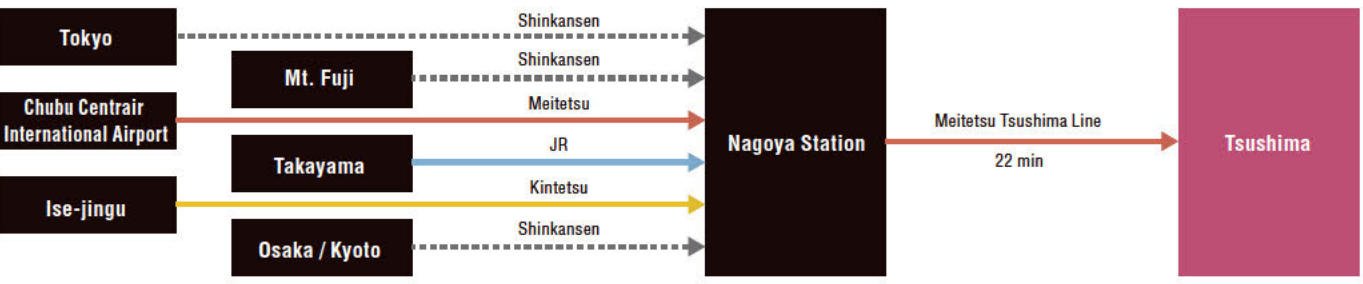


Getting to Tsushima



The True Face of Tsushima



Your own story starts here.
DISCOVER TSUSHIMA





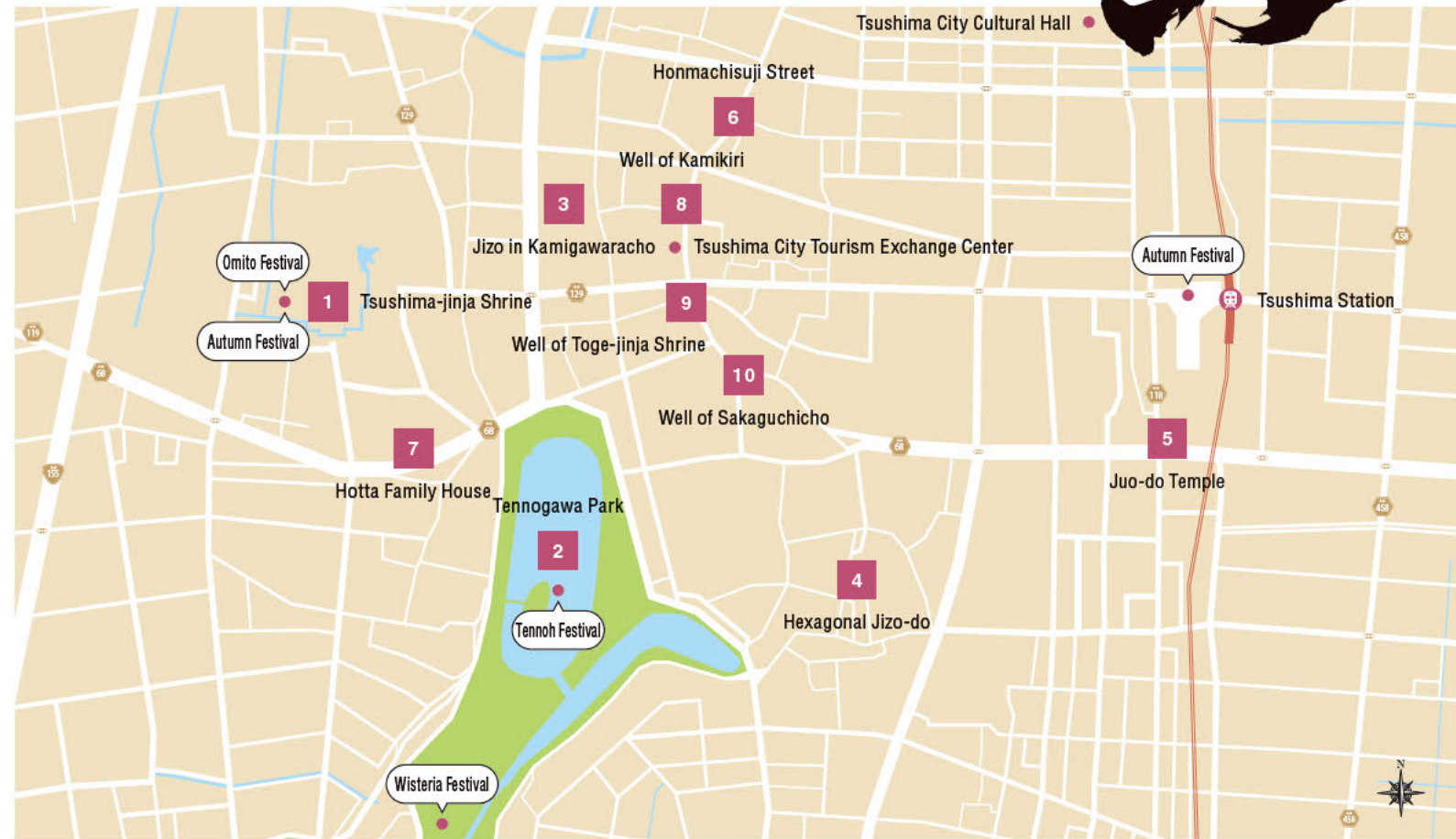
 Search for tourist info on Tsushima, or contribute your own experiences.

