

Q-15 Umi-Yama Scenic Byways in Shimabara Peninsula

Unzen, Shimabara, and Minami Shimabara City (Nagasaki Pref.)—Unzen Volcanic Area Geopark, and Rebellion of Shimabara • Amakusa—

One of the paired peninsulas in the southern part of Nagasaki Prefecture is the Shimabara Peninsula centered on the Unzen active volcano zone. As shown in the map, the peninsula is 40 km wide, 150 km long, covering an area of approximately 470 km², and all areas are the “Umi-Yama” Scenic Byway in Shimabara Peninsula. Surrounded by the Ariake Sea, Shimabara Bay and Tachibana Bay, it is composed of three local governments: Unzen City, Shimabara City, and Minami-Shimabara City.

(Access). The main access points from overseas are Nagasaki, Fukuoka and Kumamoto Airports, and the ports in Nagasaki and Hakata. Based on them, there are four main access routes to the peninsula. One of them is the peninsula route. From Nagasaki Airport or Fukuoka Airport, you arrive at the Isahaya IC on the Nagasaki Expressway or Isahaya Station on the JR Nagasaki

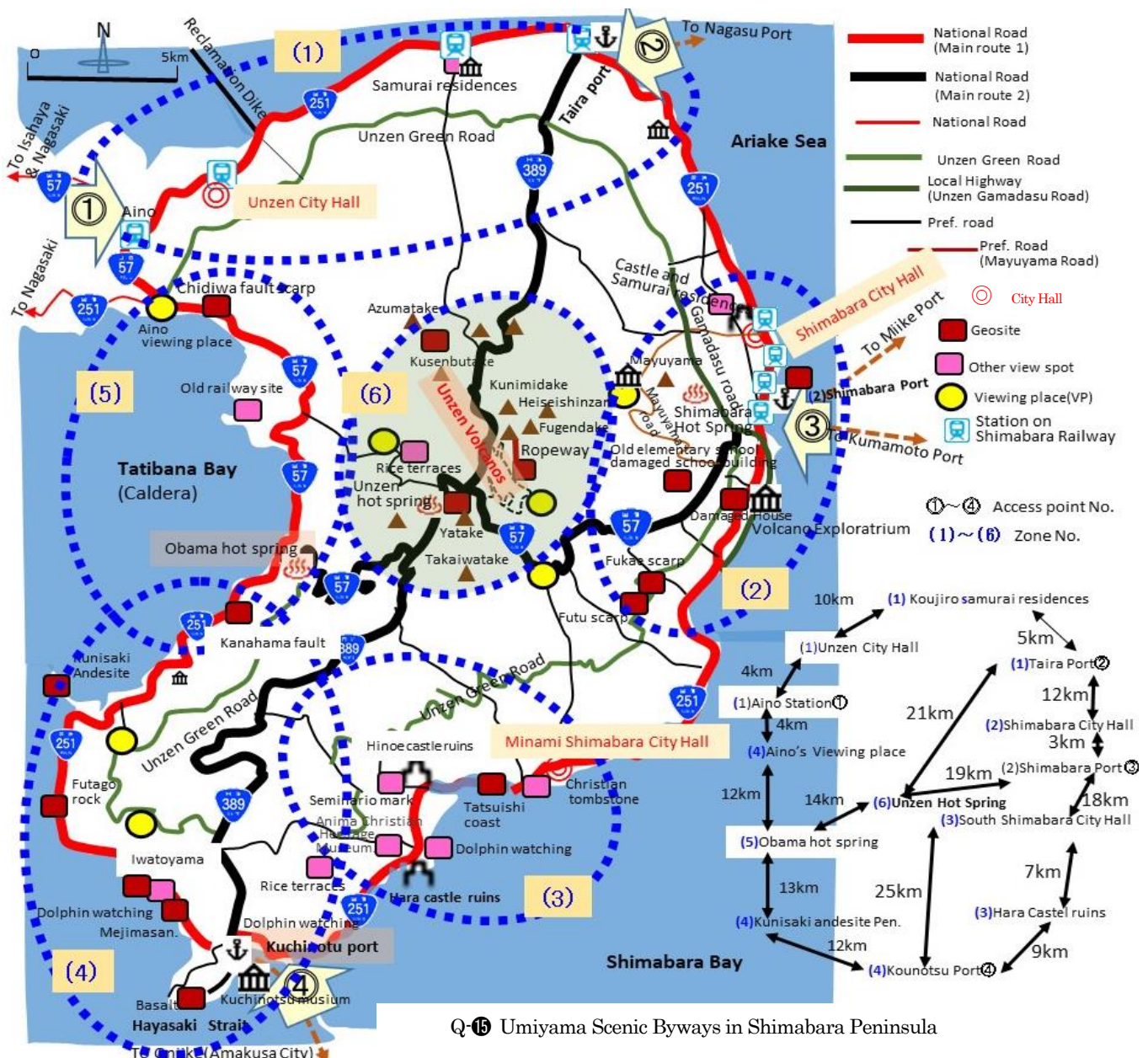
Main Line. From there, head National Route 57 south to reach Aino's district ① in Unzen City (See map).

