

Japan's Forests with Breathtaking Views: Selections from the Tourist Destinations in National Forest

Forests have provided both mankind – and indeed all living things – with safety, sustenance and security for an eternity.

The lush greenery and gentle breeze of the forest is surely enough to rekindle nature's vigor in any soul.

With more than 70% of Japan landmass covered in abundant greenery, the Forestry Agency is working to create "Recreation Forests" to inspire as many as possible to rediscover the wonder of nature.

The best forests to visit have been carefully selected and compiled as "Japan's Forests with Breathtaking Views."

Know before You Visit: General rules for visitors

- 1 Help protect wild animals and plants. When you bring your pets, please mind your manners and give consideration to the surrounding environment.
- 2 Damaging trees or stealing any forest product is penalized by law. Even collecting plants covering the ground of forest are prohibited within protection forests designated by law.
- 3 Do not enter the area beyond walking trails, or public squares. Please follow the rules for each Recreation Forest such as no camping outside the designated area.
- 4 Do not enter the area with 'No Entry' or 'Keep Out' sign.
- 5 When making a stop for rest or any other purposes, please look around and confirm that the area is safe without any risk of being hit by falling branches or rocks.
- 6 Enjoy mountaineering on your own responsibility. Please ensure that you submit your plan for mountaineering to a police station in the area as well as to your family members, your friends or colleagues after checking out climate and other necessary information for mountaineering and fully being equipped. Please also fill in 'the Name List of Climbers and Visitors', which is placed at the mountain entrance.
Check avalanche risks before mountaineering or skiing in winter.
- 7 Do not enter forests under bad weather conditions.
- 8 In order to prevent the spread of CSF through food residues, please make sure to take your garbage home with you. We are also taking measures such as removing trash bins.
- 9 Smoking is permitted only in special areas. Make sure to extinguish any fires, e.g. after smoking cigarettes.
- 10 Mountain paths are potentially dangerous to walk. Do not use smartphone while walking. When taking photos, please remain fully aware of your surroundings and do not bother other visitors in any way.
- 11 If you wish to use an unmanned aerial vehicle (drone), you need to submit prior written notice to District Forest Office. Please contact the nearest Regional Forest Office or District Forest Office of national forest beforehand.

Shichirimihama Recreation Forest Access Map



Access

By public transport					
By public transport	Nagoya Sta.	Ltd. Exp. Wide View Nanki	Kumano-shi Sta.	Kisei Main Line	Arii Sta.
		About 3 hr		About 5 min	On foot About 7 min
	Tanajoji Sta.	Ltd. Exp. Kuroshio		About 10 min	Kii-ichigi Sta.
		About 5 hr		About 15 min	On foot About 2 min
By car	Shingu Sta.	Kisei Main Line		About 30 min	Atawa Sta.
		About 30 min		About 5 min	On foot About 3 min
		Kisei Main Line		About 5 min	Udono Sta.
		About 5 min			On foot About 5 min
	Nagoya	Higashi-Meihan EXPWY / Ise EXPWY / Kisei EXPWY / Kumano-Owase Road		About 2 hr 30 min	Kumano-Odomari IC
	Osaka	Hanwa EXPWY	Nanki-Tanabe IC	Route 311 / Route 168	Route 42 About 20 min
		About 1 hr 55 min		About 1 hr 45 min	On foot About 3 min

Shichirimihama Recreation Forest

Location : Arima Town, Kumano City, Mie Prefecture; Atawa, Mihama Town / Kiho Town, Minamimuro County, Mie Prefecture

Management office contact details :

Mie District Forest Office
FAX : 0595-82-8792

Shichirimihama Pine Grove Protection Council

Secretariat of the Shichirimihama Pine Grove Protection Council
(in the Industry Promotion Division, Kiho Municipal Office)

FAX : 0735-32-0727

National Forest Planning Division, Forestry Agency, MAFF

The Official Recreation Forests Website of the Forestry Agency
https://www.rinya.maff.go.jp/e/national_forest/recreation_forest/index.html



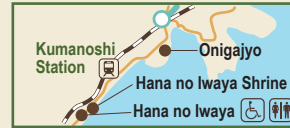
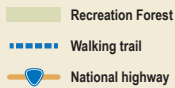
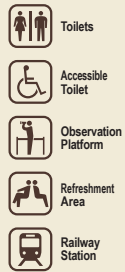
SHICHIRIMIHAMA

Recreation Forest



Kumano Kodo pilgrimage route where an expansive beach contrasts with a coastal green pine forest stretching for 25 km