#cooltsushima

Tsushima: A City of Casual, Endless Fun



Tsushima — a port town that prospered from medieval times to the early modern period, with a rich historical connection to Oda Nobunaga and other commanders of the Warring States Period. Founded in the year 540, Tsushima-jinja Shrine is the headquarters of the Tenno religion, which has 3,000 shrines across the country. The Owari Tsushima Tennen Festival is one of Japan's three biggest river festivals and has been registered on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List. Go beyond the typical tourist sites and discover what appeals to you personally about Tsushima, a city of easygoing, non-stop fun all throughout the year.



Four Major Festivals

Known as the four great festivals, these festivals are held in each of the four seasons, and they display the wealth and vitality of Tsushima, which began as a town built for Tsushima-jinja Shrine and grew into a prosperous port town on the Tenno River. We invite you to come and experience these festivals for yourself!

Omoto Festival P.5



Owari Tsushima Wisteria Festival P.7



Owari Tsushima Tennen Festival P.9



Owari Tsushima Autumn Festival P.12



Festival date / location:
1st day of the 2nd month of the lunar calendar / Tsushima-jinja Shrine

Festival date / location:
Late April to early May / Tennogawa Park

Festival date / location:
Evening Festival: 4th Saturday of July; Morning Festival: the following Sunday / Tennogawa Park

Festival date / location:
1st Sunday of October and the preceding Saturday / Tsushima Station and Tsushima-jinja Shrine area.



The First Tea Ceremony of the New Year
A “break time” culture taken root in Tsushima

“Hatsugama” is the day on which we begin practicing the tea ceremony in the new year — a tea ceremony New Year’s party. *Hatsugama* parties are held all over the place in Tsushima.

Japanese Tradition, Machiya, and Matcha Tea Culture

The matcha tea culture that began in the Muromachi period took root in the merchant culture of the Edo period, and tea ceremonies were frequently held by the village headmen of Tsushima and their associates. Matcha tea culture still survives in the *machiya* (traditional townhouses) of present-day Tsushima.

These houses have tea-ceremony rooms for showing hospitality to visitors, and some houses have multiple tea rooms. Even today, the custom of enjoying matcha tea as part of daily life lives on, and tea ceremonies are held in tea rooms opened to the public. Matcha tea can also be enjoyed at confectioners and teashops within the city, making matcha tea culture something that anyone can experience.