Points of ② and ③ on the west coast of the peninsula are to access Fukuoka Airport or Kumamoto Airport and to board a boat from Miike Port, Nagasu Port or Kumamoto Port. Point ④ is a ferry between Onike Port on Amakusa Shimoshima and Kuchinotsu Port on the south of peninsula.

(Main Route in Road Network and Public Transport).

The main routes in the scenic area are the national routes 57, 251, and 389 that circulate or cross the peninsula. Wide-area agriculture roads, disaster prevention roads and prefectural roads also complement this road network.

The Shimabara Railway runs between JR Isahaya Station and



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(6) Lava Dome of Mt. Heisei-shinzan



(6) Miyama-Kirishima in Unzen-Dake Mountains.



(2) Two Times of Big Eruptions in Unzen-Dake Mountains

Shimabara Port Station as public transportation system, and bus routes are established along the National Routes and major prefectural roads on the peninsula.

(Main Scenic Resources).

The two main scenic resources of the Shimabara Peninsula are active volcanoes and the history of hardships of Christianity.

a) Until several millions of years ago, there were only a few small islands in the sea throughout the Shimabara region. However, the eruption of volcanoes started 1 million to 1.5 million years ago, and the outer ring islands surrounding the Chijiwa Caldera (now Tachibana Bay) was born. Furthermore, the eruption of half a million years ago connected the outer ring islands with the Kyushu main island, forming a peninsula.

In addition, an earthquake occurred and a graben extending from east to west was formed in the center of the peninsula due to the north-south fault. After that, volcanic activity on the mountain and the collapse of the mountainous areas were repeated, and the present topography of the peninsula was formed. Of these volcanic activities, two major eruptions in 1792 and 1989-1995 are well known.

In the former case, Mt. Mayuyama was destroyed by an earthquake caused due to the volcanic eruption of Fugen-dake Mount. It is said that 15,000 people had died or were missing due to the large tsunami that occurred when the collapsed sediment flowed

into Shimabara Bay (see photo (2)).

The latter is the eruption of Heisei-shinzan Mount. A lava dome was formed around the crater. The pyroclastic flow, which collapsed as it grew, bypassing Mayuyama and flowing to the eastern slope of the peninsula. As a result, we had many casualties.

Due to the possibility of volcanic activity in the future, the topography of peninsula might be changed further. However, at present, the mountainous area is located in the center of the peninsula, and is composed of more than 20 mountains such as Heisei Shinzan, forming a steep slope toward Tachibana Bay. In other areas, small volcanic mountains, pyroclastic flow, and debris flow deposits are stacked up.

The Shimabara Peninsula with these contents is a part of Unzen Amakusa National Park, and was certified as Japan Geopark in 2008 and Global Geopark in 2009, focusing on Unzen Volcano.

b) Another scenic spot is associated with a rebellion by farmers on Amakusa Island and Shimabara Peninsula. The ruins are world culture heritage. Farmers in the area could not tolerate excessive taxes, famine, and severe oppression for Christians. Therefore, under the leadership of 16-years-old Amakusa Shiro, the farmers caused the largest revolt in Japan from 1637 to 1638.

