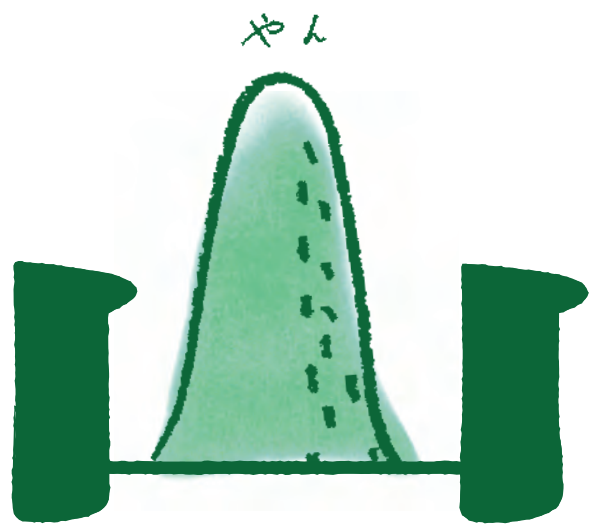


Nature and Living of Yanbaru's Three Villages



YANBARU MAP



The World Natural Heritage Site is a part of our everyday life.

You are missing the most critical point if you come to Yanbaru, a world natural heritage site, only for its green forest and mountains.

"Diversity" was the keyword when Yanbaru became a world natural heritage site and can be found in everyday life here. Finding endangered flowers in places like nearby parking lots is common. The mountain foot, where the villagers populate, is where visitors can most experience the world natural heritage site.

Visitors must visit all three villages of Yanbaru to appreciate the beauty of its nature fully.

1. Visit one village; you will encounter trees.
2. Visit two villages; you will experience the grove.
3. Visit three villages; you will savor Yanbaru's forest.

Welcome to Yanbaru's forest, a world natural heritage site.

Higashi Village

The entire village is the museum.

The Okinawa Woodpeckers being endemic to the Yanbaru area, visitors to Higashi Museum can observe the birds at a close range. There is a reason for this natural history museum being located in the foothill instead of closer to the main street, said Mr. T, the museum curator. "It is incredible for the Okinawa Woodpeckers to be able to continue reproducing for many years in such proximity to the town. We want to protect this environment for the next fifty and a hundred years. The museum was built in the foothill because of this reason. We consider this whole region as a part of the museum."

Born and raised in the village, Mr. T aims to collect as much information on the region so that the next generation can learn about the history of its people." Regarding Higashi's attractions, Mr. T recommends whale watching and stargazing from the Azalea Ecopark parking lot. He also suggests visiting Fukuchi Dam for its magnificent view and Uppama Beach for its clear blue water.

The village people are full of hospitality. Most of them are farmers, but some also operate B&B. They make excellent nature guides.

The museum mascots, the Ryukyu boars named Konsuke and Inosuke, greet the visitors at the entrance. Inside, a collection of taxidermies is displayed. However, the museum also stocks live animals for visitors to observe.



Ogimi Village

There are ocean, mountains, and waterfalls. And the co-op shops.



Originating in Okinawa, co-ops are no ordinary shops. Village people jointly invest in and operate them. The first of its kind was said to have been established in Kunigami Village Oku in 1906. However, their number decreased over the years due to management problems.

The shops sell locally grown vegetables, shima-tofu, bread, souvenirs, and baskets. Various plants with different uses are an essential part of the local diets.

Ms. Y, the shop's supervisor, was born in Ogimi. she said, "an announcement is issued to the village when local goods shipments arrive. The Mango season in summer is crazy busy. The shop is also busy the day the freshly made organic kurozato (Okinawan brown sugar) shipment arrives. After visiting the fall, tourists often stop by the shop to purchase the holly water of Nanataki, considered a sacred spot. And other specialty items include candies flavored with locally grown cinnamon. I love watching customers interact."

Ogimi is known for the longevity of its population. The synergy between people and between people and nature is one of the reasons for longevity, and co-ops provide a place for interaction.

*The taste of honey varies depending on seasonal nectar sources.

Kunigami Village

Nature and people co-exist in Yanbaru.

With their unique chirps, "Pikkuwee," butasur indicus, a migratory bird, are flying over the Kunigami Village forest park, an everyday event for this area. But, in other parts of Japan, one must travel to remote locations to see such rare birds. Okinawa is only 0.1% of Japan's total land. However, one-fourth of all the creatures inhabit in Japan live in Okinawa.

More than half of all the birds which inhabit Japan exist in Okinawa. Of the 300 types of birds found in Okinawa, 270 are migratory and stop in Okinawa during migration.

"Yanbaru is a vital place for those birds," comments Mr. K, the nature guide.