Profiting from Hatsumode, the Year’s First Visit to Tsushima-jinja Shrine

Japanese has lots of other words that begin with *hatsu* like *hatsugama* does, such as *hatsuyume* (one’s first dream of the year) and *hatsuwara* (one’s first laugh of the year). One more of these is *hatsumode*, an event that cannot be missed. Tsushima-jinja Shrine is the headquarters for the worship of Gozutennō, the god of receiving blessings and avoiding misfortune. Some 300,000 people visit during the first three days of the New Year alone.

Additionally, the Chinowa-kuguri ritual that is part of Nigimitama-sha Shrine’s annual festival from Jan. 4 to 7 is a New Year’s event in which people pass through a grass ring constructed at Tsushima-jinja Shrine. Doing so is believed to ensure a year of safety and good health.



Tea room (Hotta Family House)



Stone mills for grinding matcha tea at a teashop



Matcha tea and Japanese confections



Chinowa-kuguri ritual



Funamiso
A local dish handed down through the ages

Every plate of the local cuisine is overflowing with local history, culture, and lifestyle. Tsushima prospered in ancient times as a port town at the mouth of the Kiso River. That’s why freshwater fish dishes made from carp, minnow, eel, and so on have become traditional dishes.

Fan-Favorite Freshwater Fish Dishes

Funamiso is a dish consisting of carp (*funa*) and soybeans stewed in brown sugar and red miso for a long period of time. This area was originally a riverside district, and carp from the nearby river was an important source of protein. In order to get rid of the distinctive odor of freshwater fish, miso is used and the fish is thoroughly stewed, which makes the fish and soybeans surprisingly tender. This is very much a typical dish to find at local delicatessens in winter.

Tasting Famous Tsushima Dishes

Tsushima has numerous local dishes and special products.



Festival Food: Moroko Sushi
Oshizushi made with salty-sweet stewed minnow (*moroko*). Adding a rich flavor to the minnow cuts the distinctive odor of freshwater fish and helps to preserve it. It is a dish when family and friends get together for the Tennoh Festival and Autumn Festival.



Hearty Jubako-udon
During the Edo period, the townsfolk of Tsushima would bring lunches of udon or soba noodles to the Tennoh Festival or on flower viewing outings. Those lunches were always carefully arranged with handmade noodles in a lacquered box, or *jubako*.



Koshizunegi, a Creation of Tsushima
Cultivation of koshizunegi onions began in the Koshizu area of Tsushima during the mid-Edo period, and they were presented to the Tokugawa shogunate. They have also been designated a traditional vegetable of Aichi.



Yumenoka, a New Strawberry Brand
The strawberries of Tsushima, grown in fertile soil from the Kiso River, are large and nicely shaped with outstanding flavor.



The Omito Festival
A Bonfire Festival to Herald the Coming of Spring

|| Tsushima's Impactful Fire Festival

Of the more than 90 festivals that take place throughout the year at Tsushima-jinja Shrine, the Omito Festival is the second-most important after the Tennoh Festival, and it is held on the first day of the second month of the lunar calendar each year. It is known as a thrilling fire festival in which two large lit torches, one meter in diameter and ten meters in length, are carried in one go through the tower gate. Visitors compete to take home the embers of the torches, which are used as insect repellent or lightning protection in fields; or if used as chopsticks, are thought to prevent toothaches.



|| Yasaka-jinja Shrine to the West, Tsushima-jinja Shrine to the East

Called Gozutennosha Shrine in ancient times, Tsushima-jinja Shrine is the headquarters for over 3,000 other shrines of the same name across Japan. It was the custom in the Edo Period for people on pilgrimages to Ise to visit Tsushima as well, and those who went only to Ise-jingu Shrine were considered to have done just half the pilgrimage. Even today, the shrine is affectionately known as "Tsushima-san" and "Tenno-san," and about one million people per year go on a pilgrimage to Tsushima. Oda Nobunaga deeply venerated Tsushima-jinja Shrine as the guardian, and the Oda family crest is the same as the Tsushima-jinja Shrine sacred crest — a Japanese quince. Furthermore, Tsushima-jinja Shrine was deeply venerated by the Toyotomi and Tokugawa families, which made great contributions to it, and the tower gate and sanctuary building have both been designated national important cultural properties.