In the Shimabara Peninsula, Arima villager people first killed their deputy officer (Daikan). Then, the farmers fought in Fukae village and attacked Shimabara Castle. On the other hand, in Amakusa, the rebels fought at Hondo Castle and attacked Tomioka Castle.

However, neither castle could be occupied. Therefore, farmers gathered in the abandoned Hara Castle and built a base camp there. The scale is said to have been 37,000 persons (including non-combatants such as women and children). In contrast, the shogunate army was 130,000 soldiers.



(3) Trace of Hara Castle (World Culture Heritage, Minami-shimabara)



(3) Honmaru Ruins of Hara Jo Castle

The shogunate army attacked the castle several times with overwhelming force, but all failed. So, they attacked rebels while cutting off food supply, and eventually killed or let to commit suicide most of the rebels. This was a tragic happening that we had never experienced.

Our life on the peninsula is to take advantage of the various blessings from the volcano. There is a magma chamber at the bottom of Tachibana Bay, and heat is transmitted to the Unzen Peninsula. The entire peninsula is a resort area with hot springs (Onsen).

The main ones are Obama, Unzen, and Shimabara, each with different quality. Obama Onsen is a natural hot spring with a maximum temperature of over 105 °C. At Unzen Onsen, 30 fountains and hot steam spout out, and the hot water is said to heal wounds. Shimabara Onsen is kind to the skin and is about 40 °C.

Reference to the two landscape resources and their placement, the scenic spots on this route can be grouped into six zones, as shown in the map.

(1) Isahaya Bay Area in Unzen City

You will reach the Aino district at the base of the peninsula as you proceed along National Route 57 while tracing the history of the Isahaya Bay reclamation project that started from the back of the bay and continues to the present. When heading east on Route 251 toward the Shimabara Railroad's Azuma Station from there, you can see the long straight dike road and locks built by the latest landfill project.

Furthermore, taking National Route 251 toward Taira Port, you will find Kunimi Town Historical Culture Park. It is a town called "Koujiro-Kuji", that is registered as an important traditional building group preservation district. In the Edo period, it was Saga territory (Nabeshima clan), not the Shimabara clan. When you visit, you can enjoy the old townscape. Many relics such as waterways, hedges and stone walls are lined up neatly. Nabeshima Residence and its garden are important cultural assets of the country.



(1) Latest Embankment Road in Isahaya Bay



(1) Nabeshima's House in Koujiro-Kuji



(2) Shimabara Castle (Shimabara City)



(2) Spring Garden "Shimeisou" (Shimabara City)



(2) House buried in Debris Flow

(2)-1 Shimabara Castle and its Town (Shimabara City)

About 12 km south of Taira Port, you will reach the center of Shimabara City. Next to Shimabara Station is the Shimabara Clan's Castle and Samurai Residence Town.

In 1616 of the Edo Period, the lord of Shimabara replaced Mr. Matsukura clan (Fudai Daimyo), and initially had entered Hinoe Castle. However, because the castle was small, a new castle was built in 1624 in the Shimabara area. After the rebellion of Shimabara, Mr. Matsukura was let to transfer and the daimyos continued to change. Later, during the Meiji era, the domain itself was abolished and the castle was demolished, but it is rebuilt as a museum of modern history in the present times. Samurai armor, materials related Shimabara rebellion, hidden Christian relics, ancient folk tools and more are on display.

The southern part of the castle town uses spring water, and has clean waterways, gardens with spring water, and a communal laundry. In addition, Shimabara Onsen and Shimabara Port are next to it.

(2)-2 Lava Flow Zone in the Mizunashi River Basin.

The area from Shimabara Port to the Mizunashi River was directly damaged by the collapse of Mayuyama Mount in the Edo period and by the lava flow (from 1990 to 1996) from the Mount of Heisei-Shinzan. Needless to say, this area is the core site of Global Geopark.

As shown in the aerial photograph, the eastern side of Mayuyama is a cliff, and is followed by small hills. In addition, the Ariake Sea has many small islands formed by the debris flow of landslides.

On the other hand, the lava of Heisei Shinzan flowed down at 100 km/h and spread in the basin of Mizunashi River, which is the boundary between Shimabara City and Minami-shimabara City. The buildings of elementary school and private houses destroyed by the pyroclastic flow are left as memorials for the disaster (See photo (2)).

