

# Around Tokyo

## 東京近郊



Sometimes you need a break from the world's largest city, and on clear days Mt Fuji beckons you from the west. In summer, you can climb through forests towards the jagged summit of Japan's national symbol, as pilgrims have done for centuries, or the towns of Hakone or the Fuji Five Lakes make for ideal hiking and soaking anytime of year.

North of the capital, Nikkō looms equally large in the cultural landscape; its gilded shrines and exquisitely crafted temples are spectacularly set amid verdant woodlands. Further north, Gunma-ken is the nation's hot-spring capital, with riverbank *onsen*, mountain *onsen*, even *onsen* towns where walking the streets in your *yukata* (cotton bathrobe) and clip-clopping *geta* sandals is *de rigueur*.

South of the capital, Kamakura was Japan's capital from AD 1194–1333, boasting a treasury of temples and sylvan hiking trails. Nearby Yokohama has grown from a blip 150 years ago to Japan's second-largest city, with crackling entertainment districts, shopping galore and longstanding foreign influence.

Continuing south, the peninsula Izu-hantō offers quite different temptations: charming seaside towns, lovely windswept beaches and cliff-top *onsen* overlooking the Pacific. And you needn't leave Tokyo Prefecture for an island getaway; Izu-shotō is a chain of volcanic islands with white-sand beaches and a lush subtropical landscape for hiking, surfing and beachcombing; some would swear that the immaculately fresh sashimi alone is worth the journey.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Watch the sunrise from the majestic of **Mt Fuji** (p198), Japan's highest mountain and national symbol
- Find your spiritual centre while exploring the dazzling temples of **Nikkō** (opposite)
- Recover from the madness of the metropolis at idyllic *onsen* on **Izu-hantō** (p217) or in **Gunma-ken** (p195)
- Hike forest trails in search of hidden shrines around **Kamakura** (p224)
- Relax in a natural seaside *onsen* while gazing over the Pacific on one of the easily accessible **Izu-shotō Islands** (p231)
- Spend a day out in **Yokohama** (p218), and the sunset over its harbour may make you want to spend the night



## NORTH OF TOKYO

The big-ticket item of travel north of Tokyo is Nikkō with its amazing shrines. Further north is Gunma-ken, home to numerous hot-spring resorts.

### NIKKŌ 日光

☎ 0288 / pop 95,000

The path from Tōshōgū to Futarasan-Jinja may very well be the Japan you've dreamt of. On your left, years (decades? centuries?) of moss cling to a stone wall, while to the right are dozens of stone lanterns in precise alignment, framed with aching perfection by a vermilion wall and towering cedars.

Scattered among hilly woodlands, Nikkō is one of Japan's major attractions. If there's any drawback, it's that plenty of other people have discovered it too, and at peak season and on weekends any time of year it can be extremely crowded. Although Nikkō is certainly possible as a day trip from Tokyo, try to spend the previous night here so you arrive at its World Heritage shrines and temples before the crowds do. Gorgeous natural scenery west of the city merits another night.

### History

Nikkō's history as a sacred site stretches back to the middle of the 8th century, when the Buddhist priest Shōdō Shōnin (735–817) established a hermitage here. It was a training centre for Buddhist monks, before declining into obscurity. That is, until it was chosen as the site for the mausoleum of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the warlord who took control of all Japan and established the shōgunate that ruled for more than 250 years, until the Meiji Restoration ended the feudal era.

Ieyasu was laid to rest among Nikkō's towering cedars in 1617, and in 1634 his grandson, Tokugawa Iemitsu, commenced work on the shrine that can be seen today. The original shrine, Tōshō-gū, was completely rebuilt using an army of some 15,000 artisans from across Japan, taking two years to complete the shrine and mausoleum. Whatever one's opinion of Ieyasu (he is said to have had his wife and eldest son executed because it was politically expedient), the grandeur of Nikkō is intended to awe, a display of wealth and power by a family that for 2½ centuries was Japan's supreme arbiter of power.

### Orientation

Both JR Nikkō station and the nearby Tōbu Nikkō station lie within a block of Nikkō's main road (Rte 119, the old Nikkōkaidō), southeast of the town centre. From here, it's a 30-minute walk uphill to the shrine area, past restaurants, hotels and the main tourist information centre. From the stations to the shrines, you can take buses to the Shin-kyō bus stop for ¥190. The area north of the Daiyagawa from the town centre is greener but less well served by public transport.

### Information

#### INTERNET ACCESS

**Kyōdo Center tourist information office** (☎ 53-3795; per 30 min ¥100; ☎ 9am-5pm) Has several computers available.

#### INTERNET RESOURCES

**Nikko Perfect Guide** ([www.nikko-jp.org/english/index.html](http://www.nikko-jp.org/english/index.html))

#### MEDICAL SERVICES

**Kawaii-inn Clinic** (☎ 54-0319) On the main road, three blocks southeast of the Kyōdo Centre tourist information office.

#### POST

**Post office** (☎ 8.45am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat) On the main road, three blocks northwest of the Kyōdo Centre tourist information office. Has international ATM and currency exchange.

#### TOURIST INFORMATION

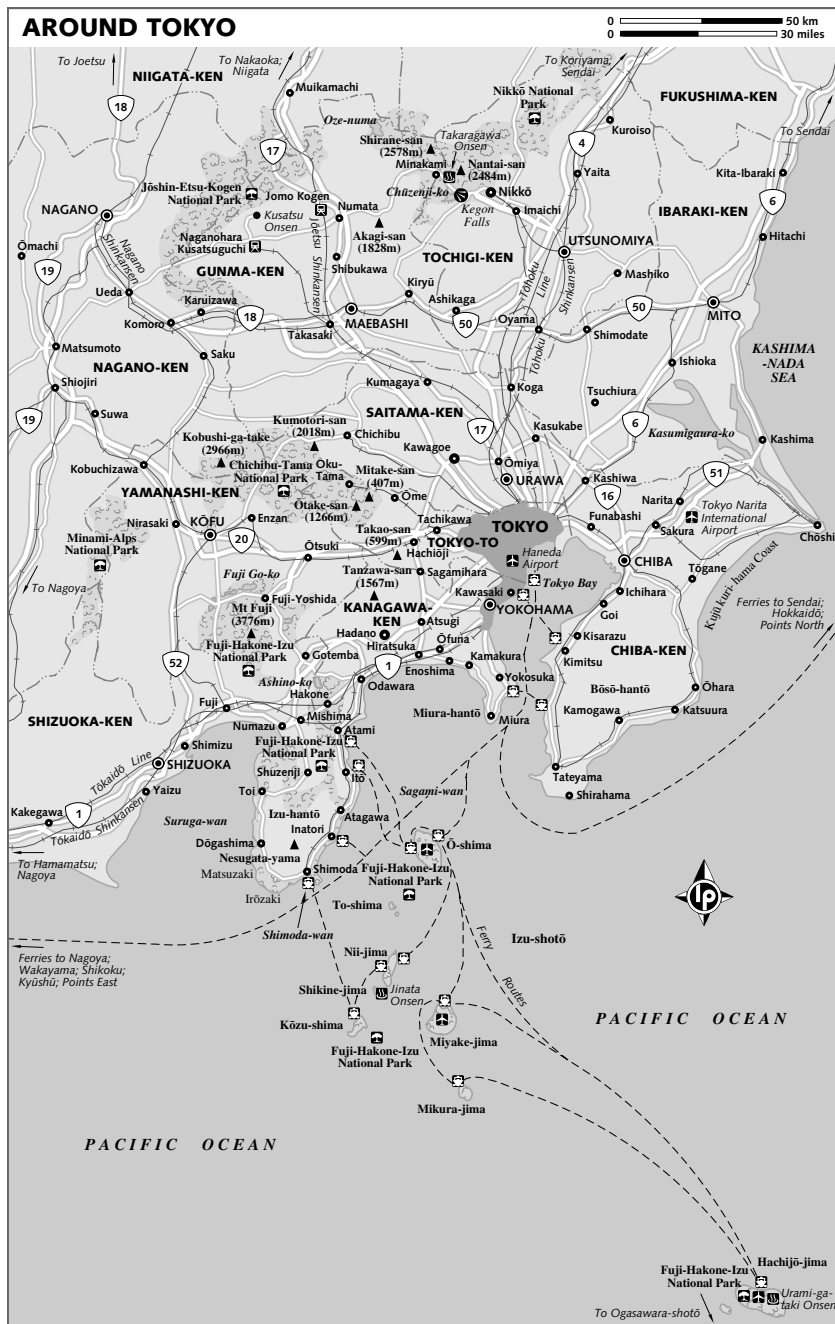
The *Tourist Guide of Nikkō* has about everything you need, and the bilingual *Central Nikko* shows the small streets. Hikers should pick up a copy of *Yumoto-Chūzenji Area Hiking Guide* (¥150) with maps and information on local flora and fauna. The small *Guidebook for Walking Trails* (¥150) is useful for short walks.

**Kyōdo Center tourist information office** (☎ 53-3795; ☎ 9am-5pm) Has a wealth of pamphlets and maps, with a friendly English speaker always on hand. Here you can also arrange for free guided tours in English through TVIGA ([adminTVIGA@hotmail.com](mailto:adminTVIGA@hotmail.com)).

**Tourist information desk** (☎ 53-4511; ☎ 8.30am-5pm) Tōbu Nikkō station has a small desk with hard-working staff.

### Sights

The World Heritage sites around Tōshō-gū are Nikkō's centrepiece. A ¥1000 combination



## ROAD-TRIPPING, EDO-STYLE

You know that old chestnut about all roads leading to Rome? Well, in Edo-era Japan all of the important roads literally led to the shogun's capital.

Under a system called *sankin-kotai*, *daimyō* (feudal lords) were required to maintain residences in Edo as well as in their home provinces and go back and forth to attend to affairs in both places. Their families, meanwhile, remained in Edo in order to suppress temptation towards insurrection. Travel to the provinces was via main 'trunk' roads, including the Tōkaidō ('Eastern Sea road', connecting Edo to Heian-kyō, now Kyoto), the Nikkō Kaidō (Nikkō road) and the Nakasendō ('Central Mountain road' most notably through Nagano-ken).

These roads became celebrated, notably through Hiroshige's series of *ukiyo-e* (woodblock prints), *53 Stations of the Tōkaidō*. At the 'stations', inns thrived and nobles and their retainers could unwind after long days. Strategically located stations housed checkpoints, 50 in all, called *sekisho*. Travelling commoners had to present a *tegata* (a wooden plaque that served as a passport) and subject themselves to inspection for contraband, such as weaponry. Violation of these rules – including trying to circumnavigate the *sekisho* – could bring severe penalties including a particularly ghastly form of crucifixion. The *sekisho* at Hakone and Kiso-Fukushima were among the most important and remain the best preserved. Other atmospheric station towns are Arimatsu (p248) on the Tōkaidō and Tsumago (p288) on the Nakasendō.

ticket', valid for two days and available at booths in the area, covers entry to the temple, Rinnō-ji, the shrines, Tōshō-gū and Futarasan-jinja, but not the Nemuri-Neko (Sleeping Cat) in Tōshō-gū and Ieyasu's Tomb.

Most sites are open 8am to 5pm (until 4pm November to March). To avoid hordes, visit early on a weekday.

## SHIN-KYŌ 神橋

The lovely red sanded **bridge** (☎ 54-0535; www.shinkyō.net) over the Daiya River is a much-photographed reconstruction of the 17th-century original. Its location is famed as the spot where Shōdō Shōnin was carried across the river on the backs of two giant serpents. Although historically the bridge was only for members of the imperial court and generals, it was temporarily opened to the public in 2005, extended until November 2007. Check when you visit for further openings.

## RINNŌ-JI 輪王寺

This Tendai-sect temple was founded 1200 years ago by Shōdō Shōnin, and today some 360m of zelkova trees make up the pillars in the current building. The three gilded images in the Sambutsu-dō (Three Buddha Hall) are the largest wooden Buddhas in Japan (8m). The central image is Amida Nyorai (one of the primal deities in the Mahayana Buddhist canon) flanked by Senjū (1000-armed Kannon, deity of mercy and compassion) and Batō (a horse-headed Kannon), whose special

domain is the animal kingdom. A room to the side contains a healing Buddha, holding his ring finger over a medicine bowl, said to be the origin of the Japanese name for this finger (*kusuri-yubi*, medicine finger).

Rinnō-ji's **Hōmotsu-den** (Treasure Hall; admission ¥300) houses some 6000 treasures associated with the temple; admission is not included in the combination ticket (p187).

Next to Rinnō-ji is the 15m-high, 3m circumference pillar Sōrintō (1643), built by Iemitsu in 1643. Inside are 1000 volumes of sutras.

## TŌSHŌ-GŪ 東照宮

A huge stone *torii* is a fittingly grand entrance to this storied Shintō shrine. To the left is a five-storey pagoda (34.3m) dating from 1650 and reconstructed in 1818. The pagoda has no foundations but contains a long suspended pole that swings like a pendulum, maintaining equilibrium in the event of an earthquake.

The entrance to the main shrine is through the *torii* at the gate, **Omote-mon**, protected on either side by Deva kings. Just inside are the **Sanjinko** (Three Sacred Storehouses). On the upper storey of the last storehouse are imaginative relief carvings of elephants by an artist who famously had never seen the real thing. To the left of the entrance is **Shinyōsha** (Sacred Stable), a plain building housing a carved white horse. The stable is adorned with allegorical relief carvings of monkeys, including the famous 'hear no evil, see no evil,



the same elements as Tōshōgu (storehouses, drum tower, Chinese-style gates etc), its smaller, more intimate scale and setting in a cryptomeria forest make it very appealing. It's unusual in that it's both a Buddhist temple and a mausoleum.

Among Taiyūin-byō's many structures, look for dozens of lanterns donated by *daimyō*, and the gate Niō-mon, whose guardian deities have a hand up (to welcome those with pure hearts) and a hand down (to suppress impure hearts). Inside the main hall, 140 dragons painted on the ceiling are said to carry prayers to the heavens; those holding pearls are on their way up, and those without are returning to gather more prayers.

### GAMMAN-GA-FUCHI ABYSS 含満ヶ淵

If the crowds of Nikkō leave you yearning for a little quiet, take the 20-minute walk to Gamman-Ga-Fuchi Abyss, a collection of *jizō* statues (the small stone statues of the Buddhist protector of travellers and children) set along a wooded path. One of the statues midway along is known as the Bake-jizō, who mocks travellers foolish enough to try to count all the *jizō* (they're said to be uncountable). Take a left after crossing the Shin-kyō bridge and follow the river for about 800m, crossing another bridge en route.

### NIKKŌ TAMOZAWA GOYŌTEI

日光田母沢御用邸

The 1899 **Nikkō Tamozawa Goyōtei** (☎ 53-6767; adult/child ¥500/250; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Wed-Mon) was the largest wooden imperial villa (106 rooms) in two generations of Emperors, and it was where the Emperor Shōwa (aka Hirohito) spent WWII. It has been painstakingly restored to its former glory and is well worth a visit. It's about 1km west of the Shin-kyō bridge.

### NIKKŌ WOODCARVING CENTER

日光木彫りの里

After marvelling over the craftsmanship of Nikkō's World Heritage sites, this workshop and sales **shop** (☎ 53-0070; 2848 Tokorono; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm Fri-Wed) has more contemporary (and utilitarian) pieces in the tradition. Exhibits on the 2nd floor include *yatai* (festival floats), *tansu* (wooden chests), and wood-working demonstrations of kitchen and other accessories. You can try your own hand with a week's notice (fax 53-0310; fee based on what you want to produce).

### Festivals & Events

**Yayoi Matsuri** (16 & 17 April) Procession of *mikoshi* (portable shrines), held at Futarasan-jinja.

**Tōshō-gū Grand Festival** (17 & 18 May) Nikkō's most important annual festival features horseback archery on the first day and a 1000-strong costumed re-enactment of the delivery of Ieyasu's remains to Nikkō on the second.

**Tōshō-gū Autumn Festival** (16 & 17 October) Autumnal repeat of the May festival, minus the equestrian archery.

### Sleeping

Most places in Nikkō are used to foreign guests.

### BUDGET

**Nikkō Daiyagawa Youth Hostel** (☎ /fax 54-1974; www5.ocn.ne.jp/%7Edaiyayh/; 1075 Nakahatsuishi-machi; dm ¥2730; ☎) This six-room, 24-bed hostel earns commendations for its hospitable hostess. It's a four-minute walk from the Shiyakusho-mae (City Hall) bus stop, behind the post office and near the river. Reserve meals in advance; breakfast/dinner is ¥420/840.

**Nikkō Park Lodge** (☎ 53-1201; fax 53-4332; www.nikkoparklodge.com; 2825 Tokorono; dm/r per person from ¥2990/3990) Friendly, cute, unpretentious and well kept, on the green side of town (pick-up available on request). It's mostly twin and double rooms, plus a couple of dorms, run by English-speaking Zen Buddhist monks; look for yoga classes. Breakfast/dinner costs ¥395/1500.

**Jōhsyū-ya Ryokan** (☎ 54-0155; fax 53-2000; www.johsyu-ya.co.jp; 911 Nakahatsuishi; r per person ¥3900) This 100-plus-year-old inn, on the main road beside the post office, is nothing fancy but good honest value. No private facilities or English spoken, but rooms have phone and TV, and there's a hot-spring bath and woodwork on the doors that's funky (in a good way). Breakfast/dinner costs ¥1000/2000.

### MIDRANGE

**Turtle Inn Nikkō** (☎ 53-3168; www.turtle-nikko.com; 2-16 Takumi-cho; s/d without bathroom ¥5100/9000, s/d with bathroom ¥5600/10,600; ☎) One of Nikkō's more popular pensions, with large Japanese and Western-style rooms, some English-speaking staff and hearty meals (breakfast/dinner ¥1050/2100). Downsides: rather institutional feel, décor that's more 'outdated' than 'traditional'. Take a bus to Sōgō-kaikan-mae, backtrack about 50m, turn right along the river and walk for about five minutes; you'll see the turtle sign on the left. Rates vary seasonally.

**Annex Turtle Hotori-An** (☎ 53-3663; www.turtle-nikko.com; 8-28 Takumi-cho; s/d with bathroom ¥6500/12,400; ☎) For a little more money and a few more minutes' walk, the Turtle Inn's newer Annex is a more modern, pleasant option. It has a windowed dining room (breakfast/dinner ¥1050/2100), well-tended *tatami* and Western-style rooms, and greenery surrounding the *onsen* (plus in-room baths). Internet access is at Turtle Inn, and your dinner may be, too. From Turtle Inn, bear left and cross the river; the annex is about 100m ahead on the right.

**Nikkō Tōkan-sō Ryokan** (☎ 54-0611; fax 53-3914; www.tokanso.com; 2335 Sannai; r per person incl 2 meals ¥8400-14,000, min 2 people) Clean and spacious, Tōkansō provides a welcoming (if not luxurious) ryokan experience. From the Shinkyō bus stop, continue uphill, cross the street, turn right and bear left again uphill.

### TOP END

**Nikkō Kanaya Hotel** (☎ 54-0001; www.kanayahotel.co.jp/nkh/index-e.html; 1300 Kami-Hatsuishi-machi; s/d from ¥9240/11,500; ☎) Nikkō's oldest Western style hotel (1893) wears its history like a fine suit. Uphill from Rte 119 and with views of the river and Shin-kyō, the best rooms have fine views, spacious quarters and private bathrooms. Rates do not include meals and rise steeply in peak seasons.

**Hotel Seikōen** (☎ 53-5555; fax 53-5554; www.hotel-seikoen.com; 2350 Sannai; d per person incl 2 meals ¥12,000-17,000) About as close as you can get to Tōshōgu, this 24-room hotel was built in the 1980s but somehow looks older. That's forgotten in the neat rooms (mostly Japanese) and *onsen*, including indoor and outdoor baths (the latter of cypress) and sauna, and meals offering local specialities. It's past Tōkan-sō Ryokan, about 100m on the left-hand side.

### Eating & Drinking

Nikkō's overnight visitors often eat where they're staying, but there are a number of places on the main road between the stations and the shrine area; most close by 8pm or 9pm. A local speciality is *yuba* – the skin that forms when making tofu – cut into strips; better than it sounds, it's a staple of *shōjin-ryōri* (Buddhist vegetarian cuisine).

**Hippari Dako** (☎ 53-2933; 1011 Kami-Hatsuishi-machi; meals ¥500-850; ☎ 11am-8pm; E) This three-table shop is an institution among foreign travellers, as years of business cards tacked to the

walls testify. It serves filling sets, including *yakitori* (chicken on skewers) and *yaki-udon* (fried noodles). It's on the left side of Rte 119, about 100m before the Shin-kyō bridge.

**Skylark Gusto** (☎ 50-1232; 595-1 Gokōmachi; mains ¥500-1000; ☎ 10am-2am Mon-Fri, 7am-2am Sat; E) Nikkō's only late-night restaurant is a branch of Skylark, a national chain of 'family restaurants'. It makes up in value and variety what it lacks in individuality. Offerings include pizzas, pasta and *tonkatsu* (pork cutlet).

**Hi no Kuruma** (ひの車; ☎ 54-2062; 597-2 Gokōmachi; mains ¥500-1500; ☎ lunch & dinner Thu-Tue; E) A local favourite for *okonomiyaki* (savoury pancakes), which you cook by yourself on a *teppan* (hot-steel table). Most choices are under ¥1000, or splurge for the works: pork, squid, beef, shrimp, corn etc (¥1500).

**Kikkō** (☎ 53-3320; 1007 Kami-Hatsuishi-machi; mains ¥700-1300; ☎ lunch & dinner; E) Welcoming, home-style spot for Korean dishes, like *ishiyaki bibimpa* (rice with beef and vegetables in a hot stone bowl), *chapchae* (fried clear noodles with vegetables) and *kimchi ramen* (noodles with spicy Korean pickles). *Yakiniku* (grilled meats) is cooked in the kitchen (other places make you cook it yourself at the table), and large dishes like *samgyetang* (stewed ginseng chicken) are enough for two. It's a few doors downhill from Hippari Dako, with a scrolling electronic sign.

**Yuba Yūzen** (☎ 53-0355; 1-22 Yasukawa-cho; sets ¥2625-3150; ☎ lunch) This *yuba* speciality house serves it sashimi-style, with tofu and soy milk, and with a variety of seasonal side dishes. There's no English menu, but there are only two choices for sets: ¥2625 if you're hungry and ¥3150 if you're really hungry. Look for the two-storey tan building across from the first left turn after Shinkyō.

**Gyoshintei** (☎ 53-3751; 2339-1 Sannai; meals around ¥4000; ☎ lunch & dinner) For *shōjin-ryōri* in a setting to die for, Gyoshintei is worth the splurge. It overlooks an elegant garden, about 250m north of the Shin-kyō bridge.

**Nikkō Beer** (☎ 54-3005; 2844-1 Tokorono; beer from ¥525; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm) Sample the local brew in the hills above town, a light lager-style Pilsner that's won beer competitions both internationally (in 2004) and in Japan (2006). Snacks include sausages and ice cream.

Stalls around the shrine precincts sell snacks grilled on a stick, including *yakitori*, *yaki-tomrokoshi* (grilled corn) and *ayu* (river trout).

## Getting There & Away

Nikkō is best reached from Tokyo via the Tōbu-Nikkō line from Asakusa station. You can usually get last-minute seats on reserved *tokkyū* (limited express) trains (¥2740, one hour 50 minutes) about every 30 minutes from 7.30am to 10am, hourly thereafter. *Kai-soku* (rapid) trains (¥1320, 2½ hours, hourly from 6.20am to 4.30pm) require no reservation. For either train, you may have to change at Shimo-imaichi. Be sure to ride in the first two cars to reach Nikkō (some cars may separate at an intermediate stop).

JR makes four daily runs between Nikkō and Tokyo's Shinjuku (¥3900) and Ikebukuro (¥3770) stations, in about two hours. Otherwise, travelling by JR is time-consuming and costly without a JR Pass. Take the *shinkansen* (bullet train) from Tokyo to Utsunomiya (¥4800, 50 minutes) and change there for an ordinary train to Nikkō (¥740, 45 minutes).

### TRAIN/BUS PASSES

Tōbu Railway offers two passes covering rail transport from Asakusa to Nikkō (though not the *tokkyū* surcharge, from ¥1040) and unlimited hop-on-hop-off bus services around Nikkō. The All Nikkō Pass (adult/child ¥4400/2210,) is valid for four days and includes buses to Chūzenji-ko (right), Yumoto-Onsen (p195) and other regional destinations. The World Heritage Pass (Sekai-isan Meguri Pass; adult/senior high/junior high/child ¥3600/3200/3000/1700, two days) includes buses to the World Heritage sights, plus admission to Tōshōgū, Rinnō-ji and Futarasan Jinja. Purchase these passes at the Tōbu **Sight-seeing Service Center** (☎ 8am-2.30pm) in Asakusa station. Bus stops are announced in English.

### TŌBU NIKKŌ BUS FREE PASS

If you've already got your rail ticket, two-day bus-only passes allow unlimited rides between Nikkō and Yumoto Onsen (¥3000) or Nikkō and Chūzenji Onsen (¥2000), including the World Heritage sites. Alternatively, the Sekai-isan-meguri (World Heritage Bus Pass; ¥500) covers the area between the stations and shrine precincts. Buy these at Tōbu Nikkō station.