Tsushima-jinja Shrine



Tsushima-jinja Shrine sacred crest

Sanctuary building donated by Masako, wife of Matsudaira Tadayoshi, son of Tokugawa Ieyasu



Tower gate donated by Toyotomi Hideyoshi



South gate donated by Hideyori, son of Toyotomi Hideyoshi



Manabashi Dishes
Food Fit for a God

This ancient Japanese technique involves preparing carp without touching it by hand, handling the fish with a knife and Manabashi only. Manabashi are long chopsticks made from wood or steel with handles on them, used when preparing fish.

|| Carp Manabashi Dishes

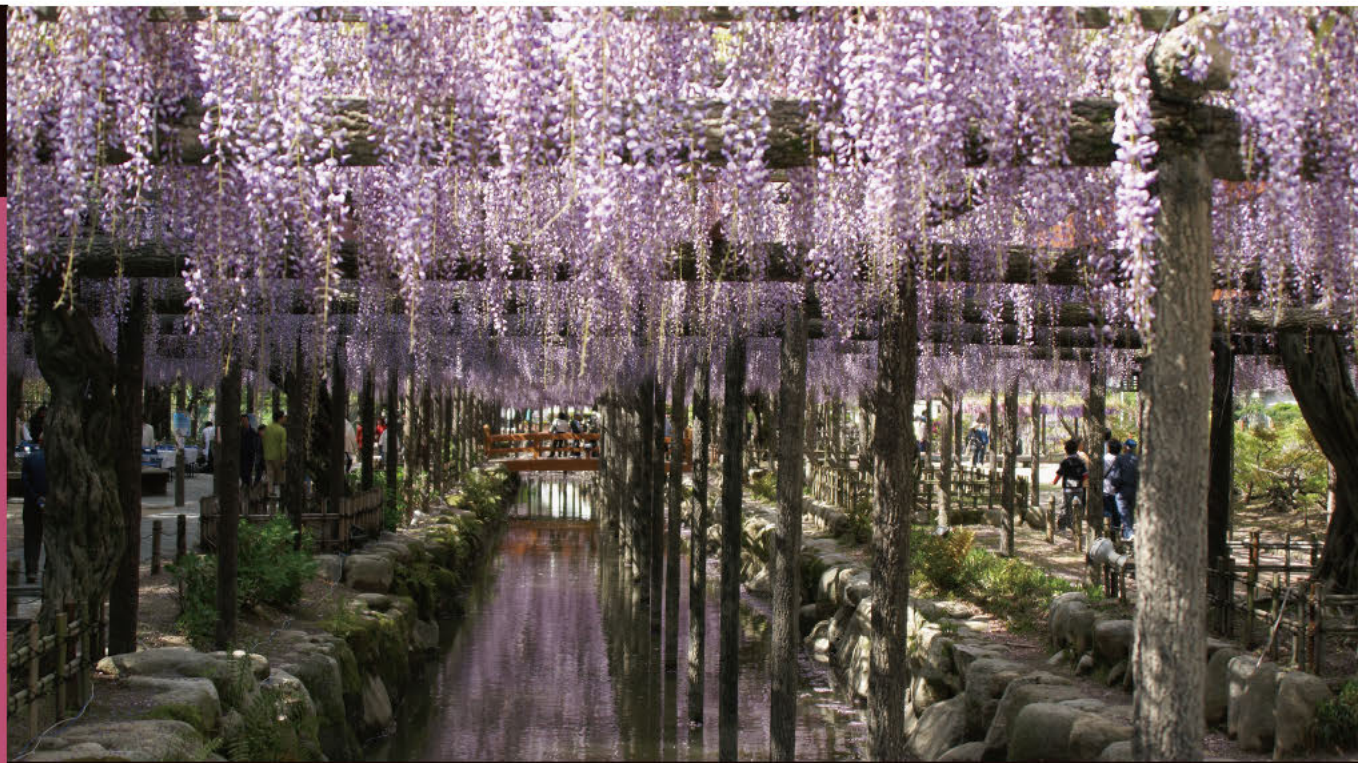
Tsushima-jinja Shrine hosts the Spring Agata Festival in the second month of the ancient lunar calendar, during which people pray for bountiful grain harvests, and the Autumn Agata Festival, at which people give thanks for the gods' blessing of bountiful ripe grain in the eleventh month of the lunar calendar. During these festivals, it is customary for carp from the twelve villages along the Nikko River to be offered to the gods. After the festival has ended, this carp is prepared using manabashi and knives as an offering to the gods. Salt and grated daikon radish are added for flavor, and after it has been offered, the shrine visitors partake of it. Because it is unusual for the priests themselves to perform this ritual, it has been widely known since ancient times as the "Tsushima Koi Manabashi Dishes Ritual."

