

Cities Where You Can Meet *Ama* (Registered on the Japan Heritage List)  
— Recommended Sites —

For more details about *ama*, we recommend the following facility:

**Toba City Sea-Folk Museum**

At this museum, you can comprehensively learn not only about the history, tools, festivities and customs of *ama*, female divers registered on the “Japan Heritage” list, but also about the fishing village culture preserved in this region. It also offers a variety of cultural experience programs.

Address: 1731-68 Uramuracho-Ogitsu, Toba City, Mie Prefecture 517-0025  
Opening hours: 9:00 a.m. — 4:30 p.m.  
Closed: June 26 through 30 and December 26 through 30  
☎0599-32-6006 URL: <http://www.umihaku.com>



Uniquely-shaped building of the Sea-Folk Museum

If you feel like enjoying seafood while conversing with *ama*, we recommend the following facilities:

**Amagoya Experience Facilities** [※Advance reservations required]

In replicas of *amagoya*, which are huts where *ama* rest after fishing, you can enjoy seafood grilled by *ama* as well as stories they tell about their fishing experiences.

*Amagoya* experience facilities found in this region:

- Amagoya “Hachiman-Kamado” [Toba City] ☎0599-33-1023
- Amagoya “Osatsu-Kamado” [Toba City] ☎0599-33-7453
- Toshijima “Amagoya Experience (barbecue)” [Toshi, Toba City] ☎0599-37-3339
- Amagoya Experience Facility “Satoumian” [Shima City] ☎0599-85-1212
- Hiba-Hironohama [Shima City] ☎0599-77-7327

※Advanced reservations are required. Make a reservation directly with each facility.



Amagoya experience facility (Photo: Satoumian)

If you feel like visiting *ama*-related sites, we recommend the following facilities:

There are many sites related to *ama*, including sacred spots which *ama* visit to pray for their safety, such as Amakazukime Shrine (Toba City), Aonominesan-Shofukuji Temple (Toba City), Izawa-no-Miya (Shima City) and Ishigami-san, known as a Shinto shrine that makes women’s wishes come true (Toba City).

- Amakazukime Shrine [Toba City] Access: Take a bus from Toba Station, get off at Kuzaki and walk for about five minutes.
- Ishigami-san [Toba City] Access: Take a bus from Toba Station, get off at Osatsu and walk for about two minutes.
- Aonominesan-Shofukuji Temple [Toba City] Access: Walk for one hour from Kintetsu Matsuo Station.
- Izawa-no-Miya [Shima City] Access: Get off at Kintetsu Kaminogo Station and walk for about five minutes.



Aonominesan-Shofukuji Temple, a sacred site to pray for maritime safety

If you feel like experiencing *ama*-style fishing, we recommend the following facilities/events:

The “Shirongo Matsuri,” a festival held on Sugashima Island, Toba City, in early July, gives you a valuable opportunity to see real *ama* diving up close. If you are interested in learning more about the details of *ama*-style fishing or experiencing it, you can even join a tour to enjoy diving with *ama* and watching them from a boat while they are diving to fish. *Ama* also perform diving shows for tourists on Mikimoto Pearl Island in Toba City.

- Shirongo Matsuri [Sugashima, Toba City] Held annually on the Saturday closest to July 11  
Contact: ☎0599-25-1157 (Tourism Division, Toba City)
- Mikimoto Pearl Island [Toba City]

*Ama* give diving performances in traditional white diving costumes.  
Admission fee: Adult 1,650 yen / Child (elementary and junior high school students) 820 yen  
※ Their diving schedule may change depending on the weather or season.

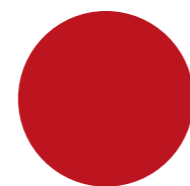
- Tour to Enjoy Diving with *Ama* [Shima City] (Conducted from spring through autumn)  
You can see *ama* catching seafood up close while diving with them.  
Fee: at least 22,000 yen (including tax)(Advanced reservations required)  
Contact: ☎0596-20-2290 Ise-Shima Tourism



Shirongo Matsuri held on Sugashima Island



Tour to enjoy diving with *ama*



JAPAN HERITAGE  
日本遺産

**What is Japan Heritage?**

The cultures and traditions of Japan are passed down through “stories” based on unique regional histories and traditions. The Agency for Cultural Affairs recognizes such stories as “Japan Heritage.”  
Toba and Shima, which are “cities where you can meet *ama*,” are registered collectively as the 73rd Japan Heritage site.