## AROUND NIKKŌ 日光周辺

☎ 0288

Nikkō is part of the Nikkō National Park, 1402 sq km sprawling over Fukushima, Tochigi,

Gunma and Niigata prefectures. This mountainous region features extinct volcanoes, lakes, waterfalls and marshlands. There are good hiking opportunities and some remote hot-spring resorts.

### Yashio-no-yu Onsen やしおの湯温泉

A 5km bus ride from central Nikkō, this modern **onsen** (admission ¥500; ☎ 10am-9pm Fri-Wed) is a good place to relax after a day of exploring shrines and temples. It has several different baths, including a *rotemburo* (outdoor bath). Take a Chūzenji-bound bus from either train station in Nikkō and get off at the Kiyotaki Itchōme stop. The *onsen* is across the river from the bus stop; walk back towards Nikkō, under the Rte 120 bypass and across the bridge.

### Chūzenji-ko 中禅寺湖

This area 10km west of Nikkō is (relatively) natural and offers a bit of seclusion, even if the namesake lake has the usual tourist facilities. The big-ticket attraction is the humbling, 97m-high falls, **Kegon-no-taki** (華厳滝; ☎ 55-0030; adult/child return ¥530/320; ☎ 7.30am-6pm May-Sep, 9am-4.30pm Dec-Feb, sliding hr in btwn). Take the elevator down to a platform to observe the full force of the plunging water. **Futarasan-jinja** (二荒山神社; ☎ 55-0017; ☎ 8am-5pm Apr-Oct, 9am-4pm Nov-Mar) complements the shrines at Tōshō-gū and on the mountain, Nantai-san (2484m). The shrine is about 1km west of the falls, along the lake's north shore.

For good views of the lake and Kegon-no-taki, get off the bus at the Akechi-daira bus stop (the stop before Chūzenji Onsen) and take the **Akechi-daira Ropeway** (Akechi Plateau Cable Car; 明智平ロープウェイ; ☎ 55-0331; adult one way/return ¥390/710, child ¥190/360; ☎ 8.30am-4.30pm Apr-Nov, 9am-4pm Dec-Mar) up to a viewing platform. From here, it's a pleasant 1.5km walk across the Chanoki-daira to a vantage point with great views over the lake, the falls and Nantai-san. From here you can walk down to the lake and Chūzenji Onsen.

**Chūzenji-ko** has the usual flotilla of sight-seeing boats at the dock (prices vary). The lake (161m deep) is a fabulous shade of deep blue in good weather, with a mountainous backdrop.

### SLEEPING & EATING

**Chūzenji Pension** (中禅寺ペンション; ☎ 55-0888; fax 55-0721; s/d without meals from ¥6300/9450, per person incl 2 meals from ¥8925) This pink hostelry set back

from the lake's eastern shore has nine mostly Western-style rooms that feel a bit like grandma's house. All have private facilities, and there's a bike rental available.

**our pick** **Hotel Fūga** (楓雅; ☎ 55-1122; fax 55-1100; www.nikko-hotelfuga.com; d per person incl 2 meals from ¥23,000) *Ay caramba!* The common baths here are bigger than entire inns elsewhere, the rest of the building is fitted with contemporary art and hallways are lined with carpets you may want to dive into. All 28 palatially proportioned Japanese-style rooms have views of the lake and Mt Nantai. It's about 150m beyond Chūzenji Pension.

**Feu de Bois** (フウドボワ; ☎ 55-1223; bread & pastry ¥100-500; ☎ 8am-6pm while supplies last) A block off the main street by the bus Chūzenji bus stop is this darling *boulangerie* selling walnut bread, Danish with apricot or choco-banana, croissants and more. Stock up before that Senjōgahara hike.

### GETTING THERE & AWAY

Buses run from the Nikkō station area to Chūzenji Onsen (¥1100, 50 minutes).

### Yumoto Onsen 湯元温泉

From Chūzenji-ko, you might continue on to the quieter hot-springs resort of Yumoto Onsen by bus (¥840, 30 minutes) or reach it by a rewarding three-hour hike on the Senjōgahara Shizen-kenkyū-rō (Senjōgahara Plain Nature Trail; 戦場ヶ原自然研究路).

From Chūzenji Onsen, take a Yumoto-bound bus and get off at Ryūzu-no-taki (竜頭ノ滝; ¥410, 20 minutes), the start of the hike. The hike follows the Yu-gawa across the picturesque marshland of Senjōgahara (partially on wooden plank paths), alongside the 75m-high falls Yu-daki (湯滝) to the lake Yu-no-ko (湯の湖), then around the lake to Yumoto Onsen and the bus back to Nikkō (¥1650, 1½ hours).

Before leaving Yumoto Onsen, you might stop off at the hot-spring temple **Onsen-ji** (温泉寺; admission ¥500; ☎ 10am-2pm late Apr-Nov), a good spot to rest hiking-weary muscles.

To hike downhill, take the bus to Yumoto and follow this route in reverse.

## GUNMA-KEN 群馬県

The Japanese archipelago is filled with *onsen*, but the star in the Kanto area hot-spring firmament is Gunma-ken. Mineral baths seem to bubble out of the ground at every turn in

this mountainous landscape, and some small towns feel delightfully traditional. Here's just a small selection.

### Kusatsu Onsen 草津温泉

☎ 0279 / pop 7625

Kusatsu has been famous for its waters since the Kamakura Period. Their source is Yubatake (湯畑, 'hot water field') in the town centre, flowing at 5000L per minute and topped with wooden tanks from which Kusatsu's ryokan fill their baths. A stroll here in your *yukata* (cotton bathrobe) is a must. Kusatsu's waters are relatively heavy with sulphuric acid, which sounds scary until you realise that it destroys harmful microbes.

Stop in or phone the **city hall tourist section** (☎ 88-0001; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm), next to the bus station (English speaker on hand, who can help book accommodation). On the web, visit www.kusatsu-onsen.ne.jp.

There are plenty of *onsen* open to the public, including **Ōtakinoyu** (大滝乃湯; adult/child ¥800/400; ☎ 9am-9pm), known for its tubs at a variety of temperatures; try different ones for an experience known as *awase-yu* (mix-and-match waters). At the park Sai-no-kawara-kōen (西の河原公園) west of town is a 500 sq metre **rotemburo** (separated by gender; ☎ 88-6167; adult/child ¥500/300; ☎ 7am-8pm Apr-Nov, 9am-8pm Dec-Mar).

Kusatsu also offers a unique opportunity to see *yumomi*, in which local women stir the waters to cool them, in folk-dance style while singing a folk song. It's next to Yubatake at the bathhouse **Netsu no Yu** (熱の湯; ☎ 88-3613; adult/child ¥500/200, ☎ 3 performances Dec-Mar, 4 performances late Mar-Nov, 6 performances May-late Oct).

Inns in the town centre are mostly pretty expensive, but the 12-room Alpine-vibe **Pension Segawa** (ペンションセガワ; ☎ 88-1288; fax 88-1377; r per person incl 2 meals from ¥8025) is a 10-minute walk from the bus terminal (owners will pick you up). Choose a Western- or Japanese-style room and three different bathtubs, and look for fresh-baked bread. Plus, there's a tennis court (in season).

Though you might not know from looking at its tower next to Yubatake, **Hotel Ichii** (ホテルイー井; ☎ 88-0011; fax 88-0111; r per person incl two meals from ¥14,000; ☎) has been a Kusatsu institution in business for 300-plus years. In addition to in-room baths, of course there are indoor and outdoor baths separated by gender. Expect *sansai* (mountain vegetable) cuisine.

Transport to Kusatsu Onsen is by bus from Naganohara-Kusatsuguchi station. From Ueno, *tokkyū* Kusatsu trains take about 2½ hours (¥5130) to Naganohara-Kusatsuguchi station, then local bus to Kusatsu Onsen (¥670, 30 minutes). Alternatively, take the *shinkansen* to Takasaki and transfer to the Agatsuma line (¥5650, 2¼ hours). **JR Highway Buses** ([www.jrbuskanto.co.jp/mn/aetop.cfm](http://www.jrbuskanto.co.jp/mn/aetop.cfm)) from Shinjuku station south exit cost ¥3100/5600 (one way/return) and take about 3¾ hours each way; reservations required.

### Minakami & Takaragawa Onsen

水上温泉 • 宝川温泉

☎ 0278

In eastern Gunma-ken, Minakami is a thriving *onsen* town with outdoor activities to match. The town of Minakami also encompasses Takaragawa Onsen (about 30 minutes away by road), a riverside spa oft-voted the nation's best.

The train station is in the village of Minakami Onsen, as are most of Minakami's lodgings. **Minakami Tourist Information Centre** (水上観光協会; ☎ 72-2611; [www.minakami-onsen.com](http://www.minakami-onsen.com); ☎ 9am-5.15pm) is across from the station, has English pamphlets and can make accommodation reservations (in Japanese). Ask which inns in town have *higaeri nyuyoku* (day-use baths) open when you visit.

**Tanigawadake Ropeway** (谷川岳ロープウェイ; ☎ 72-3575; return ¥2000; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 7am-5pm Sat & Sun) takes you via gondola to the peak Tenjin-daira, from where hiking trips, ranging from a couple of hours to all day, are available from May to November, conditions permitting. There's skiing and snowboarding in winter (December to May). From Minakami station, take a bus to Ropeway-Eki-mae bus stop (¥650, about hourly).

A number of operators lead rafting and kayaking trips in warmer months and winter expeditions, such as snowshoeing, from about ¥6000 for a half-day. Inquire at the tourist information centre. **Max** (☎ 72-4844) is a typical outlet, with English-speaking guides.

**Takaragawa Onsen** (☎ 75-261; adult/child ¥1500/1000; ☎ 9am-4pm) is idyllic and rangey. Most of its several pools on the riverbanks (with slate, not natural, flooring) are mixed bathing, with one women-only bath. Women are encouraged to take modesty towels into the mixed baths. The covered walkway down to the baths is lined with collections

of...well...*stuff* that must have taken decades to assemble: antique teapots to Pooh bears and plastic flowers. A small restaurant serves udon, *soba* and *kamameshi* (rice topped with other ingredients in a metal pot).

**Our pick** The adjacent inn, **Ōsenkaku** (☎ 75-2121; fax 75-2038; r per person incl 2 meals from ¥9600) is spectacular, with gorgeous riverfront rooms over several buildings, a mighty old-style feel and 24-hour use of the outdoor onsen, and you get to avoid the covered walkway. Prices rise steeply for nicer rooms with better views.

To reach Minakami station, take the *shinkansen* from Ueno to Takasaki and transfer to the Jōetsu line (¥5650, two hours), or *tokkyū* Minakami trains run direct (¥5130, 2½ hours). You can also catch the *shinkansen* to Jōmō Kōgen (1¼ hours) from Tokyo/Ueno (¥5240/5040), from where buses run to Minakami (¥600) and Takaragawa Onsen (¥1450, April to early December).

### MITO 水戸

☎ 029 / pop 264,000

Capital of Ibaraki Prefecture and a one-time castle town, Mito is best known for the garden, **Kairaku-en** (偕楽園; ☎ 244-5454; garden/Kobuntei pavilion free/¥190; ☎ garden 6am-7pm Apr-mid-Sep, 7am-6pm mid-Sep-Mar, pavilion 9am-4pm). It's one of the three most-celebrated landscape gardens in Japan; the other two are Kenroku-en (p294) in Kanazawa and Kōraku-en in Okayama (above).

The 18-acre Kairaku-en dates back to 1842 when it was built by the *daimyō* of the Mito *han* (domain), a member of the clan of the Tokugawa shogun. 'Kairaku-en' means 'the garden to enjoy with people', and it was one of the first gardens in the nation to open to the public, decades before the advent of public parks following the Meiji Restoration.

The gardens remain popular for their 3000 *ume* (plum blossom) trees, some 100 varieties of which bloom in late February or early March. A plum blossom festival takes place here around this time (contact the JNTO or local tourist office ☎ 224-0441 for dates). Other flowering trees (azaleas, camellias, cherry etc) make for impressive viewing in other seasons, and the hillside setting allows broad views. The three-storey pavilion Kobun-tei is a faithful 1950s reproduction of the *daimyō's* villa (the original was destroyed during WWII).

From Tokyo, JR Jōban line trains depart from Ueno station for Mito (*tokkyū*; ¥3820, 80 minutes); connect by local train to Kairaku-en station (¥180, five minutes), take a bus to Kairaku-en bus stop (¥230, 15 minutes) or walk (about 30 minutes) from the station's south exit along the lake Senba-ko.

## WEST OF TOKYO

Tokyo-to (Tokyo Prefecture) includes many cities in addition to Tokyo proper; most are along the Chūō line as it heads towards Yamanashi-ken. South and west of these are the scenic Fuji Go-ko region, Mt Fuji itself, the tourist mecca of Hakone, and the *onsen* and beach resorts of the Izu-hantō.

### Ghibli Museum 三鷹の森ジブリ美術館

When you saw *Spirited Away* by Miyazaki Hayao (or *Princess Mononoke*, *Howl's Moving Castle*, *My Neighbour Totoro* and so on), you probably fell in love with its mythical themes, fanciful characters and outrageous landscapes. So did every kid in Japan, which means you need to arrange tickets long before you arrive at this **museum** (☎ 0570-055777; [www.ghibli-museum.jp/ticket\\_info.html](http://www.ghibli-museum.jp/ticket_info.html); 1-1-83 Shimorenjaku, Mitaka-shi, Tokyo; adult ¥1000, child ¥100-700; ☎ 10am-6pm Wed-Mon) in Tokyo's Mitaka City of the work of Ghibli, Miyazaki's animation studio.

Exhibits cover the animation process from concept to screen (English-speaking docents are usually on hand). There's a zoetrope presentation of a half-dozen Ghibli characters in motion, a mini-theatre presenting short films (in Japanese but usually easy enough to follow), 5m worth of robot from *Castle in the Sky* and a gift shop with exclusive merchandise (at exclusive prices).

From Mitaka station on the Chūō line (from Shinjuku: ¥210, 13 minutes), follow the sign-posted walk along the Tamagawa Waterworks for 15 minutes to Inokashira Park and turn right. Alternatively, a community bus (one way/return ¥200/300, approximately every 10 minutes) goes directly to the museum from the station.

### Takao-san 高尾山

☎ 042

Easily reached from Shinjuku, Mt Takao is one of Tokyo's most popular day trips, although it's often busy on weekends and holidays and

rather built up compared to other regional hikes.

One of the chief attractions on this 599m mountain is the temple **Yaku-ō-in** (薬王院; ☎ 661-1115; ☎ 24hr), best known for the Hiwatori Matsuri (fire-crossing ceremony; second Sunday in March, 1pm near Takaosanguchi station). Priests walk across hot coals in bare feet amid the ceremonial blowing of conch shells. The public is also welcome to participate; expect lots of company.

The rest of the year, Takao-san offers nature hikes with six trails. Keio line offices have free trail maps in English. The most popular trail (No 1) leads you past the temple; allow about 3¼ hours return for the 400m ascent. Alternatively, a cable car and a chair lift can take you partway up (one way adult/child ¥470/230, return ¥900/450).

From Shinjuku station, take the private Keio line (*jun-tokkyū*; ¥370, 47 minutes) to Takaosanguchi. The tourist village (with snack and souvenir shops), trail entrances, cable car and chairlift are a few minutes away to the right. JR Pass holders can travel to Takao station on the Chūō line (45 minutes) and transfer to the Keio line to Takaosanguchi (¥120, three minutes).

### Oku-Tama Region 奥多摩周辺

☎ 0428

The upriver region of the Tama-gawa, in Ōme city, has some splendid mountain scenery and good hiking trails, making it a fine day trip or an easygoing overnight. The highlight of the area is the mountaintop shrine complex of Mitake-jinja and the quaint village surrounding it.

### MITAKE-SAN 御岳山

Buses run from Mitake station to the Mitake-san cable-car terminus at **Takimoto** (elevation 407m) where a cable car (¥270, 10 minutes) takes you near the summit (elevation 926m, one way/return ¥570/1090, six minutes, 7.30am to 6.30pm). Alternatively, allow one hour to hike from Takimoto to Mitake-san cable-car station (elevation 831m). About 20 minutes on foot from the top of the cable car is the rustic, wooded Mitake-jinja (御岳神社), a Shintō shrine said to date back some 1200 years, making it a historic pilgrimage site. Around the shrine are stunning views of the surrounding mountains.

**Mitake Visitors Center** (御岳ビジターセンター; ☎ 78-9363; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Tue-Sun) is 250m

eyond the top of the cable car, near the start of the village.

### ÔTAKE-SAN HIKE 大岳山

If you've got time, the five-hour round-trip hike from Mitake-jinja to the summit of Ôtake-san (大岳山; 1266m) is highly recommended. Although there's some climbing involved, it's a fairly easy hike and the views from the summit are excellent – Mt Fuji is visible on clear days. On the way, detour down to Nanoyono-taki (waterfalls set amid lush forest), Ganseki-en rock garden (a beautiful path that crosses back and forth across a gurgling stream) and Ayahirono-taki (another waterfall).

If you're not spending the night on Mitake-san, be sure to note the hours of the cable car before setting out.

### SLEEPING & EATING

The following are all on Mitake-san.

**Mitake Youth Hostel** (御嶽ユースホステル; ☎ 78-8501; fax 78-8774; www.jyh.or.jp; dm incl 2/no meals ¥4550/2880, add ¥1000 for nonmembers) This comfortable hostel has fine tatami rooms inside a handsome old building that used to be a pilgrims' lodge. It's midway between the top of the cable car and Mitake-jinja, about a minute beyond the visitor centre.

**Komadori San-sō** (駒鳥山荘; ☎ 78-8472; fax 78-8472; r per person ¥5250-6300; ㉞) On a promontory below the shrine, this 10-room *shukubō* (temple lodging) is higgledy-piggledy with bric-a-brac but friendly and at ease with foreigners. There's a balcony with mountain views, and a gigantic bathtub made of *hinoki* cypress. Breakfast/dinner costs from ¥800/2000. To reach the inn, walk around the hill where the shrine is and follow the signs.

**Reiunso** (嶺雲荘; ☎ 78-8501; fax 78-8774; r per person incl 2 meals from ¥8400) In the same building as the Mitake Youth Hostel, Reiunso has upgraded facilities and more elaborate meals.

**Momiji-ya** (紅葉屋; ☎ 78-8475; mains ¥735-1155; ㉞ noon-5pm, closed irregularly) The little shopping street just before the shrine entrance has a number of small restaurants and shops. This *soba* shop is typical, with views out the back windows and *kamonanban soba* (noodles in hearty duck broth; ¥1155). There's a picture menu.

### GETTING THERE & AWAY

To reach Mitake-san, take the JR Chūō line from Shinjuku station to Tachikawa station

(¥450, 26 minutes), where you will probably have to change to the JR Ōme line to Mitake (¥440, 45 minutes).

### MT FUJI AREA 富士山周辺

☎ 0555

Mt Fuji, emblem of Japan, dominates the region west of Tokyo. Climbing the mountain is a tradition with sacred overtones, while many visitors are content to view the mountain from its foothills. Although Hakone is probably the most famous spot for Fuji viewing, the scenic Fuji Go-ko region offers similar views and fewer crowds.

### Mt Fuji 富士山

On clear days, particularly in winter, Mt Fuji (*Fuji-san* in Japanese) is visible from as far as Tokyo, 100km away. When Japan's highest mountain (3776m) is capped with snow, it's a picture-postcard perfect volcanic cone.

For much of the year you need to be closer, and even then the notoriously shy mountain is often covered in haze or cloud. Autumn and spring are your next best bets for Fuji-spotting, yet even during these times the mountain may be visible only in the morning before it retreats behind its cloud curtain.

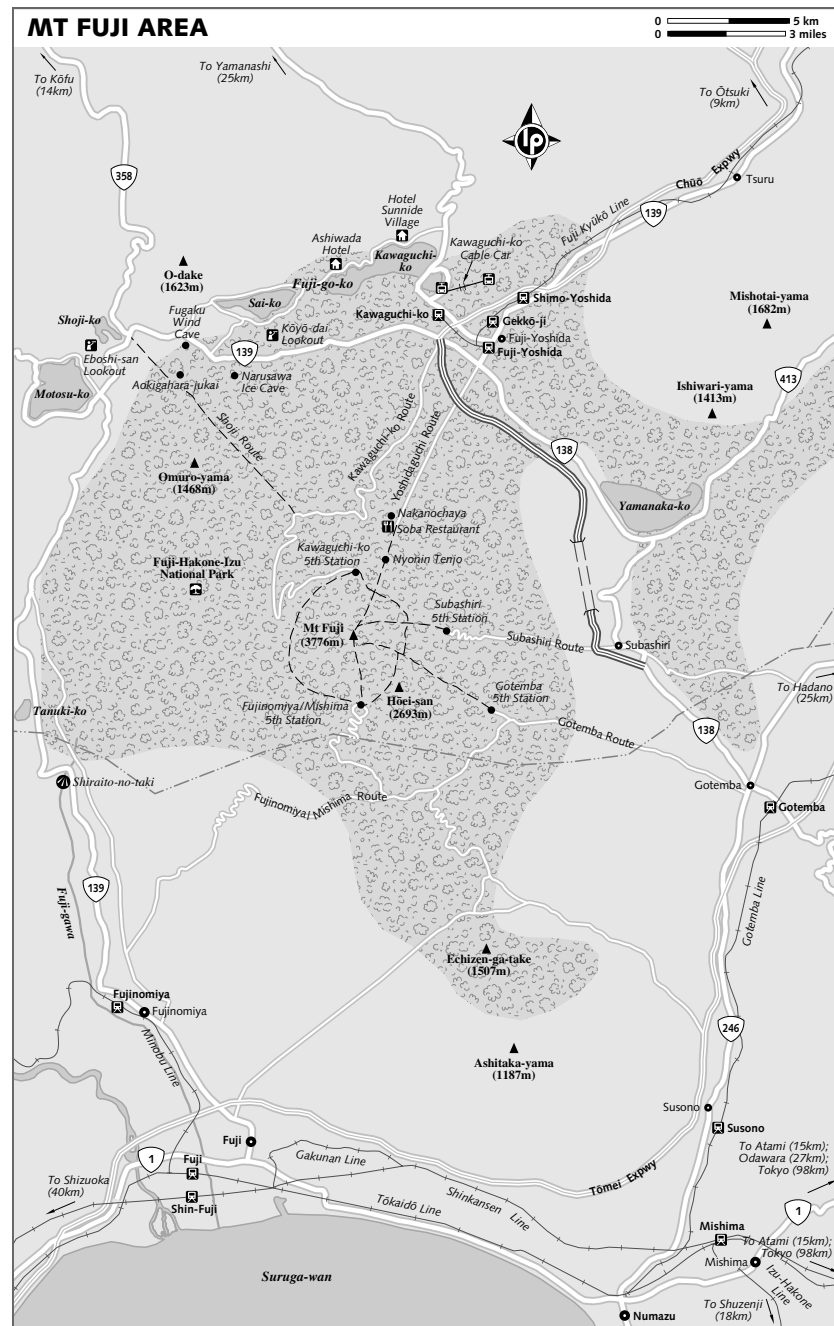
### ORIENTATION

If Fuji-san is the centre of this region, other attractions radiate around it like the numerals on a clock. At 5 o'clock is Izu-Hantō, while 4 o'clock points you towards Hakone. The Fuji-go-ko (Fuji Five Lakes) region begins at about 2 o'clock and heads west, through the towns of Fuji-Yoshida and Fuji-Kawaguchi-ko, continuing along the mountain's northern flank to the lovely, remote lake Motosu-ko at about 10-thirty. Much of this land is part of the noncontiguous Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park.

### INFORMATION

Brochures available from the **Tokyo Tourist Information Center** (TIC; ☎ 03-3201-3331) provide exhaustive detail on transport to the mountain and how to climb it, complete with climbing schedules worked out to the minute.

The best tourist information centres near the mountain are the **Fuji-Yoshida Information Center** (☎ 22-7000; ㉞ 9am-5.30pm), to the left as you exit the Fuji-Yoshida train station, and the **Kawaguchi-ko Tourist Information Center** (☎ 72-6700; ㉞ 8.30am-5pm Sun-Fri, 8.30am-6.30pm Sat



## FUJI-SAN FAQS

- In Japanese Mt Fuji is called 'Fuji-san'. This '-san' may sound like the honorific after someone's name, but it is actually an alternative reading of the character for mountain (山), usually pronounced 'yama'.
- Although it's been dormant for hundreds of years, Fuji-san's a volcano. When it last blew its top, in 1707, the streets of Tokyo, 100km away, were covered with volcanic ash.
- Experts date Fuji-san's current shape from about 8000 years ago. Before that, Fuji-san is believed to have been two volcanoes.
- Your best chances of spotting the mountain are from November to February. Lotsa luck in August, unless you climb it.
- The classic way to climb the mountain is to reach it in time for sunrise. The special name for sunrise on Fuji-san is *goraikō*.
- Even if you're just passing on the *shinkansen*, you may be able to spot the mountain. Look out the northern side of the train around Fuji city.
- The view of Mt Fuji on the back of the ¥1000 note is from Motosu-ko, the westernmost of the Fuji Go-ko.

