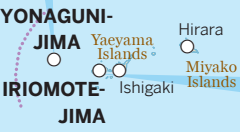


## YONAGUNI-JIMA

On really clear days you can see Taiwan from Yonaguni-jima, Japan's westernmost inhabited island. Divers come here to swim with hammerhead sharks and explore the mysterious 'Atlantis of the Pacific' ruins.



## IRIOMOTE-JIMA

Fringed by healthy coral reefs and covered with dense tropical jungle, the island of Iriomote-jima is one of Japan's wildest places.

## OKI ISLANDS

Once a place of exile, these cliff-lined islands offer some spectacular scenery and a real feeling of getting away from it all.

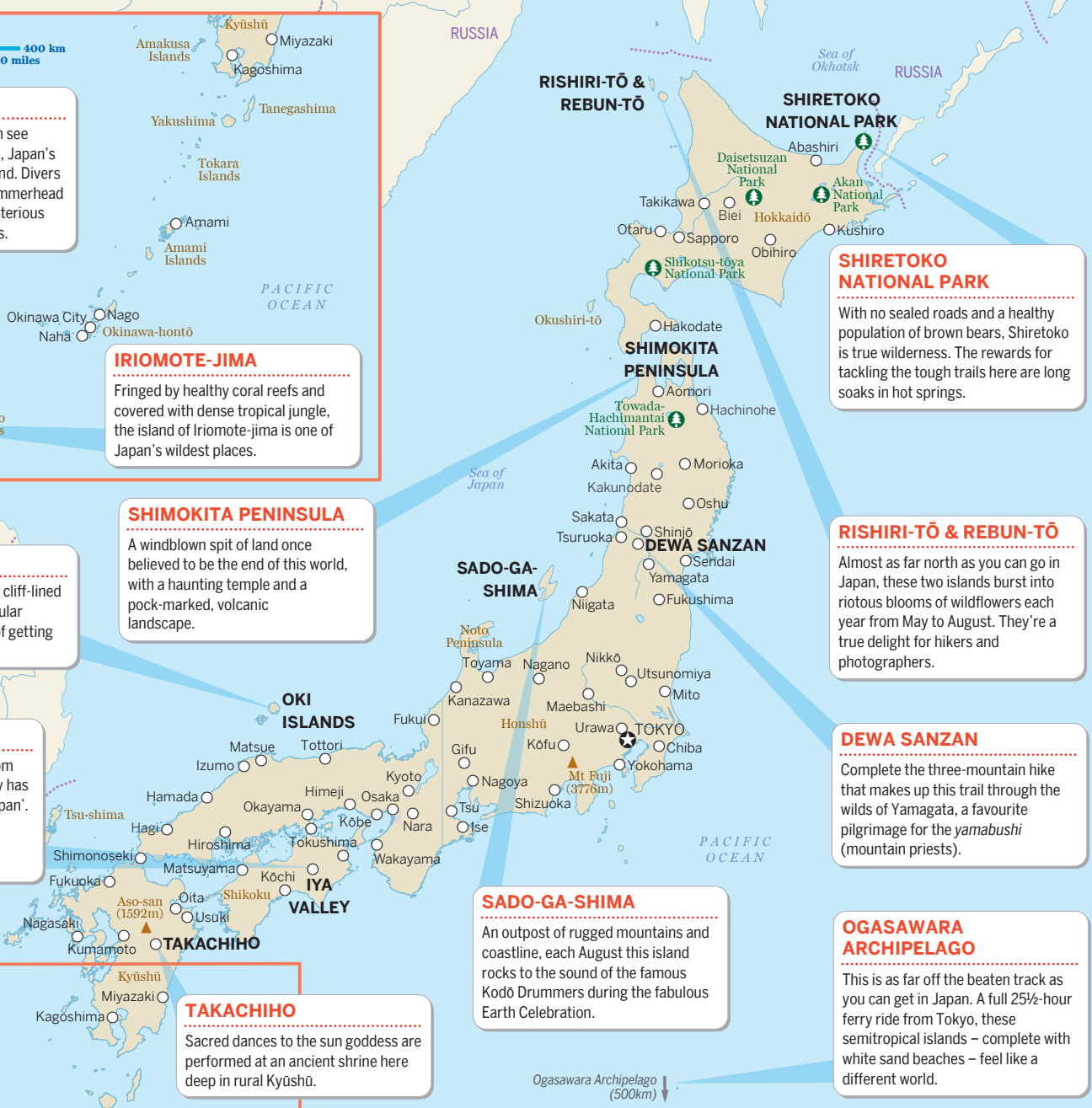
## IYA VALLEY

A few hours and a world away from the big cities of Kansai, Iya Valley has been called the 'Shangri La of Japan'. Stay in a restored thatched-roof farmhouse and get a taste of traditional village life.

See Southwest Islands Inset

## TAKACHIHO

Sacred dances to the sun goddess are performed at an ancient shrine here deep in rural Kyūshū.



## SHIRETOKO NATIONAL PARK

With no sealed roads and a healthy population of brown bears, Shiretoko is true wilderness. The rewards for tackling the tough trails here are long soaks in hot springs.

## RISHIRI-TŌ & REBUN-TŌ

Almost as far north as you can go in Japan, these two islands burst into riotous blooms of wildflowers each year from May to August. They're a true delight for hikers and photographers.

## DEWA SANZAN

Complete the three-mountain hike that makes up this trail through the wilds of Yamagata, a favourite pilgrimage for the *yamabushi* (mountain priests).

## SADO-GA-SHIMA

An outpost of rugged mountains and coastline, each August this island rocks to the sound of the famous Kodō Drummers during the fabulous Earth Celebration.

## OGASAWARA ARCHIPELAGO

This is as far off the beaten track as you can get in Japan. A full 25½-hour ferry ride from Tokyo, these semitropical islands – complete with white sand beaches – feel like a different world.

Ogasawara Archipelago (500km)