



# Shikoku

## Includes »

Tokushima.....	525
Iya Valley.....	535
Kōchi.....	541
Ashizuri-misaki....	546
Uwajima.....	547
Matsuyama.....	550
Takamatsu.....	559

## Best Places to Eat

- » Goshiki Sōmen Morikawa (p554)
- » Gosankeshi (p544)
- » Bijin-tei (p561)
- » Hirome Ichiba (p544)

## Best Places to Stay

- » Chiiori (p538)
- » Kaiyu Inn (p547)
- » Funaya (p554)
- » Shimanto-gawa Youth Hostel (p545)
- » Utoco Deep Sea Therapy Hotel (p540)

## Why Go?

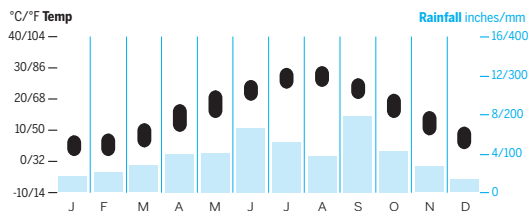
The birthplace of revered Buddhist ascetic, Kōbō Daishi (774–835), Shikoku (四国) is synonymous with natural beauty and the pursuit of spiritual perfection. The 88 Temple route is Japan's most famous pilgrimage, even if some *henro* (pilgrims) today make the trek in air-conditioned comfort.

Yet this is not merely a place for passive soul-searching. The stunning Iya Valley, a rugged and ancient Pacific Ocean coastline, gorgeous free-flowing rivers and mountain ranges all beckon to be explored firsthand. If the inner demons are restless, there are Takamatsu, Kōchi and Matsuyama, attractive and youthful cities with excellent regional cuisine and all the trappings of 'mainland' modernity.

Travellers are quietly heralding the virtues of the island where 12th-century Heike warriors disappeared into the mountains to escape their Genji pursuers. Easy to access from Honshu via two glorious feats of engineering, Shikoku offers an adventurous retreat from the outside world. Just like Kōbō Daishi would have wanted.

## When to Go

### Takamatsu



**Aug** Join every man, woman and *oka-san* for Awa Odori, the wildest dance party in Japan.

**Apr** Enlightenment may know no weather, but any pilgrimage is best taken in spring.

**Jul–Sep** The rivers are running, the surf is rolling, and the sun is, well, shining.

## **i** Getting There & Around

This chapter follows the same clockwise loop that most visitors have used to travel around Shikoku over the past 1000 years. Most visitors arrive on the island by train from Okayama or by highway bus from Osaka, Kyoto and Tokyo. The Iya Valley and the two southern capes are probably best explored by car, as many towns there have tricky bus and train connections.

### AIR

**All Nippon Airways** ([www.ana.co.jp](http://www.ana.co.jp)) and **Japan Airlines** ([www.jal.co.jp](http://www.jal.co.jp)) services connect Matsuyama, Kōchi, Takamatsu and Tokushima in Shikoku with Tokyo, Osaka and other major centres.

### BOAT

**Nankai Ferry** (南海フェリー; ☎636-0750; [www.nankai-ferry.co.jp](http://www.nankai-ferry.co.jp)) runs daily connections between Tokushima and Wakayama (¥2400, two hours, eight daily)

**Ocean Tōkyū Ferry** (オーシャン東九フェリー; ☎662-0489; [www.otf.jp](http://www.otf.jp)) departs once daily to/from Tokyo.

**Setonaikai Kisen ferry** (☎082-253-1212, Matsuyama booking office 089-953-1003; ☼9am-7pm) has regular hydrofoil connections between Matsuyama and Hiroshima (¥6300, 1½ hours, 14 daily).

Matsuyama is also a stopping point for ferries run by **Diamond Ferry company** (☎951-0167; [www.diamond-ferry.co.jp](http://www.diamond-ferry.co.jp)) between Osaka and Kōbe, and Ōita (Kyūshū). There is one sailing a day each way.

**Jumbo Ferry** (☎811-6688) runs between Takamatsu and Kōbe (¥1800, three hours and 40 minutes, five daily).

### BUS

Three bridge systems link Shikoku with Honshū. In the east, the Akashi Kaikyō-ōhashi connects Tokushima with Kōbe in Hyōgo-ken via Awaji-shima (Awaji Island). The Shimanami Kaidō (p383) is an island-hopping series of nine bridges (with bike paths!) leading from Imabari in Ehime-ken to Onomichi near Hiroshima.

### TRAIN

The Seto-ōhashi bridge runs from Okayama to Sakaide, west of Takamatsu. This is the only one of the bridges to carry trains. JR and private Kotoden trains run to all regions, except the tips of the two southern capes.

## TOKUSHIMA PREFECTURE

The traditional starting point for generations of pilgrims, Tokushima Prefecture (徳島県) is home to the first 23 of Shi-

roku's 88 Temples. Notable attractions in this region include the lively Awa-odori Matsuri (Awa-odori Festival), which takes place in Tokushima in August; the mighty whirlpools of the Naruto Channel between Tokushima and Awaji-shima; the dramatic scenery of the Iya Valley; and the surf beaches of the southern coast.

## Tokushima

徳島

☎088 / POP 270,000

With Mt Bizan looming in the west, and Shinmachi-gawa (Shinmachi River) cutting a gentle swathe through the middle, Tokushima is an appealing modern city and, with a number of nearby temples, makes a popular starting point for pilgrims.

Every August, the Awa-odori Matsuri, a traditional dance festival, attracts thousands of Japanese from across the country. At other times, the Naruto whirlpools have visitors in a spin.

## Sights & Activities

### Bizan

SITE

(眉山) Bizan means 'eyebrow' and the site surrounding the 280m-high summit raises the interest of most visitors to Tokushima. As you arrive at the foot of Bizan, at the southwestern end of Shinmachi-bashi-dōri, you pass **Awa Odori Kaikan** (阿波おどり会館; ☎611-1611; 2-20 Shinmachi-bashi; admission ¥300; ☼9am-5pm, closed 2nd & 4th Wed), which features extensive exhibits relating to the Awa-odori Matsuri and dance. The dance is performed at 2pm, 3pm and 4pm daily (with an additional performance at 11am on weekends, with a nightly performance at 8pm (afternoon/evening performances ¥500/700). From the 5th floor, a **cable car** (☎652-3617; one way/return Nov-Mar ¥600/1000, return Apr-Oct ¥600; ☼9am-5.30pm Nov-Mar, to 9pm Apr-Oct & during cherry-blossom season) whizzes you to the top of Bizan for fine views over the city. A combined ticket covering the museum, cable car and dance show is ¥1500.

### Awa Puppet Theatre

THEATRE

(阿波十郎兵衛屋敷; ☎665-2202; 184 Honura; museum admission ¥400; ☼9.30am-5pm) For hundreds of years, puppet theatre thrived in the farming communities around Tokushima. The traditional dramas can still be seen at Awa Jūrobei Yashiki, in the former residence of Bandō Jūrobei, a samurai who allowed himself to be executed