& holidays), next to Kawaguchi-ko train station. Both have friendly, English-speaking staff and maps and brochures of the area. During the climbing season (1 July to 31 August), there is also climbing information provided by staff in English at a special office at **Fuji-Yoshida city hall** (☎ 24-1236; 🕒 8.30am-5.15pm Mon-Fri).

## CLIMBING MT FUJI

The mountain is divided into 10 'stations' from base (first station) to summit (10th), but most climbers start from one of the four 5th stations, reachable by road. From the 5th stations, allow about 4½ hours to reach the top and about three hours to descend, plus an hour for circling the crater at the top. The Mt Fuji Weather Station, on the southwest edge of the crater, marks the mountain's actual summit.

North of Fuji-san is the Kawaguchi-ko 5th station (2305m), reachable from the town of Kawaguchi-ko. This station is particularly popular with climbers starting from Tokyo. Other 5th stations are at Subashiri (1980m), Gotemba (1440m; allow seven to eight hours to reach the summit) and Fujinomiya (Mishima; 2380m) best for climbers coming from the west (Nagoya, Kyoto and beyond).

To time your arrival for dawn you can either start up in the afternoon, stay overnight in a mountain hut and continue early in the morning, or climb the whole way at night. You do not want to arrive on the top too long before dawn, as it's likely to be very cold and windy.

Trails below the 5th stations are now used mainly as short hiking routes, but you might consider the challenging but rewarding hike from base to summit on either the Yoshidaguchi Route (see p203) from Fuji-Yoshida (p201) or on the Shoji Route from near Shoji-ko. There are alternative trails on the Kawaguchi-ko, Subashiri and Gotemba routes, which, assuming strong knees and expendable clothing, you can descend rapidly by running, *chussing* and sliding down loose, clay-red sand.

## Mountain Huts

From the 5th to the 8th station are about a dozen lodges scattered along the trails. Accommodation here is basic: most charge around ¥5000 for a blanket on the floor sardined head-to-toe with other climbers. Staff prepare simple meals, and you're welcome to rest inside as long as you order something. If you don't feel like eating, a one-hour rest costs ¥500. Camping on the mountain is not permitted.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

The Fuji-san area is most easily reached from Tokyo by bus; from Kansai, the journey can require multiple connections via Mishima station on the Kodama shinkansen. The two main towns on the north side of the mountain, Fuji-Yoshida and Kawaguchi-ko, are the principal gateways. See Fuji Go-ko (Fuji Five Lakes, opposite).

Daily direct buses (¥2600, 2½ hours) run from Shinjuku bus terminal to the Kawaguchi-ko 5th station. For details call ☎ 03-5376-2217. This is by far the fastest and cheapest way of getting from Tokyo to the 5th station. If you take two trains and a bus, the same trip can cost nearly ¥6000. If you're already in Kawaguchi-ko, there are bus services up to Kawaguchi-ko 5th station (¥1700, 55 minutes) from April to mid-November. The schedule varies considerably during that period – call **Fuji Kyūkō bus** (☎ 72-2911) for details. At the height of the climbing season, there are buses until quite late in the evening – ideal for climbers intending to make an overnight ascent. Taxis operate from Kawaguchi-ko train station to the Kawaguchi-ko 5th station for around ¥10,000, plus tolls.

From Subashiri, buses to the Subashiri 5th station cost ¥1220 and take 55 minutes. From Gotemba station they cost ¥1500.

From Gotemba, buses to the Gotemba 5th station (¥1080, 45 minutes) operate four to six times daily during climbing season only.

Coming from western Japan, buses run from the *shinkansen* stations at Shin-Fuji (¥2400) and Mishima (¥2390) to Fujinomiya (Mishima) 5th station in just over two hours. There are reservation centres in **Tokyo** (☎ 03-5376-2217) and **Fuji** (☎ 72-5111).

## Fuji go-ko 富士五湖

☎ 555

Yamanashi-ken's Fuji-go-ko (Fuji Five Lakes) region is scattered around the mountain's northern foothills; its lakes provide perfect

reflecting pools for the mountain's majesty. Yamanaka-ko is the largest, easternmost lake, followed by Kawaguchi-ko, Sai-ko, Shōji-ko (the smallest) and Motosu-ko. Particularly during the autumn *kōyō* (foliage) season, the lakes make a good overnight trip out of Tokyo, for a stroll or a drive, and the energetic can hike in nearby mountains. Hiking maps are available from the information centres in the two principal towns, Fuji-Yoshida and Kawaguchi-ko.

## SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Although adjacent, Fuji-Yoshida and Kawaguchi-ko are separate administrative districts, with separate visitor facilities.

## Fuji-Yoshida 富士吉田

Fuji-Yoshida's *oshi no ie* (pilgrims' inns) have served visitors to the mountain since the days when climbing Mt Fuji was a pilgrimage rather than a tourist event. A necessary preliminary to the ascent was a visit to the deeply wooded, atmospheric shrine **Sengen-jinja** (1615, thought to have been the site of a shrine as early as 788), still worth a visit for its 1000-year-old cedar, the main gate rebuilt every 60 years (slightly larger each time) and the two one-tonne *mikoshi* used in the annual Yoshida no Himatsuri (Yoshida Fire Festival).

From Fuji-Yoshida station you can walk (15 minutes) or take a bus to Sengen-jinja-mae bus stop (¥150, five minutes).

Central Fuji-Yoshida's **Gekkō-ji district** (月江寺) feels like the little town that time forgot. While developers elsewhere spend fortunes building nostalgic shopping centres through-

## MT FUJI: KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Although children and grandparents regularly reach the summit of Fuji-san, this is a serious mountain and not to be trifled with. It's high enough for altitude sickness and, as on any mountain, the weather can be volatile. On the summit it can go from sunny and warm to wet, windy and cold remarkably quickly. Even if conditions are fine, you can count on it being close to freezing in the mornings even in summer.

Mt Fuji's official climbing season is from 1 July to 31 August, and the Japanese pack in during those busy months, meaning occasional nighttime queues reminiscent of the Marunouchi Line. Authorities strongly caution against climbing outside of the regular season, when services are suspended; hiking from October to May is definitely discouraged. The first half of this decade saw a number of high-profile deaths of off-season climbers from overseas.

At a minimum, bring clothing appropriate for cold and wet weather, including a hat and gloves, as well as drinking water (unless you like shelling out ¥500 per half-litre) and snacks. If you're climbing at night, bring a torch (flashlight) or headlamp, and spare batteries. Descending the mountain is much harder on the knees than ascending; bending your knees and using your thigh muscles can help.



out Japan, the original mid-20th century façades here have barely had an update. Inside are some surprisingly hip cafes and shops.

Outside the town centre, the **Mt Fuji Radar Dome Museum** (富士山レーダードーム館; ☎ 20-0223; adult/child ¥600/400; 🕒 9.30am-5pm Wed-Mon, daily Jul & Aug) honours the weather radar that was the world's highest when it was built on the mountaintop in 1963, following a typhoon that killed some 1000 people in coastal lowlands. The radar is credited with saving countless lives. English-language signage was in the works as of this writing. The wind simulator needs no explanation.

Further down Rte 138, Yamanaka-ko is the largest of the lakes, but it doesn't offer much for visitors – unless you count an enormous

swan-shaped hovercraft that does 35-minute circuits of the lake for ¥900.

One stop west of Fuji-Yoshida station is **Fuji-Q Highland** (☎ 23-2111; admission only adult/child ¥1200/600, 1-day pass incl amusements ¥4500/3300; 🕒 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-8pm Sat & Sun, 8am-9pm 20 Jul–20 Sep), an amusement park with roller coasters, Gundam the Ride, bumper cars and more.

### Kawaguchi-ko 河口湖

On the lake of the same name, the town of Fuji-Kawaguchi-ko is closest to four of the five lakes and a popular departure point for climbing the mountain. Around 600m north of Kawaguchi-ko station, on the lower eastern edge of the lake, is the **Kawaguchi-ko cable car** (☎ 72-0363; one way/return ¥400/700) to

### THE YOSHIDAGUCHI TRAIL UP MT FUJI

Before the construction of the road to the 5th station, Fuji pilgrims began at Sengen-jinja near present-day Fuji-Yoshida, walking among towering cryptomeria trees and old stone lanterns, paying their homage to the shrine gods, and beginning their 19km ascent up Japan's most sacred mountain.

Today, this path offers climbers a chance to participate in this centuries-old tradition. Purists feel this is the best way to climb, saying that the lower reaches are the most beautiful, through lush forests along a path that you'll have almost entirely to yourself. Through sunset, the sunrise and a night in a mountain hut, you'll perhaps get a sense of that elusive spirit so deeply sought by pilgrims in the past.

Of all the routes up Mt Fuji, the Yoshidaguchi trail is the oldest. To reach the trail from the shrine, veer to the right before the main building and turn left onto the main road. This is paved, and you'll soon see a walking path alongside the road. When this roadside trail ends, take the first turn to the right to meet up with the woodland path.

After about 1¼ hours of walking you'll reach **Nakanochaya**, an ancient site marked by carved stones left by previous climbers. You'll also find a quaint **tea and soba restaurant** here (the last place to refuel before the 5th station). From here you enter Fuji's lush forests.

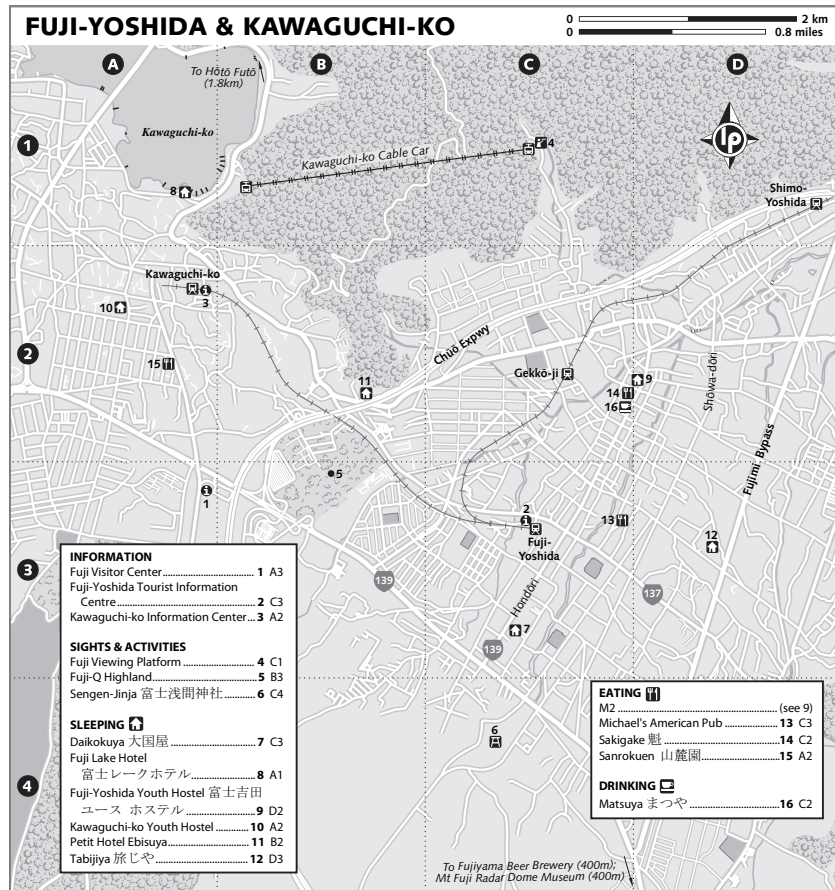
Around 90 minutes later is Umagaeshi, which once housed the old stables where horses were left before pilgrims entered the sacred area of the mountain. A big yellow sign to your left marks the path. Follow this through the *torii* with monkeys on either side, as it continues uphill. Another 20 minutes and you'll pass the 1st station.

Between the 2nd and the 3rd stations, just a bit of navigation is required. The Fuji path meets up with the **Nyonin Tenjo** (Women's Holy Ground), which until 1832 was as far up as women were allowed to go. All that remains is an altar, hidden in the forest. Just before entering you'll cross through a set of posts. Take a right, walk for 150m and look for the posts on the left, which mark the continuation of the path. Around an hour later, the path meets up with the 5th station road. You'll find the Fuji path 150m on, cutting up to the right. You can stay at one of the 5th stations in the vicinity or if you still have energy, continue up another two hours to one of the 7th station huts.

It takes about five hours to reach the 5th station from the Sengen-jinja. The next day, you'll have a much harder 4½-hour ascent up the scarred, barren mountain. Many rise at midnight and climb in darkness, but you can let the crowds go, get up at 4.30am and complete the ascent as the sun peeks through the clouds. On the descent, you can catch a bus at the Kawaguchi-ko 5th station, which will take you to Kawaguchi-ko station.

Pick up maps and get the latest climbing information from the **Fuji-Yoshida Information Center** (☎ 22-7000; 🕒 9am-5.30pm). The *Climbing Mt Fuji* brochure is invaluable.

For more information, visit the excellent website [www.city.fujiyoshida.yamanashi.jp](http://www.city.fujiyoshida.yamanashi.jp).



the Fuji Viewing Platform (1104m). Ask at Kawaguchi-ko's Tourist Information Center (p198) for a map.

If the mountain isn't visible, **Fuji Visitor Centre** (富士ビジターセンター; ☎ 72-0259; admission free; 🕒 9am-10pm late Jul-late Aug, 9am-4pm Dec-Feb, sliding closing time rest of year) shows what you've missed. An English video gives a great summary of the mountain and its geological history, worth viewing even in good weather.

The western lakes are relatively undeveloped. At Sai-ko, **Sai-ko Iyashi-no-Sato Nenba** (西湖いやしの里根場; ☎ 20-4677; adult/child ¥200/100; 🕒 9am-5pm) opened in 2006 on the site of some historic thatched-roof houses, washed away in

a typhoon 40 years earlier. Inside these dozen reconstructed frames are demonstrations of crafts including silk and paper; restaurants specialise in *soba* and *konyakku* (arrowroot gelatin).

There are good views of Mt Fuji from the western end of the lake and from the Kōyō-dai lookout, near the main road. Close to the road are the Narusawa Ice Cave and the Fugaku Wind Cave, both formed by lava flows from a prehistoric eruption of Mt Fuji.

Further west, tiny Shoji-ko is said to be the prettiest of the Fuji Go-ko, though it has no Fuji view. However, you can continue to Eboshi-san, a one- to 1½-hour climb from

the road, for a fine view of it over the Aokigahara-jukai (Sea of Trees). The last lake along is Motosu-ko, the deepest and least visited of the lakes.

### FESTIVALS & EVENTS

The **Yoshida no Hi Matsuri** (Fire Festival; 26 to 27 August) is an annual festival held to mark the end of the climbing season and to offer thanks for the safety of the year's climbers. The first day involves a *mikoshi* procession and the lighting of bonfires on the town's main street. On the second day, festivals are held at Sengen-jinja (p201).

### SLEEPING

If you're not overnighing in a mountain hut, Fuji-Yoshida and Kawaguchi-ko make good bases. **Tourist information offices** (Kawaguchi-ko ☎ 72-6700; Fuji-yoshida ☎ 22-7000) can make reservations for you.

### Fuji-Yoshida

**Fuji-Yoshida Youth Hostel** (☎ 22-0533; www.jyh.or.jp; dm ¥2835; ☒) Popular lodging in a former public bath near Fuji-Yoshida's old town. Both Western and Japanese style are available, some with mountain views, though on our visit the public spaces smelled vaguely of dog. The hostel is around 600m south of Shimo-Yoshida station; walk down the main street, keeping Lawson's on the left. Go through three sets of lights and turn down the small alley on the right.

**Tabijiya** (☎ 20-0500; fax 24-0200; s/d/tw from ¥5750/10,600/11,600; ☒ ☒ ☒) You're tired after all-day hiking and just want a reliable Western-style bed for not a lot of money. Tabijiya's a simple but new and clean business hotel about 10 minutes' walk from the town centre. A large, fresh-cooked breakfast is ¥750.

**Daikokuya** (☎ 22-3778; Hanchō-dōri; d per person ¥6600) Fuji-Yoshida's main street is lined with old *oshi-no-ie* (pilgrim's inns). Set back from the road, this one has elegant tatami rooms, a traditional setting and a handsome private garden. It's 10-minutes' walk from Fuji-Yoshida station.

### Kawaguchi-ko

Most inns far from Kawaguchi-ko station offer free pick-up.

**Kawaguchi-ko Youth Hostel** (☎ /fax 72-1431; dm ¥3360; ☒ mid-Mar–early Nov) This rather plain hostel is about 500m southwest of Kawaguchi-ko

station, with a mix of Japanese and bunk-bed rooms and a 9pm curfew. From the station, turn left, left again after the 7-Eleven, right at the first set of lights and, finally, left in front of the power station. Bike rental per day costs ¥800.

**Hotel Sunnide Village** (ホテルサニーデビレッジ; ☎ 76-6004; fax 76-7706; info@sunnide.com; backpacker plan rate per person ¥4200, r per person with bathroom ¥6300; ☒ ☒) A lovely, welcoming hillside lodge commanding a great view over Kawaguchi-ko towards Mt Fuji; enjoy it from the outdoor bath. Same-day travellers qualify for discounted 'backpacker' rates if rooms are available; phone (some English spoken) or ask at the tourist office. Meals are available from breakfast/dinner ¥1050/2100 (¥1575 backpacker dinner).

**Ashiwada Hotel** (足和田 ホテル; ☎ 82-2587; fax 82-2548; s/d ¥6000/12,000; ☒ ☒ ☒) This friendly hotel boasts impressive views of Kawaguchi-ko (though not Fuji-san) and generously proportioned, mostly Japanese rooms with private bath. There are also well-kept common baths and *rotemburo*. It's at the western end of the lake, in a more residential neighbourhood.

**Fuji Lake Hotel** (☎ 72-2209; fax 73-2700; r per person without/with 2 meals from ¥8000/12,000) Just off the town centre and right on the lakefront, this seven-storey historic (1935) hostelry offers mountain and lake views from its Japanese-Western combo rooms. In addition to private facilities (some rooms have their own *rotemburo*), there are common *onsen*, too.

### EATING & DRINKING

Fuji-Yoshida is known for its *teuchi udon* (homemade, white wheat noodles); some 62 shops sell it! Try yours with tempura, *kitsune* (fried tofu) and *niku* (beef). The **Fuji-Yoshida Tourist Information Center** (☎ 22-7000) has a map and list of restaurants (around ¥500).

Kawaguchi-ko's local noodles are *hōtō*, sturdy, hand cut and served in a thick miso stew with pumpkin, sweet potato and other vegetables.

### Fuji-Yoshida

**Sakigake** (☎ 090-3815-6405; most dishes ¥600-800; ☒ dinner Tue–Sun) Down an alley, behind a low door and through some curtains in the middle of Gekkoji, this candlelit basement café is almost an alternative universe. No English menu, but kindly, arty, young staff dish up *tofu salad* (tofu salad), *yakitori*, sashimi and

*shochu* in excellent crockery. It's across from Onoue barber shop.

**M2** (☎ 23-9309; mains ¥700-1300; ☒ 11am-10pm; ☒) One block away from the Fuji-Yoshida Youth Hostel, this quaint restaurant serves Western and Japanese dishes at good prices. Curry rice, pork sauté and burger sandwiches are among the offerings. The miniature toys and kitschy artwork adds to the charm.

**Michael's American Pub** (☎ 24-3917; meals ¥800-1100; ☒ 8pm-2am Fri–Wed, lunch Sun–Fri) For traditional Americana – burgers, pizzas and brew – drop by this expat and local favourite. From Fuji-Yoshida station, walk north to the main road (Akafuji-dōri) and take a right. After crossing the river, take the third left.

**Fujiyama Beer Brewery** (☎ 24-4800; most dishes ¥714-1300; ☒ 11am-10pm) This beer hall near the Radar Dome is positively Teutonic inside. Wash down sausages, pizzas, salads and cheeses with house-brewed pilsner, weissen or dunkel. Picture menu.

**Café Matsuya** (☎ 22-5185; ☒ 9am-7pm Tue–Thu, 9am-10pm Fri, 11am-10pm Sat & Sun; ☒) A fitting emblem for arty Gekkoji, this charming café is also a craft store. Come for coffee, tea or a chat with the equally charming English-speaking owner. It's on the main drag.

### Kawaguchi-ko

**Hōtō Fudō** (ほうとう不動; ☎ 72-5560; hōtō ¥1050; ☒ lunch) A few branches around town serve this massive stew bubbling in its own cast-iron pot. The *honten* (main branch) is a barn of a restaurant north of the lake, near the Kawaguchi-ko Art Museum via retro-bus.

**Sanrokuen** (山麓園; ☎ 73-1000; meals ¥2100-4200; ☒ 11am-8pm Fri–Wed) This charming *irori* (fireplace) restaurant allows diners to grill their own meals around charcoal pits set in the floor: skewers of fish, chicken, tofu, steak and veggies are available. From Kawaguchi-ko station, turn left, left again after the 7-Eleven and after 600m you'll see the thatched roof on the right.

### GETTING THERE & AWAY

Buses (¥1700, 1½ hours) operate directly to Kawaguchi-ko from outside the western exit of Shinjuku station in Tokyo. There are departures up to 16 times daily at the height of the Fuji climbing season. Some continue on to Yamanaka-ko and Motosu-ko. In Tokyo, call **Keiō Kōsoku Bus** (☎ 03-5376-2217) for reservations and schedule info. In Kawaguchi-ko,

make reservations through **Tōmei Highway Bus** (☎ 72-2922).

Trains take longer and cost more. JR Chūō-line trains go from Shinjuku to Ōtsuki (*tokkyū* ¥2980, one hour; *futsū* ¥1280, 1¼ hours), where you transfer to the Fuji Kyūto line to Kawaguchi-ko (*futsū* ¥1110, one hour) via Fuji-Yoshida (¥990, 50 minutes). On Sundays and holidays from March to November there is a direct local train from Shinjuku and Tokyo stations (¥2390 from Shinjuku, ¥2560 from Tokyo, both two hours).

### GETTING AROUND

The new Fuji-Kawaguchi-ko Sight-seeing bus (retro-bus) has hop-on-hop-off service to all of the sightseeing spots in the western lakes costing ¥1000/500 per adult/child for two days. One route follows Kawaguchi-ko's northern shore, and the other heads south and around Sai-ko and Aokigahara.

Buses run from Fuji-Yoshida station to Fujinomiya (¥2050, 80 minutes) via the four smaller lakes and around the mountain. From Kawaguchi-ko, there are nine to 11 buses daily to the *shinkansen* stop of Mishima (¥2130, two hours).

### HAKONE 箱根

☎ 0460 / pop 15,227

Hakone is Tokyo's original tourist mecca and remains popular for views of Mt Fuji, mountainous topography, art museums, *onsen* (and eggs boiled in them) and the opportunity to ride a variety of transport. The tourist track lets you explore the region via switchback train, funicular, ropeway (gondola) and pirate ship.

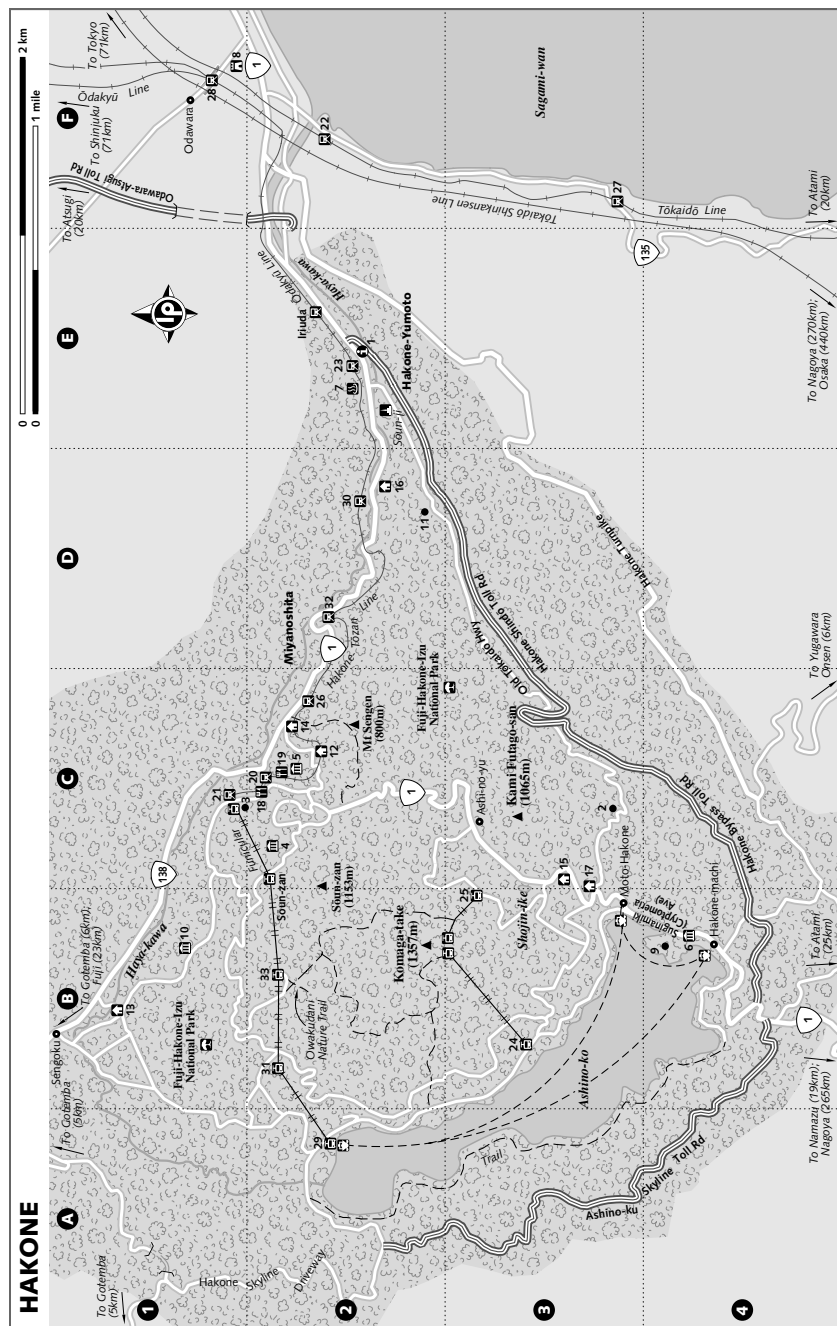
Unfortunately – particularly during the height of summer and on weekends year-round – Hakone can be quite busy and feel highly packaged. To beat the crowds, plan your trip during the week. For more information, try www.hakone.or.jp/english.

