

Miyajima Hiking Map

1 Nature Course

Daishoin Route – Miyajima Ropeway – Tsutsumigaura Nature Trail

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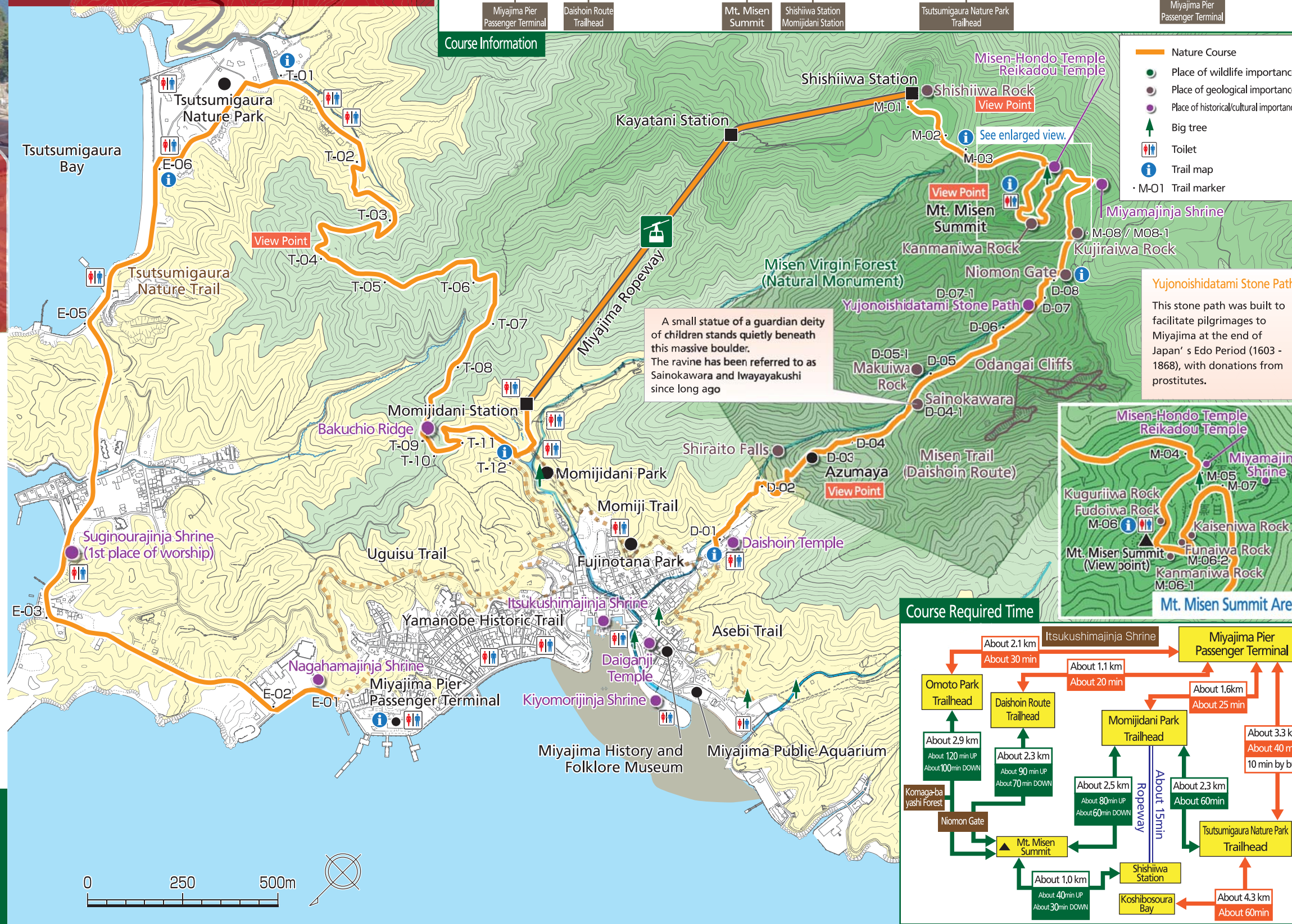
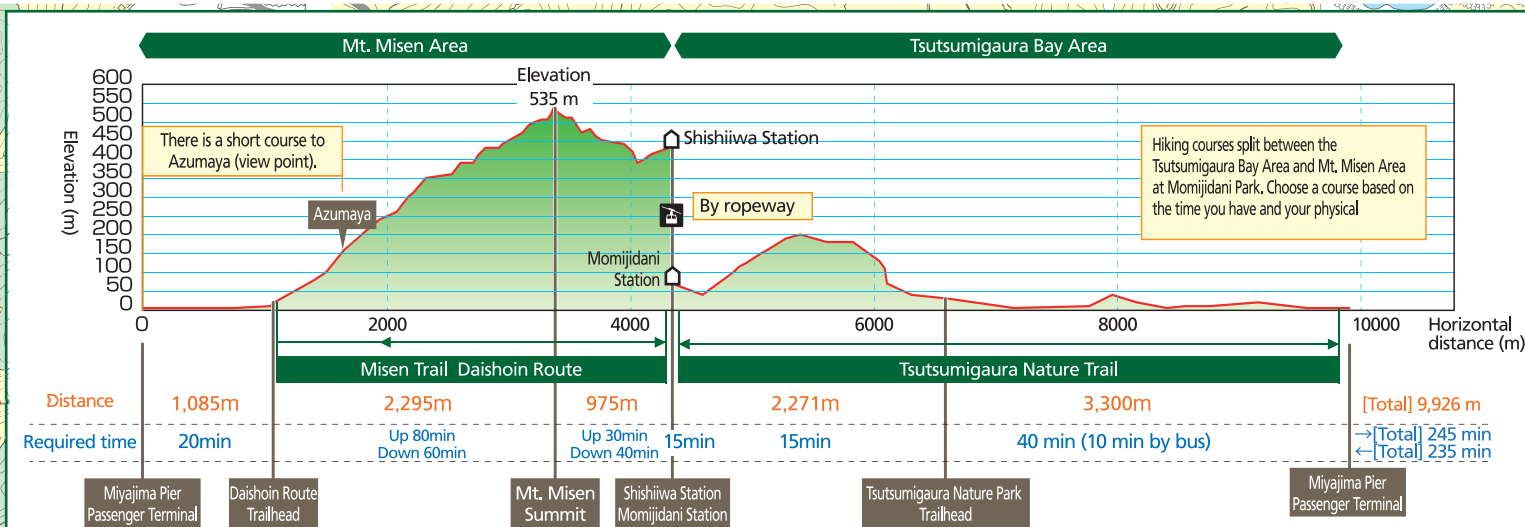
Daishoin Route – Miyajima Ropeway – Tsutsumigaura Nature Trail

