



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Itoigawa
UNESCO
Global Geopark



Discover Itoigawa

Hidden Beauty Along the Jade Coast



Takanami-no-Ike Pond



Birthplace of Jade



Fresh Seafood



Local Sake



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Discover

**National Site of Scenic Beauty
Oyashirazu Cliffs**



Snorkeling in the Sea of Japan

Itoigawa



Welcome to Itoigawa

Nestled along the Jade Coast between the Northern Japanese Alps and the Sea of Japan, Itoigawa is a city of surprises with breathtaking natural beauty, rich cultural heritage and an exceptionally homegrown food scene. Chase the sunset along the coast on the Kubiki Cycling Road, experience beauty and art on a spiritual level at the Tanimura Art Museum & Gyokusuien Garden, or discover a closer connection with the land around you at the Itoigawa UNESCO Global Geopark. With so much to do and so many things to discover, one visit is all it takes to understand why Itoigawa is known as Japan's hidden gem!

**National Natural Monument
Kotakigawa Jade Gorge**

Northern Alps

Where the Alps Meet the Sea

Itoigawa owes its breathtaking natural beauty to its unique location, wedged between the towering Japanese Alps and the expansive Sea of Japan. With dozens of hiking trails, mountain trails, campgrounds and more, Itoigawa is a great place to experience the majesty and beauty of Japan outdoors!

Mt. Korenge (2766 m)-Niigata's Highest Peak



Himekawa Gorge and the Oito Line

The Himekawa River flows through the center of Itoigawa, carving out the Himekawa Gorge, flanked on either side by the Japanese Alps and the Umidani Mountains. The Oito Line train winds through this beautiful gorge, connecting Itoigawa to Matsumoto City and the resort towns of Hakuba and Otari.



Renge Nature Trails

Mt. Korenge (2766 m) is the highest mountain in Niigata Prefecture. Part of the Chubu Sangaku National Park, the Renge Region is famous for its many hiking and nature trails, camping, and the famous Renge Hot Springs (see page 9). The autumn colors around Shiroike Pond are particularly beautiful in October.



Takanami-no-Ike Pond

This alpine pond, located next to the Kotakigawa Jade Gorge, is a popular summer retreat featuring campgrounds, nature trails, a natural history museum and a restaurant serving local specialties. It's a perfect place to reconnect with nature or just grab a bite to eat and some souvenirs after a visit to the Kotakigawa Jade Gorge!

Japan's Jade Coast

Deep in the mountains of Itoigawa lie the Kotakigawa and Omigawa Jade Gorges, Japan's only gemstone-quality jade deposits. Small pieces of jade and other beautiful stones wash down the rivers and are deposited on the coasts along Itoigawa and neighboring Asahi Town, giving this area its name: The Jade Coast.

Fishing Tours



Sunsets and Natural Beauty

The evening sun setting into the Sea of Japan is one of the most sublimely beautiful and iconic views in Japan. There are many popular places to enjoy the sunset in Itoigawa, including the Oyashirazu Cliffs, Benten-iwa Rock and Tottoko-iwa Rock.

'Tottoko-iwa' means 'Chicken Rock.' Can you see why?



Jade Coast

Sea Fishing and Other Activities

Itoigawa boasts one of the largest fisheries in the region and is a popular destination for anglers of all skill levels! Experience fishing, snorkeling, SUP and a variety of other popular Japanese seaside activities at one of Itoigawa's many beaches!