### FESTIVALS & EVENTS

**Ashino-ko Kosui Matsuri** (31 July) At Hakone-jinja near Moto-Hakone, this festival features firework displays over Hakone's landmark lake.

**Hakone Daimonji-yaki Matsuri** (6 August) During this summer festival, the torches are lit on Myojoga-take so that they form the shape of the Chinese character for 'big' or 'great'.

**Hakone Daimyō Gyoretsu Parade** (3 November) On the national Culture Day holiday, 400 costumed locals re-enact a feudal lord's procession.

**INFORMATION**

Tourist Information Center  
箱根観光案内所..... 1 E2

**SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES**

Amazake-jaya Teahouse..... 2 C3  
Hakone Detached Palace  
恩賜箱根公園..... (see 9)  
Hakone Gōra Kōen  
箱根強羅公園..... 3 C1  
Hakone Museum of Art  
箱根美術館..... 4 C2  
Hakone Open Air Museum  
彫刻の森美術館..... 5 C2  
Hakone Sekisho Shiryōkan  
(Checkpoint Museum)  
箱根関所資料館..... 6 B4  
Kappa Tengoku Rotemburo  
かつぱ天国..... 7 E2

Odawara-jō 小田原城..... 8 F1  
Onshi Hakone Kōen  
恩賜箱根公園..... 9 B4  
Pola Museum of Art  
ポーラ美術館..... 10 B1  
Tenzan 天山..... 11 D2

**SLEEPING**

Hakone Sengokuhara Youth  
Hostel 箱根仙石原  
ユースホテル..... (see 13)  
Hotel Okada ホテルおかだ..... 16 D2  
Moto-Hakone Guest House  
元箱根ゲストハウス..... 17 C3

**EATING**

Gyōza Center 餃子センター..... 18 C2  
Kappeizushi かつ平寿し..... 19 C2

**TRANSPORT**

Chōkoku-no-Mori 彫刻の森駅..... 20 C2  
Gōra 強羅..... 21 C1  
Hakaya 早川..... 22 F2  
Hakone Yumoto 箱根湯本..... 23 E2  
Hakone-en 箱根園..... 24 B3  
Koma-ga-take 駒ヶ岳..... 25 B3  
Miyanoshita 宮ノ下..... 26 C2  
Nebukawa 根府川..... 27 F3  
Odawara 小田原..... 28 F1  
Tōgendai 桃源台..... 29 A2  
Tōnosawa 塔ノ沢..... 30 D2  
Ubako 姥子..... 31 B2  
Ōhiradai 大平台..... 32 D2  
Ōwakudani 大涌谷..... 33 B2

**SLEEPING**

In addition to places listed beneath individual destinations are these longtime favourites:

**Hakone Sengokuhara Youth Hostel** (☎ 84-8966; fax 84-6578; www.jyh.or.jp; dm/r per person ¥3195/5400; ☒ ☑) Run by the same family, this pleasant hostel is directly behind the Fuji Hakone Guest House. It has Japanese-style dorms and private rooms, hot-spring baths, cooking facilities and English-speaking staff.

**Fuji Hakone Guest House** (☎ 84-6577; fax 84-6578; www.fujihakone.com; r per person ¥5250-6300; ☒ ☑) Run by a welcoming, English-speaking family, the guesthouse has handsome tatami rooms and a cosy *onsen*. It's a popular spot with foreign travellers. Expect rates to increase by ¥1000 per person at busy times. Take bus 4 from Odawara station to Senkyōrō-mae bus stop (50 minutes). There's an English sign close by.

**GETTING THERE & AWAY**  
**Bus**

Odakyū's express bus service runs directly from the west exit of Shinjuku station to Hakone-machi (¥1950, two hours, 20 daily), but you lose the fun of the combination of rail, cable and water-borne conveyances.

**Train**

The private **Odakyū line** (www.odakyu.jp) from Shinjuku station takes you directly into Hakone-Yumoto, the region's transit hub. If you are travelling on a Japan Rail Pass, you can save the intercity fare by taking the JR train to Odawara and changing trains for Hakone-Yumoto.

**Odakyū's Hakone Freepass** (箱根フリーパス; adult/child from Shinjuku ¥5500/2750, from Odawara ¥4130/2070) is an excellent deal for the standard Hakone circuit, covering the return fare to Hakone and unlimited use of most modes of transport within the region for three days, plus a number of other discounts. There's also a Hakone Weekday Pass, valid for two days with similar benefits (¥4700/3410 from Shinjuku/Odawara). Transport prices in this section are without the Freepass, except as noted.

The most convenient service is Odakyū's inscrutably named Romance Car to Hakone Yumoto (with/without Freepass ¥870/2020, 85 minutes). There is also *kyūkō* (regular express) service (¥1150, two hours), although you may have to change trains at Odawara.

JR trains run between Shinjuku and Odawara (¥1450, 80 minutes). From Tokyo station, take the Kodama *shinkansen* (¥3440, 35 minutes) or the Tōkaidō line (*futsū* ¥1450, 1½ hours; *tokkyū* ¥2660, one hour).

At Odawara, change to the narrow gauge, switchback Hakone-Tōzan line, via Hakone Yumoto to Gōra (¥650, 55 minutes). If you've arrived in Hakone Yumoto on the Odakyū line, you can change to the Hakone-Tōzan line (¥390 to Gōra, 40 minutes) in the same station.

**GETTING AROUND**

Part of Hakone's popularity comes from the chance to ride assorted *norimono* (modes of transport): switchback train (from Hakone-Yumoto to Gōra), funicular, ropeway (gondola), ship and bus. Check out www.odakyu.jp,

which describes this circuit. Stops along the way have snack and souvenir shops.

### Cable Car & Ropeway

Gōra is the terminus of the Hakone Tōzan Railway and the beginning of the cable car (funicular) to Sōunzan, from where you can catch the Hakone Ropeway (gondola) line to Ōwakudani and Tōgendai.

### Boat

From Tōgendai, sightseeing boats crisscross Ashino-ko to Hakone-machi and Moto-Hakone (¥970, 30 minutes). The boats look like pirate ships and Mississippi River paddlewheelers – tourist kitsch but fun all the same.

### Bus

The Hakone-Tōzan and Izu Hakone bus companies service the Hakone area, linking up most of the sights. Hakone-Tōzan bus routes are included in the Hakone Freepass. If you finish in Hakone-machi, Hakone-Tōzan buses run between here and Odawara for ¥1150. Hakone-en to Odawara costs ¥1270. Buses run from Moto-Hakone to Hakone-Yumoto for ¥930 every 30 minutes from 10am to 3pm.

### Luggage forwarding

At Hakone-Yumoto station, deposit your luggage with **Hakone Baggage Service** (箱根キャリーサービス; ☎ 86-4140; baggage per piece from ¥600; ☎ 8.30am-7pm) by noon, and it will be delivered to your inn within Hakone by 3pm. From inns, pick-up is at 10am for 1pm delivery at Hakone-Yumoto. Hakone Freepass holders get ¥100 discount per bag.

### Hakone-Yumoto Onsen 箱根湯元温泉

A pleasant town nestled at the foot of the mountains, Yumoto is Hakone's busiest hot-springs resort, in both senses. Still, if the weather looks dodgy, it makes sense to stop off between Odawara and the Tōzan Railway, and spend the day soaking in the baths. You can also approach the town on foot from Moto-Hakone via the Old Tōkaidō Highway (see p210).

Pick up a local and regional maps and info at the excellent **Tourist Information Center** (☎ 85-8911; ☎ 9am-6pm), by the bus stops across the main road from the train station. There's always an English speaker on hand.

*Onsen* are the main attraction of Hakone-Yumoto. **Kappa Tengoku Rotemburo** (☎ 85-6121; adult/child ¥750/400; ☎ 10am-10pm), behind the station, is a popular outdoor bath, worth a dip if the crowds aren't too bad; it's three minutes on foot from Hakone-Yumoto station. More upmarket are the fantastic *onsen* of **Ten zan Notemburo** (天山野天風呂; ☎ 86-4126; admission ¥1200; ☎ 9am-11pm), which has a larger selection of indoor and outdoor baths. To get there, take the free shuttle bus from the bridge outside the station (except Fridays and second and fourth Thursdays each month).

### SLEEPING & EATING

**Hotel Okada** (☎ 85-6000; fax 85-5774; r per person incl 2 meals from ¥14,000; ♿ ♿) Most travellers prefer staying further up the mountain, but for a bit of pampering, try this large hotel on the edge of the Sukumo-gawa. It has excellent Japanese- and Western-style rooms and a large bath complex. Take bus A from the train station (¥100, 10 minutes).

Yumoto Onsen's dozens of restaurants (from hamburgers to *soba*) are used to foreign visitors.

### Miyanoshita 宮ノ下

This village is the first worthwhile stop on the Hakone-Tōzan railway towards Gōra. You'll find a handful of antique shops along the main road (head down the hill from the station and continue in the same direction), some splendid ryokan, and a pleasant hiking trail skirting up the 800m Mt Sengen. The entrance to the trail is 20m from the road from the station, up an incline.

**our pick** Miyanoshita also has one of Japan's finest hotels. Opened in 1878, the **Fujiya Hotel** (☎ 82-2211; fax 82-2210; www.fujiyahotel.co.jp; d from ¥21,090) is one of the first Western-style hotels in the nation. Now sprawled across several wings, it remains impressive for the woodwork in its old-world lounge areas, dining room, a hillside garden, historic hot-spring baths (though in truth others are nicer) and guest rooms with hot-spring water piped into each one. Even if you don't stay here, it's worth a visit to soak up the atmosphere and maybe have tea in the lounge. Foreign travellers should inquire about the weekday special of US\$128 for double rooms (you can pay the equivalent sum in yen). The hotel is around 250m west of the station.

If you don't fancy paying resort prices for dinners at the Fujiya, a short walk away are

the friendly sushi shop **Miyafuji** (鮨みやふじ; ☎ 82-2139; most dishes ¥1575-2310; ☎ lunch & dinner Wed-Mon; E), known for its *aji-don* (brook trout over rice), or **La Bazza** (ラバツツア; ☎ 87-9223; lunch/dinner courses from ¥1050/1480; ☎ lunch & dinner Wed-Mon; E) for pizzas, pasta and Italian grills.

### Chōkoku-no-Mori 彫刻の森

Two stops beyond Miyanoshita is the excellent **Hakone Open-Air Museum** (☎ 82-1161; www.hakone-oam.or.jp; adult/child/concession ¥1600/800/1100; ☎ 9am-5pm Mar-Nov, to 4pm Dec-Feb). Although tickets are pricey, there's an impressive selection of 19th- and 20th-century Japanese and Western sculptures in a soaring hillside setting: with works by Henry Moore (26 sculptures, one of the world's largest collections), Rodin, Maillol and Miro, while interior galleries contain works by Giacometti and Calder; there's also a Picasso pavilion (with some 300 pieces) and paintings by Takamura Kotaro, Fujikawa Yuzo and other Japanese artists. Several decent restaurants and a tea house are inside. Hakone Freepass holders receive a discount.

A charming ryokan lies 300m uphill from the museum on the left. **Chōraku-sō** (☎ 82-2192; fax 82-4533; r per person with/without meals ¥8800/5150; ♿) has simple but nicely maintained tatami rooms with kitchenettes and private toilet. There's an *onsen* on the 1st floor, available for day use ¥550.

For exquisite sushi, don't miss **Kappeizushi** (☎ 82-3278; mixed sushi around ¥1500; ☎ 9am-8pm Wed-Mon), a nondescript spot that delivers fresh, tender slices of sashimi. A picture menu is available. It's a few metres downhill from the museum on the same side of the street.

### Gōra 強羅

Gōra is the terminus of the Hakone-Tōzan line and the starting point for the funicular and cable-car trip to Tōgendai on Ashino-ko. The town also has a couple of its own attractions that may be of minor interest to travellers.

Just a short walk beside the funicular tracks towards Sōun-zan is the park, **Hakone Gōra-kōen** (☎ 82-2825; adult/child ¥500/free, free for Freepass holders; ☎ 9am-5pm), with a rock garden, alpine and seasonal plants, a fountain and several greenhouses with tropical flowers. Adjacent to the park, **Hakone Museum of Art** (☎ 82-2623; adult/junior high & younger/student ¥900/free/400; ☎ 9.30am-4.30pm Apr-Nov, to 4pm Dec-Mar) has a stately collection

of Japanese ceramics from back as far as the Jōmon period (10,000 years ago).

**Pola Museum of Art** (☎ 84-2111; www.polamuseum.or.jp; adult/junior high & elementary/university & high school/senior ¥1800/700/1300/1600; ☎ 9-5pm) is a worthy detour from Gōra. The collection comprises some 9500 works of European and Japanese painting from the impressionists onward, as well as ceramics and glass art, in changing displays. It's almost as renowned for its futuristic building (2002). Admission is free for elementary and junior-high school students on Saturdays. From Gōra station, take the Sightseeing Shuttle bus to Shissei-kaen (¥290, 13 minutes).

**Gyōza Center** (☎ 82-3457; mains ¥735-945, set meals ¥1155-1365; ☎ 11.30am-3pm & 5-8pm Fri-Wed) is famous for its *gyōza* (dumplings) a dozen different ways, including in soup (*sui-gyōza*), in soup with *kimchi* (*kimchi sui-gyōza*) and plain pan-fried (*nōmaru*...sound it out). Set menus include rice and miso soup. It's 200m downhill from the Gōra station, or about as far up from Chōkoku-no-mori.

**Sōun-zan & Ōwakudani** 早雲山・大桶谷 From Gōra, continue to near the 1153m-high summit of Sōun-zan by funicular (¥410, 10 minutes).

From Sōun-zan, there are several hiking trails including one to Mt Kami (1¼ hours); another up to Ōwakudani (1¼ hours) was closed as of this writing owing to the mountain's toxic gases.

Sōun-zan is the starting point for the Hakone Ropeway, a 30-minute, 4km gondola ride to Tōgendai (one way/return ¥1330/2340), stopping at Ōwakudani en route. In fine weather Mt Fuji looks fabulous from here.

Ōwakudani is a volcanic cauldron of steam, bubbling mud and mysterious smells. The 25-minute **Ōwakudani Nature Trail** (Ōwakudani Shizen Sansakuro, 大桶谷自然散策路) leads uphill through the charred, somewhat apocalyptic landscape to some of the boiling pits. Here you can buy boiled eggs, turned black in the sulphurous waters. Numerous signs warn travellers not to linger too long, as the gases are poisonous.

### Ashino-ko 芦ノ湖

Between Tōgendai and Hakone-machi and Moto-Hakone, this leg-shaped lake is touted as the primary attraction of the Hakone region; but it's Mt Fuji, with its snow-clad



to Itō or Shimoda to find more reasonable lodgings.

### GETTING THERE & AWAY

JR trains run from Tokyo station to Atami on the Tōkaidō line (Kodama *shinkansen* ¥4080, 55 minutes; Odoriko ¥4070, 1¼ hours; Acty *kaisoku* ¥1890, 1½ hours).

### Itō & Jōgasaki 伊東・城ヶ崎

☎ 0557

Itō is another hot-springs resort and is famous as the place where Anjin-san (William Adams), the hero of James Clavell's book *Shogun*, built a ship for the Tokugawa shōgunate. It is said that this resort town was so popular that 100 geisha entertained here in Itō a century ago, although these days it's a commendably relaxed place. Itō station has a **Tourist Information Center** (☎ 37-6105; ☎ 9am-5pm).

A couple of blocks off the beach is the monumental **Tōkaikan** (東海館; ☎ 36-2004; adult/child ¥200/100; ☎ 9am-9pm, closed 1st Tue of the month), a former inn and now a national monument for its elegant woodwork, each of its three storeys designed by a different architect. The rooms, and the canal views from them, will take you back to the time of those geisha.

South of Itō is the striking Jōgasaki coast, windswept cliffs formed by lava. A harrowing 48m-long suspension bridge leads over Kawowakizaki Point, with waves crashing 23m below. It's a popular location for film and TV shoots, particularly suicide scenes. If you have time, there's a moderately strenuous cliffside hike with volcanic rock and pine forests, south of the 17m tall lighthouse.

**our pick** If you like Tōkaikan, the splendid **Ryokan Inaba** (旅館いなば; ☎ 37-3178; fax 37-3180; www.inaba-r.co.jp; 1 per person incl 2 meals ¥13,000) next door has many of the same traditional touches, sumptuous seafood meals, in-room facilities, and indoor and outdoor *onsen* baths. Pick-up is available from Itō station.

### GETTING THERE & AWAY

Itō is connected to Atami by the JR Itō line (¥320, 25 minutes). The JR limited express Odoriko service also runs from Tokyo station to Itō (¥3820, 1¼ hours). From Itō to Jōgasaki, take the Izukyū (aka Izukyū) line to Jōgasaki-kaigan (¥560, 18 minutes) and walk downhill about 1.5km; buses are also available but take longer and cost more. Izukyū also continues on to Shimoda.

### Shimoda 下田

☎ 0558 / pop 26,700

Shimoda has a fabulous mix of history and seashore. It holds a pivotal place in history as the spot where Japan officially opened to the outside world after centuries of isolation. Following the opening of Japan by the *Kurofune* (Black Ships) under Commodore Matthew Perry, the American Townsend Harris opened the first Western consulate here.

### INFORMATION

**Main Post Office** (☎ 22-1531; ☎ 10am-5pm) The main post office has an international ATM; it's a few blocks from Perry Rd.

**Shimoda Tourist Association** (☎ 22-1531; ☎ 10am-5pm) Pick up the useful *Shimoda Walking Map* and book accommodation. From the station, take a left, walk to the first intersection and you'll see it on the southwest corner.

**Volunteer English Guide Association** (☎ 23-5151; maimai-h@i-yonet.ne.jp; ☎ 8.30am-5.15pm Tue-Sun) Offers free guided tours.

### SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

**Ryōsen-ji & Chōraku-ji** 了仙寺・長楽寺 A 25-minute walk south of Shimoda station is **Ryōsen-ji** (☎ 22-0657) temple, site of another treaty, supplementary to the Treaty of Kanagawa, signed by Commodore Perry and representatives of the Tokugawa shōgunate.

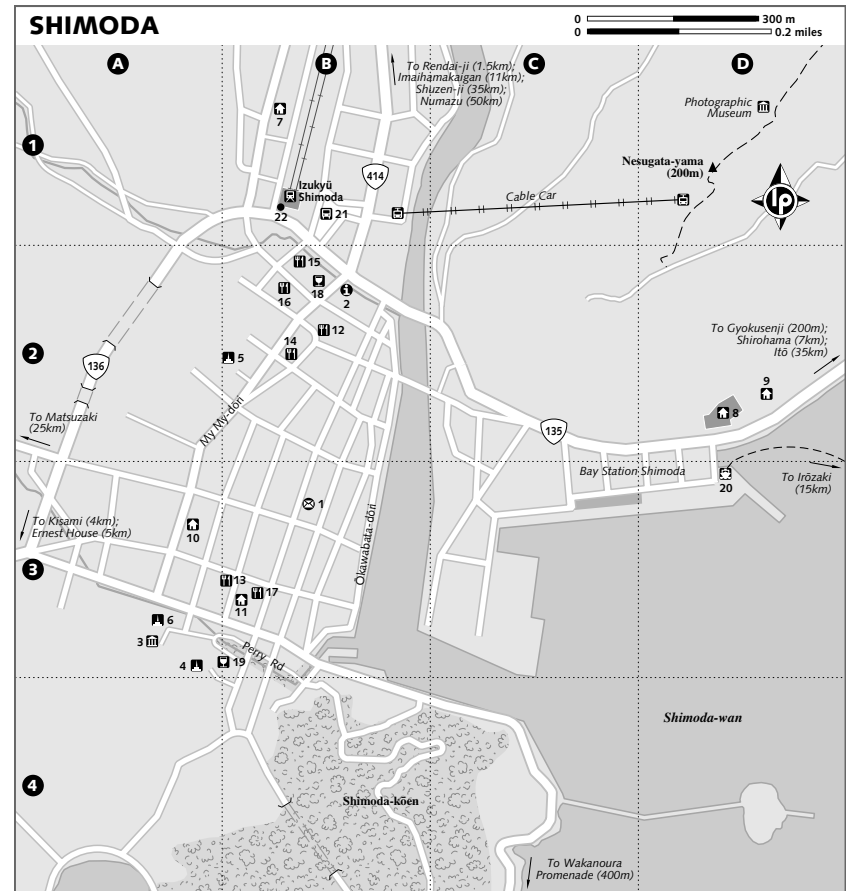
The temple's **Black Ship Art Gallery** (☎ 22-0657; adult/child ¥500/150; ☎ 8.30am-5pm, closed 1-3 Aug & 24-26 Dec) includes more than 2800 artefacts relating to Perry, the Black Ships, and Japan as seen through foreign eyes and vice versa. Exhibits change about five times per year.

Behind and up the steps from Ryōsen-ji is Chōraku-ji, where a Russo-Japanese treaty was signed in 1854; look for the cemetery and *namako-kabe* (black and white lattice-patterned) walls.

### Hōfuku-ji 宝福寺

In the centre of town is Hōfuku-ji, a temple that is chiefly a **museum** (☎ 22-0960; admission ¥300; ☎ 8am-5pm) memorialising the life of Okichi (p214).

The museum is filled with scenes and artefacts from the various movie adaptations of her life on stage and screen. Okichi's grave is also here, in the far corner of the back garden, next to a faded copper statue. Other graves in this garden are dedicated to her, with the names of actors who played her.



### INFORMATION

Main Post Office 下田郵便局 ..... 1 B3  
Shimoda Tourist Association  
観光案内所 ..... 2 B2

### SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Black Ship Art Gallery  
(Hōmotsukan) 了仙寺宝物館 ..... 3 A3  
Chōraku-ji 長楽寺 ..... 4 A3  
Hōfuku-ji 宝福寺 ..... 5 B2  
Ryōsen-ji 了仙寺 ..... 6 A3

### SLEEPING

Kokumin-shukusha New Shimoda  
国民宿舎ニュー下田 ..... 7 B1  
Kurofune Hotel 黒船ホテル ..... 8 D2  
Shimoda Bay Kuroshio  
下田ベイクロシオ ..... 9 D2  
Shimoda-ya 下田屋 ..... 10 A3  
Oizu Ryokan 大伊豆旅館 ..... 11 B3

### EATING

Gorosaya ごろさや ..... 12 B2  
Hiranoya 平野屋 ..... 13 B3  
Isoka-tei 磯華亭 ..... 14 B2

Matsu Sushi 松寿し ..... 15 B2  
Musashi むさし ..... 16 B2  
Porto Caro ポルトカーロ ..... 17 B3

### DRINKING

Cheshire Cat Jazz House  
チェシャークャット ..... 18 B2  
Ja Jah ジャジャ ..... 19 B3

### TRANSPORT

Bay Cruises 遊覧船 ..... 20 D3  
Bus Stop バス停 ..... 21 B1  
Nippon Rent-a-Car  
ニッポンレンタカー ..... 22 B1

### Gyokusenji 玉泉寺

Founded in 1590, this **temple** (☎ 22-1287; admission free, Harris museum adult/child ¥300/150; ☎ 8am-5pm) is most famous as the first Western consulate

in Japan, in 1856. The museum here is filled with artefacts of the life of Townsend Harris, the first consul general, and life-size models of him and Okichi (p214). The bas-relief of a

## THE LEGEND OF OKICHI

Shimoda is famous in international affairs, but an affair of the heart remains this town's most enduring melodrama. Like all good stories, there are many versions.

Saito Kichi (the 'O' was later added as an honorific) was born a carpenter's daughter in Shimoda. Some accounts say that her exceptional beauty and talent for music led her poor family to sell her to a geisha house at age seven. Others skip directly to 1854, when the Black Ships arrived in Shimoda and a devastating earthquake destroyed Okichi's home and possessions.

