanese government as a natural landscape that represents Japan based on the Natural Parks Act.

Thirty-four national parks are designated from Hokkaido in the north down to Okinawa and the Ogasawara Islands in the south, and more than 300 million people visit them every year.

These national parks are full of precious treasures such as wild animals and plants, history and culture in addition to the scenic beauty. Japan's national parks are characterized by various environments such as forests, farmlands, villages, etc. While some are untouched, the local history and culture derived from nature and people's lives can be appreciated.

Come visit our national parks to fully enjoy the beautiful nature of Japan that shows off various sceneries in each season.

Terrain Geological Features Wild Animals and Plants

– Landscape combining complex topography –

A wide variety of natural landscapes lie both inland and along the coasts of Ise-Shima National Park.

The coastal area of Ise-Shima National Park is notable for its indented ria coasts. These were thought to be formed over a long period of time by various factors, including river valleys that were drowned when sea levels rose after the last glacial period. The calm seas and puzzle-piece shapes of Ago Bay's islands create an aesthetically pleasing, peaceful landscape. On the Pacific side of the Shima Peninsula, erosion from rough waves has created jagged cliffs and terraces. This dramatic scenery can be seen along the coast from Daiozaki Headland to Minami-Ise.

Ise-Shima National Park's inland area is characterized by lush forests and low mountains. These offer many hiking trails to explore, as well as numerous vantage points from which to view the patchwork coastline and seas. In Ise-Shima, rich nutrients flow from the inland forests to the coastlands and surrounding seas. The warm ocean current also enriches marine life, supporting the local fishing villages. Local aquafarming practices, such as pearl cultivation and tending the rafts floating on Ago Bay, compliment the natural scenery.



Views of the Rias coast

Characteristics

Ise-Shima National Park A Story of Harmony Between People, the Sea, and Ise Jingu's Ancient Tradition

Ise-Shima National Park covers central Mie Prefecture, including most of the Shima Peninsula. It spans a vast area of almost 60,000 hectares. The inland area of the park boasts gentle mountain slopes and lush green forests that surround Ise Jingu, Japan's most important *jinja* (Shinto shrine) complex. Its precincts are seen as the heart of Japanese spirituality. The topographically varied coastline ranges from rugged outcrops to ancient rock ledges and sandy beaches. Unlike most national parks, Ise-Shima has a relatively large proportion of private land, and significant populations in four cities: Ise City, Toba City, Shima City, and Minami-Ise Town. The lives, history, culture, and customs of Ise-Shima's people are deeply connected to the park's natural landscapes. Since ancient times, they have lived with nature and respected the environment.

[Date of Designation] November 20, 1946 [Relevant Prefectures] Mie Pref.
[Area] 555.44 km² (Land area) 209km² (Sea area)



Rias Coast of Ago Bay & Pearl cultivation farms

Culture

Ise-Shima National Park allows visitors to experience local traditions, customs, and festivals which have a deep connection with nature.

– Ise Jingu –

At the spiritual heart of Ise-Shima National Park is Ise Jingu. Founded about 2,000 years ago as a place to worship and give thanks to the sun deity Amaterasu-Omikami, the Ise Jingu precincts blend harmoniously with the surrounding forests. Ise Jingu represents the connection between people and nature. Nutrients from the protected forests in Ise Jingu enrich the sea and help ensure abundant marine life in Ise-Shima. People show gratitude for nature's blessings, including seafood, through various ceremonies. The Ise Jingu buildings are rebuilt every twenty years, ensuring that traditional craftsmanship survives. This also helps ensure the sacred site remains fresh and timeless, much like the diverse and vibrant nature of Ise-Shima itself.

– Meoto Iwa in Futami, Ise –

The Meoto Iwa ("Husband and Wife Rocks")—a large and a smaller rock bound together with straw ropes—are one of Ise-Shima National Park's most famous sights. See the sunrise here in early summer, perfectly framed by the rocks. The Meoto Iwa site has been a place for sun worship since ancient times. Very lucky visitors may even see Mt. Fuji.