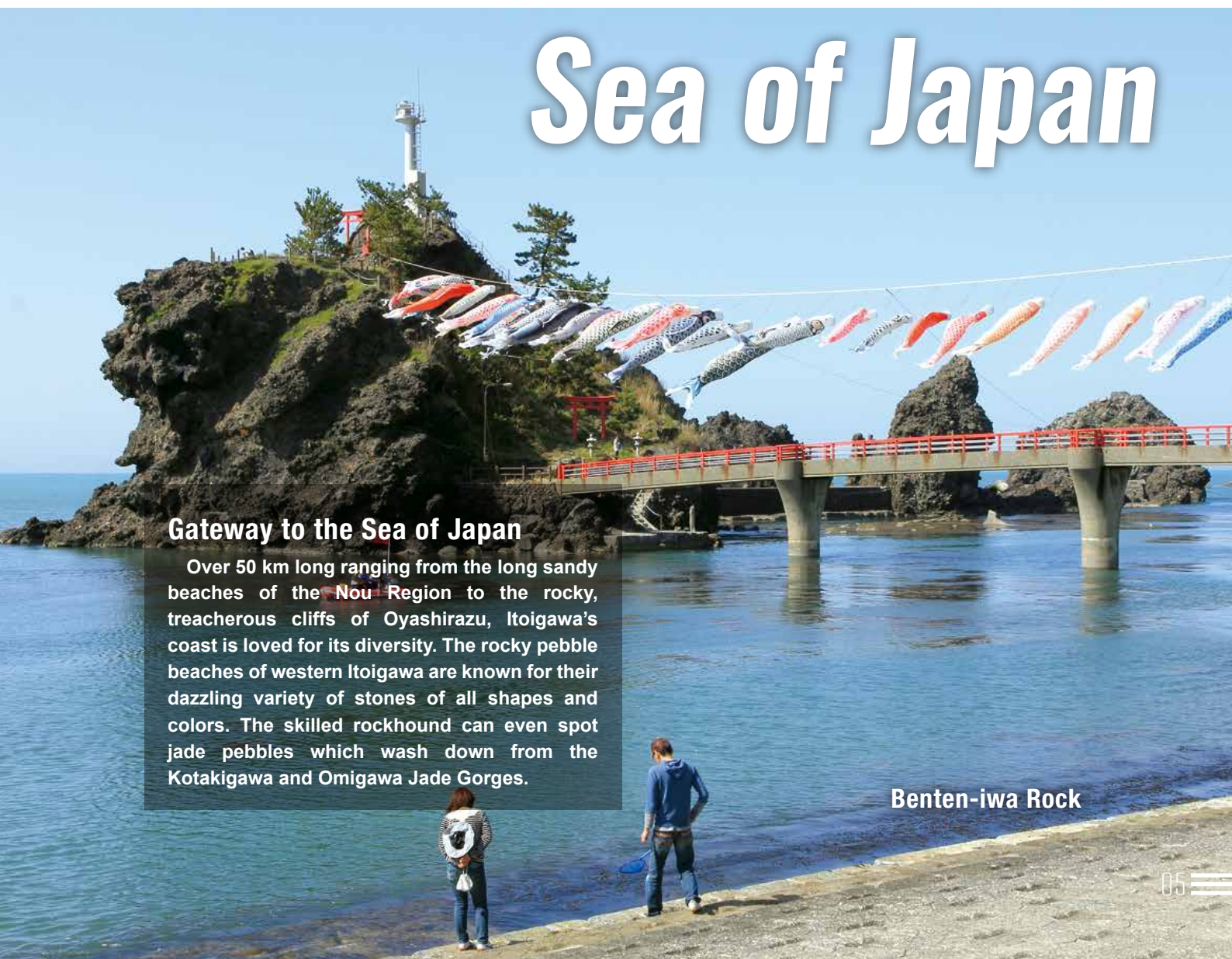


Sunset & Tottoko-iwa Rock

Sea of Japan

Gateway to the Sea of Japan

Over 50 km long ranging from the long sandy beaches of the Nou Region to the rocky, treacherous cliffs of Oyashirazu, Itoigawa's coast is loved for its diversity. The rocky pebble beaches of western Itoigawa are known for their dazzling variety of stones of all shapes and colors. The skilled rockhound can even spot jade pebbles which wash down from the Kotakigawa and Omigawa Jade Gorges.



Benten-iwa Rock

Ski



Rental Bicycles



Seaside Cycling

The Kubiki Cycling Road is a 32 km long bicycle path running from Itoigawa to neighboring Joetsu City. It's a fun way to experience the beauty of Itoigawa's coast.