Okichi's home was rebuilt by a longtime admirer named Tsurumatsu, and the two fell in love. But in 1856, when Townsend Harris became America's first consul in Shimoda, he needed a maid, and local authorities assigned the task to Okichi, then in her late teens. Despite her initial refusal, authorities prevailed on her to sacrifice her love of Tsurumatsu for the good of the nation. Tsurumatsu received a position with the shōgunate in Edo (now Tokyo).

Okichi gradually developed respect for Harris, even reportedly protecting him from an assassination attempt. Some versions of the story say that Harris forced her to fulfill his needs as well, and locals began taunting her as 'tōjin Okichi' (the foreigner's concubine), driving her to drink.

Following Harris's departure in 1858, Okichi moved briefly to Kyoto before heading to Edo to find Tsurumatsu. Together they lived in Yokohama until Tsurumatsu's untimely death.

Okichi returned to Shimoda and opened a restaurant (some say it was a brothel). But drink had taken its hold, the business went bankrupt and she wandered the streets before eventually drowning herself in a river.

Okichi's story has been dramatised in just about every form of Japanese drama. Outside Japan, the best-known version of this story is *The Barbarian and the Geisha*, the 1958 film starring John Wayne, which, no surprise, tells the story its own way.

cow in front of the temple refers to the fact that Harris requested milk to recover from an illness; Japan had no custom of milk drinking at the time, which changed after seeing the results here.

## Shimoda Kōen & Wakanoura

### Promenade 下田公園・和歌の浦遊歩道

If you keep walking east from Perry Rd, you'll reach the pleasant hillside park of Shimoda Kōen overlooking the bay. It's loveliest in June, when the hydrangeas are in bloom. Before entering the park, the coastal road is also a fine place to walk. If you have an hour or so, keep following it around the bay, passing an overpriced aquarium, and eventually you'll meet up with the 2km-long Wakanoura Promenade, a stone path along a peaceful stretch of beach. Turn right when you meet up with the road to return to Perry Rd.

## Nesugata-yama 寝姿山

About 200m east of Shimoda station is the cable-car station to Nesugata-yama (Mt Nesugata; 200m). The **Shimoda Ropeway** (☎ 22-1211; adult/child ¥1200/600 return, incl park admission; ☎ 9am-5pm) runs cable cars every 10 minutes to a mountaintop park, where the temple Aizendō houses a Kamakura period Buddha

statue; some 150 Jizō statues get amazing views of the bay. There's also a hedge maze and an underwhelming museum of early photographic equipment. From Nesugata-yama it's possible to hike to Rendaiji (p216, 2½ hours) or Shirahama (p429, 1¼ hours).

## Beaches

There are good beaches around Shimoda, particularly around Kisami, south of town. Take an Irōzaki-bound bus (bus 3 or 4; ¥340); ask to be dropped at Ōhama Iriguchi and walk 10 minutes towards the coast. North of Shimoda is the lovely white-sand beach of Shirahama (bus 9; ¥320), which can get packed in July and August.

## Bay Cruises

Several cruises depart from the Shimoda harbour area. Most popular with Japanese tourists is the *Kurofune* (Black Ships) cruise around the bay (adult/child ¥920/460, 20 minutes), which departs every 30 minutes (approximately) from 9.10am to 3.30pm.

Three boats a day (9.40am, 11.20am and 2pm) travel to Irōzaki. You can leave the boat at Irōzaki (adult/child ¥1530/770, 40 minutes) and head northwards up the peninsula by bus, or stay on the boat to return to Shimoda.

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

**Kurofune Matsuri** (Black Ships Festival; Friday, Saturday and Sunday around the 3rd Saturday in May) Shimoda commemorates the first landing of Commodore Perry with parades by the US Navy Marine band and firework displays. It's fascinating to see virtue has been made out of this potentially bitter historical event.

**Shimoda Taiko Matsuri** (Drum Festival; 14 & 15 August) A spectacular parade of *dashi* floats and some serious Japanese-style drumming.

## SLEEPING

There are lots of *minshuku* around and the **Shimoda Tourist Association** (☎ 22-1531; ☎ 10am-5pm) can help with reservations.

**Ōizu Ryokan** (☎ 22-0123; r per person ¥3500; ☎) Popular with international travellers for its excellent prices, Ōizu has plain but comfy Japanese-style rooms with TV, and a two-seater *onsen*. It's at the south end of town, two blocks north of Perry Rd. Check-in is from 3pm. It's often closed on weekdays, so phone ahead.

**Kokumin-shukusha New Shimoda** (☎ 23-0222; fax 23-0025; r per person without/with meals ¥4855/7480) This drab but friendly inn offers spacious tatami rooms with shared facilities and a large *onsen*. Take a right out of the station, another right at the first light, walk 2½ blocks and it's on your right. Expect to pay up to ¥2000 more at peak times.

**Shimoda-ya** (☎ 22-0446; r per person without meals ¥5380) This *minshuku* offers pleasant Japanese rooms and a 24-hour *onsen*. It's a few blocks past Hofuku-ji on the left-hand side. No English is spoken.

**Ernest House** (☎ 22-5880; fax 23-3906; www.ernest-house.com; s/d ¥6300/10,500; ☎ ☎) A great escape, two minutes' walk from the beach in Kisami Ōhama. In an attractive, Western-style house, this 13-room pension is friendly and youthful, with hardwood furniture, a restaurant and a café. It gets lots of surfers, and guests can order picnic breakfasts (¥1050), best enjoyed on the beach. Dinners cost ¥2520. Reservations are recommended, and note that rates can more than double at peak times. From Izukyū Shimoda station, take an Irōzaki-bound bus (stop 3 or 4; ¥360); ask to be dropped off at the Kisami stop, from where it's a 15-minute walk towards the coast. A taxi from the station costs about ¥1500.

**Shimoda Bay Kuroshio** (下田バイクロシオ; ☎ 27-2111; fax 27-2115; www.baykuro.co.jp; r per person without meals/with 2 meals from ¥12,000/18,000; ☎)

This futuristic 42-room hotel rather gleams above Shimoda-wan. Texas-sized rooms are festooned with textiles, woodworked headboards, designer bedspreads, and relics, shells and fossils inlaid in its poured-in-place concrete. Outside: *rotemburos* (naturally) and summer barbecues.

**Kurofune Hotel** (☎ 22-1234; kurofune@ever.ocn.ne.jp; r per person incl 2 meals from ¥15,000; ☎) On the hillside across from Shimoda's boat dock and with dead-on bay views, this old-line hotel has both Japanese- and Western-style rooms – some have their own *rotemburo* – plus heap-aping seafood meals and huge common *onsen* with *rotemburo*. The lobby décor is a little over the top, but squire as you walk through and you'll be fine.

## EATING

Seafood is the speciality in Shimoda.

**Musashi** (☎ 22-0934; mains ¥630-1000; ☎) lunch) This casual spot serves tasty Japanese *shokudō* (cafeteria) favourites, including tempura *soba* and *rāmen* with grilled pork. Take a left out of the station, turn right down the narrow lane and take the first left. Look for the giant badger.

**Matsu Sushi** (☎ 22-1309; sets from ¥1000; ☎ 11am-8pm Thu-Tue) This home-style, good-value sushi bar is close to the station, across from Akitsu camera. Go for the *jizakana* set of local fish.

**Porto Caro** (☎ 22-5514; mains ¥1050-1360; ☎) lunch & dinner Thu-Tue; E) A 2nd-floor trattoria serving tasty pastas, pizzas (at night) and other Italian fare. Try seafood pasta with local wasabi, or paella (¥3000). It's two blocks north of Perry Rd, on the same road as the post office.

**Isoka-tei** (☎ 23-1200; meals ¥1155-2100; ☎ 11.30am-3pm & 5.30-10pm) This friendly spot serves hearty seafood sets that you can choose from a picture menu. From the Tourist Association, head three blocks down My My-dōri, take a left and it'll be on the next corner.

**Hiranoya** (☎ 22-2525; meals ¥1260-3150; ☎) lunch & dinner Wed-Mon; E) A former private home, filled with antiques, elegant woodwork and funky Western-style seating. It serves steaks, sandwiches, burgers and curry; set meals include soup, salad and coffee. Look for the *namakokabe* (lattice pattern walls).

**Gorosaya** (☎ 23-5638; lunch/dinner ¥1575/3150; ☎) lunch & dinner Fri-Wed; E) Elegant but understated ambience and fantastic seafood. The *Isōjiru* soup is made from over a dozen varieties of shellfish. From the Tourist Association,

head two blocks down My My-dōri, take a left and it'll be on your left. Look for the wooden fish decorating the entrance.

#### DRINKING

**Ja Jah** (☎ 27-1611; 🕒 7pm-2am Tue-Sun) This cosy bar is a good place to kick back with fun tunes and friendly people. DJs sometimes spin (R&B, soul, hip-hop) on weekends.

**Cheshire Cat Jazz House** (☎ 23-3239; 🕒 11am-1am Thu-Sun) For live jazz, visit this low-key spot on My My-dōri. It's easily spotted by its English sign.

#### GETTING THERE & AWAY

Shimoda is as far as you can go by train on the Izu-hantō. You can take the Odoriko *tokkyū* from Tokyo station (¥6090, 2¾ hours) or Atami (¥3400, 80 minutes). From Itō, Izu Kyūō runs from Itō station (¥1570, one hour). Trains also run from Atami (¥1890, 1½ hours). Try to catch Izukyū's Resort 21 train cars, with sideways-facing seats for full-on sea views.

South and west, transit is by bus to Dōgashima (¥1360, one hour) or Shuzen-ji (¥2180, two hours).

Car rental is available at **Nippon Rent-a-Car** (☎ 22-5711) just outside the train station on the right.

#### Around Shimoda

##### IMAIHAMA 今井浜

This relaxing seaside village is one of Izu's few towns with a sandy beach and a laid-back surfer vibe. Just what the doctor ordered for an overdose of culture and history.

You can rent body boards or fins from ¥1500 a day at **Soul Surf** (☎ 32-1826) on the main street. **Onsen Minshuku Wataya** (☎ 32-1055; fax 32-2058; s/d incl 2 meals ¥9075/1650) is a kindly, family-run, eight-room place facing the beach, with tiny sea-view *rotemburo*. Look for the Kirin beer sign about 100m past the surf shop.

Imaihama-kaigan station is on the Izukyū line between Itō (¥1330, one hour) and Izukyū Shimoda (¥480, 20 minutes).

#### RENDAI-JI & KANAYA ONSEN

##### 蓮台寺・金谷温泉

The town of Rendai-ji is home to one of the best *onsen* on the peninsula, **Kanaya Onsen** (admission ¥1000; 🕒 9am-10pm). Its rangey, rambling building houses the biggest all-wood bath in the nation (on the men's side), called the *sen-*

*nin-furo* (1000-person bath, a vast exaggeration). The women's bath is nothing to sneeze at, and both sides have private outdoor baths as well. BYOT (towel), or buy one for ¥200.

The same building also houses the fabulously traditional **Kanaya Ryokan** (金谷旅館; ☎ 22-0325; fax 23-6078; r per person without/with meals from ¥7350/15,750), which was built in 1929 and feels like it. Some of the tatami rooms are simple, while others are vast suites with private toilet. There are no restaurants nearby, so go for the inn's meals or pack you own.

Take the Izukyū line to Rendai-ji station (¥160, five minutes), go straight across the river and main road to the T-junction and turn left; the *onsen* is 50m on the right.

#### IRŌZAKI 石廊崎

The southernmost point of the peninsula is noted for its cliffs and lighthouse and some fairly good beaches. You can get to the cape from Shimoda by boat (see p214) or by bus (¥930, 45 minutes) from bus 4 platform. **Izukyū Marine** (☎ 22-1151; adult/child ¥1120/5600) runs frequent 25-minute cruises around the harbour.

#### Matsuzaki 松崎

##### ☎ 0558

The sleepy coastal village of Matsuzaki is known for its streetscapes: some 200 traditional houses with *namako-kabe* walls – diamond-shaped tiles set in plaster. They're concentrated in the south of town, on the far side of the river. There is no tourist information in English.

The **Izu Chōhachi Art Museum** (☎ 42-2540; adult/child ¥500/free; 🕒 9am-5pm) showcases the work of Irie Chōhachi (1815–99). His plaster, fresco and stucco paintings are unimaginably detailed. Each colour, no matter how intricate the design (be it a pine needle or a stitch on a kimono), gets its own layer of plaster. You'll want to use a magnifying glass (supplied by staff) to examine the works in detail.

Amid rice fields 3km east of town is the **Sanyo-sō Youth Hostel** (三糸荘ユースホステル; ☎ /fax 42-0408; dm member/nonmember ¥3045/4095), a marvellously antique former landowner's home with fine (shared) tatami rooms. If this building were not a hostel, it would probably be some kind of important cultural property. From Shimoda take a Dōgashima-bound bus and get off at the Yūsu-hosteru-mae bus stop (¥1160, 50 minutes); it's another ¥240 to

Matsuzaki. Breakfast/dinner costs ¥630/1050. Rental bikes are available for exploring the countryside. Check-in is between 4pm and 6.30pm.

To central Matsuzaki, the bus fare from Shimoda is ¥1230; from Dōgashima ¥520.

#### Dōgashima 堂ヶ島

For help booking accommodation and info on onward transport, stop by the **information office** (☎ 52-1268; 🕒 8.30am-5pm Mon-Sat) in front of the bus stop and above the tourist jetty. Staff will also rent you a bicycle for free.

The main attraction at Dōgashima is the dramatic rock formations that line the seashore. The park just across the street from the bus stop has some of the best views. It's also possible to take a return boat trip (¥1880/920 50/20 minutes) from the nearby jetty to visit the town's famous shoreline cave. The cave has a natural window in the roof that allows light to pour in. You can look down into the cave from paths in the aforementioned park.

About 700m south of the bus stop, you'll find the stunning **Sawada-kōen Rotemburo onsen** (沢田公園露天風呂温泉; admission ¥500; 🕒 7am-7pm Wed-Mon Sep-Jul, 6am-8pm Wed-Mon Aug) perched high on a cliff overlooking the Pacific. Go early in the day if possible; around sunset it's standing room only. Males and females bathe separately.

#### GETTING THERE & AWAY

Buses from Dōgashima (¥1360, one hour) leave from platform 5 in front of Shimoda station. From Dōgashima you can catch a bus onward to Shuzen-ji (¥1970, 1½ hours), complete with fantastic views over Suruga-wan to Mt Fuji. When the air is clear and the mountain is blanketed by snow, you'll swear you're looking at a Hokusai print. The best views are between Ōkubo (大久保) and Toi (土肥).

#### Shuzen-ji Onsen 修善寺温泉

##### ☎ 0558

Although it's not on any coast, Shuzen-ji Onsen is the peninsula's most charming town, a hot-spring village in a lush valley bisected by the rushing Katsura-gawa. Lucky, too, since Shuzen-ji, along with Atami, is one of the two gateways to Izu (Shuzen-ji Onsen is a 10-minute bus ride from Shuzen-ji station). There are some fine places to stroll, and at dusk the town bells play 'Moon River'.

#### SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

In the middle of Shuzen-ji Onsen is the tranquil namesake temple **Shuzen-ji** (☎ 72-0053; admission free; 🕒 5am-6pm) dating from 807. It's said to have been founded by Kōbō Daishi, the Heian-period priest credited with spreading Buddhism throughout much of Japan. The present structure dates from 1489.

The real reason to visit Shuzen-ji is to take a dip in one of its famous *onsen*. Right in the on the river is **Tokko-no-yu** (とっこの湯; iron-club waters), said to be Izu's oldest hot spring. Its name comes from a legend that its waters sprung from the rock when it was struck by Kōbō Daishi himself. Unfortunately, it was closed for bathing at the time of writing.

Inns around town offer day-use bathing, or try **Hako-no-yu** (箱湯; admission ¥350; 🕒 noon-9pm), an elegant new facility identified by its wonderful wooden tower.

#### SLEEPING & EATING

**Shuzen-ji Youth Hostel** (修善寺ユースホステル; ☎ 72-1222; shuzenji@yjh.gr.jp; dm member/nonmember ¥3045/3645; 🕒 closed 18-22 Jan & 30 May-3 Jun; ☎ ☑ )

In the hills west of town, this large (100-bed) hostel feels a little institutional but a good choice nonetheless, featuring tasty meals (breakfast/dinner ¥630/1050), decent rooms and a peaceful setting. It's a 12-minute bus ride from Shuzen-ji station; take a bus from the platform 6 at Shuzen-ji station to the New Town-guchi stop (last bus 6.45pm). It's a five-minute walk from the bus stop.

**Onsen Minshuku Fukui** (温泉民宿福井; ☎ 72-0558; fax 72-3529; r per person ¥4875) This simple but friendly *minshuku* is a popular choice for foreign guests. Decent tatami rooms and a small garden-side *rotemburo*. From the bus stop, head about 350m up hill. Look for the Maruko convenience store on the right and 'tourist home Fukui' in the world's tiniest letters on a white signboard, and follow the path.

**Goyōkan** (五葉間; ☎ 72-2066; fax 72-8212; www.goyokan.co.jp; r per person without/with breakfast ¥6450/7500) A midrange B&B *minshuku* in the centre of everything, with river views. No private facilities, but the shared (indoor) baths are made of stone and *hinoki* cypress. Some English is spoken.

**our pick** **Yukairo Kikuya** (湯回廊菊屋; ☎ 72-2000; fax 72-2002; s/d/tr per person from ¥25,000/23,000/20,000) Spanning the Katsura-gawa, this splendid, romantic ryokan has been an inn since the mid-17th century. Rooms feature *wa-beds*



(futon on platforms), and, unusual for *kaiseki* cuisine, you get to choose your own meals. Naturally, the baths are splendid, too.

**Zendera Soba** (禅寺そば; ☎ 72-0007; meals ¥630-1890; ☎ lunch Fri-Wed; E) This cosy local institution – it looks like a temple – serves *zaru soba* (cold soba) and the *tempura teishoku* (tempura set meal), but the real speciality is the namesake Zendera *soba* (¥1260), served with your own stalk of wasabi root to grate. It's steps from the bus station on the river side of the street.

#### GETTING THERE & AWAY

From Tokyo, access to Shuzen-ji is via Mishima on the Tōkaidō line (Kodama *shinkansen* ¥4400, one hour) and then Izu-Hakone Tetsudō trains between Mishima and Shuzen-ji (¥500, 35 minutes). Buses connect Shuzen-ji station and Shuzen-ji Onsen (¥210, 10 minutes). Long-distance buses run between Shuzen-ji and Shimoda (¥2180, two hours) and Shuzen-ji and Dōgashima (¥1970, 1½ hours).

## SOUTH OF TOKYO

The coastal towns of Kanagawa-ken are just a short train ride from Tokyo, yet can seem ones away.

The vibrant port of Yokohama is Japan's second-largest city, though it's a much less chaotic metropolis than its big sister to the north. Further south lies the fascinating old capital of Kamakura, often called a Little Kyoto for its wealth of Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines.

### YOKOHAMA 横浜

☎ 045 / pop 3,579,000

Around the time of the Black Ships, Yokohama was home to barely 600 people. A century-and-a-half later, it's Japan's second metropolis, with a breezy atmosphere, fine food, parks and historic districts, and loads of shopping. Unlike most Japanese cities, it's also a city of distinct neighbourhoods, including Chinatown, the historic Motomachi and Yamate districts, and the new seaside development of Minato Mirai 21.

Yokohama is barely 20 minutes from central Tokyo, meaning that it's an easy day trip or nighttime excursion. Among Japanese it's a popular date spot.

### History

For most of history, Yokohama was an unnoticed fishing village near a rest stop called Kanagawa on the Tōkaidō. Its fate changed abruptly in 1853–54, when the American fleet under Commodore Matthew Perry arrived off the coast to persuade Japan to open to foreign trade; in 1858 this little village was designated an international port.

Westerners were first relegated to an area within a moat in a district called Kannai ('inside the barrier') but later began to own property up the mountainside (Yamate). A Chinese community burgeoned as well, and the city expanded on reclaimed land, eventually encompassing the original Kanagawa rest stop.

Although Yokohama is unquestionably Japanese, foreign influence is in its blood. Among Yokohama's firsts-in-Japan: daily newspaper, gaslamps and train terminus (connected to Shimbashi, in Tokyo).

The Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923 destroyed much of the city, with the rubble used to reclaim more land, including Yamashita Kōen. The city was devastated yet again in WWII air raids; occupation forces were initially based here but later moved down the coast to Yokosuka. The late 20th century saw redevelopment of the harbour area, including some fancy skyscrapers, and in 2002 Yokohama hosted the finals of the FIFA World Cup.

### Orientation

Central Yokohama sits on the southern side on the western part of Tokyo-wan (here called Yokohama-wan). Most of the sights are within about 1km of the water, near Sakuragi-chō, Kannai and Ishikawa-chō stations on the JR Negishi line, or Minato Mirai or Motomachi-Chūkagai stations on the Minato Mirai Line.

### Information

Information about Yokohama is available on the web at [www.welcome.city.yokohama.jp/eng/tourism](http://www.welcome.city.yokohama.jp/eng/tourism).

**Animi** (☎ 222-3316; 4-2-7 Minato Mirai; per hr ¥100;

☎ 10am-8pm) Internet access. Walk 15 minutes north-west of Minato Mirai 21 station.

**Chinatown 80 Information Center** (☎ 662-1252; Honcho-dōri; ☎ 10am-10pm) For the latest goings-on in Chinatown, the centre is a few blocks from the Motomachi subway station.

**Citibank** (☎ 24hr) International ATM is outside the western exit of Yokohama station, on the 2nd floor of the First Building, near the Yokohama Bay Sheraton.

**Minato Mirai 21 Information Center** (☎ 211-0111; 1-1-62 Sakuragi-chō; ☎ 9am-7pm) English speakers here can provide a wealth of information, including the free *Yokohama City Guide*. It's outside the northern exit of Sakuragi-chō station.

**Post office** A block east of the Sakuragi-chō station, with foreign ATM service.

### Sights & Activities

#### MINATO MIRAI 21 みなとみらい 21

This district of man-made islands (☎ Sakuragi-chō, Minatomirai, Bashamichi) used to be shipping docks, but the last two decades have transformed them into a metropolis-of-the-future ('Minato Mirai' means 'port future'), with a buzzing street scene by day and glowing towers by night (Landmark tower and the three-towered Queens Sq). In addition to the attractions listed here, there's one of the world's largest convention complexes, several hotels, and lots of shopping and dining.

These sights are arranged as a possible walking tour.

#### Landmark Tower

Japan's tallest building (70 storeys, 296m) has one of the world's fastest lifts (45km/h). The **Landmark Tower Sky Garden** (☎ 222-5030; Minato-Mirai 2-2-1-1; adult/child/senior & student ¥1000/500/800; ☎ 10am-9pm Sep-Jun, to 10pm Sat, to 10pm Jul & Aug) observatory is on the 69th floor; on clear days there are views to Tokyo, Izu-hantō and Mt Fuji.

#### Yokohama Museum of Art

Behind Landmark Tower, this contemporary **art museum** (☎ 221-0306; 3-4-1 Minato Mirai; adult/elementary & junior high/college & high school ¥500/100/300; ☎ 10am-6pm Fri-Wed) has a decent collection displayed in changing exhibitions. It's noted for its building, designed by Pritzker Prize winner Tange Kenzō (1989).

#### Mitsubishi Minato Mirai Industrial Museum

This is one of Japan's better science and technology **museums** (☎ 224-9031; 3-3-1 Minato Mirai; adult/child ¥500/200; ☎ 10am-5.30pm Tue-Sun), with a wildly enjoyable helicopter simulator and good hands-on exhibits.

For a less-simulated airborne adventure, take a helicopter tour of Yokohama. **Yokohama Heli Cruising** (横浜ヘリクルージング; ☎ 223-

1155; flight per 5/10min ¥4000/12,500; ☎ Fri-Sun) offers short but exhilarating flights from its heliport in Rinko Park, a seven-minute walk north-east of Queen's Sq. Flights depart around sunset.

#### Yokohama Maritime Museum

On the harbour in front of Landmark Tower, this fan-shaped **museum** (☎ 221-0280; 2-1-1 Minato Mirai; admission to museum & ship ¥600; ☎ 10am-6.30pm Tue-Sun Jul & Aug, 10am-4.30pm Tue-Sun Sep-Jun) is largely dedicated to the *Nippon Maru* sailing ship docked adjacent. The ship (built 1930) retains many original fittings, including captain's and officers' rooms and the engine room.

#### Cosmo World

Next to the Maritime Museum, this **amusement park** (☎ 641-6591; 2-8-1 Shinkō; rides ¥200-700; ☎ 11am-9pm Mon-Fri, to 10pm Sat & Sun) features one of the world's tallest Ferris wheels, **Cosmo Clock** (112.5m; admission ¥700).