A facility for displaying volcano-related and disaster-related materials has been built and is open to the public (Unzendake Disaster Memorial Museum and Gama-dasu Dome). At the same time, levees were built to control the flow of lava debris.

(3) Heritages of hidden Christian

In the center of Minami-shimabara City, ruins of the medieval Hinoe Castle and heritage related to hidden Christians during the Edo period can be seen.



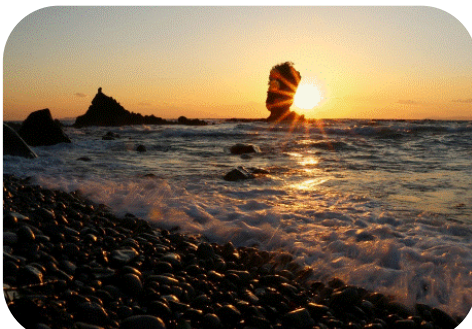
(5) Source of Hot Water in Obara Onsen (spa town)



(3) Tatsuishi Coast



(5) Hot Spring for Foot in Obama Onsen



(4) Futago-iwa (rock)



(6) Unzen Jigoku (Spout of Hot Water or Steam)



(6) Catholic Martyrdom Monument



(6) Officials urging Residents to abandon Christianity



(4) Dolphin Watching in Shimabara Bay

The biggest spot is the remains of Hara Castle (World Cultural Heritage), the last battlefield of Shimabara Amakusa's rebellion. Farmers involved in the riots had a hard time collecting and eating seaweed from under the cliff, but in the end they were defeated and it is said that rebels except one spy have been killed or committed suicide. After that, Christians underwent more severe oppression, but continued their faith secretly. The hidden Christian relics and materials are preserved and exhibited in the Arima Christian Heritage Memorial Hall.

(3) & (4) Geosites in Minami-Shimabara City

You can visit prehistoric geo-sites at the southern end of the Shimabara Peninsula, which are registered with the UNESCO Global Geopark. In other words, you can see the oldest layer of 4.3 million years ago (Hayasaki Peninsula), the andesite (Futagoiwa

rocks) erupted half million years ago, and the first layer of Unzen Volcano (Ryuishi Coast). (See photos (3) and (4)).

(5) Region of Obama Spa Town and Tachibana Bay

This scenic area is the rift valley facing Tachibana Bay, the northern boundary of which is the Chijiwa fault, and the southern side is the Kanehama Fault. In particular, the Chijiwa Fault has a long stretch in the east-west direction, with a fall of 300 to 450m in 300 thousand years, and the bottom of the southern slope is subducting at a rate of 1 to 1.5mm / year.

Obama Onsen is one of the 3 major hot springs on the Shimabara Peninsula and is located at the foot of Mt.Unzendake. The temperature of hot water is 105 °C, and the amount of heat radiation (water amount × hot water temperature) is the highest in Japan. The foot bath "HOT FOOT 105" installed on the beach was named after this fact. The sunset over Tachibana Bay while bathing in hoto water is a wonderful view.

(6) Region in Unzen Volcano and Unzen Spa

You can climb the Unzendake Mountains through National Route 57 from Obama Onsen and Shimabara City. The main scenic spots are Unzen hot springs, Unzen Jigoku (Hell) Tour, and Unzen Active Volcano. Mt. Unzendake is a general term for active volcanoes such as Heisei Shinzan (1483m), Fugen-dake (1359m), and Myoken-dake (1333m). When you want to climb these volcanoes easily, you can also take a bus or taxi from Unzen Onsen

to Nita Pass and take a ropeway.

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The seas surrounding the peninsula have its unique characteristics. The Ariake Sea in the eastern side has a wide tidal flat, with a well-developed lagoon where crabs, rockfish, puffers, prawns, and kelp gather. Tachibana Bay on the west is Caldera Bay, and there are many steep cliffs on the coast. In addition, about 300 dolphins settle at the southern end of the Shimabara peninsula, and you can see a powerful dolphin show that swims in groups from the boat.

In short, this route area is a region of attractive scenic byways that ties the surrounding sea (Umi) to the central volcano (Yama). In this sense, "Umi-Yama" has been added to the course name.

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