This course exposes hikers to what draws visitors to the area, noting first and foremost a diverse natural landscape that spreads from the Miyajima coastline to the summit on Mt. Misen, and an array of historical and cultural highlights like Tsutsumigaura Bay and Bakuchio Ridge where Motonari Mori fought the Battle of Itsukushima.

[Distance] 10.2 km total

[Required time] About 4 – 5 hr

[Difficulty] Easy



Ropeway & Ferry Information

Miyajima Ropeway Timetable (About every 15 min)

Dec. – Feb. 9:00 ~ 16:30 (Last ride down: 17:00)
 March – Oct. 9:00 ~ 17:00 (Last ride down: 17:30)
 Nov. 8:00 ~ 17:00 (Last ride down: 17:30)
 GW/Obon 8:30 ~ 17:30 (Last ride down: 18:00)

Miyajima Ferry Timetable (About every 15 min [Daytime])

[Miyajima Matsudai Kisen Tourist Ship]	[JR-W]
Departing Miyajimakuchi 7:15 ~ 20:35	Departing Miyajimakuchi 6:25 ~ 22:42
Departing Miyajima 7:00 ~ 20:35	Departing Miyajima 5:45 ~ 22:14

*Timetables are valid as of 03/31/2014.

* Both the ropeway and ferry lines operate according to special timetables during events, etc.
 For more information, contact the respective operators.

Other Model Courses

- 2 Wildlife Course Omoto Route – Momijidani Route
- 3 Geology Course Omoto Route – Momijidani Route
- 4 History & Culture Course Tsutsumigaura Nature Trail

Guide maps can be downloaded from the below website.

Website
http://chushikoku.env.go.jp/nature/miyajima_guide_map/



1 What to See Along the Nature Course

The Nature Course takes you up the Misen Trail (Daishoin Route from Daishoin Temple to Mt. Misen Summit) and down through the Tsutsumigaura Nature Park by way of the Miyajima Ropeway. It is a perfect choice for enjoying the beauty of both the sea and mountains.