"The forest park is full of surprises. Yanbaru Kuina maintains its territory by pairing with its mates. You can distinguish the chirps of paired Kuina from single Kuina. You can also discover the mysteriously woven cobwebs of spiders, frogs playing hide-and-peek, and lazy newts."

The diversity is not only limited to the forest. In these areas, one can find various butterflies maintaining their territories by segregating hostplants. Throughout history, the residents of Yanbaru have co-existed with nature. If you observe and listen closely, you can find their heritage everywhere.

Yanbaru Kuina (Okinawa Rail) is a bird species in the rail family endemic to the northern part of Okinawa island. Their existence was confirmed in 1973, and the flightless birds are classified as endangered.



Kunigami Village Tourism Association
(the nearest Michi no Eki is Yuiyui Kunigami)
1569-1 Aza-Okuma, Kunigami-son, Kunigamison-gun,
Okinawa, Japan, 905-1412
Tel:0980-41-2420,
Hours: 8:30 - 17:00
(Closed on Jan. 1)

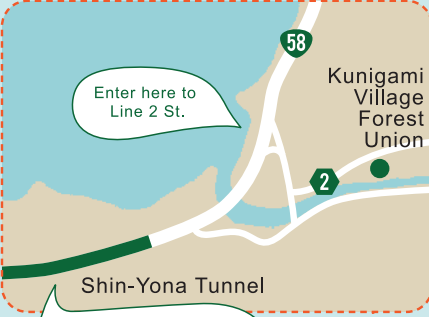


Michi no Eki Yuiyui Kunigami
Enjoy souvenir shops, restaurants, and playgrounds.

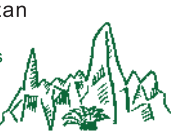
Enjoy watching whales with their calves and marine sports.

Kunigami Supermarket
Buy fresh sashimi and everyday items, and even order ingredients for your barbecues.

Hentona Main Shopping Street
Okinawa's north-most shopping street with restaurants, bars, sushi, bistro, and hotels.



Daiseikirinzan
Experience the vastness of the earth.

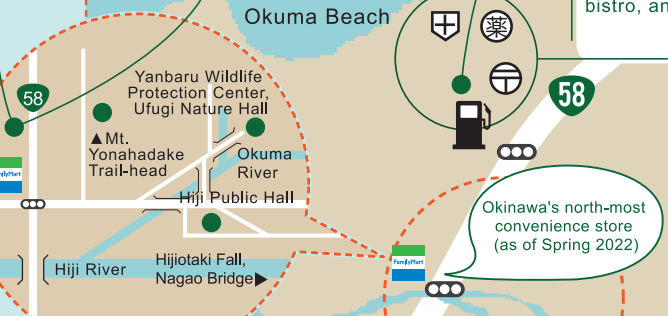


Hedo-Misaki Cape Tourist Information is located inside the shop, **HEADLINE**. Next is Fushikubu Cafe, with panoramic views of the areas and the observatory terrace.



Sunrise: ☀
Sunset: 🌇

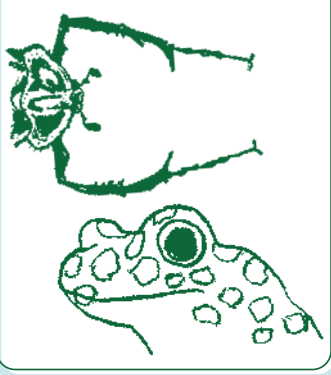
Yanbaru Kuina Ecology Exhibition and Educational Center
Observe Yanbaru Kuina in its wildlife state with the information provided by the local guides.



Kaigin Athletic Field
Pro athletes come to train in this field.

Huge Statue Yanbaru Kuina
Turn right to Yanbaru Sake Brewery

Yanbaru Wildlife Protection Center, Ufugi Nature Hall
Spend leisurely time discovering the creatures and rare books.



Bashofu (Abaca-cloth) Hall
Check out the Instagram @kijoka_bashofu before visiting
Ito Bashofu

Yanbaru Sake Brewery
The aroma of steamed rice and Awamori(Okinawa's original shochu) fills the brewery.

Restaurant Emi-no-mise
Enjoy Okinawan soul foods made with indigenous wisdom and nature.

Kijoka Tabuku (Paddy Field)
Mountains surround the paddy field. Visitors can enjoy the blossom of Iris Ochroleuca and the local craft in April.

Old-Ogimi Village Hall Building
Spared from the war, it is the oldest concrete building in Okinawa.

Kijoka Village Entrance
Iris Ochroleuca

Ogimi Farm Revitalization Center
Buy local foods from "The Village of Longevity."

Ogimi Shikuwasa (Citrus Depressa) Park
A great place to learn about shikuwasa: it serves excellent sweets.