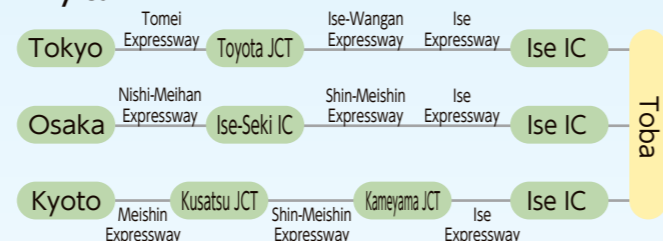
■ Access to Toba and Shima

**Toba City**

● By train

Nagoya Station	JR/Kintetsu	1 hr and 35 min	Toba
Osaka-Namba Station	Kintetsu	Approx. 2 hr	
Kyoto Station	Kintetsu	Approx. 2 hr and 20 min	

● By car



● By ferry

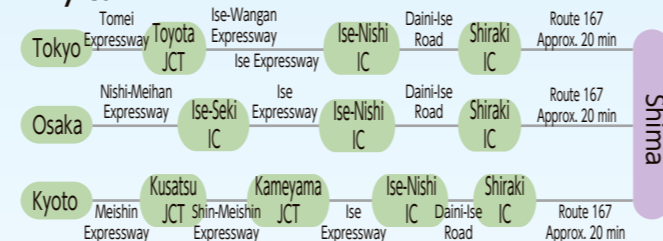


**Shima City**

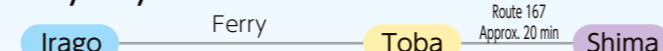
● By train

Nagoya Station	Kintetsu	Approx. 2 hr and 5 min	Shima
Osaka-Namba Station	Kintetsu	Approx. 2 hr and 25 min	
Kyoto Station	Kintetsu	Approx. 2 hr and 45 min	

● By car



● By ferry



Project for the Promotion of Comprehensive Utilization of Local Cultural Properties  
Issued by the Ama Promotion Council

For more information on the *ama* registered on the Japan Heritage list, check this website. →  
Japan Heritage Official Website <https://japan-heritage.bunka.go.jp/ja/stories/story073/index.html>



JAPAN HERITAGE  
日本遺産

**Toba and Shima,**  
Cities Where You Can Meet *Ama*  
(Registered on the Japan Heritage List)



Toba and Shima,  
the Cities with the Largest Number  
of *Ama* in Japan

Japan Heritage

Toba and Shima, Cities Where You Can Meet *Ama*:  
Female Divers Who Dive to Fish for a Living

We give a brief introduction to the “story” of *ama* registered on the Japan Heritage list.

**Toba and Shima, Cities Where You Can Meet *Ama***

Toba and Shima, blessed with rich natural seafood, are “cities where you can meet *ama* (female divers),” and boast the largest number of *ama* in Japan: about half of the *ama* in the country conduct their fishing activities here. In the world, Japan and South Korea are the only countries with such female divers who dive in the sea without oxygen tanks to catch abalone, turban shells and seaweed. It is definitely worth visiting these cities to meet real “*ama*” who dive to fish for a living.



*Ama* diving to fish in the sea off Toba and Shima

**Abalone Loved by Deities: “Oben” known as a Legendary *Ama***

Abalone caught in the sea off Kuzaki, Toba City, are processed into “*noshi-awabi*,” which are dried abalone offered annually to Ise Jingu. The tradition of *noshi-awabi* offerings can be traced back to an ancient legend that Princess Yamatohime-no-Mikoto, who is said to have established Ise Jingu to enshrine Amaterasu-Omikami, visited Kuzaki to find food for deities, received extremely delicious abalone from an *ama* called “Oben”, and then designated Kuzaki as the area of abalone production for deities.