|| Kagura Dancing by Four Maidens Bearing Sakaki Plants

At Tsushima-jinja Shrine, a Daidaiko Kagura performance takes place from April 1 to 13 each year. The Yagumomai-dance is performed, and carp "manabashi dishes" are handed out. During the Muromachi Period, the family serving Tsushima-jinja Shrine as Oshi (priests) were active as missionaries, working to spread the Tenno religion across the country. Oshi prayed and left talismans at homes that sheltered them in every region, and whenever believers came to Tsushima, Kagura music and dancing would be performed, and the visitors' worship and lodging needs would be taken care of. However, Oshi activities declined with the abolition of hereditary control of shrines, so the Tsushima-jinja Shrine Daidaiko sect was formed. During the Daidaiko Kagura season, Tsushima-jinja Shrine would bustle with visitors from Daidaiko shrines around the country.



Yagumomai-dance



The Town of Wisteria
Springtime in Tsushima: The Owari Tsushima Wisteria Festival

Delicate, light purple flowers hanging down like waterfalls, wisteria blossoms look beautiful as they sway in the breeze. Tsushima is so famous for its wisteria, it used to be called “the town of wisteria.”

Beautiful Curtains of Wisteria a Symbol of Springtime in Tsushima

The Owari Tsushima Wisteria Festival, which takes place every year from late April to early May, has preserved traces of “the town of wisteria” down to the present. A magnificent wisteria arbor 275 m in length, 5,034 m² in area, can be found at Tennogawa Park, illuminated by sunlight with a sweet aroma that wafts from the tufts of vividly resplendent flowers. The wisteria blossoms cast beautiful reflections on the surface of the canal that flows beneath the arbor, which is lit up in the evening during the flower-viewing season, making the radiant, fairytale-like flowers look even more exceptional.

Rare Yaekokuryu Wisteria

This wisteria arbor, said to be one of the greatest in the East, includes 114 trees of 12 different varieties, with kyushaku wisteria being the most common. One of those varieties, yaekokuryu wisteria, is very rare, and there are few opportunities to see it. It has a strong scent and bunches of round, grape-like blossoms. There is only one of these in the park.



Usubeni Wisteria



Yaekokuryu Wisteria



Shiro- and Murasaki-Kapitan Wisteria



Illumination



Minazuki (a Japanese Dessert)

Minazuki
Seasonal Japanese Dessert Culture

The sixth month of the lunar calendar is called Minazuki. In the Shimoshinden district of Tsushima, the cultivation of Japanese apricot, Japanese hawthorn, and other fruit trees once thrived, and when the fruit ripened, Japanese desserts would be made from them. Additionally, manju (sweet bean-paste buns) are mentioned in the *Choshu Zasshi* as famous products of Tsushima from the mid-Edo Period. In addition to Tsushima’s matcha tea culture, numerous Japanese confection shops that deal in seasonal Japanese desserts and *manju* can be found.