Ujibashi bridge and Torii Gate



Sunrise of the Meoto Iwa Rocks



Ama (Female Divers) Fishery

Conservation Efforts

– Alien Species Control –

Set in the south of Shima City, the Wagu-Oshima Island is an uninhabited island listed as a Natural Monument of the Mie Prefecture. It is populated by colonies of seaside plants, such as *Crinum asiaticum* var. *japonicum*. However, a fast-spreading introduced plant species: Spanish-dagger (a type of *Yucca*) is identified as one of the greatest threats to the island's native species. The Ministry of the Environment has been working in cooperation with the local people to eradicate *Yucca*.

– Restoration of seaweed forests –

It is concerned that degradation of algae forests (called *Isoyake* in Japanese) reduces both productivity and biodiversity of marine ecosystems. Local organizations have been taking actions to tackle this issue. The Toshi branch of the Toba-Isobe Fishery's Association has been engaged in a restoration program near Toshijima Island, Toba City, since 2005. To encourage re-establishment of the seaweed forests, natural stones with *arame* (a type of algae) larvae are dispersed into the ocean. Today, Fishery's Associations in Shima City and Minami-Ise Town run similar restoration programs.

– Restoration of Tidal Flats –

Ago Bay once had abundant tidal flats. However, some of them are degraded by dehydration due to change in land use. It has been reported that both biological productivity and natural water purification ability of the ecosystem have increased in some restored tidal flats. The governments, local fishermen and companies collaborate to restore tidal flats in Ago Bay, which is expected to have positive effects on the natural environment and the local fishery.

Contact List

Chubu Regional Environment Office
Sannomaru 2-5-2,
Naka Ward, Nagoya City, Aichi Prefecture
460-0001
Tel: 052-955-2130

Ise-Shima National Park Office
Ugata 3098-26, Ago Town,
Shima City, Mie Prefecture
517-0501
Tel: 0599-43-2210

The Association of the Ise-Shima National Park
URL: <http://www.ise-shima.or.jp/>

Yokoyama Visitor Center
URL: <http://chubu.env.go.jp/nature/yokoyama/>



Ise-Shima National Park Website
<http://www.env.go.jp/en/nature/nps/park/iseshima/index.html>

Cover Photo: Sunset of Ago Bay (Kirigaki View Point in Tomoyama Park)

For Safe Travel
Please download below application in order to get information about warning for earthquake, volcanoes, tsunami and so on.

*Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=jtp.co.rcsc.safety/Tips.android>
*iPhone: <https://itunes.apple.com/jp/app/safety-tips/id858357174?mt=8>



Supported by Japan Tourism Agency (<https://www.jnto.go.jp/safety-tips/eng/app.html>)



Publisher: Ministry of the Environment
Year published: 2021

This English-language text was created by the Japan Tourism Agency.

* Please note that the highlights & guide map's purpose is to show an overview of the designated area; therefore, a margin of error shall be allowed.



Hypselodoris festiva



Osprey



Uzume-gashi oak (Quercus phillyraeoides)



Jingu tsutsuji (Rhododendron sanctum)



Hamabo (Hibiscus hamabo)



Seaweed Forest (Ecklonia cava Kjellman)

Ethics in National Parks

Please keep in mind the importance of nature and observe the following while staying in the national park so that everyone can enjoy.



Do not litter.



Do not pick flowers or plants.



Do not feed any wildlife.



Do not catch/capture any wildlife.



Bonfires shall be built within the designated area only.



Do not bring alien species. All alien species are prohibited in the park.

- When you feel an earthquake, be prepared for a tsunami and evacuate immediately to higher ground.
- Catching fish and shellfish by other than fishery operators might constitute a violation of fishery rights and be punishable by law.
- The entry of vehicles into the breeding grounds of loggerhead turtles is restricted.



