



# Shikoku

## Includes ➔

Tokushima .....	607
Iya Valley .....	616
Tsurugi-san .....	621
Hiwasa .....	621
Kōchi .....	624
Nakamura .....	628
Ashizuri Cape .....	628
Uwajima .....	629
Matsuyama .....	634
Ishizuchi-san .....	640
Takamatsu .....	643

## Best Outdoor Adventures

- ➔ Rafting Yoshino-gawa (p617)
- ➔ Hiking Ishizuchi-san (p640)
- ➔ Hiking Tsurugi-san (p621)
- ➔ Surfing Tokushima (p622)
- ➔ Cycling the Shimanami Kaidō (p639)

## Best Temples

- ➔ Zentsū-ji (p641)
- ➔ Konpira-san (p641)
- ➔ Ishite-ji (p634)
- ➔ Kongōfuku-ji (p629)
- ➔ Yashima-ji (p646)

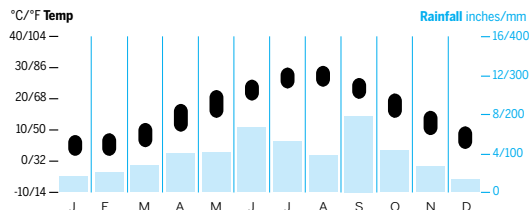
## Why Go?

The birthplace of revered Buddhist ascetic Kōbō Daishi (774–835), Shikoku (四国) is synonymous with natural beauty and the pursuit of spiritual perfection. It's home to the 88 Temple route, 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's also 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 Honshū via two glorious feats of engineering, Shikoku offers an adventurous retreat from the outside world.

## 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 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 or 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 (¥2500, 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 (¥9310, 18 hours).

**Setonaikai Kisen Ferry** (☎253-1212, Matsuyama booking office 953-1003; [www.setonaikaikisen.co.jp](http://www.setonaikaikisen.co.jp); ☀9am-7pm) Has regular hydrofoil connections between Matsuyama and Hiroshima (¥6900, 1¼ hours, 13 daily).

**Jumbo Ferry** (ジャンボフェリー; ☎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 Awajishima (Awaji Island). The Shimanami Kaidō 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 (Seto 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.

## **i** INTERNATIONAL DRIVING PERMIT

If you plan on renting a car to explore Shikoku's more out-of-the-way destinations – such as the Iya Valley and the southern surf beaches – be sure to procure an International Driving Permit before leaving your home country.

## TOKUSHIMA PREFECTURE

The traditional starting point for generations of pilgrims, Tokushima Prefecture (徳島県) is home to the first 23 of Shikoku'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 the Shinmachi-gawa 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) At the foot of Bizan, the 280m-high summit at the southwestern end of Shinmachi-bashi-dōri, **Awa Odori Kaikan** (阿波おどり会館; ☎611-1611; [www.awaodori-kaikan.jp](http://www.awaodori-kaikan.jp); 2-20 Shinmachi-bashi; admission ¥300; ☀9am-5pm, closed 2nd & 4th Wed of each month) 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; ☀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 Jūrobei Yashiki Puppet Theatre

THEATRE

(阿波十郎兵衛土敷; ☎665-2202; <http://joruri.info/jurobe>; 184 Miyajima Motoura, Kawauchi-chō; museum admission ¥400; ☀9:30am-5pm) For