Akada and Kutsuwa, Famous Tsushima Products

Akada and *kutsuwa* have been made by the Tsushima-jinja Shrine gate since ancient times, and pilgrims have bought them as gifts to take home since the olden days. Said to be Japan’s hardest confections, they are associated with Tsushima-jinja Shrine. *Akada* is a simple confection made by kneading rice flour and then deep-frying it in oil. Tradition has it that Kobo Daishi offered it to Tsushima-jinja Shrine as a prayer to dispel a plague in the Heian Period, and that was when pilgrims began seeking to buy it in order to obtain its plague-preventing benefits. *Kutsuwa* is a confection made by kneading white rice and mochi rice in boiling water, steaming it, adding sugar, and then deep-frying it in oil. It is shaped to resemble the grass ring used in the Chinowa-kuguri ritual, and it allegedly gets its name from its similarity to the bit (*kutsuwa*) of a sacred shrine horse.



Traditional Japanese-style confections of Tsushima



Akada being sold in the late Edo Period (Owari Meishozue)



Akada and Kutsuwa

尾張津島天王祭



The Owari Tsushima Tennenoh Festival
Light and Water Theater — The Owari Tsushima Tennenoh Festival

The Owari Tsushima Tennenoh Festival, counted among Japan's top three river festivals, is said to be the most beautiful of Japan's many summer festivals. It boasts nearly 600 years of tradition as the festival of Tsushima-jinja Shrine, and records say that even Oda Nobunaga attended it. The Danjiri float of the Owari Tsushima Tennenoh Festival has been designated a national Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property, and it was registered on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List as one of the "Yama, Hoko, Yatai, float festivals in Japan" on Dec. 1, 2016. The Evening Festival takes place the fourth Saturday of July, and the Morning Festival takes place the following morning.

Resplendent Makiwara Floats at the Evening Festival

The Evening Festival begins when you see the paper lanterns of five Makiwara floats lit up by candles. The appearance of the leisurely procession of the Makiwara floats festooned with 365 individual lanterns arranged atop the float in a hemispherical shape, representing one year, with a tall pole in the middle with 12 lanterns representing the number of months is a resplendent sight like something out of an ancient picture scroll.

Tennenoh Festival Sequence of Events

The Tennenoh Festival consists of numerous events in addition to the Evening and Morning Festivals.



Child (Chigo) Parade (before Evening Festival)
Children wearing beautiful clothing are carried on shoulders to the festival boats and then pray for the festival to proceed without problems at Tsushima-jinja Shrine.



Mikoshi (portable shrine) Parade (morning of Evening Festival day)
A lovely procession stretching for 100 meters carries the mikoshi shrines from Tsushima-jinja Shrine to Tennogawa Park.



Mikoshi Returning (day of Morning Festival)
When the six children riding each float alight during the Morning Festival, the mikoshi shrines return to Tsushima-jinja Shrine.



Musical Performance of Chigo (day of Morning Festival)
After the Mikoshi returning, a performance by children is held in Tsushima-jinjas' Shrine hall for praying where the object of worship housed has returned.

Brilliant Danjiri Floats at the Morning Festival

Six Danjiri floats, lavishly adorned, make their appearance. Ten polemen jump from the bow of the floats into the water and swim to the otabisho. They then dash up to Tsushima-jinja Shrine to offer their banner-poles to the shrine deities. If drops of water from offered banner-poles get on you, it is thought to heal illness and injury.



地藏盆



Jizo-bon
Jizo-bon Heralding the End of Summer

The 24th of each month is the sacred festival for Jizo, and the 24th after the Bon festival in August is called Jizo-bon. Jizo-bon events take place mainly in the Kinki Region — particularly Kyoto — as well as the Chubu and Kansai regions. The event is for giving thanks to Jizo, the deity who protects children, and for praying for the growth of the community's children. Jizo-bon is celebrated all over the place within Tsushima. Here are some of the Jizo statues you may encounter in Tsushima.