Shichirimihama Recreation Forest Map



Geographical/ topographical features

25 km-long Shichirimihama Beach, located within Yoshino-Kumano National Park on the Kii Peninsula (southern Mie Prefecture) and extending from Kumano City through Mihama Town to Kiho Town, is known as Japan's longest gravel beach. The name "Shichiri" (meaning "7 ri," where 1 ri is approximately 4 km) is said to have originated from the length of the beach. A 120 m-wide belt of pine trees separates the beach, which is on the Kumanonada Sea, from a parallel national road and continues for a great distance. The scenery of the wide open beach, green pine groves and the Kii Mountain Range in the distance is extremely beautiful, and has been listed among Japan's top 100 white sand beaches with green pine trees and Japan's top 100 beaches.



Shichirimihama (Mihama Town)

Historical/ cultural features

Kumano Kodo refers to pilgrimage routes connecting three sacred sites that have been the subject of nature worship since ancient times: Kumano Sanzan, Yoshino/Omine and Koyasan. The area encompassing these sacred sites and primeval forests was registered as a World Heritage site in 2004. This Recreation Forest is adjacent to the Hama-kaido Route, a Kumano Kodo route that was heavily used by pilgrims during the Edo period (early 17th to late 19th century) to visit Kumano Sanzan. So many pilgrims trekked to Kumano that they resembled long rows of ants, and the phrase "ari no Kumano-mairi" (meaning "ants visiting Kumano Sanzan") later came to be used to refer to this large number of people walking in rows. Devout worshippers visited Ise Jingu and Kumano Sanzan repeatedly. This religious practice was referred to as "Ise e nanatabi, Kumano e sando" (meaning "seven times to Ise and three times to Kumano").

The pines were planted to protect the local residents from the strong sea winds blowing from Kumanonada Sea, and they have continued to serve their purpose as a windbreak forest. In 1983, the forest was selected from more than 2,000 candidate locations as one of Japan's 100 nature spots that should be preserved into the 21st century.



Hama-kaido Route—a Kumano Kodo pilgrimage route along the sea

Climate/ flora and fauna

The climate is temperate all year round, but the area receives a relatively large amount of precipitation. The adjacent coast is known as a spawning ground for Aoumigame (green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*)). The local community carries out activities to conserve the spawning ground and support the turtles' hatching process. Roadside Rest Area "Kiho Town Sea Turtle Park" has fish tanks with swimming green turtles and Akaumigame (loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*)), and offers feeding programs for visitors.

The vegetation includes Kuromatsu (Japanese black pine (*Pinus thunbergii*)) and Akamatsu (Japanese red pine (*Pinus densiflora*)) as well as wild evergreen broad-leaved trees such as Kusunoki (camphor tree (*Cinnamomum camphora* (L.) J.Presl)), Aoki (*Aucuba japonica*) and Hisakaki (*Eurya japonica*). Many trees are slanted as a result of the constant sea winds.



Leopard plant cluster

Attractions

The contrast between the dark-green pine groves, the deep-blue waters of the Kumanonada Sea and the wide open beach along the Shichirimihama coast creates stunning scenery. The view from the Matsumoto-toge Pass (Kumano City) of Kumano Kodo is particularly noteworthy.

Another attractive tourist spot nearby is Hana no Iwaya-jinja Shrine, which is the tomb of Izanami-no-Mikoto (a goddess of creation and death) and which has been registered as a World Heritage site along with Kumano Kodo. It has no shrine building, but its "goshintai" (an object of worship)—a 45 m high giant rock facing the Kumanonada Sea—is extremely impressive.

The route along Shichirimihama from Kumano City to Kumano Hayatama Taisha (Shingu City) is called the "Hama-kaido Route"—part of the Kumano Kodo Ise-ji Route. It attracts a large number of tourists today. At the same time, however, the footpath in the forest, which offers a relaxing environment with its beautiful views of the Kumanonada Sea, the coastline and the pine groves, is used by local residents throughout the year for hiking and strolling.



Onigajyo

Information

- Elevation (m) 0 - 15
- Area (ha) 80.47
- Entrance fee None for the Recreation Forest itself
- Opening seasons Accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a year
- Accommodation options [Outside the forest] About 10 Japanese inns and hotels, as well as some guest houses, mainly in Kumano City
- Car parking capacity / parking charges Kumano / Hana no Iwaya: Free parking for 25 ordinary vehicles and 3 large vehicles
Park Shichirimihama: Free parking for 266 ordinary vehicles and 14 large vehicles
Kiho Town Sea Turtle Park: Free parking for 46 ordinary vehicles and 5 large vehicles