



# Hiroshima & Western Honshū

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## Best Island Living

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## Best Historic Sites

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## Why Go?

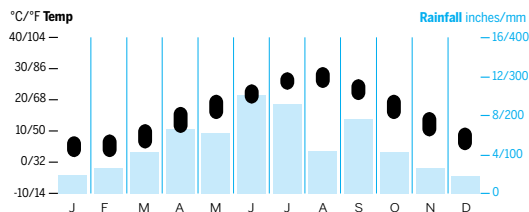
Travellers to Western Honshū (本州西部) will find two contrasting coastlines. San-yō (literally 'sunny side of the mountains'), looking out over the Inland Sea, boasts the bigger cities, the narrow-laned portside and hillside towns, ceramic history and the bullet train. This is the coast that holds the region's big name – indelibly scarred, thriving, warm-hearted Hiroshima.

On the other side of the dividing Chūgoku mountain range, San-in (literally 'in the shade of the mountains') gazes out across the expanse of the Japan Sea. Up here, it's all about an unhurried pace, onsen villages that see few foreigners, historic sites, wind-battered coastlines, and great hospitality.

Head inland for hikes along gorges and through caves. Or you can escape the mainland all together – to the Inland Sea and its galaxy of islands, or to the remote and rugged Oki-shotō in the Sea of Japan.

## When to Go

### Hiroshima



**Mar–May & Sep–Nov** Mild and photogenic, spring and autumn get most of the attention.

**Jul–Sep** Beach weather draws crowds to the Inland Sea islands and the Japan Sea coast.

**Aug** Hiroshima remembers 6 August with services and a river full of lanterns.



## Hiroshima & Western Honshū Highlights

**1** Reflecting on a tragic past in cosmopolitan **Hiroshima** (p414)

**2** Gaining a new perspective at the art installations of **Naoshima** (p443)

**3** Photographing the floating shrine and staying at a ryokan on **Miyajima** (p422)

**4** Island hopping by bicycle via the **Shimanami Kaidō** (p429) to Shikoku

**5** Slowing down and listening to the waves on the **Kasaoka Islands** (p446)

**6** Seeing where the gods go on holiday at **Izumo Taisha** (p467)