The Hexagonal Jizo-do Temple in Minatocho

This famous hexagonal Jizo-do enshrines six Jizo statues. This Jizo-do is unusual for its six-sided lantern shape, and according to religious belief, in the past, whenever a thief broke into a house, the Jizo statues would turn into six priests, chasing away the intruder and protecting the town.



MAP4

The Juo-do Temple in Imaichibacho

A Jizo and the Juo are enshrined here. The Juo are the ten judges of the afterlife, including Yamaraja the king of Hell. It was believed that they would determine, through deliberation with Jizo, whether the departed went to Heaven or Hell.



MAP5

The Substitute Jizo in Kamigawaracho

Deeply revered as the Jizo for eye diseases and the Jizo endowed with milk, this Jizo is known as the "sweating Jizo" because it sweats all over its body in place of the mother during difficult childbirth.



MAP3



Tennogawa Park
Equinox Flowers Painting the Riverbanks

Equinox flowers, which bloom around the autumn equinox at Tennogawa Park, attract viewers with the color of their bright flowers when they bloom.

The Seasonally Changing Atmosphere of Nature and History

Tennogawa Park extends around a pond that was created when the Tenno River, a tributary of the Kiso River that flowed north-to-south through the city until the Edo Period, was dammed. At Tennogawa Park, visitors can enjoy the flowers and festivals that differ from one season to the next. In spring, cherry blossom trees surround the park in blooms. Around Golden Week (in the beginning of May), the baton is passed to the wisteria. The water lilies around the bridge to Nakanoshima Island begin to bloom in early summer, and visitors enjoy the sight of their dainty white petals. Then, in late July, the park is packed with people as a site of the Owari Tsushima Tennen Festival. In fall, the entire park is draped in colorful leaves. When winter comes and the snow falls, the scenery at Tennogawa Park is different once again.

Eight Views of the Tenno River That Convey Its Scenic Beauty

The changing of the colorful seasons enhances the beauty of Tennogawa Park, a park of flowers, greenery, and water. The landscape during the changing seasons has received wide appreciation as eight scenic views of the Tenno River.



(1) Dreams of heroism at the Tennen Festival (Owari Tsushima Tennen Festival)



(2) Tennogawa Park disappearing into the silvery snow (snowy landscape)



(3) Water lilies surrounding an island (water lilies)



(4) Fairytale-like Nakanoshima Island (Nakanoshima and Miyoshijima)



(5) A road cherry blossoms in full bloom in spring (cherry tree-lined embankment)



(6) Wisteria clusters painting the canal (wisteria arbor)



(7) An ancient road and the Nakaji embankment (rows of pines at the Nakaji embankment)



(8) Brocade reflected in pond (fall leaves and ginkgo trees)



The Owari Tsushima Autumn Festival
Karakuri Puppet Art

The Owari Tsushima Autumn Festival takes place on the first Sunday of October and the previous Saturday, and its vibrant colors are enjoyed by men and women, young and old alike throughout the city. During the festival, sixteen extravagant floats from four areas — Nanakiri, Mukaijima, Imaichiba, and Kamori — make their way in lively fashion, and one of the most eye-catching things about them is the *karakuri* dolls. Accompanied by Tsushima festival music, these moving figures are captivating to watch as they write words, fly through the air, and so on, giving a realistic performance that attracts onlookers.

The Lively and Vigorous Ishidorimatsuri Festival

People parade through the streets, vigorously making noise by beating gongs and drums. Three of the floats — Hokubu, Chubu, and Nanbu — were introduced around 1915, and Karausuchō float was introduced in 1956. When the Hokubu, Chubu, and Nanbu Ishidorimatsuri Festival floats come together, a powerful “Ishidorimatsuri Festival Float Competition” is held by the tower gate of Tsushima-jinja Shrine.