#### Manyō Club

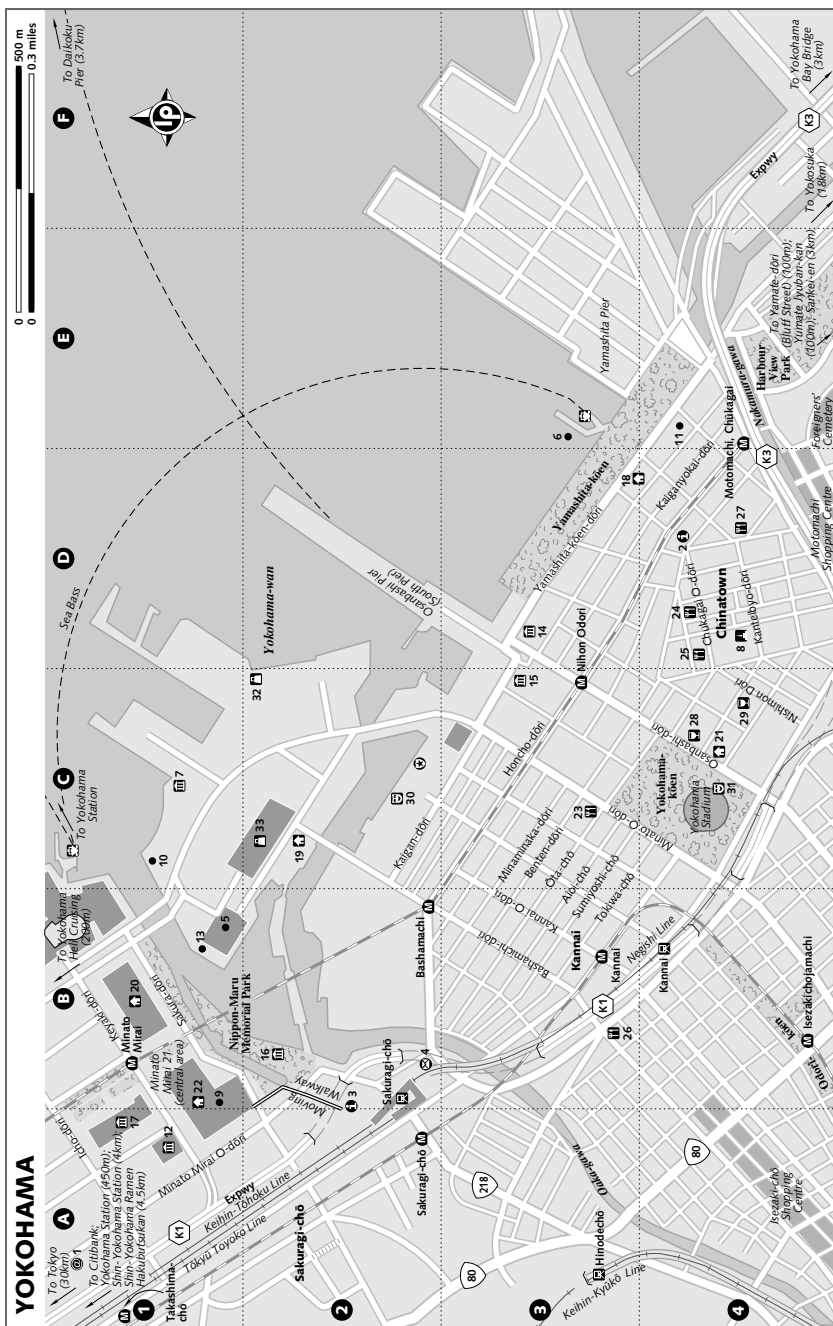
The fact that there is no *onsen* in Yokohama (that we know of) doesn't matter. This new **hot-spring facility** (☎ 663-4126; 2-7-1 Shinkō; adult/child ¥2620/1470; ☎ 10am-9am) trucks in water daily from Atami and gives you five storeys' worth of ways to enjoy them: pool to pool, sauna to sauna in your custom *yukata*. Spa treatments are available (extra charge), and 'relax rooms' have hundreds of TVs in front of hundreds of comfy chairs. Check-in is on the 7th floor.

#### Japan Overseas Migration Museum

Yokohama has long welcomed the world, but this fine **museum** (☎ 663-3257; 2-3-1 Shinkō; admission free; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun) looks at Japanese who went overseas. Agricultural labourers, fishermen and performers later became merchants, doctors and priests in the USA, Brazil and more. It's a must for anyone of Japanese heritage, with signage in English. It's inside the offices of the charitable organisation Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

#### Akarenga Sōkō

It means red brick **warehouses** (☎ 211-1515; admission free; ☎ 11am-8pm, some restaurants later), and these century-old structures have been refurbished into chichi speciality shops, restaurants, cafés, changing art exhibits and special events. Well worth a visit.



## INFORMATION

Animi アニミ	1 A1
Chinatown 80 Information Center	2 D4
Minato Mirai 21 Information Center	3 B2
みなとみらい 21	21
Post Office 郵便局	4 B2

## SIGHTS &amp; ACTIVITIES

Cosmo World	5 B1
横浜コスモワールド	5 B1
Hikawa Maru	6 E3
Japan Overseas Migration Museum	7 C1
海外移住資料館	7 C1
Kantei-byō 関帝廟	8 D4
Landmark Tower	9 B1
ランドマークタワー	9 B1
Manyō Club 万葉倶楽部	10 C1
Marine Tower マリナタワー	11 E4
Mitsubishi Minato Mirai Industrial Museum	12 A1
三菱みなとみらい技術館	12 A1
Nippon Maru Sailing Ship	13 B1
日本丸	13 B1
Silk Museum シルク博物館	14 D3

Yokohama Archives of History	15 C3
横浜開港資料館	15 C3
Yokohama Maritime Museum	16 B2
横浜マリタイムミュージアム	16 B2
Yokohama Museum of Art	17 A1
横浜美術館	17 A1

## SLEEPING

Chano-ma	(see 32)
Hotel New Grand	18 D3
ホテルニューグランド	18 D3
Navios Yokohama	19 C2
ナビオス横浜	19 C2
Pan Pacific Hotel Yokohama	20 B1
パンパシフィックホテル横浜	20 B1
Toyo Inn Sutajium-mae Honkan	21 C4
東横インスタジアム前本館	21 C4
Yokohama Royal Park Hotel	22 B1
ニッコー横浜ロイヤルパーク	22 B1

## EATING

Baikōtei 梅香亭	23 C3
Heichinrō Honten へい珍楼本店	24 D4
Manchinrō Honten 萬珍楼本店	25 D4

Motion Blue	(see 32)
Nana's Green Tea	(see 32)
Yokohama Curry Museum	26 B3
横浜カレーミュージアム	26 B3
Yokohama Daiseikai 横浜大世界	27 D4

## DRINKING

Peace ベース	28 C4
Sirius シリアス	(see 22)
Windjammer ウィンドジャマー	29 C4

## ENTERTAINMENT

Bank ART Studio	30 C2
バンクアートスタジオ	30 C2
Yokohama Stadium Ticket Office	31 C4
横浜スタジアムきっぷ売場	31 C4

## SHOPPING

Akarenga Sōkō	32 C2
Queen's Square Yokohama	(see 20)
クイーンズスクエア	(see 20)
Yokohama World Porters	33 C2
横浜ワールドポーターズ	33 C2

## YAMASHITA-KŌEN AREA 山下公園周辺

Moored alongside this seaside park (📍 Motomachi-Chukagai) you'll find the **Hikawa Maru** (☎ 641-4362; adult/child ¥800/400; 🕒 9.30am-6pm conditions permitting), a retired luxury 1930 passenger liner (one of the staterooms was used by Charlie Chaplin).

Across the street, the **Silk Museum** (☎ 641-0841; 1 Yamashita-kōen-dōri; adult/child/student/senior ¥500/100/200/300; 🕒 9am-4.30pm Tue-Sun) pays tribute to Yokohama's history as a silk trading port, with all aspects of silk production and some lovely kimono and *obi* (sashes). The nearby **Yokohama Archives of History** (☎ 201-2100; 3 Nihon Ōdori; adult/child ¥200/100; 🕒 9.30am-5pm Tue-Sun) chronicles the city (displays in English) from the opening of Japan to the mid-20th century; it's inside the former British consulate. The **Marine Tower** (☎ 641-7838; 15 Yamashita-kōen-dōri; adult/child/student/senior ¥700/300/350/500; 🕒 9.30am-9pm conditions permitting), one of the world's tallest inland lighthouses (106m), offers a less-razzle-dazzle view over the harbour than does Landmark Tower.

## MOTOMACHI &amp; YAMATE 元町・山手

This area south of **Yamashita-kōen** (📍 Motomachi-Chukagai, Ishikawa-chō) combines the gentle intimacy of Motomachi's shopping street with early-20th-century Western-style architecture and fantastic views from the brick sidewalks of Yamate-hon-dōri ('Bluff St'). Private homes and churches here are still in use. Attractions include Harbour View Park and the Foreign-

ers' Cemetery, final resting place of 4000 foreign residents and visitors – the headstones carry some fascinating inscriptions. A stroll from near Yamashita-kōen to Ishikawa-chō station should take about one hour.

## CHINATOWN 中華街

Always wanted to go to China? Yokohama's **Chinatown** (Chūkagai; 📍 Motomachi-Chukagai, Ishikawa-chō) has the sights, sounds, aromas of Hong Kong without the airfare, rivalling Minato Mirai in popularity. Within its 10 elaborately painted gates are all manner of Chinese speciality shops and some 500 food shops and (often expensive) restaurants, and enchanting neon displays at night. Chinatown's heart is the Chinese temple **Kantei-byō** (admission free; 🕒 10am-8pm), dedicated to Kanwu, the god of business. See the box text (p223) for information about Yokohama Daiseikai, a Chinese theme park.

## SANKEI-EN 三溪園

Opened to the public in 1906, the beautifully landscaped gardens of **Sankei-en** (☎ 621-0634; www.sankeien.or.jp; 58-1 Honmoku Sankei-en; adult/child ¥500/200; 🕒 9am-5pm) feature walking paths among ponds, 17th-century buildings, several fine tea-ceremony houses and a 500-year-old, three-storey pagoda. The inner garden is a fine example of traditional Japanese garden landscaping. From Yokohama or Sakuragi-chō station, take bus 8 to Honmoku Sankei-en-mae bus stop (10 minutes).

## Sleeping

Most people day trip to Yokohama from Tokyo, but there are some worthy lodgings even if no bargains. Look for internet specials.

**Toyo Inn Sutajium-mae** (☎ 664-1045; fax 664-1046; www.toyo-inn.com/eng; Osanbashi-dōri; s/d ¥6090/8400; ㊟ Kannai; ㊟ ㊟ ㊟ wi-fi) Simple but nicely outfitted business hotel with small, comfortable rooms in a main building (Honkan) and marginally nicer new building (Shinkan). Rates include breakfast, internet and more. From the station, walk along the main road, turn left after the stadium and take the first left. It's two blocks further.

**Navios Yokohama** (☎ 633-6000; fax 63-6001; www.navios-yokohama.com; 2-2-1 Shinkō; s/tw from ¥8140/15,750; ㊟ Bashamichi; ㊟ ㊟ wi-fi) In Minato Mirai, it's Yokohama's best deal in this price range; rooms are spacious, spotless and central. Choose city views (across the harbour to Landmark Tower or sea view towards Akarenga Sōkō).

**Hotel New Grand** (☎ 681-1841; fax 681-1895; www.hotel-newgrand.co.jp; 10 Yamashita-kōen-dōri; s/tw from ¥13,860/20,000; ㊟ Motomachi-Chūkagai; ㊟ ㊟) This old-line (1927) 251-room hotel has a prime waterfront location and was once a favourite of visiting foreign dignitaries (check out the timeless original lobby). Now it's a classy, upmarket option with some old-world charm, despite the addition of a tower in 1992.

**Yokohama Royal Park Hotel** (☎ 221-1111; 224-5153; www.yrph.com; 2-2-1-3 Minato Mirai; s/tw/d from ¥31,500/35,700/36,750; ㊟ ㊟ ㊟) You can't get any higher than this, on the upper floors of Landmark Tower, and it hardly gets more luxe either, with fitness centre, pool, oodles of space, marble, burlwood, blackout curtains and an aromatherapy salon.

**Pan Pacific Yokohama** (☎ 682-2222; fax 682-2223; www.panpacific.com; 2-3-7 Minato Mirai; d from ¥40,000; ㊟ Minatomirai; ㊟ ㊟ ㊟) Right by the convention centre, this superbly stylish hotel boasts designer furnishings, rooms with balconies and excellent views, and several good but pricey restaurants.

## Eating

For generations, people have come to **Chinatown** (㊟ Ishikawachō or Motomachi-Chūkagai) for a bang-up dinner. Plan on spending about ¥5000 per person for a fancy dinner and perhaps half that for lunch – look for set menus – although there are certainly less expensive

eateries. For an eclectic mix of cuisines visit the restaurant floors of Landmark Plaza and Queen's Sq.

**Baikōtei** (☎ 681-4870; 1-1 Aioicho; mains around ¥800-1300; ㊟ 11am-8.30pm Mon-Sat; E; ㊟ Kannai or Nihon Ōdōri) This weathered classic with red-velour seating is famed for its Hayashi rice (with meat, vegetables and demiglace), and a mean *katsu-don* (pork cutlet). Look for the sign that announces Baikō Emmies.

**Chano-ma** (☎ 650-8228; 3rd fl, Akarenga Sōkō Bldg 2; mains from ¥700; ㊟ 11am-midnight Sun-Thu, to 5am Fri & Sat; E) Dine on sushi, salads and croquettes at high tables with high chairs or on mattresses arranged around an open kitchen, while serious club beats play under tall ceilings.

**Yamate Jyuban-kan** (山手十番館; ☎ 621-4466; 247 Yamatechō; mains/courses from ¥2000/3500; ㊟ 11am-9pm; E) Overlooking the Foreigners' Cemetery in Yamate, this French restaurant serves consistently good cuisine in a building like a mansion from the American south. A casual café occupies the 1st floor, while upstairs is the classic restaurant, dishing out longstanding favourites like the Kaika steak set. Reservations recommended.

**Manchinrō Honten** (☎ 681-4004; 153 Yamashita-chō; mains from ¥1100, dinner for 2 ¥8400; ㊟ lunch & dinner Tue-Sun; E) One of Chinatown's oldest and most popular Cantonese restaurants, with a respected Hong Kong chef. Expect specialities like wok-fried seafood with XO sauce and shrimp with mayonnaise, plus *yum cha* (dim sum; ¥480 to ¥700). Look for the stone lions out the front.

**Heichinrō Honten** (☎ 681-3001; 149 Yamashita-chō; lunch/dinner ¥3000/5000; ㊟ 11am-10.15pm; E) Neck and neck with Manchinrō, the equally elegant Heichinrō is another Cantonese favourite. Separate dining rooms for main dishes and *yum cha* (¥420 to ¥1020), including *ebi no kingyo* (shrimp in the shape of goldfish) and popular noodle soups.

## Drinking & Entertainment

Yokohama buzzes at night. Many of the city's bars are near Kannai station, and there's a growing scene around Minato Mirai.

**Peace** (☎ 650-2200; Osanbashi-dōri; cocktails from ¥650, mains ¥600-950; ㊟ 11am-2am Sun-Thu, to 4am Fri & Sat; ㊟ Kannai) Diagonally across from Yokohama Stadium, this airy, stylish bistro and lounge attracts a young, attractive crowd for its extensive cocktail menu, decent food and groovy beats. Live music some nights.

## IT'S A RESTAURANT! IT'S A THEME PARK!

In 1994 Nelson Mandela became president of South Africa, Israel and Jordan signed a peace treaty, Netscape launched Navigator and the first passengers travelled through the Chunnel. But here in Yokohama, something *really* important happened: the **Shin-Yokohama Rāmen Hakubutsukan** (☎ 471-0503; 2-14-21 Shinyokohama; adult/child ¥300/100, most meals from ¥900; ㊟ 11am-11pm) opened, inaugurating the age of the food theme park throughout Japan. This museum of *rāmen* continues to show the history and culture of these Chinese-style noodles about which it's fair to say Japan is bonkers. Downstairs, nine *rāmen* restaurants from around the country were hand-picked to sell their wares in a replica of a 1958 Shitamachi (downtown district).

The concept has been copied many times since, not least here in Yokohama. In Chinatown, the eight-storey **Yokohama Daiseikai** (Daska; ☎ 681-5588; 3 Minami-mon; adult/child ¥500/400, mains from ¥900; ㊟ 10am-9pm Oct-Jun, to 10pm Jul-Sep) models itself on Shanghai's gilded age of the 1920s and '30s, with silks, carvings and crafts, performances of jazz and Chinese opera, and three floors of restaurants. To beat the crowds, visit on weekdays.

Japan is also obsessed with curry rice, a large bowl filled with rice on one side and meat or vegetables in curry sauce on the other. The **Yokohama Curry Museum** (☎ 250-0833; 1-2-3 Isezaki-chō; admission free, most meals ¥650-1350; ㊟ 11am-10pm) offers nine styles of curry, including Indian, Okinawan and, er, French. The cocktail bar here serves a 'currytini'. We dare you.

**Windjammer** (☎ 662-3966; 215 Yamashita-chō; live music cover ¥400-600, drinks from ¥900; ㊟ 6pm-1.30am; ㊟ Kannai) The setting feels like the inside of a yacht (especially after the potent Jacktar cocktail, ¥1050). All the better to listen to live jazz nightly.

**Bank ART Studio** (☎ 663-4697; 3-9 Kaigan-dōri; ㊟ 11.30am-11pm; ㊟ Nihon-Ōdōri) This art gallery opened in 2004, with flexible space for exhibitions, views of Minato Mirai skyscrapers, and a simple bar and snack menu. It will erase any doubts whether Yokohama is cool. Look for the arcade made of wire clothes hangers.

**Motion Blue** (☎ 226-1919; 3rd fl, Akarenga Sōkō Bldg 2; most tickets free-¥4200; ㊟ 5-11.30pm Mon-Sat, 4-10pm Sun; ㊟ Bashamichi) Yokohama's hottest music club books jazz, fusion, world music, J-pop and more. It's in the Akarenga-Sōkō.

**Nana's Green Tea** (☎ 664-2707; Akarenga Sōkō Bldg 2; drinks around ¥500) Contemporary takes on traditional Japanese drinks: latte of frozen *maccha* (powdered green tea) with whipped cream, drinks with azuki beans, and a steaming bowl of *zensai* (azuki bean soup).

**Yokohama Stadium** (☎ 661-1251; Yokohama Kōen; tickets ¥1800-5500; ㊟ games Apr-early Oct; ㊟ Kannai) If you're looking to see a Japanese baseball game, Yokohama's stadium is a great place: it's centrally located, and the local team, the Bay Stars, is usually middling, meaning that tickets are generally easy to come by.

**Sirius** (☎ 221-1111; 2-2-1-3 Minato Mirai; drinks from ¥1000; ㊟ 5pm-1am; ㊟ Sakuragi-chō) Elegant cocktail lounge on the top (70th floor) of

the Yokohama Royal Park Hotel. The place to go for a view over cocktails like the Two Hearts, with apple and cherry syrups, Calpis and fresh apple, topped with Champagne (¥1900).

## Shopping

In Minato Mirai, Yokohama World Porters is a huge shopping complex with lots of restaurants on the ground floor, including Vivre, possibly the world's cleanest supermarket. Landmark Tower and Queens Sq are similarly filled with shopping and dining, and Akarenga Sōkō with craft, antique and speciality shops. There are often street performances throughout Minato Mirai. The more intimate shopping strip of Motomachi is lined with lovely boutiques.

## Getting There & Away

Frequent JR and private-line trains from Tokyo serve Yokohama station, where you can change for Sakuragichō and Kannai (¥130, three and five minutes) or Ishikawachō (¥150, eight minutes), or the more expensive local subway. Take the Keihin Kyūko line from Shinagawa station (¥290, 18 minutes), or the Tōkyū Tōyoko line from Shibuya station (¥260, about 25 minutes), which becomes the Minato Mirai subway line to Minatomirai (¥440, 28 minutes) and Motomachi-Chūkagai (¥460, 30 minutes).

From Tokyo station, JR's Keihin Tōhoku and Tōkaidō lines stop at Yokohama station

(¥450, 40 minutes); some continue on to Sakuragichō, Kannai and Ishikawa-chō (all ¥540). The Tōkaidō *shinkansen* stops at Shin-Yokohama station, northwest of town, connected to the city centre by the Yokohama line.

#### TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Yokohama station connects frequently with Narita and Haneda airports via Narita Express trains (N'EX; ¥4180, 1½ hours) or JR Airport Narita line (¥1890, two hours, including transfers) and limousine buses to/from the Yokohama City Air Terminal (YCAT, Sky Building east of Yokohama station, next to Sogō department store; Narita airport ¥3500, two hours; Haneda airport ¥560, 35 minutes).

#### Getting Around BICYCLE

**Bike rental** (☎ 641-7838; per 2hr ¥300) is available near the Marine Tower (p221).

#### BOAT

**Sea Bass** (☎ 661-0347) ferries connect Yokohama station, Minato Mirai 21 and Yamashita-kōen. Boats run between approximately 10am and 8pm. Full fare from Yokohama station to Yamashita-kōen is ¥600 (20 minutes). **Suijō Bus** (☎ 201-0821; adult/child ¥400/200; ☎ 1-5pm Tue-Fri, noon-6pm Sat & Sun) runs ferries between Minato Mirai, Ōsanbashi and Renga Park.

#### BUS

Although trains are more convenient, Yokohama has an extensive bus network (¥210 per ride). A special Akai-kutsu (red shoe) bus loops every 30 minutes during daytime through the tourist areas for ¥100/300 per ride/day pass.

#### KAMAKURA 鎌倉

☎ 0467 / pop 171,000

The capital of Japan from 1185 to 1333, Kamakura rivals Nikkō as the most culturally rewarding day trip from Tokyo. An enormous number of Buddhist temples and the occasional Shinto shrine dot around the countryside. If you start early you can cover a lot of ground in a day, but two days will also allow you to visit the temples of East Kamakura and take some nice walks. Kamakura is small and pleasant, although it gets packed on weekends and in holiday periods.

#### History

The end of the Heian period was marked by a legendary feud between two great warrior families, the Minamoto (Genji) and the Taira (Heike). After the Taira routed the Minamoto, the third son of the Minamoto clan, called Yoritomo, was sent to live at a temple in Izu-hantō. When the boy grew old enough, he began to gather support for a counterattack on his clan's old rivals. In 1180 Yoritomo set up his base at Kamakura, far away from the debilitating influences of Kyoto court life, close to other clans loyal to the Minamoto and, having the sea on one side and densely wooded hills on the others, easy to defend.

After victories over the Taira, Minamoto Yoritomo was appointed shōgun in 1192 and governed Japan from Kamakura. When he died without an heir, power passed to the Hōjō, the family of Yoritomo's wife.

The Hōjō clan ruled Japan from Kamakura for more than a century until, in 1333, weakened by the cost of maintaining defences against threats of attack from Kublai Khan in China, the Hōjō clan was defeated by Emperor Go-Daigo. Kyoto once again became the capital.

#### Orientation

Kamakura's main attractions can be covered on foot, with the occasional bus ride. Cycling is also practical (p229). Most sights are signposted in English and Japanese. You can start at Kamakura station and travel around the area in a circle (Komachi-dōri 'shopping town' and broad Wakamiya-ōji are the main streets east of the station), or start one station north at Kita-Kamakura station and visit the temples between there and Kamakura station on foot. The itinerary in this section follows the latter route.

#### Information

**Kamakura Green Net** ([www.guide.city.kamakura.kanagawa.jp](http://www.guide.city.kamakura.kanagawa.jp)) Has useful information about both living and sightseeing here.

**Post office** (1-10-3 Komachi; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, to 3pm Sat) With ATMs, a short walk from Kamakura station's east exit.

**Tourist Information Center** (☎ 22-3350; ☎ 9am-5:30pm Apr-Sep, to 5pm Oct-Mar) Just outside Kamakura station's east exit, this helpful office distributes maps and brochures, and can also make bookings for same-day accommodation.

#### Sights & Activities

##### ENGAKU-JI 円覚寺

**Engaku-ji** (☎ 22-0478; admission ¥200; ☎ 8am-5pm Apr-Sep, to 4pm Oct-Mar) is on the left as you exit Kita-Kamakura station. It is one of the five main Rinzaï Zen temples in Kamakura. Engaku-ji was founded in 1282, allegedly as a place where Zen monks might pray for soldiers who lost their lives defending Japan against Kublai Khan. Today the only real reminder of the temple's former magnificence and antiquity is the gate San-mon, a 1780 reconstruction. At the top of the long flight of stairs through the gate is the Engaku-ji bell, the largest bell in Kamakura, cast in 1301. The Hondō (Main Hall) inside San-mon is a recent reconstruction, dating from the mid-1960s.

##### TŌKEI-JI 東慶寺

**Tōkei-ji** (☎ 22-1663; admission ¥100; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mar-Oct, to 4pm Nov-Feb), across the railway tracks from Engaku-ji, is notable for its lush grounds as much as for the temple itself. On weekdays, when visitors are few, it can be a pleasantly relaxing place.

Historically, the temple is famed as having served as a women's refuge. A woman could be officially recognised as divorced after three years as a nun in the temple precincts. Today there are no nuns; the grave of the last abbess can be found in the cemetery, shrouded by cypress trees.

##### JŌCHI-JI 淨智寺

A couple of minutes further on from Tōkei-ji is **Jōchi-ji** (☎ 22-3943; adult/child ¥150/80; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Mar-Oct, to 4.30pm Nov-Feb), another temple with pleasant grounds. Founded in 1283, this is considered one of Kamakura's five great Zen temples, prized for its moss-covered entry, its bell tower and for the flowers that seem to explode here each spring.

