

Travel Guide of Scenic Byway Kyushu

Q-① Nichinan Sparkling Coast

Cities of Miyazaki, Nichinan, and Kushi-ma (Miyazaki Pref.) —Unique Coastline, Myth and Tropical Plant—

The scenic area of Nichinan's Sparkling Coast consists of the cities of Miyazaki, Nichinan and Kushima, and belongs to the Nichinan Seaside National Park in the southern part of Miyazaki Prefecture, which is a subtropical region.

(Access). Miyazaki Airport, and Miyazaki Station on the Nippou Main Line of JR Kyushu are important access points to this scenic area. Also, in the section of expressway between Shin-Yatsushiro Station on the Kyushu Shinkansen and Miyazaki City, the high-speed bus system, which is named as "B&S Miyazaki", is operated.

(Scenic Resources). The Nichinan Sparkling Coast has three main landscape resources. One of them is the stunning terrain under the tropical sun along the Nichinan coast. If you drive along the coastline from Miyazaki City to Kushima City, it will change greatly with Aoshima Island as the boundary.

The northern part of Aoshima Island is a flat area with sandy beaches, and the coast from the Hitotsuba area to Aoshima is part of the sandy Miyazaki Plain. On the other hand, the southern part is a serrated coastline. Going south over Aoshima, a large bedrock called the Devil's Washboard spreads out, forming a precipitous cliff (see photo (2)).

The second is a subtropical plant colony, where you can enjoy a tropical landscape with colorful flowers and trees. As you drive south along the road with rows of Washington Palms, you will find the Aoshima Island covered with wild palm trees. After that you will arrive in Nichinan City, where cycads and cactuses grow, and you can enjoy flowers such as jacaranda, lantana or hibiscus under the dazzling sun.

Myths written more than 1300 years ago are the third regional resource. Japanese mythology is described in the Kojiki, the oldest historical book edited in the 8th century, and it is said that this landscape road is one of the places corresponding to the mythical world.

Niniginomikoto God descended from heaven to Takachiho-mine Peak, which is on the border of Miyazaki and Kagoshima prefectures, and reigned over the country. Later, the descendant, Emperor Jimmu, left the Miyazaki to settle the country and establish the Yamato administration. Along the shimmering coastline of Nichinan, there are many places and shrines that convey this myth.

(Main Route). The access to this scenic spot is covered by two expressways in Miyazaki Prefecture, but the main roads of this scenic route are National Route 220 and National Route 448, as shown in the map. To visit the inland scenic spots, you need to add prefectural road 28 and national road 222. The JR Kyushu Nichinan Line is also available as a public transportation, and the limited express "Umisachi/Yamasachi" is popular.

The distance from Miyazaki City to Kushima City is about 200 km, and the main scenic zones are indicated by serial numbers (1) to (6) on the map.

(1) Scenery spots of the urban area in Miyazaki City.

Miyazaki is a city of sports. Due to the mild winter climate, various professional teams such as baseball, rugby and soccer are in camp during the off-season. As a result, you can enjoy these sports, while enjoying the world of mythology. Both children and adults can have a fun trip together.

There is the Hitotsuba Toll Road in the northeastern part of Miyazaki City, along which a vast pine forest facing the Hyuga Sea extends. It is the largest Awakigahara Forest Park in Miyazaki City. You can enjoy walking, golfing, swimming and driving, as well as a public forest, resort facilities and a natural zoo.

As shown in photo (1), gods shrined in the Eda Shrine are a couple of the god of Izanagi Mikoto and the goddess of Izanami Mikoto. According to local myths, the two gods created many



Q-① Nichinan Sparkling Coast (NICHINAN)



(2) View from Horikiri Pass of Nichinan Coast Road.



(1) Tachibana Main Street in CBD, and Tachibana Parkway along the Oyodo River.



(1) Awakigahara Forest Park in Miyazaki City



(1) Eda Shrine (upper) and Misogi Pond (lower)

islands and gods in Japan. It is also said that many gods were born again when Izanagi cleansed himself in a pond near the shrine after Izanami died. One of them is Amaterasu Okami, the founder of the imperial family.

Miyazaki Shrine is also located 7 km southwest of Eda Shrine, and enshrines the Emperor Jimmu who is a descendant of Amaterasu-Omikami. As described in the book of Kojiki, the Japanese believe that he grew up in Miyazaki region and became the first Emperor in the founding of Japan.