*Noshi-awabi* production

**Faith and Festivities Passed Down by *Ama***

Toba and Shima have a number of Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples, such as Aonominesan-Shofukuji Temple in Toba City and Izawa-no-Miya (a Shinto shrine affiliated with Ise Jingu) in Shima City, which are worshipped by fisherpeople, especially *ama*, who coexist with the sea. You can be exposed to their culture by visiting those sacred sites. Besides that, a variety of *ama* festivals, held to pray for maritime safety and great catches of fish, have been passed down for generations in different areas of the cities.



Izawa-no-Miya, one of the sacred spots worshipped by fisherpeople

**Culture of *Ama* Experienced through the “Five Senses”**

If you visit fishing villages located along the coasts of Toba and Shima or on the islands off those coasts, you will see “*amagoya*” (huts where *ama* rest after fishing) standing side by side as well as *ama* going fishing in the sea, shipping seafood they caught, or doing other things. *Ama*’s loud voices coming from *amagoya* and the alleys around will pique your interest. In *amagoya* experience facilities, you can enjoy seafood caught by *ama*, such as abalone, while conversing with them. Besides that, you can even dive with *ama* to fully experience their world through the five senses. By traveling around the two cities, you will notice that the traditional lifestyle and faith of *ama*, who have worshipped nature and coexisted with the sea since ancient times, still exist as “*ama* culture,” and feel refreshed and recharged by their vigor.



Talking with *ama* in an *amagoya* experience facility



## Cultural Properties of Toba City

- 1 Fishing Techniques of Ama in Toba and Shima (※)
- 2 Artifacts Unearthed from Shirahama (Archaeological Site)
- 3 Noshi-Awabi Production in Kuzaki
- 4 Fishing Gear Used in the Kumanonada Sea, Ise Bay, and on the Shima Peninsula



Ama, female divers, in Toba and Shima have passed down their fishing (diving) techniques from generation to generation.



Bone and horn tools from the Yayoi Period, such as abalone scrapers made from deer bones, are exhibited in the Sea-Folk Museum.



In Kuzaki, Toba City, *noshi-awabi* (dried abalone) are produced and then dedicated to Ise Jingu.



6,879 objects, including fishing gear used by ama, are designated as National Important Tangible Folk-Cultural Properties and exhibited in the Sea-Folk Museum.

- 5 Shirongo Matsuri
- 6 Notto Prayers on New Year's (Held in Kuzaki)
- 7 Aonominesan-Shofukuji Temple
- 8 Amakazukime Shrine



On Sugashima Island, this festival is held annually on the Saturday closest to July 11<sup>th</sup>. You can see ama diving up close.



On January 17, people, especially females such as ama, put the deity of the New Year on a straw boat and then float it out to sea.



Fisherpeople around Ise Bay, especially ama, visit this Buddhist temple to pray for maritime safety.



This Shinto shrine enshrines "Oben," a legendary ama who is believed to have offered abalone to Princess Yamatohime-no-Mikoto.

- 9 Kazukiori
- 10 Ishigami-San
- 11 Kamishima-Yatsushiro Shrine
- 12 Kantekisho Observation Post



Prior to the start of the fishing season of the year, ama hold this ceremony to pray to a deity called Hachidai-Ryuo for maritime safety and great catches of fish.



This Shinto shrine is visited by many women because it is believed to make one wish of every woman come true.



This Shinto shrine is one of the sites which appear in *The Sound of Waves (Shiosai)*, a novel written by Yukio Mishima.



This observation post, used in the past, appears in the climax of *The Sound of Waves (Shiosai)*. It is also one of the filming locations for the *Shiosai* movie.

- 13 Niwanohama Beach
- 14 Narrow Alley Streetscapes on Toshijima Island



This beach, which appears in the *Sound of Waves (Shiosai)*, is a scenic spot with limestone outcrops.



Toshijima, one of the islands inhabited by ama, is characterized by its narrow alleys, which are like labyrinths.