##### DAIBUTSU HIKING COURSE

If time permits, consider taking the Daibutsu Hiking Course, which begins at the steps just up the lane from Jōchi-ji and follows a wooded path for 3km to the Daibutsu (allow about 1½ hours). Along the course you'll pass the small shrine of **Kuzuharagaoka-jinja**, from which you'll see signs to the landscaped park of **Genjiyama-kōen** (where you'll see a statue of Minamoto Yoritomo). From here, head down the stairs, keep going down the hill and take a right to reach **Zeniarai-benten** (Money-washing Shrine; ☎ 25-1081), one of Kamakura's most al-

luring Shintō shrines. A cave-like entrance leads to a clearing where visitors come to bathe their money in natural springs with the hope of bringing financial success. You can either return back up the steps to the path or continue down the paved road, turning right at the first intersection, walking along a path lined with cryptomeria and ascending up through the shrine of **Sasuke-inari jinja** (typical of inari shrines, it's recognized by the succession of *torii* gates) before meeting up with the Daibutsu path once again.

##### KENCHŌ-JI 建長寺

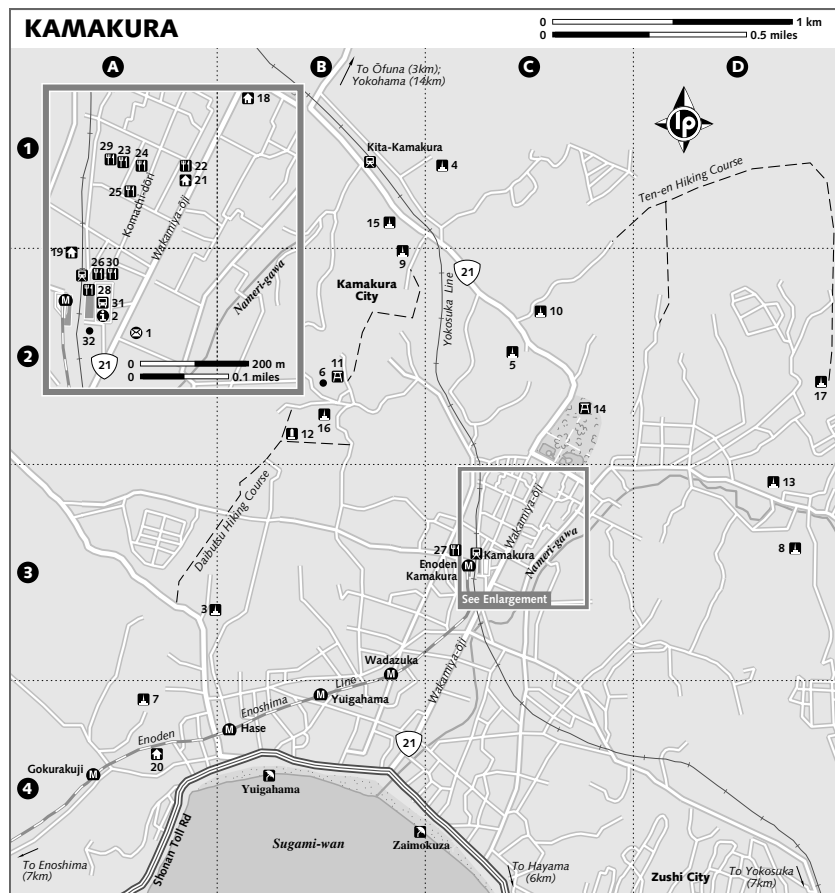
Continuing towards Kamakura along the main road from Jōchi-ji, on the left you'll pass the turn-off to this **temple** (☎ 22-0981; adult/child ¥300/100; ☎ 8.30am-4.30pm), the first-ranked of the five great Zen temples. Founded in 1253, Kenchō-ji once comprised seven buildings and 49 subtemples, most of which were destroyed in the fires of the 14th and 15th centuries. However, the 17th and 18th centuries saw its restoration, and you can still get a sense of its splendour. Today, Kenchō-ji functions as a working monastery with 10 subtemples. Among the highlights are the **Butsuden** (Buddha hall), brought piece by piece from Kyoto; the painstakingly landscaped **Zen garden**, shaped like the kanji for 'mind'; and the **juniper grove**, believed to have sprouted from seeds brought from China by Kenchō-ji's founder some seven centuries ago.

##### TEN-EN HIKING COURSE

Another excellent walk through the countryside begins by walking around the Kenchō-ji's Hojo (main hall) and up the steps to the entrance of the Ten-en Hiking Course. From here it's a two-hour walk to Zuisen-ji, along one of the most scenic spots in Kanagawa-ken; those with less time can take a shorter (80-minute) trail to Kamakura-gū.

##### ENNŌ-JI 円応寺

Across the road from Kenchō-ji is **Ennō-ji** (☎ 25-1905; adult/child ¥200/150; ☎ 9am-4pm Mar-Nov, to 3pm Dec-Feb), which is distinguished primarily by its collection of statues depicting the judges of hell. Presiding over them is a statue of Emma (Sanskrit name: Yama; an important cultural property), an ancient Hindu deity and ruler of the hell's 10 kings. The statue is noted for its fierce gaze meant for the wicked (hopefully you won't have anything to worry about). Hell



and judgement became important concepts with the rise of the Jōdō (Pure Land) school of Buddhism (see p54).

**TSURUGAOKA HACHIMAN-GŪ** 鶴岡八幡宮  
Further down the road, where it turns towards Kamakura station, is **Tsurugaoka Hachiman-gū** (☎ 22-0315; admission free; ⌚ 7am-9pm), the main Shintō shrine of Kamakura. It was founded by Minamoto Yoriyoshi, of the same Minamoto clan that ruled Japan from Kamakura. This shrine's sprawl, with elongated paths, broad vistas and lotus ponds, presents the visitor with an atmosphere drastically different to the repose of the Zen temples clustered around Kita-Kamakura station. The Gempei Pond (the name comes from the kanji for the Genji

and Heike clans) is divided by bridges, said to symbolise the rift between the clans.

#### DAIBUTSU 大仏

The **Kamakura Daibutsu** (Great Buddha; ☎ 22-0703; adult/child ¥200/150; ⌚ 7am-6pm Apr-Sep, to 5.30pm Oct-Mar) is at Kōtoku-in temple. Completed in 1252, it is Japan's second-largest Buddha image and Kamakura's most famous sight. It was once housed in a huge hall, today the statue sits in the open, the hall having been washed away by a tsunami in 1495. Cast in bronze and weighing close to 850 tonnes, the statue is 11.4m tall. Its construction is said to have been inspired by Yoritomo's visit to Nara (where Japan's biggest Daibutsu holds court) after the Minamoto clan's victory over

#### INFORMATION

Post Office 郵便局.....1 A2  
Tourist Information Center  
観光案内センター.....2 A2

#### SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Daibutsu (Great Buddha) 大仏.....3 A3  
Engaku-ji 円覚寺.....4 C1  
Ennō-ji 円応寺.....5 C2  
Genjyama-kōen  
源氏山公園.....6 B2  
Hase-dera 長谷寺.....7 A4  
Hōkoku-ji 報国寺.....8 D3  
Jōchi-ji 淨智寺.....9 B2  
Kenchō-ji 建長寺.....10 C2  
Kuzuharaoka-jinja.....11 B2

Sasuke-inari-jinja 佐助稲荷神社.....12 B2  
Sugimoto-dera 杉本寺.....13 D3  
Tsurugaoka Hachiman-gū  
鶴岡八幡宮.....14 C2  
Tōkei-ji 東慶寺.....15 B1  
Zeniarai-benten 銭洗弁天.....16 B2  
Zuisen-ji 瑞仙寺.....17 D2

#### SLEEPING

Classical Hotel Ajsai  
ホテルあじさい.....18 B1  
Hotel New Kamakura  
ホテルニューカマクラ.....19 A2  
Kamakura Hase Youth Hostel  
鎌倉はせユースホステル.....20 A4  
Komachi-shō 鶴が丘会館.....21 A1

#### EATING

Caraway キャラウェイ.....22 A1  
Horetaro 徳太郎.....23 A1  
Imo-no-kichikan 芋の吉館.....24 A1  
Kamakura Ichibanya  
鎌倉老番屋.....25 A1  
Kawagoe-ya 川古江屋.....26 A2  
Kinokuniya 紀伊国屋.....27 C3  
Komachi-ichiba 小町市場.....28 A2  
Milk Hall ミルクホール.....29 A1  
Toshimaya 豊島屋.....30 A2

#### TRANSPORT

Bus Station バス停.....31 A2  
Rental Cycles  
レンタサイクル.....32 A2

the rival Taira clan. Even though Kamakura's Daibutsu doesn't quite match Nara's in stature, it is commonly agreed that it is artistically superior.

The Buddha itself is the Amida Buddha (*amitābha* in Sanskrit), worshipped by the followers of the Jōdo school as a figure of salvation.

Buses from stop 1 to 6 in front of Kamakura station run to the Daibutsu-mae stop. Alternatively, take the Enoden Enoshima line to Hase station and walk north for about five minutes. Better yet, take the Daibutsu Hiking Course.

#### HASE-DERA 長谷寺

About 10 minutes' walk from the Daibutsu, **Hase-dera** (☎ 22-6300; adult/child ¥300/100; ⌚ 8am-5pm Mar-Sep, to 4.30pm Oct-Feb) is one of the most popular temples in the Kantō region, also known as Hase Kannon.

The walls of the staircases leading up to the main hall are lined with thousands of tiny statues of Jizō; ranked like a small army of urchins, many of them clothed to keep them warm. It's quite charming until you realise that Jizō is the patron *bodhisattva* of travellers and departed children, and the statues were placed there by women who lost children through miscarriage or abortion. The effect can be quite haunting.

The focal point of the temple's main hall is the Kannon statue. Kannon (*avalokiteshvara* in Sanskrit), the goddess of mercy, is the Bodhisattva of infinite compassion and, along with Jizō, is one of Japan's most popular Buddhist deities. This 9m-high carved wooden *jūichimen* (11-faced Kannon) is believed to date from the 8th century. The 11 faces are actually one primary face and 10 secondary faces, the latter representing the 10 stages of

enlightenment. It is said that the 11 faces allow Kannon, ever vigilant for those in need of her assistance, to cast an eye in every direction. The temple dates back to AD 736, when it is said the statue washed up on the shore near Kamakura.

#### OTHER SHRINES & TEMPLES

If you're still in the mood for temples, there are plenty more in and around Kamakura, which has some 60 more temples and shrines.

From the Daibutsu it is best to return to Kita-Kamakura station by bus and take another bus out to the temples in the peaceful eastern part of town. While these lack the grandeur compared to Kamakura's more famous temples, they more than make up for with their charm and lack of crowds.

The grounds of this secluded Zen temple, **Zuisen-ji** (☎ 22-1191; admission ¥100; ⌚ 9am-5pm) make for a pleasant stroll and include Zen gardens laid out by Musō Kokushi, the temple's esteemed founder. It is possible to get there from the Egara Ten-jin shrine on foot in about 10 to 15 minutes; turn right where the bus turns left in front of the shrine, take the next left and keep following the road. From Zuisen-ji you can access the Ten-en Hiking Course.

The small **Sugimoto-dera** (☎ 22-3463; admission ¥200; ⌚ 8am-4.30pm), founded in AD 734, is reputed to be the oldest in Kamakura. Its ferocious-looking guardian deities and a statue of Kannon are its main draw. Take a bus from stop 5 at Kamakura station to the Sugimoto Kannon bus stop.

Down the road (away from Kamakura station) from Sugimoto-dera, on the right-hand side, **Hōkoku-ji** (☎ 22-0762; admission ¥200; ⌚ 9am-4pm) is a Rinzaï Zen temple with quiet, landscaped gardens where you can relax under a

red parasol with a cup of Japanese tea. This is also one of the more active Zen temples in Kamakura, regularly holding *zazen* (Soto-school meditation) classes for beginners. Take a bus from stop 5 at Kamakura Station (¥190, 10 minutes) to Gyōmyōji.

### Festivals & Events

**Bonbori Matsuri** (7-9 August) Hundreds of lanterns are strung up around Tsurugaoka Hachimangū.

**Hachimangū Matsuri** (14-16 September) Festivities include a procession of *mikoshi* (portable shrines) and, on the last day, a display of horseback archery.

**Kamakura Matsuri** A week of celebrations held from the second Sunday to the third Sunday in April. It includes a wide range of activities, most of which are centred on Tsurugaoka Hachimangū.

### Sleeping

**Kamakura Hase Youth Hostel** (☎/fax 24-3390; dm member/nonmember ¥3000/4000; ♿ ♿) Four rooms, 12 beds, three minutes from both Hasedera and the beach. Simple but contemporary and tidy, this hostel is mostly bunk beds, with one tatami room and laundry facilities. From Kamakura station take an Enoden Enoshima train to Hase station. Breakfast/dinner available for ¥300/700.

**Hotel New Kamakura** (☎ 22-2230; fax 22-0223; s/d without bathroom from ¥4200/11,000, with bathroom from ¥7500/11,000; ♿) Within sight of the train platform, this handsome 1924 hotel in two buildings has Western- and Japanese-style rooms with large windows, dark wood floors, exposed beams and comfortable furnishings. Exit west from Kamakura station and take a sharp right down the alley. It's at the car park. Reservations recommended.

**Komachi-sō** (☎ 23-2151; s/tw ¥5000/9000; ♿) Tiny, pleasant and affordable *minshuku* with decent rooms. It's located on a narrow lane parallel to Wakamiya-ōji, just behind the back entrance to the Tsurugaoka Kaikan. Look for the *torii* in the street. Check-in is from 4pm.

**Classical Hotel Ajsai** (☎ 22-3492; r per person from ¥6830; ♿) Across from Tsurugaoka Hachimangū, the Ajsai is an intimate, affordable option with basic Western-style rooms and a friendly, no-nonsense host. Fourth-floor rooms have shrine views. Breakfast (¥1000) is *kamameshi* (rice in a hot pot; vegetarian version available).

**Tsurugaoka Kaikan** (☎ 24-1111; fax 24-1115; s/tw or d ¥8400/16,800; ♿) This 14-room hotel, with Japanese-Western combination rooms, is a

popular wedding venue – great kimono-spotting on weekends. The blinding-white lobby glows with early '80s glam. Look for the sign on the front reading 'Kamakura Marriage Avenue', facing Wakamiya-ōji.

### Eating

The station area bursts with restaurants and snack stands. The streets around Komachidōri and Wakamiya-ōji are happy hunting grounds.

**Komachi-Ichiba** (☎ 24-7921; most dishes ¥500-1000; ♿ lunch & dinner) Two sister restaurants make up the 'Komachi market', upstairs from Kamakura station. *Fūrin* is a smart *izakaya* (Japanese pub/eatery) specialising in fish and seafood like sashimi and grills, while *Tenten* offers tempura. Expect the sake and spirits to flow at night.

**Caraway** (☎ 25-0927; dishes ¥630-940; ♿ 11.30am-8pm Tue-Sun; E) This Japanese-style curry shop has an old-world charm and some unusual preparations. Go for the classic beef curry, or spring for chicken curry with Edam cheese.

**Horetaro** (☎ 23-8622; most dishes ¥900-1300, all you can eat from ¥1575; ♿ lunch & dinner Tue-Sun; E) *Okonomiyaki* and *monjayaki* (Osaka- and Tokyo-style savoury pancakes respectively) are the thing here, along with fried rice and other dishes you grill yourself on a *teppan* (steel plate) at the table. All-you-can-eat-and-drink sets including alcoholic drinks are ¥3150 for 2½ hours.

**Milk Hall** (☎ 22-1179; most dishes ¥700-900; ♿ 11am-10.30pm; E) *Sweet!* This quaint café-bar-antique shop serves light meals (small plates like boiled sausages or baked camembert), coffees and cocktails, and it features live jazz some nights. From Kamakura station's east exit, head two blocks down Komachidōri, take a left and then another left down the first alley.

**Kawagoe-ya** (☎ 24-2580; most meals ¥945-1365; ♿ lunch & dinner Fri-Wed) Cosy and country style, specialising in a range of Japanese foods like *soba* and *donburi* (rice with assorted toppings). The *mini-maguro-don* set (¥1365) comes with *soba* and more. It's outside Kamakura station's east exit, in the basement below McDonald's. Picture menu and plastic models available.

Snackers will love Komachidōri. **Kamakura Ichibanya** (☎ 22-6156) specialises in *sembei* (rice crackers); watch staff grilling them in the window or buy some 100 packaged varieties,

including curry, garlic, *mentaiko* (spicy cod roe) or *uni* (sea urchin). **Imo no Kichikan** (☎ 25-6038) is famous for soft-serve sweet-potato ice cream (look for the giant plastic cone with lavender-hued ice cream), while **Toshimaya** (☎ 25-0505) sells Kamakura's *omiyage* (souvenir) of record, the *hato sabure*, large butter cookies in the shape of a dove (¥84 each or from ¥451 for five). For picnic foods for hiking or beaching, **Kinokuniya** (☎ 25-1911; ♿ 9.30am-8pm) is a ritzy supermarket out Kamakura station's west exit, with freshly made sushi, deli specialties and baked goods.

### Getting There & Away

Yokosuka line trains run to Kamakura from Tokyo (¥890, 56 minutes) and Shinagawa stations, via Yokohama (¥330, 27 minutes). Alternatively, the Shōnan Shinjuku line runs from the west side of Tokyo (Shibuya, Shinjuku and Ikebukuro, all ¥890) in about one hour, though some trains require a transfer at Ōfuna, one stop before Kita-Kamakura.

The JR Kamakura-Enoshima Free Pass (from Tokyo/Yokohama ¥1970/1130) is valid for two days, covering the trip to and from Tokyo/Yokohama and unlimited use of JR trains around Kamakura, the Shōnan monorail between Ōfuna and Enoshima, and the Enoden Enoshima line.

### Getting Around

You can walk to most temples and shrines from Kamakura or Kita-Kamakura station. Sites in the west, like the Daibutsu, can be reached via the Enoden Enoshima line from Kamakura station to Hase (¥190) or bus from Kamakura station stops 1 to 6. Bus trips around the area cost either ¥170 or ¥190. Another good option is renting a bicycle; **Rental Cycles** (☎ 24-2319; per hr/day ¥500/1500 Mon-Fri, ¥550/1600 Sat & Sun; ♿ 8.30am-5pm) is outside the east exit of Kamakura station, and right up the incline.

## EAST OF TOKYO

Much of Chiba-ken, to the east and southeast of Tokyo, is suburbia with not many compelling reasons to visit. One notable exception is the town of Narita which, fortunately, most visitors to Japan will pass through anyway as it is the hub of the nation's international air traffic.

### NARITA 成田

☎ 0476 / pop 120,000

Narita is chiefly known as the home of Japan's main international airport, but the town of Narita is a pleasant stop, with a traditional atmosphere. Its quiet streets lead to a lovely, historic temple with lush gardens – perfect for unwinding before or after a long flight or if you have a layover of a half-day or more.

You can pick up a copy of the Narita map/pamphlet at the **Narita Tourist Information Center** (☎ 24-3198; ♿ 8.30am-5.15pm) just outside the eastern exit of JR Narita station, or at the tourist information counters at Narita International Airport (p808). Maps, including local restaurants, are available at the tourist info center by the station. You might also stop by the **Narita Tourist Pavilion** (☎ 24-3232; Omotesandō; ♿ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun Oct-May, 10am-6pm Jun-Sep) for exhibits on local history. Either of the offices in town can book accommodation.

### Orientation

Both the Keisei Narita and JR Narita lines stop in Narita, a couple of hundred metres apart. Both are within a block of Omotesandō, the town's very pleasant main drag lined with restaurants and shops. It winds like an eel (more on that shortly) downhill to Narita's main attractions, Narita-san-kōen and Shinshōji.

### Sights & Activities

The town's centrepiece is the impressive temple **Narita-san Shinshō-ji** (成田山新勝寺; ☎ 22-2111; admission free; ♿ 24hr) and the attractive park around it, Narita-san-kōen (成田山公園). While the temple was founded in the 10th century (five of its buildings are Important Cultural Properties), the main hall is a 1968 reconstruction. The temple itself remains an important centre of the Shingon sect of Buddhism and attracts as many as 10 million visitors a year.

Amid the 165,000 sq metres of ponds and greenery of Narita-san-kōen (be sure to stroll the ponds), you'll find two museums good for real aficionados: the **Narita-san Calligraphy Museum** (成田山書道美術館; ☎ 24-0774; adult/child ¥500/300; ♿ 9am-4pm Tue-Sun), which has a good collection of *shodō* (calligraphy), and the **Reikōkan Historical Material Museum** (成田山霊光館; ☎ 22-0234; adult/child ¥300/150; ♿ 9am-4pm Tue-Sun), under the temple's upper pagoda, with artefacts from 18th-century Japanese life and various temple treasures.

## Festivals & Events

**Hatsumode** (New Year's Day) On a day when a large proportion of the Japanese populace visits shrines and temples to receive blessing for the new year, things get hectic at Narita-san Shinshō-ji. A high level of crowd-tolerance is a must.

**Setsubun** (3 February) Another notable festival at Narita-san Shinshō-ji, commemorating the last day of winter in the Japanese lunar calendar.

**Taiko Matsuri** (Drum Festival; first Saturday and Sunday in April) Some 30 to 40 drumming troupes from all over Japan converge on the city for a noisy, energetic weekend.

**Gion Festival** (Held for three days at the beginning of July) This 300-year-old festival is Narita's most spectacular, featuring colourful floats and costumed processions.

## Sleeping

Narita lodging is both in the town centre (accessible by train) and closer to the airport (with airport shuttle service). Japanese-style inns are relatively scarce.

**Kirinoya Ryokan** (桐の屋旅館; ☎ 22-0724; www.root.or.jp/kirinoya; s/d ¥5250/9450; ♿ ♿) OK, so it's far from the station, sights, restaurants and nightlife, it's not much to look at from the outside, the ground floor is concrete and rooms don't have private facilities. So what's the attraction? History. Billing itself as a 'ryokan museum', it's filled with armour, swords and other bric-a-brac passed down from the owners' ancestors; some rooms have carvings and paintings. It's on Higashi-sando; take the first left after passing the entrance to Narita-san-kōen, follow the road for the next 400m and it's on the left. Meals are available.

**Comfort Hotel Narita** (コンフォートホテル成田; ☎ 24-6311; fax 24-6321; www.choicehotels.com; Hanazaki-chō 968; s/d/tw from ¥5800/8000/10,000; ♿ ♿ ♿ wi-fi) This excellent-value, new business hotel lives up to its name. Within sight of Keisei Narita station, its rooms are spotless (if business-hotel small), staff have English-language maps to restaurants and such, there's a coin laundry, and breakfast and wi-fi or LAN internet connections are free. From the station, descend the east exit stairs and the hotel is on your left.

**Ohgiya Ryokan** (扇屋旅館; ☎ 22-1161; fax 24-1663; www.naritakanko.jp/ohgiya; s/d without bathroom ¥6300/10,500, s/d with bathroom ¥7350/13,650; ♿ ♿) This friendly, 27-room Japanese inn has comfortable rooms; some have traditional art and woodwork and open onto a lovely

garden. It's a 10-minute walk from JR Narita or Keisei Narita stations, down Omotesandō towards the temple, but forking to the left just before the tourist pavilion. It's 200m further on the left. Breakfast/dinner is available from ¥800/1575.

Airport hotels are typically big chains. For the following, it's best to go to the airport and then take the shuttle bus to your hotel:

**Narita Excel Hotel Tokyū** (成田エクセルホテル東急; ☎ 33-0109; fax 33-0148; www.tokyuhotels.co.jp/en/TE/TE\_NARIT/index.shtml; s/d from ¥13,860/23,100; ♿ ♿ ♿ ♿) In addition to in-room facilities, there are common baths and saunas as well as tennis court and a swimming pool (though it's open midsummer only). Women-only rooms available.

**ANA Hotel Narita** (全日空ホテル成田; ☎ 33-1311; fax 33-0244; www.anahotel-narita.com/english; s/d from ¥18,480/23,100; ♿ ♿ ♿ ♿) Pick of the bunch, with fitness and sauna facilities. If you're flying ANA, you can check in at the hotel and avoid queues at the airport.

## Eating & Drinking

Because of the airport, there's a higher concentration of foreigners here than just about anywhere else in Japan and Omotesandō is happy hunting ground for international cuisine. The local speciality is eel. Many places have English menus and staff who are at least somewhat proficient.

**Grill House Hero's** (ヒーローズ; ☎ 22-9002; 845-8 Hanazaki-chō; most dishes ¥630-890; ☎ dinner; E) The menu of this *izakaya* careens from sashimi to tempura, *okonomiyaki* to sausages, in a warehouse-like room with rustic dark beams and *ranma* (room dividers) panels dividing the booths. From JR Narita station east exit, turn where you see Mister Donut. After a couple of bends in the road, you'll see the restaurant at the bottom of a hill.

**Kikuya** (菊屋; ☎ 22-0236; 385 Nakamachi; sets ¥1050-2310; ☎ lunch & dinner; E) A simple but stylish place on Omotesandō, across from the Tourist Pavilion, serving a variety of lunch and dinner sets, including sashimi, tempura and other Japanese fare. Look for the English sign reading 'Chrysanthemum Housu' (sic).