Rent a bicycle at Itoigawa Station or bring your own! Cycling maps are available in English, Japanese and Chinese.

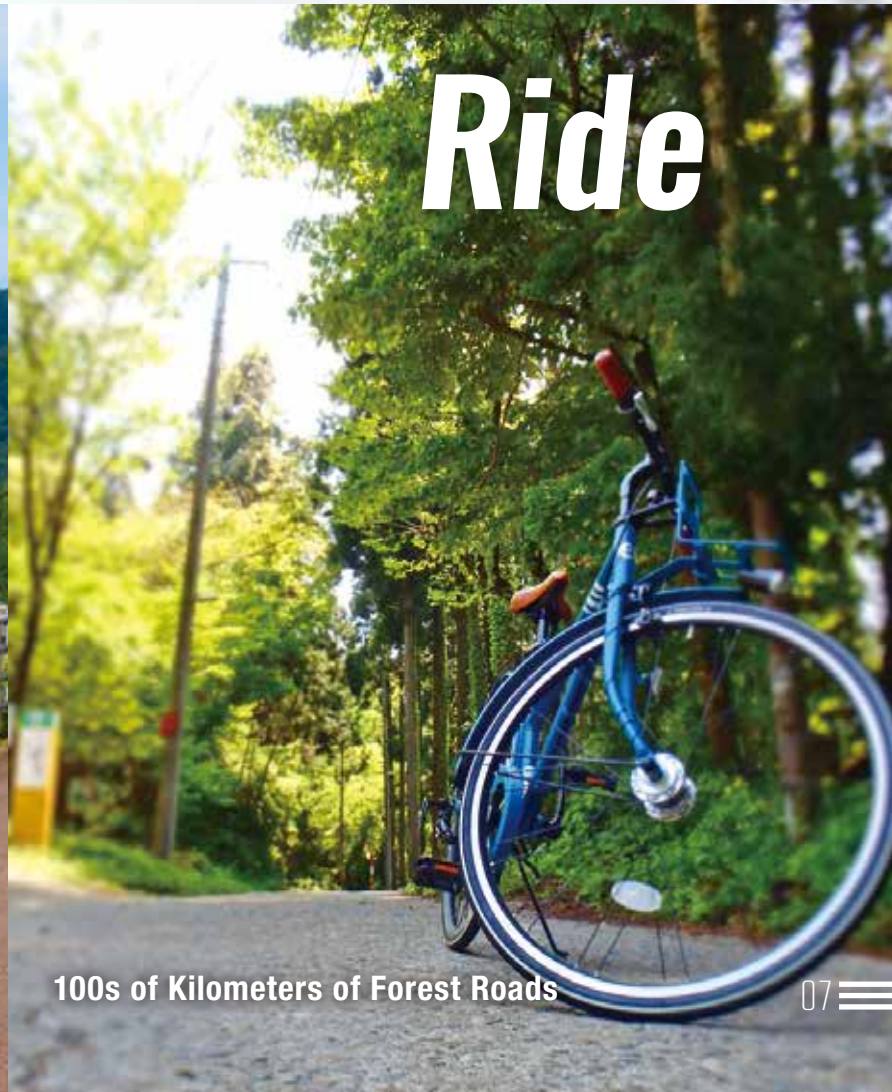


Powder Paradise

Every year, more and more people are discovering Itoigawa's ski slopes. While maybe not as big or as famous as Hakuba or Niseko, with some of the country's deepest powder, the slopes at Charmant Hiuchi and Itoigawa Seaside Valley offer skiing experiences you won't soon forget!



Kubiki Cycling Road



Ride

100s of Kilometers of Forest Roads



Festivals

Itoigawa Kenka Matsuri (Fighting Festival)

Every April 10, two teams of men representing their respective district meet at Amatsu Shrine. The two teams fight each other by pushing large portable shrines called mikoshi against each other. The festival is said to bring a bountiful harvest of rice and fish.

