

Nishi-Awa region in Tokushima Prefecture

Experience *satoyama* food culture fostered through agriculture on steep mountain slopes

GIAHS / J-NIAHS
“Nishi-Awa Steep Slope Land Agriculture System”

Nishi-Awa is a mountainous area in Tokushima Prefecture where about 85% of the land is covered by forest. People have long built houses on the mountain slopes, and in some places, slopes as steep as 40 degrees are used to cultivate crops. Farmers are able to produce about 140 crops, including grains, vegetables, fruits, tea, and wild vegetables, through environmental adaptations such as drying *kaya* (silvergrass and other grasses) for fertilizer, developing unique farming tools, and planting different crops according to the sun exposure, elevation, and topography. This has resulted in a rich food culture that utilizes a variety of grains unique to the area.



1 A farmer performing *tsuchiage* to restore eroded soil. 2 The Nishi-Iya Jindai Odori (“rain dance”) is a folk dance that is said to have originated in the early Heian period (794–1185). 3 Buckwheat porridge, a local staple. 4 Koeuro, cone-shaped piles of *kaya*. They are meticulously broken up and spread in the fields to fertilize the soil and prevent erosion.



Sustainable Tourism

Visit Agricultural Heritage Systems

Tambasasayama region in Hyogo Prefecture, Minamiawaji region in Hyogo Prefecture, and Nishi-Awa region in Tokushima Prefecture

Day 1

JR Tokushima Sta.

▼ Approx. 50-min. drive



Wakimachi Udatsumi Townscape

A merchant town that prospered in the Edo period as a distribution center for Awa indigo. Take a guided tour to better understand the characteristics and history of the buildings from each period.



Address: Wakimachi, Mima City, Tokushima
Tel: 0883-53-8599 (Mima Tourism Bureau)

▼ Brief walk



Udatsumi Kobo, Awa Tennen Aizome Yamauchi

A natural indigo dyeing studio in the town of Udatsumi where you can participate in an indigo dyeing workshop and dye a handkerchief, scarf, tote bag, or other item with dyes made using traditional methods.



Address: 45-1 Tsukinukecho, Wakimachi, Mima City, Tokushima
Tel: 0883-52-5168

▼ Approx. 40-min. drive



SARUKAI Tourist Farm: Where Buckwheat Flowers Bloom

This is a great place to experience a field with a 40-degree slope. The farm is open to the public only from late September to mid-October when the buckwheat flowers are in bloom.



Address: Sarukai, Sadamitsu, Tsurugi Town, Mima District, Tokushima
Tel: 0883-62-3111 (Industry and Economy Division, Tsurugi Town Hall)

▼ Approx. 2-hr. drive



Oku-Iya Menme Workshop, Experience Atelier Tsuzuki

Learn how to make Iya soba, a local buckwheat noodle dish from the Higashi-Iya region. The process starts with making buckwheat flour, and you can listen to local folk songs while you work.



Address: 84-1 Wakabayashi, Higashiya, Miyoshi City, Tokushima
Tel: 0883-88-5625

▼ Approx. 20-min. drive



Stay Guest House Tougenkyo-Iya

Ochiai is a village dotted with traditional Japanese houses on the slope of a mountain with an elevation difference of about 390 meters. Eight of these houses are rented out in their entirety to visitors and are becoming increasingly popular for the village life experience they offer. Guests can cook for themselves or request catering featuring local dishes.



Address: 403 Ochiai, Higashiya, Miyoshi City, Tokushima
Tel: 0883-88-2540

Day 2

Guest House Tougenkyo-Iya

▼ Approx. 35-min. drive



Iya Kazurabashi Bridge

This suspension bridge is made from woven kiwiberry vines. It is 45 meters long, weighs approximately 5 metric tons, and is re-woven every three years. Crossing the bridge is a thrilling experience—it sways as you walk across it, and you can see the bottom of the valley through the gaps in the bridge floor! The clear waters of the Iya River and the Biwa Waterfall are not to be missed.



Address: 162-2 Zentoku, Nishiyayama-son, Miyoshi City, Tokushima
Tel: 0883-76-0877 (Miyoshi City Tourist Information Center)

▼ Approx. 25-min. drive



Oboke Gorge Sightseeing Boat

The Oboke and Koboke gorges are recognized as both Places of Scenic Beauty and Natural Monuments of Japan. Oboke Gorge occupies the upper four kilometers of the two. You can take a round-trip sightseeing cruise on the crystal-clear Yoshino River and enjoy the beauty of the majestic rock walls carved by nature over the course of 200 million years.



Address: 1520 Nishiu, Yamashiro-cho, Miyoshi City, Tokushima
Tel: 0883-84-1211

▼ Approx. 45-min. drive



Minshuku Uribo

Enjoy a lunch of wild game and a farm experience at a guesthouse run by hunter Masao Kinoshita. The lunch is hearty and includes plenty of venison and wild boar meat. The farm experience changes with the seasons, including activities such as vegetable harvesting and *konnyaku* (konjac) making.