At 555m, Mt. Asama's summit is the highest point in Ise-Shima National Park. The soil here contains serpentinite, stunting the growth of coastal species of plants and trees. The open landscape gives visitors an uninterrupted 360-degree view of Ise Bay, the islands of Toba Bay, and the Pacific. Enjoy these vistas while taking a hot footbath at the nearby viewpoint. Along a fifteen-minute walking route near the summit, one can view plants such as jingu-tsutsuji (*Rhododendron sanctum*), a variety of azalea. It is also possible to go to the viewpoint by car, or by hiking along a trail which is accessible from Asama Station.



Located along the Pearl Road that stretches 23.8km between Shima and Toba, the Toba View Point is a scenic spot. One can view both the Pacific and forests of Ise Jingu, Japan's most important *jinja* (Shinto shrine) complex, from here. The panoramic ocean vista stretches from the Atsumi Peninsula to Daiozaki. As the stars are clearly visible, people also visit this area to view the night sky.



Located in Ise-Shima National Park, Yokoyama's leisurely hiking course allows visitors to experience the area's nature firsthand, as well as admire spectacular views of Ago Bay from five different angles. Yokoyama Tenku Café Terrace can be reached easily from the carpark via the wheelchair access ramp. Alternatively, visitors can stroll up the stone steps from the Yokoyama Visitor Center. After enjoying the cafe and terrace, visitors can take in further views of the bay and Shima City from various viewpoints along the trail.



Tomoyama Park in Shima is surrounded on three sides by Ago Bay. Unlike other viewpoints such as Yokoyama and Mt. Konpira, the Kirigaki View Point in Tomoyama Park allows visitors a closer view of the bay's jagged coastline and uninhabited forested islands. Visiting this spot on evenings around the spring and fall equinoxes to watch the sunset over the entrance to the bay is highly recommended.



At 150m above sea level, the Nankai View Point offers panoramic views across Gokasho Bay's lagoon. A causeway crosses the bay, linking both sides. The view over the sea here is so far-reaching that the horizon appears curved.



Located in Minami-Ise, Ugura Picnic Site has four viewpoints offering different views of the rocky coastline facing the Kumanonada Sea. The park has gained popularity as a romantic place for couples to visit due to the beautiful heart-shaped inlet that can be seen from the Meshima View Point. At night the stars are clearly visible, attracting astronomers to this spot.

Activity Ise-Shima National Park Eco Tour

Ise-Shima National Park offers so many activities and unique experiences that there is sure to be something to interest and excite everyone.