After the fighting ends, local children gather on the stage in beautiful costumes to perform ancient ritual dances passed down over the centuries.

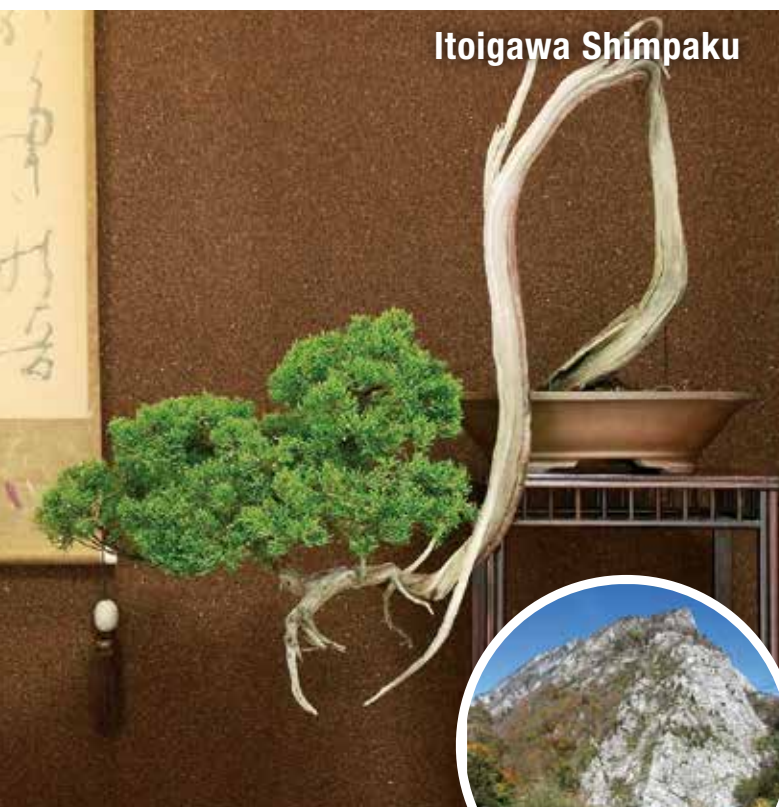
Nou Hakusan Shrine Spring Grand Festival

On April 24, the people of Itoigawa's Nou Region gather at Nou Hakusan Shrine for its Spring Grand Festival. Children and adults dressed in colorful costumes perform ancient ritual dances handed down over the generations since the 1400s. At the festival's climax, the stirring "Ryo'o-no-Mai" dance is performed in the light of the setting sun.



Oumi Take-no-Karakai Festival

This unusual festival is held every January 15 near Oumi Station. Originating over 300 years ago, the name roughly means "Oumi Bamboo Fight." Two teams of young men dressed in kabuki-style makeup engage in a ceremonial tug-of-war using large bamboo poles. The winning team is said to be blessed with a bountiful harvest in the new year.



Itoigawa Shimpaku

The beautiful Itoigawa Shimpaku juniper tree, considered the king of bonsai, grows only on the rocky limestone cliffs of Mt. Myōjō and Mt. Kurohime.



Tanimura Art Museum

Discover beauty on a spiritual level at this awe-inspiring museum of Seiko Sawada's Buddhist artwork, designed by master architect Togo Murano.



Gyokusuien and Hisuien Gardens

These sister gardens use Itoigawa's natural landscape to create living art which grows and changes with each passing season.

Hot Springs

Itoigawa is home to many natural hot spring baths—beautifully rugged outdoor baths surrounded in the natural majesty of the Northern Alps, luxurious hot spring resorts and hotels, and small, traditional baths tucked away in charming hamlets— each is unique so you must try them all!

Renge Onsen

Itoigawa Onsen

Himekawa Onsen

Sasakura Onsen

Maseguchi Onsen

Amakazari Onsen

Choja Onsen

Food



Sasazushi

This colorful local delicacy is made by layering sushi rice, wild vegetables, pickles and more on bamboo leaves.