Address: 29 Uchino, Higashiya, Higashimiyoshi Town, Miyoshi District, Tokushima
Tel: 0883-87-8988 (Sora no Sato)

▼ Approx. 1-hr.-20-min. drive

JR Tokushima Sta.

Getting there from Osaka

By train and bus

JR Osaka Sta. JR Sannomiya Sta. (Walk) Hanshin Kobe-Sannomiya Bus Stop JR Tokushima Sta.

Ride for approx. 30 min. on the JR Kobe Line, get off at JR Sannomiya Sta., walk for approx. 3 min., then ride for approx. 2 hr. on the Tokushima Bus bound for JR Tokushima Sta. from the Hanshin Kobe-Sannomiya Bus Stop

By car

From Osaka Wakimachi IC

From Osaka to Wakimachi IC
Approx. 2 hr. 40 min. on the Hanshin Expwy, Kobe-Awaji-Naruto Expwy, and Tokushima Expwy



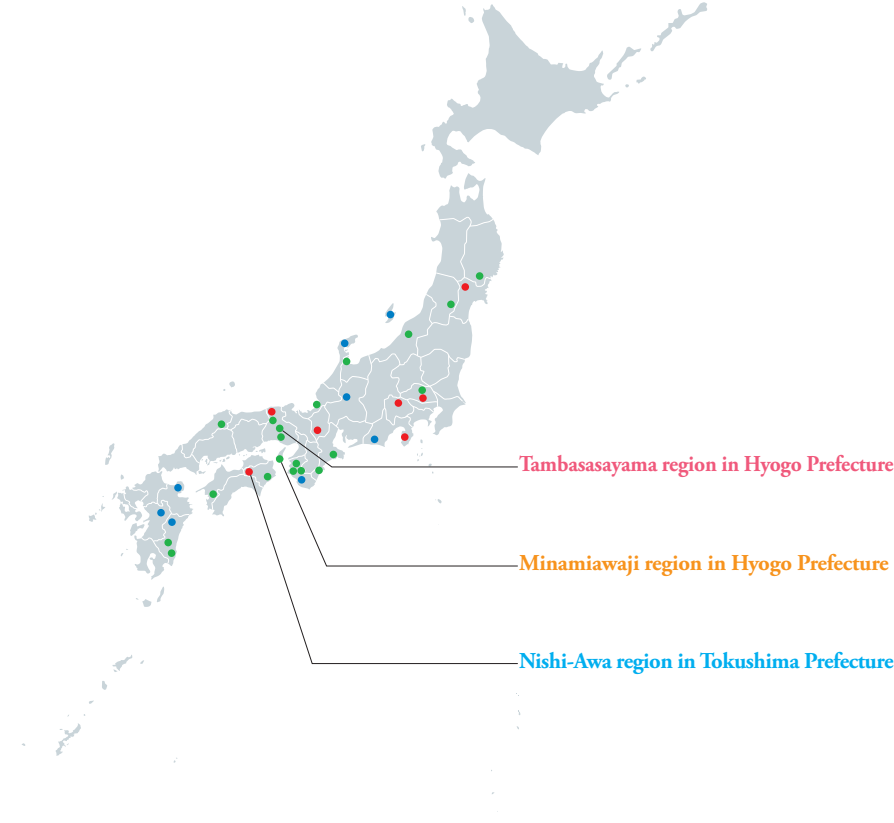
What are Agricultural Heritage Systems?

In regions designated as Agricultural Heritage Systems, farming, forestry, and fishing are practiced using traditional methods that have generally been handed down continuously for more than a century. These traditional practices have been nurtured and formed by the local climate, topography, and historical background, creating a food culture, climate, and landscape unique to the regions.

The agriculture, forestry, and fisheries industry that have been designated as Agricultural Heritage Systems incorporate resource recycling systems that do not deplete natural resources (i.e., soil, forest, and aquatic resources) and have a low environmental impact, which contributes to the preservation of biodiversity, including creatures native to Japan. Agricultural Heritage Systems are a form of “living heritage” that continues to evolve and adapt to changes in society and nature.

There are two types of Agricultural Heritage Systems: Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) designated by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and Japanese Nationally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (JNIAHS) designated by the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

In Japan, there are 15 Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (●) and 28 Japanese Nationally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (○).
● areas are designated as both.
(As of January 2025)



MAFF

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

Publisher / Contact:

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Rural Development Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
1-2-1 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8950 Japan Tel: 03-3502-8111 (ext. 5621)

Information on GIAHS and JNIAHS is also available on the website of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.
<https://www.maff.go.jp/f/nousin/kantai/index.html>

For sightseeing information on Agricultural Heritage Systems:
https://www.maff.go.jp/f/nousin/kantai/giahs_7/index.html