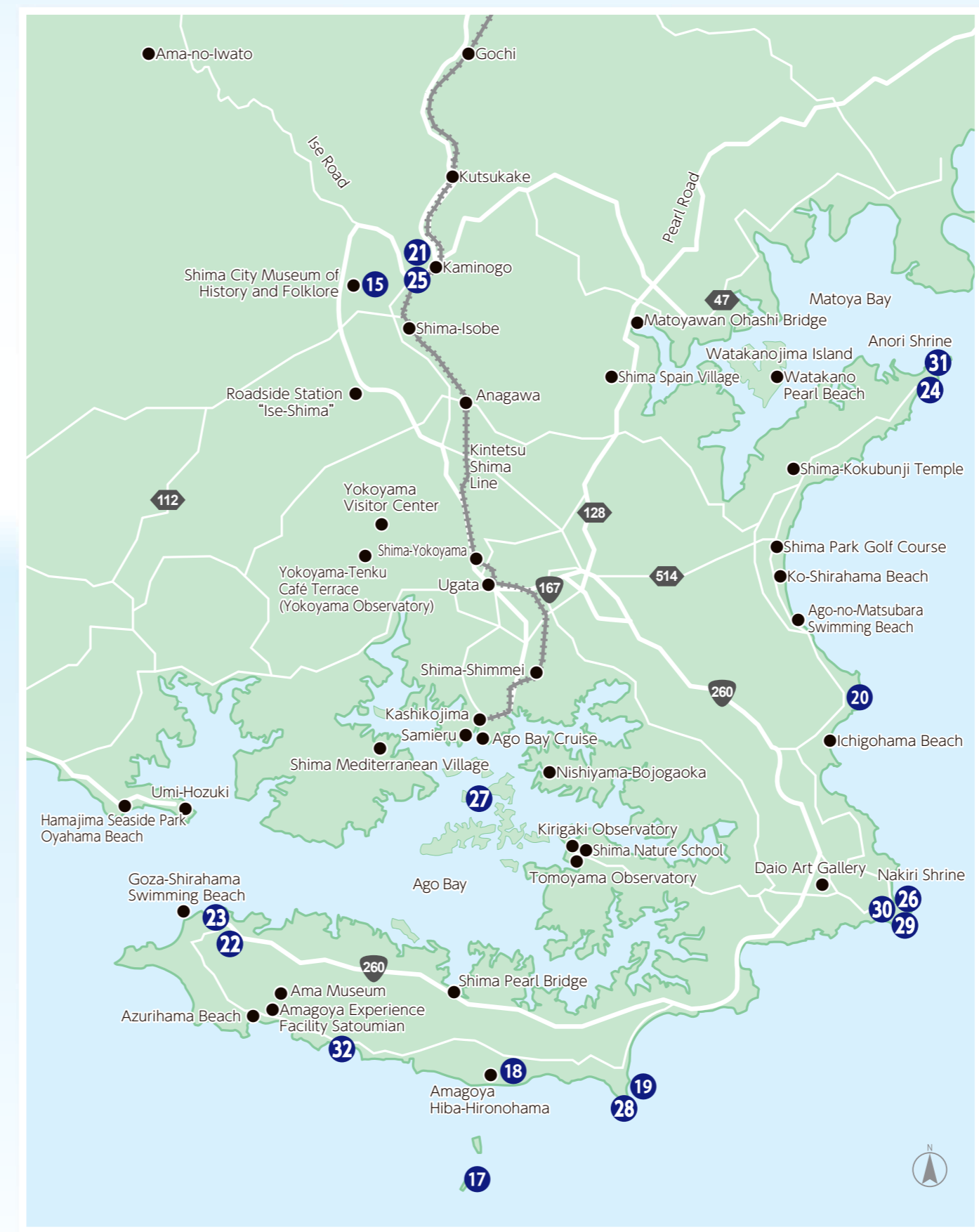
## Map of Toba City

Toba City, located on the Shima Peninsula in the eastern part of Mie Prefecture, is blessed with a mild climate as well as many scenic sites, including its four inhabited islands and its ria coasts. Toba is also rich in natural seafood and tourist attractions, such as Mikimoto Pearl Island and Toba Aquarium, and is famous for being the city with the largest number of ama in Japan.