Then, proceeding these shrines for a while, you can encounter the bustling city center and wander through the boulevard (Tachibana Main Street) of Washington's palm trees and large camphor trees. We also recommend taking a walk along the Tachibana-Parkway along Oyodo River.

(2) Aoshima Island and Horikiri Pass in Miyazaki City.

Proceeding 16 kilometers south National Route 220 from the center of Miyazaki City, you can reach Aoshima Island. While a large scale of lamination by sandstone and mudstone can be seen in the area around the island, the nature of island remains untouched and is entirely covered with wild palm trees. Aoshima Shrine is located in the center of the island and is dedicated to the god Hikohohodemino-Mikoto, the grandfather of the first Emperor Jinmu. He was skilled at hunting in the mountains, so he is also called Yamasachi-Hiko and is the god of mountain foods.

Paying attention to the branch point on the way and further going south along the seashore road (Prefectural Road 377), you'll arrive at Horikiri Pass (80m above sea level) immediately. You can see a symbolic view of the route, as shown in Photo (2) on page 1.

The strange rock-shaped devil's washboard and phoenix harmonize with the blue sea and blue sky. In addition, colorful tropical flowers such as Hibiscus and Jacaranda welcome all travelers.

(3) Areas of UdoJingu Shrine in Nichinan City



(2) Aoshima Island surrounded with the Wavelike Rocks (Upper). Aoshima Shrine and Botanic Garden Aoshima (Lower)

If you follow the prefectural road while watching the the strange rocks, you will enter National Route 220, and if you go further Prefectural Road 443, you will reach Udo Jingu Shrine.

The shrine building is located in a cliff cave facing the Hyuga Sea. Many shrines are generally on the stairs due to the legend that God came down from heaven. This shrine, on the other hand, is located on the bottom of the stairs and is a very rare case (see photo (3)).

The main god of Udo Shrine is "Hikonagisatake-Ugayafukiaezuno-Mikoto", and its name is long and difficult. For this reason, although not well known in Japan, he is famous as the father of Emperor Jimmu and the son of Yamasachihiko.

In short, the gods of the shrines of (1) to (3) in the Miyazaki region are described in Japan's oldest historical record, "Kojiki". It is related to the creation of the earth and the descent of Amaterasu's grandson to the earth. Arranged according to the flow of myth, the results are as shown in the table. In particular, "Ninigino-Mikoto", "Yamasachi-Hiko" and "Ugayafukiaezuno-Mikoto" are said to be Hyuga's Gods of three generations.

Hyuga is the old name of the Miyazaki region including the eastern part of Kagoshima Prefecture. If interesting the Japanese roots and hoping to understand the spirit of the Japanese people, we recommend you to visit shrines shown in the table.

(4) Aburatsu Port and Horikawa Canal in Nichinan City.

Returning to National Route 220 from Udo Jingu Shrine and heading south, you will find Aburatsu Port.

Aburatsu Port played an important role in the trade with the Tang Dynasty in ancient China. In 17th to 19th century (Edo period), it prospered as a shipping port of timbers, and in the present age, fishing of tuna and bonito is prosperous, and fishing boats come in and out of the country. At the same time, cruise ships from Asia enter the port several times a year recently.

Through these activities at the port, canals, stone bridges, and related buildings around the port have been built, any of which remain as historical heritage. While watching them, you can eat delicious fish dishes at a reasonable prices in a restaurant.

There are also Arahiratsu Shrine and Ushiodake Shrine related to Hyuga myth. The former is near Aburatsu Port and is dedicated to the empress of Emperor Jinmu. The latter is located about 17km inland along Prefectural Road No.27, and the main deity is Umisachihiko God.

According to myth, Umisachihiko was the older brother of Yamasachihiko and was good at sea fishing. But, their brothers quarreled and he was defeated. It is said that he moved to Ushio Shrine, after that, and became the founder of the Hayato people in southern Kyushu.

Table. Shrines related to the myth in the Miyazaki area, and its principal gods.