Benizuwai Crab

Itoigawa is one of the largest producers of benizuwai crab. You can buy it straight from the fishermen at Marine Dream Nou



Koshihikari Rice

Like most of Niigata, Itoigawa is known for its rice. The heavy snowfall and crystal clear water makes for rice so good you have to taste to believe!



Namban Shrimp

This small shrimp, a variety of amaebi, is popularly enjoyed in sushi or raw as sashimi. In Itoigawa it is also popularly served fried and as tempura!



Black Yakisoba

Unique to Itoigawa, Black Yakisoba is a dish of stir-fried noodles served in a jet black squid ink sauce. Each shop has its own unique recipe so try them all!



Geopark Rice Bowls

Each of these colorful donburi rice bowls is themed on a different site in the Itoigawa Geopark and feature Itoigawa's best ingredients!



Monkfish

This Itoigawa delicacy is commonly served in hotpot, but is also enjoyed fried or as sashimi. The richly flavored liver is called 'the foie gras of the sea.'

Local Sake

A combination of pure cool water and abundant rice makes Itoigawa a great place for sake! Try sake from each of the five local breweries!



Kaga-no-I

One of Niigata's oldest breweries.



Kenshin

Named for samurai Uesugi Kenshin.



Tsukimizu-no-Ike

From the beautiful Hayakawa Valley.



Nechi Otokoyama

Made using only locally grown rice.



Yukitsuru

From the historic Teramachi District.



Rice Planting

Itoigawa's rice is some of the best in the world! Try traditional rice planting methods, both planting and harvesting.
(Reservation Required)



Farm Experiences

Visit Itoigawa's farms to learn about Japanese agriculture!
(Reservation Required)



Fossil Hunting

Join in the hunt for 300 million year old fossils at Fossil Valley next to the Fossa Magna Museum!



Sushi Making

Learn how to make authentic sushi using local ingredients and craftsmanship passed down over generations!
(Reservation Required)



Itoigawa Jade Coast

Itoigawa's pebble beaches are covered in a dazzling variety of stones. If you are lucky you might even find jade!



Fossa Magna Museum

Learn about jade and Itoigawa's natural history at this award-winning, world-class science museum!



Itoigawa UNESCO Global Geopark

In 2009, Itoigawa was inscribed as Japan's first Global Geopark. UNESCO Global Geoparks are areas recognized for their globally significant geological and cultural heritage, carefully managed to balance conservation, education and sustainable development.

At Itoigawa UNESCO Global Geopark, visitors can learn how the land around us shapes our cultures and our lives, as well as the story of how the Japanese Islands were formed and how this violent process gave rise to the world's oldest jadeworking culture.

URL: <http://www.geo-itoigawa.com/eng/>

Japan's National Stone Itoigawa Jade

Itoigawa is the only place in Japan which produces gemstone jade. Discover more about its rich history at the Fossa Magna and Chojagahara Museums!

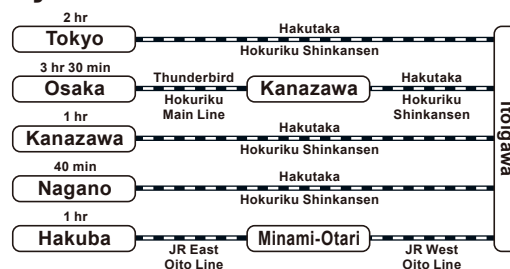


Visiting Itoigawa

Major Sites of Interest in Itoigawa



By Train



Contact Info / Itoigawa City Commerce and Tourism Division
 kanko@city.itoigawa.lg.jp
 1-2-5 Ichinomiya, Itoigawa,
 Niigata 941-8501 JAPAN

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Discover More Online

There is just way too much to do and see in Itoigawa to fit it all into a brochure! Visit us online at <http://discover-itoigawa.com> for detailed information, fun travel ideas and more!

Discover Itoigawa

Search