## Map of Shima City

Shima City, whose whole area is part of Ise-Shima National Park, is located in the southeastern part of Mie Prefecture. The city is blessed with many scenic sites representing Japan, such as Ago Bay, which is dotted with about 60 islands of different sizes, and the intricately indented coastlines (ria coasts) forming capes and coves. The city is also famous for its pearls, which are cultivated in Ago Bay.



## Cultural Properties of Shima City

- 15 Professional Tools and Their Related Materials Found on the Shima Peninsula
- 16 Abalone Dedicated to Ise Jingu
- 17 Shiokake Matsuri (Oshima Matsuri)
- 18 Koshima Matsuri and Hama Matsuri



Professional tools, including fishing gear used by ama, are exhibited in the Shima City Museum of History and Folklore.



Abalone are dedicated to Ise Jingu as an offering to deities.



On June 1<sup>st</sup> of the old Japanese calendar, participants in this festival pour seawater over one another from their boats on the sea off the Fishing Port of Wagu.



The Koshima Matsuri held on June 4<sup>th</sup> and the Hama Matsuri held on June 11<sup>th</sup> (both according to the old Japanese calendar) are festivals where ama pray for great catches of fish in Shimacho-Fuseda.

- 19 Hama-kiyome
- 20 Ishigyo-orashi
- 21 Izawa-no-Miya
- 22 Tsumekiri Fudosen



On June 13<sup>th</sup> of the old Japanese calendar, this ceremony is held on the Ozatonohama Beach located in Shimacho-Katada to console the souls of the nine ama who died young at sea.



On March 18<sup>th</sup>, each participant in this ceremony, held on the Nishiohama Beach located in Agocho-Shijima, throws a stone with a Chinese character selected from the Heart Sutra of Buddhism written on it into the sea.



Izawa-no-Miya is a Shinto shrine affiliated with Naiku of Ise Jingu and worshipped by ama. You can still enjoy the traditional streetscape as you approach the shrine.



A statue of Fudo-Myoo (Acala), believed to have been carved by Kobo-Daishi (Kukai) using his own nails, is enshrined in this Buddhist temple, which is a sacred spirit site shrouded in silence.

- 23 Ishibotoke (Shiobotoke)
- 24 Puppet Theater of Anori
- 25 Isobe-no-Omita
- 26 Nakiri-no-Warajihiki



Several stone statues of Buddha, worshipped by ama, stand in the sea off the Port of Goza, appearing and disappearing with the tides.



On the second Saturday and Sunday of September, traditional puppet plays, passed down from the Edo period, are performed in Anori.



At this event, several rituals, such as rice planting and bamboo tug-of-war by naked men, are performed on June 24<sup>th</sup>.



In September, a huge straw sandal (waraji) with a length of 2 meters is carried from Nakiri Shrine to the Subanohama Beach and then sent out to sea during this event, which is held on a day designated according to the old Japanese calendar.

- 27 Ria Coasts and Pearl Culture Rafts
- 28 Mugisaki Lighthouse
- 29 Daiosaki Lighthouse
- 30 Streetscapes of Nakiri



The beautiful landscapes found on the Shima Peninsula, such as intricately indented coastlines and floating pearl culture rafts, are symbols of the region.



In the park around the lighthouse, you can easily hear the sound of ama's heavy breathing, known as *Isobue*.



This lighthouse, built in 1927, is open to the public. There is also a lighthouse museum on its premises.



The Nakiri area, characterized by its stone walls and narrow stone-paved slopes, is popular among landscape painters.

- 31 Anorisaki Lighthouse
- 32 Historical Documents from the Storehouse of the Former Koshika Village
- 33 Doman-Seman (※)



This lighthouse, built in 1948, is open to the public. If the weather permits, you can even enjoy watching ama while they are diving.



Valuable documents, including those written about how ama used to live from the Edo period to the Modern period, are stored in this storehouse.



Doman-Seman are lucky symbols believed to protect ama from danger.

※ 1 and 3 are cultural properties shared by Toba and Shima Cities.

