

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.
- 7 Do not enter forests under bad weather conditions.
- 8 Do not dispose of any leftover food in the forest. Please take your garbage home with you.
- 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.

Iwakuni Recreation Forest Access Map



Access

By public transport:

- About 10 minutes on foot (about 0.8 km) from the Kintaikyo bus stop
- Iwakuni Kintaikyo Airport (bus bound for Shin-Iwakuni Station: about 10 minutes) → bus bound for Kintaikyo: about 20 minutes → get off at the Kintaikyo bus stop
- Shin-Iwakuni Station (JR Sanyo Shinkansen) → bus bound for Kintaikyo: about 15 minutes → get off at the Kintaikyo bus stop
- Iwakuni Station (JR San-yo Line) → bus bound for Kintaikyo: about 20 minutes → get off at the Kintaikyo bus stop
- Nishi-Iwakuni Station (JR Gantoku Line) → bus bound for Kintaikyo: about 4 minutes → get off at the Kintaikyo bus stop

By car:

- San-yo Expressway (Iwakuni IC) → Route 2: about 10 minutes → Kintaikyo Shimogawara Parking Lot
- Chugoku Expressway (Muikaichi IC) → Route 187: about 70 minutes → Kintaikyo Shimogawara Parking Lot

Iwakuni Recreation Forest

Address :Yokoyama, Iwakuni City, Yamaguchi Prefecture

Management office contact details:
Yamaguchi Forest Administration Office
FAX : 083-923-4631

Iwakuni Shiroyama Forest Environment Improvement Committee
(Tourism Promotion Division, Industry Promotion Department, Iwakuni Municipal Office)
FAX : 0827-22-2866

National Forest Planning Division, Forestry Agency, MAFF

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



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IWAKUNI

Recreation Forest



Recreation Forests
Forestry Agency

Iwakuni Recreation Forest — a great place for everyone to appreciate nature, history, and culture



Geographical / topographical features

The Recreation Forest is on an independent mountain with a relatively moderate slope in a hilly area about 150 m above sea level, located to the west of the Kintaiyko Bridge in eastern Yamaguchi Prefecture. Rather hilly terrain is also found on the eastern slope (the Kintaiyko Bridge side) of the ridge.



Kintaiyko Bridge and the Iwakuni Recreation Forest in late autumn

Historical / cultural features

The forest was banned from entry for a long time since the destruction of the Iwakuni Castle as a result of the Edo shogunate's order "ikkoku ichijyo rei" (allowing one castle per domain) to destroy all castles other than those of feudal lords. It was protected as the Kikkawa family's domain-owned forest until it was transferred to the State in the Meiji Period (the late 19th century).

The Kintaiyko Bridge that hangs over the Nishiki River at the foot of the mountain is a five-span arch bridge built in 1673 by Kikkawa Hiroyoshi, the feudal lord of the Iwakuni Domain. Although the bridge was washed out by a typhoon in 1950, it was rebuilt in 1953. When the bridge was renovated in the Heisei Period over three years from 2001, out of the 410m³ of wood used, 120m³ of Kiso Hinoki (natural Hinoki (Japanese cypress (*Chamaecyparis obtuse*)) grown in the Kiso and Urakiso regions) and 30m³ of Aomori Hiba (*Thujaopsis dolabrata* Sieb. et Zucc. var. *hondai* Makino) were supplied from the national forest.



Kintaiyko Bridge on a spring night

Climate, flora and fauna

The area has a temperate Setonaikai climate with an average annual temperature of 15 to 16°C and little precipitation and hardly any snow with an annual rainfall of about 1,500 mm. The Recreation Forest is a natural forest mainly consisting of evergreen broad-leaved trees including chinquapin trees (*Castanopsis*) and Kashi (evergreen oak (*Quercus*)). As many as 210 varieties of trees, 350 varieties of flowers, and 100 varieties of ferns have been found in the forest. Since the broad-leaved forest provides an ideal habitat for wild birds, about 60 species of wild birds can be observed throughout the year at Shiroyama and the Nishiki River at the foot of the mountain.



Traveling through the air up the mountain of evergreen broad-leaved trees!

Attractions

The Recreation Forest is located near an urban area. The green of the evergreen trees, the limp Iwashiki River that flows at the base of the mountain where Ayu (Ayu sweetfish (*Plecoglossus altivelis* (Temminck & Schlegel, 1846))) swim and Kajikagaeru (Kajika frog (*Buergeria buergeri* (Temminck & Schlegel, 1838))) croak, and the Kintaiyko Bridge, which is one of Japan's three unique bridges, together show splendid seasonal beauty in harmony.



Iwakuni Castle

Information

- Elevation(m) 10–300 (Shiroyama)
- Area (ha) 278.15
- Entrance fee None (Fees are required for using facilities such as the ropeway and the Kintaiyko Bridge)
- Operating seasons Accessible 24 hours a day
- Accommodation options [Outside the forest] Accommodations are available around the Kintaiyko Bridge and in Iwakuni City
- Car parking capacity / parking charges
 - Kintaiyko Shimogawara Parking Lot (the parking capacity changes depending on the water level of the river)
 - Parking capacity: 400–500 ordinary vehicles
 - Parking charge: 300 yen per day per vehicle during the cherry-viewing season and the Golden Week and on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays during March through May and September through November
 - Yokoyama Kasenjiki Athletic Field Parking Lot (a temporary parking lot for the cherry-viewing season and the Golden Week)
 - Parking capacity: 900 ordinary vehicles
 - Parking charge: 300 yen per day per vehicle during the cherry-viewing season and the Golden Week