Wildlife Along the Daishoin Route

The Daishoin Route cuts through the center of the Misen Virgin Forest (Natural Monument). It has been the primary route up Mt. Misen for a long, long time and features some of the best views. The Misen Virgin Forest is populated with tall evergreen conifers like native hemlock spruces, firs, red pines and cedars, and broad-leaved trees including several species of oak, kurobai, Japanese star anise, camellia, Japanese sapphireberry, shirodamo and Japanese andromeda. Until recently, wild orchids grew in the vicinity of Makuwa Rock, but mudslides seem to have wiped them out. In summer, the chirping of blue-and-white flycatchers and narcissus flycatchers can be heard in the forests and ravines, and common cuckoos and lesser cuckoos at higher elevations.

History of the Daishoin Route (Misen Trail)

The medieval general Terumoto Mori is said to have ordered 18 pilgrimage paths be cut when rebuilding Dainichido Shrine (now Miyamajinja) in 1599 as the protectorate saint of Mt. Misen. In 1906, Japanese statesman Hirobumi Ito spent a great deal of his own money improving some 24 trails so that people could enjoy the history of Mt. Misen and the beauty of the Seto Inland Sea. Known as both the Daishoin Route and the Misen Trail, the path is traveled by many visitors to the island.

Natural Highlights

Shiraito Falls



Though not a great deal of water, the falls look like threads of white silk during the 14 m drop to the bottom. Fireflies have been known to swarm around the falls in summer, which has inspired poets to describe the site as one of the eight scenic locations on the

island. The 17th century cartographer Tadataka Ino wrote, "Like stars in the sky, fireflies twitter before the cascades descending from the mist." Sadly, mudslides in 2005 greatly changed the way the falls look.

Makuwa Rock [Marker] D-05-1



This massive section of exposed bedrock measuring 30 m in height by 150 m in length can be spotted while climbing the stone steps. It has been named "Makuwa" (literally "curtain rock") because of its resemblance to a stage curtain in a theater.

Hemlock Spruce Forest



This tract of hemlock spruces is found in the middle of the Misen Virgin Forest. Because this particular species is vertically distributed across the Japanese Islands, it belongs to the temperate zone. On Miyajima, it grows at elevations 400 m above sea-level on Mt. Misen and

Mt. Iwafunedake, and in Komagabayashi Forest.

Mt. Misen Summit [Marker] M-06, M-06-1, M-06-2



The Japanese monk responsible for propagating Buddhism in Japan, Kobo-Daishi (Kukai), is said to have founded a temple on top of Mt. Misen and claimed the mountain sacred. The panorama from the summit (elevation 535 m) is so beautiful that it inspired the 19th century Japanese statesman Hirobumi Ito to describe it as the "greatest merit of Miyajima." Near the summit are Kuguriwa, Fudoiva and other noteworthy rock outcroppings and boulders, and several temples associated with Kobo-Daishi.

[Kanmaniwa Rock]

Just above Funaiwa Rock and slightly down the western side from the summit is a large rock with a tiny hole. The hole is but 10 cm across and filled with water that oddly enough overflows at high tide and dries up and leaves a salt residue at low tide. Druses are found around the hole, which has led some to think the hole itself is a geode.

[Funaiwa Rock]

A little ways uphill from Dainichido Shrine is a boat-looking rock where a guardian deity of children is worshipped. It is called "Funaiwa" (literally "boat rock") because of its shape. The thicket of trees above it would be its sail. This strangely shaped rock is believed to have separated and fallen from the cliff face behind it after being rounded by the wind.

Miyajima Hiking Rules

Because of its historical importance and scenic beauty, the entire island of Miyajima is a national park. Moreover, the Misen Virgin Forest is designated a Natural Monument of Japan. Therefore, it is strictly forbidden to pick plants, catch animals, collect rocks or light fires anywhere on the island. Please observe the below rules in order to preserve the rare natural environment of Miyajima for future generations.



Mudslide Prevention Along the Shiraito River and Ravine



During Typhoon 14 in September 2005, a hill slope in Komagabayashi Forest collapsed and sent mud sliding into the upper reaches of the Shiraito River. The mudslides damaged Daishoin Temple and numerous other cultural properties. Restoration work aimed at preventing future mudslides used rocks and earth from the immediate area to improve the terrain with the least possible impact on the surrounding environment and preserve the natural landscape of Miyajima. Work was completed in October 2008 and the Misen Trail (Daishoin Route) was reopened after three years of being closed.