- Water Sports and Activities -



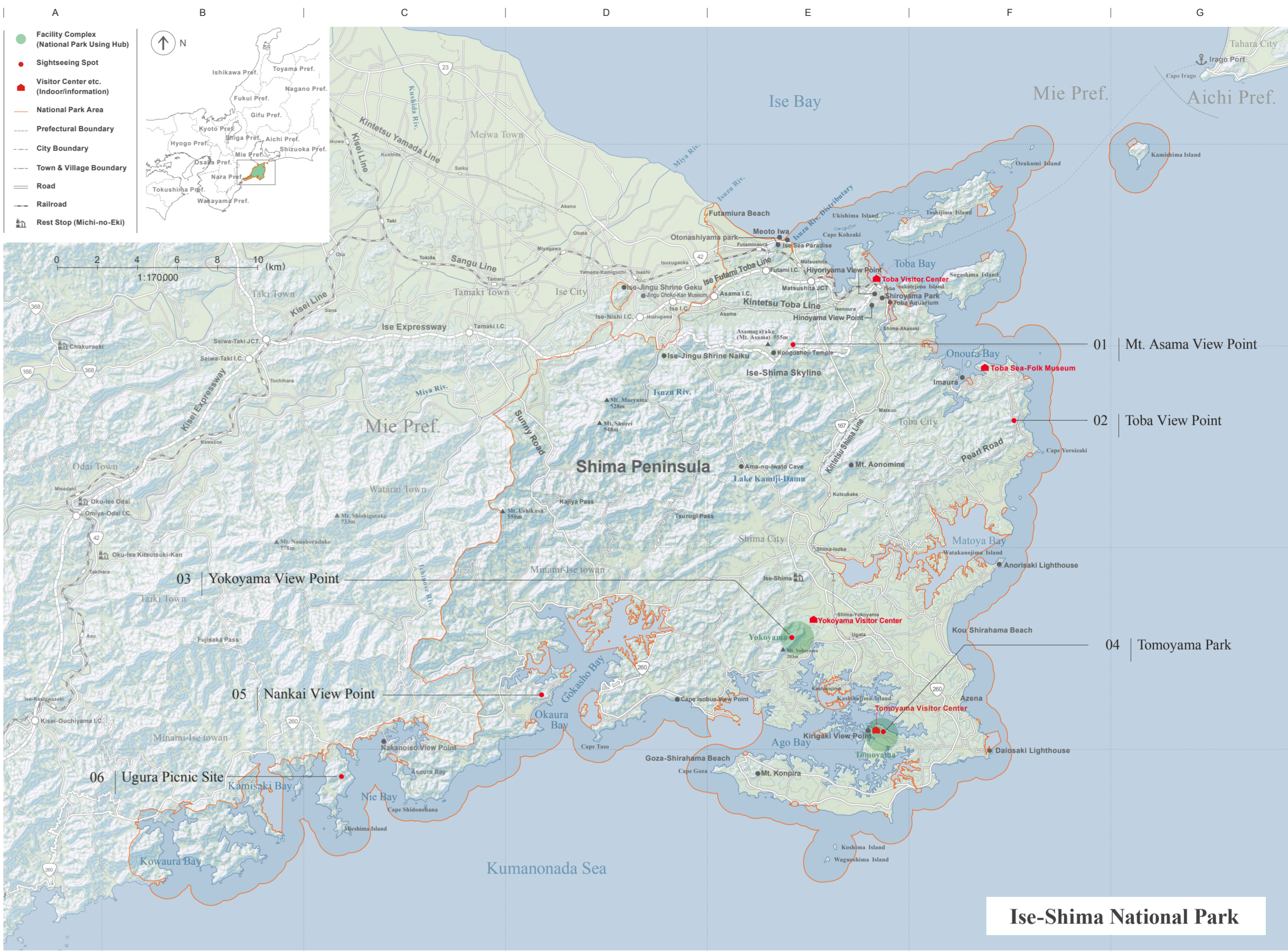
From mid-April to September, visitors can enjoy many water activities in the calmer seas of the bays. Going on a sea kayak or a paddleboard tour allows visitors to explore the inlets along the coastline and some of the many islands. The fully guided sea kayak tours are suitable for beginners and families. Some places also offer sea kayak tours at night, when the moon and stars over the sea create a romantic atmosphere.



For the more adventurous, skydiving over Ise-Shima's seas, green forests, and coastlines makes for an exhilarating experience. This is available from summer through the fall. There is surfing on the Pacific side of Ise-Shima. Surf enthusiasts can rent boards from surfing schools. Snorkelers can discover seaweed beds and various types of seaweed, such as *wakame*. Diving offers close encounters with marine life, including various types of sea slug.



For those seeking a more relaxed vacation, various cruises depart from Kashikojima Island and Toba Bay. Ago Bay's ferries weave around the bay's many small islands, giving travelers an up-close view of the curving coastlines and lush forests.



Please contact each responsible Ise-Shima National Park office of the Ministry of the Environment for area details.

- Hiking and Walking -



Ise-Shima boasts numerous hiking trails, which lead visitors to the beautiful scenery of the surrounding bays and mountains. Trails suitable for beginners include the Yokoyama Picnic Site, with its many viewpoints offering vistas across Ago Bay. Surrounded by a large number of blossoming cherry trees in spring, Mt. Otonashi's promenade looks out across Ise Bay towards Aichi Prefecture's Atsumi and Chita peninsulas. Hikers who want to walk further can try climbing to the top of Mt. Asama, Ise-Shima National Park's highest mountain. There are also guided walking tours of Shima's rocky coasts and historical fishing villages.