Kagura

Floats decorated with carvings of dragons, lions, castles, and more on their roofs play *kagura* drums in their respective parts of the city.



Kodomo-jishi (Children's Lion Parade)

Lively children in *happi* coats at the head of an adorable lion. Carrying wooden clappers and bells, they call out “*Wasshoi chirorin!*” as they parade down the street.



How Dignified! Kamori Floats at the Height of Spring

These majestic floats surrounded by pink flowers got their start during the Bunka Period (1804-1818).





MAP6

Historical Districts
Nostalgic Townscapes

Tsushima flourished not only as a port town, but also as a shrine town for Tsushima-jinja Shrine. Tsushima's financial assets supported the Oda family during the Warring States period, and the city came to be associated with the Toyotomi and Tokugawa families. Within the city are numerous old-fashioned districts and historical sites that harken back to the days of old, imbued with a sense of history.

Walking through a Town with a Feeling of History

The area around Honmachi Street is full of historical sights, where the appearance hasn't changed since the Muromachi Period, and a jumbled thicket of narrow lanes remains. Lattice doors, storehouses, rooftop shrines, and other traces of merchants' houses also remain, preserving evidence to the modern day of the city's development as a port town and commercial city. Temples proliferated as the town grew, and there are close to ninety temples within the city. Visitors to temples can enjoy a variety of activities that include Zen meditation, sutra writing, and Buddhist image tracing.

Three Historical Wells

Tsushima has a great deal of underground water from the Kiso River — a land with plentiful well water. Wells are indicated on several street corners in old maps of Tsushima. These wells were used as common wells for local residents in the Edo Period. Their existence had been forgotten with the arrival of municipal waterworks, but old wells are now seen as value items. Three wells remain along Honmachi Street.

Hotta Family House, an Important Cultural Property

Build in the mid-Edo period, this example of typical townhouse architecture that attests to Tsushima's prosperity has been designated a national important cultural property. This residence consists of a main house and three storehouses. The roof features *udatsu* walls for preventing the spread of fires, and the spacious earthen floor of the entrance hall features a rare *kojin-kamado* oven. There are also tea rooms, a unique aspect of matcha tea culture.



MAP7

Street: Kamikiri, Sakaguchicho, and Toge-jinja Shrine.



Well of Kamikiri



Well of Toge-jinja Shrine



Well of Sakaguchi-cho



Brewing
A Brewing Culture That Supports Washoku (Japanese Cuisine)

One of the aspects of the *washoku* (Japanese cuisine) most noted worldwide is that of sake, which has even become popular overseas. Brewing is used to make not only sake but soy sauce and miso as well, and that brewing culture can still be found in Tsushima.

Sake-brewing in Tsushima

Sake has a long history, and because sake was used in Shinto rituals, it was believed to have mystical powers. The *Kojiki*, Japan's oldest history book, records that Takehaya Susano-no-mikoto, an enshrined deity at Tsushima-jinja Shrine, conquered a giant serpent by making it drink sake and fall asleep. Sake brewing developed not only because of Tsushima's advantageous location as a riverside district, but also because of its flourishing shrine religion. There used to be many breweries here, and the storehouses are still lined along the street. Clean groundwater from the three rivers of Kiso, quality rice from the Nobi Plain, and a climate and geography ideal for sake brewing give Tsushima's sake a deep flavor. Sakagura (sake breweries) can be toured by appointment, so visitors can see what the process looks like.



A Long-standing Shop with the Atmosphere of a Commercial District

The main condiments used as the basis for the *washoku*, such as sake and miso, are almost all fermented foods made using *koji* (aspergillus mold), so *koji* is an indispensable part of Japanese food culture. Sweet amazake made using *koji* has been drunk as a source of nutrition for warding off the summer heat since the Edo Period. Today, known as a "drip you can drink," it has gained much attention as a beverage that benefits beauty and health. Aspects of Tsushima's brewing culture involving sake and *koji* can still be found along Honmachi Street.