**Kawatoyo Honten** (川豊本店; ☎ 22-2711; 386 Nakamachi; meals ¥1260-1890; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun; E) This landmark eel house is across from the Tourist Pavilion. The most popular preparation is *unaju*, grilled, sauced and served over rice in a lacquer box. Arrive at the right time and you can watch your own eel being fished from the tank and prepared before your eyes.

**Barge Inn** (バージン; ☎ 23-2546; Omotesandō; meals around ¥1500; ☎ 10am-2am; E) A popular gathering spot for expats (especially flight crews), this sprawling, nicely aged British-style pub features billiards, a generous front patio and eclectic eats, including English meat pies and Indian tandoori chicken. There are evenings dedicated to jazz, sports, DJs or quiz nights.

## Getting There & Away

From Narita International Airport you can take either the private Keisei line (¥250, five minutes) or JR (¥190/230 from Terminal 2/1, five minutes). From Tokyo, the easiest way to get to Narita is via the Keisei line from Ueno (*kyūkō* ¥810, 65 minutes). JR trains from central Tokyo usually involve a transfer at Chiba and Sakura (¥1110, 1½ hours). Note that most Keisei Skyliner or JR Narita Express trains do not stop at Narita. For more information, see p183.

## IZU-SHOTŌ 伊豆諸島

Known in English as the Izu Seven Islands, the Izu-shotō are peaks of a submerged volcanic chain that starts just east of Izu-hantō and extends some 300km south into the Pacific Ocean. Although the islands are easily reached by ferry from Tokyo, they feel worlds away. Five of the seven islands are suitable for tourism, and each has a completely different character – with excellent interisland connections you could spend an enjoyable week island hopping and checking them all out. No matter which island you visit, you're sure to find yourself thinking: 'Can I really be only a few hours from downtown Tokyo?'

Soaking in an *onsen* while gazing at the Pacific is the classic Izu-shotō activity. There is also excellent hiking up the *mostly* dormant volcanoes (Mitake-jima is still venting volcanic gases). And, in the summer, the surprisingly good beaches fill up with Tokyoites escaping the city.

The islands can be crowded in the summer high season – it's often better to visit just outside this season, but keep in mind that typhoons can wreak havoc with your plans from late summer into early fall; just leave time in your schedule for delays.

Unless you're planning to camp, we recommend getting a Japanese speaker to reserve your accommodations before you arrive.

Otherwise, tourist association offices on the islands can help with accommodation.

## Getting There & Away

**Tōkai Kisen Ferry Company** (東海汽船; ☎ 03-5472-9999 in Japanese; www.tokaikisen.co.jp in Japanese) operates ferries between Tokyo and the Izu-shotō.

The inner group of islands (Ōshima, Toshima, Nii-jima, Shikine-jima and Kōzushima) is serviced by high-speed hydrofoils departing mornings from Tokyo (usually around 8am) and returning from the islands to Tokyo that same afternoon. Fares and travel times to/from Tokyo are as follows: Ōshima ¥7220, two hours; Nii-jima ¥9320, 3¼ hours; Shikine-jima ¥9320, 3¼ hours; and Kōzushima ¥10,020, four hours.

The inner islands are also serviced by the large passenger ferry *Camellia-maru*, which departs around 11pm and arrives in the islands early the next morning (it stops at all the islands from north to south). It returns to Tokyo the same evening. Fares (2nd class) and travel times are as follows: Ōshima ¥4440, 6¼ hours; Nii-jima ¥5960, 8¼ hours; Shikine-jima ¥5960, 9¼ hours; and Kōzushima ¥6330, 10¼ hours. Some of these islands are also serviced by ferries from Izu-hantō.

The outer group of islands (Miyake-jima, Mikura-jima and Hachijō-jima) is serviced by the large passenger ferry *Salvia-maru*, departing daily around 10.30pm and arriving in the islands the following morning, returning to Tokyo late the same evening. The journey between Tokyo and Hachijō-jima takes 10 hours and costs ¥8360 in 2nd class.

Ferries sail to/from from Tokyo's Takeshiba Pier, a 10-minute walk from the north exit of Hamamatsu-chō station.

**ANA** (全日空グループ エアーニッポン; ☎ 0120-029-222; www.air-nippon.co.jp in Japanese) has flights between Tokyo's Haneda airport and Ōshima (¥10,500, 35 minutes) and Hachijō-jima (¥16,500, 45 minutes). **Shinchūō Kōkū** (新中央航空; ☎ 0422-31-4191; www.central-air.co.jp in Japanese) has flights between Chōfu airport (on the Keiō Line about 20 minutes from Shinjuku) and Ōshima (¥6500, 35 minutes), Nii-jima (¥13,700, 45 minutes) and Kōzushima (¥14,900, 55 minutes).

## Getting Around

Island hopping is easy on the daily ferries that run up and down the island chains. In

addition, three ferries daily between Nii-jima and Shikine-jima (¥420, 10 minutes) make day trips possible.

Buses run on the larger islands, infrequently. Hitching, while possible, is not that easy (folks here are less inclined to stop than those elsewhere of Japan). Cars and scooters are ideal on all the islands, though you'll need an international license to rent them. Bicycle rentals are widely available, but the granny bikes on offer are no joy on hills; consider bringing your own bike.

## Ō-SHIMA 大島

☎ 04992

The largest of the Izu islands and closest to Tokyo, Ōshima makes an easy overnight trip out of the city. It is dominated by 754m Mihara-san (三原山), a semi-dormant volcano that last erupted in 1986. The south coast has some good beaches, and you can round out your stay with a dip in one of the island's fine *onsen*.

Due to its proximity to the mainland, Ō-shima is the most popular island in the group. It can fill up with young Tokyoites on weekends and holidays.

## Information

**Ō-shima Tourist Association** (大島観光協会;

Ō-shima Kankōkyōkai; ☎ 2-2177) Near the pier in Motomachi.

## Sights & Activities

If you've never peered into the maw of a recently erupted volcano, then we highly recommend a trip to the summit of **Mihara-san**. It's an awesome experience, and the concrete eruption shelters that line the path to the crater add a certain frisson to the approach. To get there, take a bus from Motomachi port to Mihara-sancho-guchi (¥860, 50 minutes, around seven departures daily) and walk to the Kaguchi-tenbōdai observation point (about 45 minutes).

Ōshima's southernmost point, **Toushiki-no-hana** (トウシキの鼻) is rocky and wave beaten with good swimming in sheltered pools below Toushiki Camp-jo. Don't even try to swim when the waves are high. To get there, take a Seminaa-bound bus from Motomachi port to Minami-kōkō-mae (¥620, 35 minutes). About 5km east of this point is the island's best beach, **Suna-no-hama** (砂の浜), a fine stretch of black volcanic sand. Take a Seminaa-bound bus from Motomachi port to Suna-no-hama-iriguchi (¥420, 20 minutes).

**Onsen** are Ōshima's other main attraction. **Motomachi Hama-no-yu** (元町浜の湯; admission ¥400; ☎ 1-7pm, to 11pm Jul & Aug), 10 minutes' walk north of the port, is a fine outdoor *onsen* with great ocean views. It's mixed bathing, so swimsuits are mandatory, and it can be crowded in summer. A quieter place is **Ōshima Onsen Hotel** (大島温泉ホテル; admission ¥800; ☎ 1-9pm), an outdoor *onsen* with a good view of Mihara-yama. Take a Mihara-sancho-guchi-bound bus from Motomachi port to Mihara-yama Onsen Hotel (¥630, 20 minutes).

## Sleeping & Eating

**Tōshiki Camp-jō** (トウシキキャンプ場; free) Very close to the Minami-kōkōmae stop, this campground has a nice location right near the sea, as well as showers and a communal cooking area.

**Ryokan Kifune** (旅館喜船; ☎ 2-1171; fax 2-2853; r per person incl 2 meals ¥6500) They call it a ryokan, but it's actually a collection of small cabins with a communal dining area. All rooms have private bathrooms. It's midway between Motomachi and Okadako. Call in Japanese and the owners will pick you up at the pier.

**Otomodachi** (お食事処おともだち; ☎ 2-0026; meals from ¥1000; ☎ 11am-3pm & 5-9pm) This simple shokudō 50m north of the pier serves simple Japanese fare, like the *jōsashimi teishoku* (special sashimi set, ¥1200). Look for the large white menu out the front.

## NII-JIMA 新島

☎ 04992

Nii-jima competes with neighbouring Shikine-jima as the most appealing island in the Izu-shotō. It's got a ripping white-sand beach, two fine *onsen* and an easy laid-back vibe that'll make you think they hauled a bit of Okinawa right to the doorstep of Tokyo. And there's a great camping ground within walking distance of the beach!

## Information

**Nii-jima Tourist Association** (新島観光協会; Nii-jima Kankōkyōkai; ☎ 5-0048) About 200m south of the pier.

## Sights & Activities

The best beach anywhere near Tokyo is Nii-jima's fantastic Habushi-ura, a blazing 6.5km stretch of white sand that runs over half the length of the island. Although it's really just a beach break, it attracts surfers from all over

Kantō. We reckon, however, that it's better for plain old swimming (as long as the waves aren't too big). On the port side of the island, Mae-hama stretches 4km and is a good alternative when Habushi-ura is too rough.

The island's other main attraction is one of Japan's most whimsical *onsen*: **Yunohama Hot Springs** (湯の浜温泉; ☎ 24hr). This free *onsen* consists of several outdoor tubs built into the rocks overlooking the Pacific with a few Parthenon-inspired columns and structures thrown in for good measure. It's a lot of fun and it's only five minutes, walk south of the Tourist Association. Bathing suits are required. About five minutes, walk away, up the hill and inland a bit, **Mamashita Onsen** (間下温泉; regular bath ¥300, sand bath ¥700; ☎ 10am-10pm Thu-Tue) has a good indoor bath and a sand bath – you're buried in hot sand and you lie there sweating and feeling like you're being crushed. Sounds awful, but we felt good when it was over!

Niijima's other attractions include the **Niijima Modern Glass Art Museum** (新島現代ガラスアートミュージアム; Niijima Gendai Garasu Aato Mujiamu; ☎ 5-5140; www.niijimaglass.com), 1km south of the port. There's some fine work made from naturally magnetic Koga stone (which is found only in Nii-jima and in Sicily). You can often see glassblowers in action.

## Sleeping

**Habushi-ura Camp-jo** (羽伏浦キャンプ場; free) With a stunning mountain backdrop and spacious grassy sites, this campsite is a winner, and it's only about 10 minutes' walk to the beach. There are showers, a cooking area and fresh water.

**Minshuku Hamashō** (民宿 浜庄; ☎ 5-0524; fax 5-1318; r per person incl 2 meals from ¥6000) Very close to Mae-hama beach, this rambling *mishuku* has friendly owners, good seafood and a great location.

**Nii-jima Grand Hotel** (新島グランドホテル; ☎ 5-1661; fax 5-1668; www.15.ocn.ne.jp/~nghotel in Japanese; r per person incl 2 meals from ¥8500; ☎ wi-fi) The island's only proper hotel, only 15 minutes' walk from Habushi-ura, has pleasant, large, clean rooms with private bathrooms and a friendly young staff. The large communal bath is also a winner.

## SHIKINE-JIMA 式根島

☎ 04992

About 6km south of Nii-jima is tiny Shikine-jima, only 3.8 sq km. What this island lacks

in size, it more than makes up for in charm. It's got a couple of great seaside *onsen* (all of which are free) and several good little beaches. You can easily make your way around the island on foot, or on *mama-charis* (granny bikes) that can be rented on the island.

## Information

**Shikine-jima Tourist Association** (式根島観光協会; Shikine-jima Kankōkyōkai; ☎ 7-0170) At the pier.

## Sights & Activities

**Jinata Onsen** (地鉈温泉; admission free; ☎ 24hr) is one of the most dramatically located *onsen* we've seen in Japan: at the end of a narrow cleft in the rocky coastline, it looks like the work of an angry axe-wielding giant (hence the Japanese name, which translates as 'earth axe'). Try to go midway between high tide and low tide, when the temperature is ideal. Pick up a map at the Tourist Association and look for the stone sign with red arrows at the access road.

Near Ashitsuki Port, you'll find another *onsen*: picturesque **Matsugashita Miyabi-yu** (松が下雅湯; admission free; ☎ 24hr). It's not affected by the tide and the view of the harbour is great; look for the entrance near the boat ramp. A minute or so further down the coast is **Ashizuki Onsen** (足付温泉; admission free; ☎ 24hr), another fine *onsen* built into the rocks right at the water's edge. Like Jinata Onsen, the water temperature depends on the tide.

**Tomariko-kaigan** (泊港海岸) is a picturesque little beach in a sheltered cove with calm waters perfect for children. It's about 500m northwest of the ferry port, up and over the hill. **Naka-no-ura** (中の浦海岸) and **Ō-ura** (大浦海岸) beaches are an easy walk along the same coast.

## Sleeping

**Kamanoshita Camp-jo** (釜の下キャンプ場; free; ☎ Sep-Jun) Right near a fine little beach and two great free *onsen*, this little camping ground is great, especially in the quieter times of year, when you might have it to yourself. No showers here, but there is one *onsen* nearby.

**Ō-ura Camp-jo** (大浦キャンプ場; free; ☎ Jul & Aug) Right on a good beach, this camping ground is rather cramped and not well maintained, but the location is hard to beat. There are showers.

**Kutsuroginoyado Fuminoya** (くつろぎの宿 ふみのや; ☎ 7-0062; fax 7-0814; r per person incl 2 meals from ¥6000) Conveniently located in the centre



of the island, this classic *minshuku* has clean rooms, good food and a pleasant owner.

## KŌZU-SHIMA 神津島

☎ 04992

Dominated by 572m Tenjō-san (天上山), a table-topped mountain that takes up the entire northern end of the island, Kōzu-shima is somewhat less enticing than its neighbouring islands, but it does have a couple of decent beaches, one good *onsen* and some interesting hiking trails. For thrill seekers, the island's airport, on a plateau on the southern end of the island, is the closest most of us will ever get to flying off an aircraft carrier.

### Information

**Kōzu-shima Tourist Association** (神津島観光協会; Kōzu-shima Kankōkyōkai; ☎ 8-0321) Near the pier.

### Sights & Activities

Hiking around the summit area of Tenjō-San is Kōzu-shima's main activity. The information office has excellent Japanese-language hiking maps. The hike up to the 524m **Kuroshima-Tenbō-Dai** (黒島展望台) point is a three-hour roundtrip; on clear days you'll be rewarded with a fine view of Fuji-san. From the point, you can continue along the summit plateau to **Ura-Sabaku** (裏砂漠), a sandy 'desert', and **Babaa-Ike** (ババア池), a small pond.

Back at sea level, about 1km north of the pier, the fine **Kōzu-shima Onsen** (admission ¥800; ☎ 10am-9pm Thu-Tue) has three outdoor baths built into the wild rocks of the coast, plus some excellent indoor baths. You'll need a swimsuit to enter the outdoor baths.

About 2km north of the *onsen*, along the coastal road, you'll find **Akazaki Yūhodō Shiokazae-No-Michi** (赤崎遊歩道潮風の道; admission free; ☎ 24hr), a fantasy land of wooden walkways, bridges, diving platforms and observation towers built around a great natural swimming inlet in the craggy coast. It's the sort of place you'd see more of if the world was ruled by children.

### Sleeping

**Nagahama Camp-jo** (長浜キャンプ場; free) Right on the beach, with showers and barbeque grills, this camping ground is fairly close to the *onsen*, about 2km north of the pier.

**Hotel Kōzukan** (ホテル神津館; ☎ 8-1321; fax 8-1323; www.kozukan.yad.jp in Japanese; 1 per person from ¥10,500) The island's only hotel has both Japa-

nese- and Western-style rooms, with toilets but shared bathrooms. Rooms are fairly spacious and there are sunset views.

## MIYAKE-JIMA 三宅島

At the time of writing, Miyake-jima, 180km south of Tokyo, was not suitable for tourism due to the 2002 eruption of its volcano, Osu-yama (雄山). Island residents have been permitted to return and ferries stop here, but tourists are not encouraged to visit. This may change, however. Check with the **Izu Seven Islands Tourist Federation** (東京諸島観光連盟 (旧名称:伊豆七島観光連盟); ☎ 03-3436-6955) for the latest conditions.

## HACHIJŌ-JIMA 八丈島

☎ 04996

About 290km south of Tokyo, Hachijō-jima is the second-largest and next-to-last island in the Izu-shotō chain. Basically two dormant volcanoes connected by a flat strip of land, it's a relaxing place to spend a few days away from the Tokyo rat race. While the rocky beaches are no match for those of Nii-jima or Shikine-jima, the island has some great hiking, fine *onsen* and a laid-back vibe.

### Information

**Hachijōjima Tourism Association** (八丈島観光協会; Hachijō-jima Kankōkyōkai; ☎ 2-1377) Next to the town hall, in the centre of the island on the main road.

### Sights & Activities

The island is dominated by two dormant volcanoes, 854m Hachijō-Fuji (八丈富士) and 701m Mihara-yama (三原山), covered with lush semitropical vegetation. There is good hiking on both mountains, but if your time is limited take the three-hour trip up Hachijō-Fuji. The one-hour walk around the rim of the crater is awesome, but be careful as the footing is treacherous in places. On the Mihara-yama end of the island, try the hike to **Kara-taki** (唐滝), a lovely waterfall about an hour's hike inland and uphill from the settlement of Kashidate (get a map from the Tourist Association).

**Urami-ga-taki Onsen** (裏見ヶ滝温泉; admission free; ☎ 10am-9pm) is not to be missed. It's tucked into a thick forest overlooking a waterfall – in the late afternoon and early evening it's pure magic. You'll need a swimsuit since it's mixed bathing. Take a Sueyoshi-bound bus from the port (you may have to change at Kashitate

Onsen Mae) to Nakata-Shōten-mae and walk 20 minutes towards the ocean. Before you enter the *onsen*, take the trail from the road above and follow it upstream for a few minutes to the lovely waterfall, **Urami-ga-taki** (裏見ヶ滝).

A 15-minute walk below Urami-ga-taki Onsen, towards the sea, is **Nakanogō-Onsen Yasuragi-no-yu** (中之郷温泉 やすらぎの湯; admission ¥300; ☎ 10am-9pm Fri-Wed), a quaint local *onssen* with a fine view over the Pacific from its inside baths.

**Project WAVE** (☎ 2-5407; wave@isis.ocn.ne.jp) offers a variety of ecotourism options, including hiking, bird-watching, sea kayaking and scuba diving. Its owner, Iwasaki-san, speaks English.

### Sleeping

**Sokodo Camp-jō** (底土キャンプ場; ☎ 2-1121; free) This excellent camping ground is 500m north of Sokodo pier. Toilets, cold showers and cooking facilities are available and there are two good beaches nearby. You must reserve (in Japanese only) a spot at the ward office (number above).

**Ashitaba-sō** (あしたば荘; ☎ 7-0434; fax 7-0434; www.8jou.com/owners/asitabahp.htm in Japanese; 1 per person incl 2 meals ¥6500) The owner of this good *minshuku* is a friendly, chatty fellow who serves heaped portions of locally caught seafood. It's in the hamlet of Nakanogō; the owner will pick you up at the pier provided you've made reservations in advance (in Japanese).

**Kokuminshukusha San Marina** (国民宿舎サンマリーナ; ☎ 2-3010; fax 2-0952; www6.ocn.ne.jp/~marina-6 in Japanese; 1 per person incl 2 meals ¥6825) This is a clean, fairly new, well-maintained guesthouse with good food and a convenient location, about 500m north of Sokodo pier. Turn left off the coastal road at a sign that reads 'Ocean Boulevard' and look for a big whitish building.

## OGASAWARA-SHOTŌ

### 小笠原諸島

☎ 04998

About 1000km out in the blue expanse of the Pacific Ocean, this far-flung outpost of Tokyo Prefecture is one of Japan's most interesting destinations, a nature-lover's paradise surrounded by clear tropical waters and coral reefs. Snorkelling, whale watching, dolphin

swimming and hiking are all on the bill, as is simply lazing around on the great beaches.

The only way to get here is by a 25-hour ferry ride from Tokyo. The ferry docks at Chichi-jima (父島; Father Island), the main island of the group (population 1938). A smaller ferry connects this island to Haha-jima (母島), the other inhabited island (population 462).

The islands see few Western visitors, despite the fact that the earliest inhabitants were Westerners who set up provisioning stations for whaling ships working the Japan whaling grounds. You still see the occasional Western family name and vaguely Western visage. You'll also see disused gun emplacements at the ends of most of the islands' beaches, built by the Japanese in hopes of repelling an anticipated Allied invasion in WWII (the big battles were fought further south on Iwo-jima).

Given the islands' nature, history and location, a trip here is one of Japan's great little adventures. When your boat sails from Chichi-jima and the entire island turns out to wave you off, you'll know you've done something special.

## CHICHI-JIMA 父島

Chichi-jima has plenty of accommodation, restaurants, even a bit of tame nightlife. But the real attractions are the excellent beaches and outdoor activities.

### Information

**Chichi-jima Tourism Association** (父島観光協会; Chichi-jima Kankōkyōkai; ☎ 2-2587) In the B-Ship building, about 250m west of the pier, near the post office.

### Sights & Activities

The two best beaches for snorkelling are on the north side of the island, a short walk over the hill from the village. **Miya-no-ura** (宮之浦) has decent coral and is sheltered, making it suitable for beginners. About 500m along the coast (more easily accessed from town) is Tsuru-hama (釣浜), a rocky beach that has better coral but is more exposed.

Good swimming beaches line the west side of the island, getting better the further south you go. **Kominato-kaigan** (小港海岸) is the best, easily accessible beach on this side by bus from town or by hitching. From here, you can walk over the hill and along the coast to the excellent Jinny and John Beaches, but note that it's a two-hour walk in each direction and there is no drinking water – bring at least 3L per person.

On Chichi-jima's east side is another fine beach, **Hatsune-ura** (初寝浦), at the bottom of a 1.2km trail with a 200m vertical drop. Hitching or going by scooter to the trailhead is the best bet.

Many operators, including **Chichijima Taxi** (父島タクシー; ☎ 2-3311 in Japanese) offer dolphin swimming and whale watching, as well as trips to Minami-jima, an uninhabited island with a magical secret beach called **Ōgi-ike** (扇池). Don't expect these operators to speak much English.

### Sleeping & Eating

Camping is not permitted on the island.

**Ogasawara Youth Hostel** (小笠原ユースホステル; ☎ 2-2692; fax 2-2692; www.oyh.jp in Japanese; dm members/nonmembers incl 2 meals ¥4500/5500; ☑) This is a clean, well-run, regimented hostel about 400m southwest of the pier, near the post office.

**Chichi-jima View Hotel** (父島ビューホテル; ☎ 2-7845; fax 2-7846; www.16.ocn.ne.jp/~view1/page006.html; chichijimaview@alpha.ocn.ne.jp; r per person from ¥10,000) Just a minute's walk west of the pier, this hotel has large, airy rooms with private bathroom and kitchen.

**Marujyō-shokudō** (丸丈食堂; ☎ 2-3030; set meals from ¥800) This simple *shokudō* is where the locals come for simple but tasty sets like the sashimi set (¥840, ask for *kyō no sashimi teishoku*). It's in a blue-and-white building next to an island gift shop.

### Getting There & Away

The *Chichijima Maru* sails about once a week between Tokyo's Takeshiba Pier (10 minutes from Hamamatsu-chō station) and Chichi-jima (2nd class ¥26,100 in July and August, ¥22,570 September to June, 25 hours). Contact **Ogasawara Kaiun** (小笠原海運株式会社; ☎ 03-3451-5171; www.ogasawarakaiun.co.jp/index.html in Japanese).

### HAHA-JIMA 母島

Haha-jima is a quieter, less developed version of Chichi-jima, with some fine beaches on its west side and good hiking along its spine. If you really want to get away from it all, this is the place.

### Information

**Haha-jima Tourist Association** (母島観光協会; Haha-jima Kankōyōkai; ☎ 3-2300) In the passenger waiting room at the pier.

### Sights & Activities

A road runs south from the village to the start of the **Minami-zaki Yūhodō** (南崎遊歩道), a hiking course that continues all the way to the **Minami-zaki** (南崎; literally, southern point). Along the way you'll find **Hōraine-kaigan** (蓬茨根海岸), a narrow beach with a decent off-shore coral garden, Wai Beach, the best beach on the island, with a drop-off that sometimes attracts eagle rays, and finally, Minami-zaki itself, which has a rocky, coral-strewn beach with ripping views of smaller islands to the south. Above Minami-zaki you'll find **Kofuji** (小富士), an 86m-high mini Fuji-san with fantastic views in all directions.

### Sleeping & Eating

Camping is not permitted on the island.

**Minshuku Nanpū** (民宿ナンプー; ☎ 3-2462; fax 3-2458; r per person incl 2 meals ¥7350) This clean, new *minshuku* is about 500m northeast of the pier, with friendly owners, good food, clean rooms and a nice bath.

### Getting There & Away

The *Hahajima Maru*, sails about four times a week between Chichi-jima and Haha-jima (¥3780, two hours). Contact **Ogasawara Kaiun** (小笠原海運株式会社; ☎ 03-3451-5171; www.ogasawarakaiun.co.jp/index.html in Japanese).