

Tambasasayama region in Hyogo Prefecture

Enjoy the rural landscape and traditional culture of growing black soybeans for 300 years

J-NIAHS
"Tambasasayama's Kuromame Cultivation Over 300 Years"

Tambasasayama City in Hyogo Prefecture is one of Japan's leading producers of kuromame (black soybeans). Its history dates back more than 300 years. This area has historically suffered from water shortages due to low rainfall, so farmers began to "sacrifice" certain rice paddies, using them as fields to grow black soybeans instead.



Day 1

JR Sasayamaguchi Sta. (JR Takarazuka Line and Fukuchiyama Line)
Convenient rental bicycles for touring the city are available at the JR Sasayamaguchi Station East Exit Cycle Port and the Sasayama Tourist Information Center.

Tamba Tabuchi Farm
During its farm tours in July and August, you can learn why traditional farming methods were developed and the secrets behind the delicious taste of Tamba-guro brand soybeans, as well as harvest and taste summer-ripened edamame.

Heritage Footpath
Explore a roughly one-hour walking loop around a peaceful satoyama (land between Japan's foothills and arable land). Tours are available with a local guide (inquire for more details). The sight of rice paddies with no visible power lines or telephone poles and about 10 remaining Han-ya for producing fertilizer are signs of the traditional farming methods that have been handed down to the present day.

Sasayama Castle Oshoin, Ruins of Sasayama Castle
Sasayama Castle was built in 1609 during the early Edo period on the orders of Tokugawa Ieyasu. The castle's main hall, called the Oshoin, is unprecedented in terms of size and architectural style for a feudal lord. Inside the hall, there are displays on the history of Sasayama Castle, and visitors can try on suits of armor and uchikake (formal outer kimono).

Stay! Maruyama Village
Spend the night in your own traditional cottage in the village of Maruyama, nestled in the foothills of the mountains. The facility has been renovated to be modern and practical while retaining its original floor plan. In the morning, staff from the village come to the kitchen to prepare breakfast using local ingredients and freshly cooked rice.

Day 2

Maruyama Village
Approx. 13-min. drive

Tambasasayama Historical Art Museum
A former courthouse that was renovated into a museum. The building is one of the oldest wooden courthouses in Japan and has been designated a cultural property of the city. You can tour the old courtroom and check out the armor and art on display. The museum also offers Ojiyama-yaki pottery workshops for making chopstick rests and magatama (comma-shaped beads) in the style of the Sasayama domain's local kiln.

Kawaramachi Tsumairi Merchant House District
This district once flourished as the commercial center of the Sasayama domain. It still retains the look of an Edo-period (1603-1867) castle town, and the district has been selected as one of Japan's Important Preservation Districts for Groups of Traditional Buildings. In addition to the historic stores, modern cafes and knick-knack shops make the streets a fun place to stroll around.

Odagaki Shoten
A long-established store specializing in black soybeans that has been in business for 290 years. From the Meiji era (1868-1912), the store started selling black soybean seeds to farmers, then bought back the produce and sold it throughout Japan, spreading the name of the giant Tamba-guro black soybeans. Visitors can also enjoy black soybean sweets at the store's cafe, ODAGAKI mameidou.

JR Sasayamaguchi Sta.

Getting there from Osaka
By train: JR Osaka Sta. to JR Sasayamaguchi Sta. Ride for approx. 1 hr. on the JR Takarazuka Line / Fukuchiyama Line.
By car: From Osaka to Tannan-Sasayamaguchi IC. Approx. 1 hr. on the Chugoku Expwy and Maizuru-Wakasa Expwy.

Minamiawaji region in Hyogo Prefecture

Visit Awaji Island for its delicious produce, nurtured by a cyclical agriculture system involving paddy rice, cattle, and onions

J-NIAHS
"Cyclical Production System for Paddy Rice, Onions, and Livestock in Minamiawaji"

In the Minamiawaji area of Awaji Island, Hyogo Prefecture, locals have adapted to an island environment characterized by scarce farmland and water. They have developed an irrigation system that combines reservoirs, rivers, irrigation canals, and groundwater. They have also practiced double cropping, growing onions after harvesting rice. These adaptations led to the establishment of a cyclical system in which rice straw is used to feed dairy cows, whose manure is then composted and plowed back into the soil to grow onions. The "onion huts," where the onions are dried with sunlight and the sea breeze, are a unique sight in this area.



Day 1

Sumoto Bus Center
Approx. 22-min. drive

Awaji Farm Park England Hill
Explore this sprawling agricultural park where you can pick vegetables in the fields, visit greenhouses for tomatoes and strawberries, and see about 30 species of animals, including koalas and wallabies. The restaurant's ushiji (beef rice bowl), made with Awaji beef and Awaji Island onions, is very popular.

Minacoicoiya
This farmer's market offers a variety of delicious produce from Awaji Island. The market has one of the largest onion sales areas in Japan and also offers fresh vegetables, locally caught fish, local craft beer, and specialty somen noodles. It is the perfect place to find Awaji Island souvenirs.

Awajishima Hamada Farm
After listening to onion farmer Tetsuji Hamada talk about the history of Awaji Island onions, how they are grown, and what makes them so delicious, experience planting and harvesting the onions (available September through June). During the rest of the year, you can experience what it is like to package the onions.

Stay! Agri Museum NADA
This accommodation facility is located in a closed elementary school. The facility grows "schoolyard tomatoes" and "classroom basil" that you can pick and use to make pizzas. Other popular experiences include catching, cooking, and eating your own fish and barbecuing local ingredients (inquiry required).

Day 2

Agri Museum NADA
Approx. 22-min. drive

Southern Birds Agricultural Heritage Tour
Take an in-depth tour of agriculture on Awaji Island. On this tour, you will see a nagayamon, a structure where farmers used to keep cattle, and the local landscape dotted with reservoirs. Then experience harvesting onions and hanging them to dry (or making onion jam, depending on the season).

Awaji Ningyoza (Puppet Theatre)
A permanent venue where the local performing art of Awaji Island, Awaji Ningyo Joruri (puppet show), is performed throughout the year. Before each performance, there is an explanation of the show, its highlights, and how the puppets are operated. The program that combines a backstage tour with a short performance is also popular.

Uzu no Oka Onaruto Bridge Memorial Hall
This commercial facility overlooks the Onaruto Bridge spanning the Naruto Strait. Ottomaneji, the giant onion statue, is a hugely popular photo spot. Spend your time here enjoying all things onion, from onion burgers to an onion claw machine.

Sumoto Bus Center

Getting there from Osaka
By train and bus: JR Osaka Sta. to JR Maiko Sta. Maiko Expwy Bus Stop. Sumoto Bus Center.
By car: From Osaka to Sumoto IC. Approx. 1 hr. 30 min. on the Hanshin Expwy and Kobe-Awaji-Naruto Expwy.