	Event in myth	Pedigree of GOD	Related Shrine	Location
Heaven	Creation of Japan land	Izanagi & Izanami	Misogi Pond	(1)Awakigahara-cho, Miyazaki City
	Ancestor that is worshiped as the god of the imperial family	↓	Eda Shrine	(1)Awakigahara-cho, Miyazaki City
		Sun Goddess (Amaterasu Omikami)	Amanoiwato Shrine Ise Shrine	Takachiho Town in Miyazaki Pref. Ise City, Mie Pref.
Ground	Advent to Takachiho Peak of Hyuga	Ninigino-Mikoto* (Grandson of Amaterasu Omikami)	Kirishima Shrine	Kirishima City, Kagoshima Pref.
	Good fisher in the sea Good hunter in the mountain	Umisachihiko (Older bro.)	Ushiodake Shrine	(4)Kitagou-machi, Nitinan City
		Yamasachihiko* (Younger Bro.)	Aoshima Shrine	(2)Aoshima, Miyazaki City
		↓		
	Establish of Yamato Government	Ugayafukiaezu-No-Mikoto*	Udo Shrine	(3)Miyaura, Nitinan City
		↓		
		First Emperor Jinmu	Miyazaki Shrine	(1)Jingu, Miyazaki City

*: Hyuga's three Gods

(1)~(4):Scenic point in this route.



(3) Udo Jingu Shrine (Nitinan City)



(4) Horikawa Canal and Ukiyoe of Aburatsu Port (by Utagawa Hiroshige.)



(3) Cypresses growing naturally in the rocky area of Nichinan Coast.

(5) Obi Castle and its castle town (Nichinan City)

Obi Castle is located 9 km west from Aburatsu Port along National Route 222.



(5) Main Gate of Obi Castle (Nichinan City)



(5) Obi Castle Town (Nichinan City)



(6) Misaki Horses of Cape Toi (Kushi-ma City)



(6) Narrow Approach Path to Misaki Shrine

For about 100 years from the 15th century to the 16th century, the battle over the territory of the Obi clan continued between Ito in Hinata and Shimadzu in Satsuma. For this reason, the territory management was switched between the Ito and Shimadzu families many times. In other words, this historic events in Obi territory are similar to English-French Centennial War in French territory.

Finally, the territory of the obi has been under the rule of Mr. Ito since the Edo period, and the castle town had been maintained. In the castle town of the Edo period, many historical heritages of Ito Clan such as stone stairways, moats, samurai residences are left, and the main gate of the castle was rebuilt, too. The area surrounding the castle is registered as an important conservation district of the historic Building Group.

After passing beyond the castle town, you can see the terraced rice fields in Sakamoto area, as shown in Photo (5). In general, terraced fields meander along the terrain. However, this rice field is a beautiful landscape, with the stone walls linearly shaped to use the horses. It has been selected as one of the top 100 rice terraces in Japan.

(6) Ishinami-Kaigan Coast and Cape Toi in Kushi-ma City, Miyazaki.

Going further south on National Route 488, you find the Ishinami-Kaigan coast and Kojima Island in Kushima City at the south end of Miyazaki Prefecture. As shown in Photo (6), the arched long coast is a beautiful white beach and has been selected as one of 100 beaches in Japan. Over 250 types of subtropical plants fill the coast and are a natural treasure of the country.

Under the dazzling scenery of the south, there is a more important place called Kojima Island. Many monkeys live on the island, and a sandy beach (tombolo) appears at the low tide. You can across over the island but you need to use ferry to protect wild monkeys.

This island became famous for the phenomenon of the 100th monkey. A study at Kyoto University revealed the monkey's culture of washing and eating sweet potatoes.

Cape Toi is at the south end of National Route 448 and is located on the cliffs of sandstone and mudstone. If you follow the narrow and steep path, you will see the sheer cliffs and Misaki (Cape) Shrine. Subtropical plants can also be seen, making it a natural botanical garden.

On the other hand, when you climb up the cliff (240 m above sea level), you will reach a white large lighthouse (important tangible culture property, 1929). From there you can see the beautiful panorama at the southernmost tip of the Nichinan Coast National Park in the Pacific Ocean.

The Cape is known as a habitat for semi-wild horses that have been grazed for more than 300 years, and was designated as a special natural monument as Misaki-uma Horse and its breeding ground. While looking at the lighthouse, a friendly horse may come to there. It will be also

interesting to play with horses.

Driving long distances along the seaside of tropical Miyazaki, will you enjoy the world of myth, the castle town of Obi and the rare tropical nature.



(5) Rice Terrace in Sakata District



(6) Ishinami Coast and Kojima Island.

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