Bakuchio Ridge



On the evening of September 30, 1555, Motonari Mori landed under darkness in Tsutsumigaura Bay. The following morning, he climbed this ridge to sneak up behind the camping army of former-ally-turned-foe Takafusa Sue. Mori is said to have encouraged his troops by claiming his "gamble would quickly end the battle." (The name Bakuchio literally means "gamble ridge.") They struck Sue's headquarters early in the morning before his soldiers could prepare for war. Cited in Japanese history as one of three most brilliant surprise attacks, the Battle of Itsukushima brought war to a close.

Wildlife Along the Tsutsumigaura Nature Trail



The ridgeline from Bakuchio Ridge to Tsutsumigaura Bay features plenty of vegetation that grows well in sunlight such as red pines, bayberries, camphors, forked ferns and white oaks. The valleys and other less lit sections along the trail have more broad-leaved trees like Japanese chinquapins, Japanese blue oaks, lusterleaf hollies and Mimizubai (symplocos glaucas).



Distance Marker

Stone markers such as this have indicated the route up Mt. Misen to Misendo Temple since ancient times. With the summit being the 24th such marker, each stone marks about 109 m. The oldest of these markers bears the date 1559.

Precautions for Hikers

- The required times in this brochure are for good weather and small groups of experienced hikers aged 40 to 50 prepared for a one-day hike. They do not include any time for sightseeing, nature observations or breaks, therefore use them as a basic reference.
- Being on trails after sunset is very dangerous. Check that the ropeway and other modes of transportation are running, confirm the last service of the day before setting out, and **start your descent at least 3 hours before sunset.**
- **All courses involve hiking.** Whether taking an easy or moderate trail, wear shoes and clothing suited for hiking, and carry emergency food and beverage with you.
- Watch out for harmful wildlife (poisonous snakes, hornets, etc.).

Nature and History of Miyajima

Wildlife

Miyajima is a natural habitat for many rare plants and animals, including naturally growing fir trees in the Misen Virgin Forest and lowlands, vegetation peculiar to beachheads and salt marshes, and a species of mangrove skimmer that lives only on Miyajima. There are also deer all over the island, but they are wild and must not be fed.

Landscape and Geology

Miyajima is home to many temples, shrines and historical sites to note Mt. Misen, Daishoin Temple and Daiganji Temple and, of course, the World Heritage Itsukushimajinja Shrine.

History and Culture

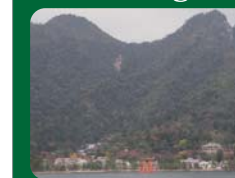
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Itsukushimajinja Shrine (World Heritage)



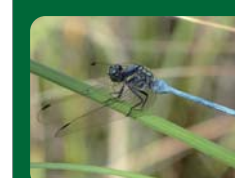
Itsukushimajinja Shrine was registered as a World Heritage in 1996. The buildings and surrounding environment are highly valued for their integrated relationship as there is no other shrine in the world that incorporates the tide into its design.

Misen Virgin Forest (Natural Monument)



The Misen Virgin Forest is a designated Natural Monument of Japan. Its vegetation is a mixture of southern plants and conifers. It is a rare find where you can see wheel trees and other primeval plants in a natural state.

Wetland of International Importance and The Mangrove Skimmer



Miyajima is the only place in Japan where the mangrove skimmer lives. This particular species of dragonfly is classified as a Critically Endangered Species by both Japan's Ministry of the Environment and the Hiroshima Prefectural Government. Its wetland habitat along the southwestern coast of the island was registered under the Ramsar Convention as a Wetland of International Importance in July 2012.

Natural Fir Forest (Omoto Park)



Firs are a kind of conifer that likes cool mountainous environments and rarely grows along the coast. This section of Omoto Park features naturally growing firs, hemlock spruces and Japanese nutmegs that are normally found in colder regions, making it a rare botanical find.

Nanaurajinja Shrine (Subsidiary Shrines of Itsukushimajinja Shrine)



What is known as the "Nanaura Meguri" (literally the "Seven-Bay Pilgrimage") is a time-honored Shinto practice of circumnavigating the roughly 30 km perimeter of Miyajima by boat with Mt. Misen always to the starboard side, and ultimately paying homage to the gods at the shrines venerated in each of seven bays.

Waterfront Wildlife



Miyajima has an environmentally diverse coastline that includes tidal flats, rocky shores and salt marshes. The expansive tidal flats that extend from Itsukushimajinja Shrine to Omoto Park is home to a wide variety of shellfish, crabs and other marine life, and is certainly worth a visit.