- Food Culture -



Ise-Shima is famous for its seafood, and there are many opportunities for fishing and related activities for visitors. Fishing boat tours of Ago Bay allow visitors to catch fish such as horse mackerel, with chances of catching improved with expert advice from the boatmen. Similar tours are offered on fishing boats and feeding farmed sea bream. From January to March, *wakame* seaweed harvesting excursions are available. In Minami-Ise, visitors can try other fishing-related activities, such as rides on fishing boats and feeding farmed sea bream. In Ise-Shima an activity program allows travelers to experience local culture, including visiting an *ama* diver's hut. This is a building where, traditionally, female divers known as *ama* relaxed, chatted and warmed themselves in front of a fire after diving. *Ama* have played an important role in Ise-Shima's culture for centuries, and today the majority of Japan's remaining *ama* live in this area. Visitors can relax around the hut's central fire pit while an *ama* cooks fresh, seasonal seafood in front of them. These are rare opportunities to meet divers in a traditional setting and to hear their stories. In summer, those who would like to learn more about them can participate in dives with an *ama*.

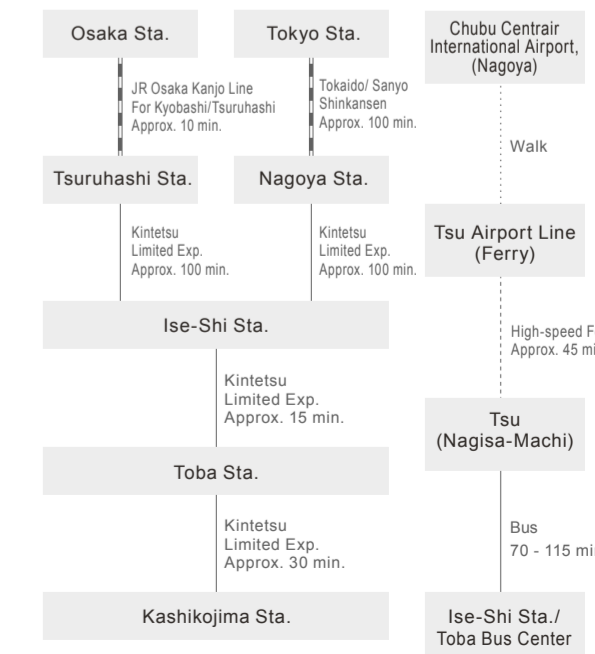
Information Facilities

Yokoyama Visitor Center | E4
 Ugata 875-24, Ago Town, Shima City, Mie Prefecture
 517-0501
 [TEL] 0599-44-0567
 This center offers an introduction to the nature and culture of Ise-Shima National Park through its displays of images, panels, photographs, and specimens. It also has seasonal information covering events and highlights. You will also find details of recommended courses and other sightseeing information in Ise-Shima National Park, in addition to information on the nature around the visitor center.

Toba Sea-Folk Museum | F3
 Ogitsu1731-68, Uramura-cho, Toba City, Mie Prefecture
 517-0025
 [TEL] 0599-32-6006
 This museum portrays the long and deep relationship between the sea and people. The exhibitions on coastal fishery in Mie Prefecture focus on *ama* (female divers), the marine products offered to Ise Jingu Shrine and the Imperial Court from this area, sea-related religion and festivals, and the marine environment. It contains around 60,000 folkloric materials related to the sea. Various events and exhibitions related to the sea are held at the museum, including a seaside nature experience and fish-eating experience.

* Please directly contact each facility for details such as the hours of operation, etc.

Access Transportation



* The access route above is an example. The time required for each section is an estimate only. Please contact each transportation company or check their websites for more information.

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