Hanagasa (costume hat) at Henan Bridge

Turn right to **Ta-Taki Fall**

Ta-Taki Fall, (Henan River Ta-Taki Parking Area)
There is no promenade to the waterfall. Preserved in its natural state, many wild animals inhabit the area. The tourists can soak in water and relax.



Flying Spider Monkey Tree Fern *Mucuna macrocarpa*

The first soba flower blossom in Japan.

Gesashi Uppama Beach
The water is clear blue even on cloudy days.

Ogimi Village Tourism Association
(the nearest Michi no Eki is Ogimi)
Yanbaru Area Tourist Attraction Guides
95 Tsunami Ogimi-son, Kunigami-gun, Okinawa, 905-1318
Tel: 0980-50-5707,
<https://ogimi-kanko.com>,
Hours:9:00 - 17:00
(Open all year around)



Higashi Village Tourism Council
(Higashi Village Fureai Hirugi Park)
54-1 Aza-Kesashi, Higashi-son, Kunigami-gun, Okinawa, 905-1205
Tel: 0980-51-2655,
<https://higashi-kanko.jp>,
Hours:9:00 - 17:00
(Closed from Dec. 29 to Jan.3 and the Obon Season)



Fureai Hirugi Park
Mangrove. Observe tropical plants growing in backwater areas where seawater and freshwater merge.



We are proud to have Yanbaru designated as a world natural heritage site. However, a warning is due. We have relied heavily on the grace and resilience of nature in the past. Here in Yanbaru, we co-exist with nature by respecting and integrating it into everyday life. Protecting rare and endangered species is essential. Above all, we want to hand down to the next generation our tradition of a diversified lifestyle of nature and humans.

Michi no Eki are roadside stations located along roads and highways where travelers stop to rest. The facilities also include shops and restaurants to promote local tourism and trade.

Yanbaru Kuina (Okinawa Rail) is a bird species in the rail family endemic to the northern part of Okinawa island. Their existence was confirmed in 1973, and the flightless birds are classified as endangered.

Indian Coral Trees on Miyagi Island
An Indian coral tree in front of Shioya Bridge welcomes visitors. In April, the tree blossoms with bright red flowers.



Shioya Bay
The town is usually serene and peaceful, but during the Ungami (The God of Sea Festival), it becomes lively and filled with excitement.

Michi no Eki Sunrise Higashi
Try the specialty goods and foods made with pineapple.



Fukuchigawa Seaside Park

Mt. Nekumachiji
The mountain's elevation is 360.7m, the highest in Ogimi Village. There is a trekking trail for beginners. The branch-twined hedge, Igimi Hakinzo, keeps the animals out and can be found in some trails.



Ishiyama Observatory
Imagine life in the Itajiri Forest. An excellent place for stargazing.

Mutabaru Observatory
The incredible view of the Shioya Bay of the East China Sea appears at the end of the deep forest.



The Culture and Sports Memorial Hall

Shioya Police Station

Tonokiya Camp Site
If you want to avoid camping solo, this is the place.



The Museum of the Mountain and Water Life
The museum is located in the Noguchigera (the Okinawa Woodpecker) habitat. Visitors can encounter wild boars and habu snakes.



The Buttress Rooted Looking-Glass Tree
The buttress roots are streamlined in varying sizes. The tree is the largest of its kind on the Okinawa mainland.



Yama no Eki (mountain roadside station) Takae Shop
Ward-operated general merchandise shop with natural motifs. Next to the shop is an observatory where visitors can view the mountains.

Azalea Eco-Park
Enjoy a walk through the Azalea garden. View the entire starry sky at night from the parking lot.



Hiji Otake Fall Mountain Trails.
Find Akahige (the Ryujkyu Robins) during hikes.



Hikagehigo (Flying Spider-Monkey Tree Fern) Plant
Cherry Blossom

Yanbaru Learning Forest.
Turn right to Yanbaru Kuina Ecology Center.

Great view of Yanbaru forests.

Yes! There's a castle even in Yanbaru.

The shop has a nostalgic feel to it.

The waterfall is the protector and sacred site of Kijoka.

Enjoy chestnut picking and playing with wooden toys.

Inn is located in the deep forest of the northern Okinawa mainland.

Yanbaru Learning Forest.

Michi no Eki Yanbaru Pineapple Hill Aha

U.S. Military North Training Field

Nejame Castle Site

Nagao Bridge

Kijoka Co-ops

Nanataki Fall of Kijoka

Ogimi Village

Taiho Dam

Fukuchi Dam

Esu Public Hall

Yuinohama Park

Shioya Police Station

The King of Oyster Monument

Climb up the hill to the Mutabaru Observatory

The Entrance to Bunagaya Square

Igimi Hakinzo Observatory