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TOTTORI

The Land, The Lives, The Stories



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Unbeaten, Underrated, Unexpected: A Tottori Story

There is something about the breeze you feel when you first land in Tottori. It comes with a shade of tension from the unexpected, blended with the great expectations for what you're just about to set foot in. Tottori is full of nature-made allure — from its vast sand dunes and a mysterious deep-in-the-mountain temple that no historical sources can explain, to its endless resources for adventures and delicious local produce that stretches from everything from tender meat, giant (and oh, so sweet!) watermelons to creamy milk soft serve and persimmons that are so sugar-rich you'd almost think they're artificial. And yet, despite hiding all this under its thin veil, Tottori remains, still, mostly undiscovered to foreign travelers in Japan.

For those who dare to visit Tottori, however, this least populated prefecture in Japan, suddenly turns into a welcoming home away from home. It's the people who'd gladly open up to you on its streets, the laid-back way of life you'd find yourself being slightly jealous of, the immersed-in-life farmers who carry on undisturbed as you pass by. Tottori's charm lies in the small things in life we have come to appreciate more in recent years. It's a place you'll find yourself wanting to peel layer by layer until you figure out how to explain the spell it casts on visitors.

In this book, we have collected a selected combination of Tottori's many charms, from east to west, hoping that you will visit, explore and feel the prefecture. We hope that this book will help you pen a new story of Tottori — and find your own as you create it.

Welcome to Tottori — it's small, but it has much to offer.

Tottori, facing the Sea of Japan to its north and the Chugoku Mountains to its south, is a coastal region in southern Honshu neighboring the prefectures of Hyogo to the right and Shimane to the left. Easily accessible from Tokyo with daily 80-minute flights, Tottori is the least populated prefecture in Japan — and one of the least explored.

To those who aren't fully acquainted with Tottori yet, the prefecture is best known for three things: being so sparsely populated (less than Suginami Ward, one of Tokyo's residential wards) that there's more sand and mischievous *yokai* (mythical creatures) than humans; being the birthplace of some of Japan's best known manga and anime (think *Detective Conan*, *GeGeGe no Kitaro* and *A Distant Neighborhood*), and being the last of Japan's 47 prefectures to open a Starbucks store. The last one only happened in 2015.

Those who know Tottori better, however, will smile politely and tell you that while all of the above is true, there are some layers to each of them. Yes, the dunes spread as far as the eye can see, but the stars above them are equally infinite. The *yokai* are mischievous, but they can also be kind, compassionate and, most importantly, coexist with people. Their existence is immensely influenced by local superstitions, a characteristic common to the people of Japan's spiritual birthplace, San'in, which Tottori is part of. *Detective Conan*'s author, Gosho Aoyama, was born and raised in Tottori until his early youth, but he isn't the only mastermind the prefecture has raised: there was Shoji Ueda, the photographer who made the dunes his canvas and went to represent Japan at its best in Europe; the founders of Kirin Brewery and Asics, Chozo Isono and Kihachiro Onitsuka, respectively; Shigeru Mizuki, the father of *GeGeGe no Kitaro*, and dozens of other manga artists, including the legendary Jiro Taniguchi, author of *A Distant Neighborhood*, who grew up, struggled and left a legacy in Tottori. And while Tottori was indeed the last Japan prefecture to welcome the Seattle coffee chain, by the time the franchise had arrived, Tottori had already established a "competitive" brand called Sunaba — a play on words meaning "sand pit" that rhymes with how Japan calls Starbucks: "Staba."

By now, you've most likely discovered that these are all no coincidences. Tottori is a small prefecture with a big attitude, dry humor, a never losing spirit and countless potentials. It's also stunning all year-round.

In spring, the Utsubuki Park in Kurayoshi City is covered with over 4,000 cherry trees blooming over a peaceful, quintessential Japanese landscape. The sand dunes open the season for dynamic adventures, such as sandboarding, paragliding and fat biking. In summer, some 20,000 fireflies illuminate the Fukumaki mountainside forest, creating an otherworldly experience you can rarely see in Japan. The summer is also the season for the famous extra sweet Tottori watermelon, juicy Japanese pears and persimmons, and the hearty Iwagaki oysters, some of the country's largest. In autumn, the prefecture is changed into a tapestry of red, yellow and orange, starting from the majestic Mount Daisen, Tottori's undisputable shield. A hike along the Oshika Gorge or a visit to the Daisenji Temple are life-changing during this season. Then, at last, when winter comes, Tottori transforms into a winter wonderland, offering the best of winter sports opportunities in western Japan — skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing. And when one wishes to warm up, there's nothing like a soak in a hot spring and the taste of the sweet, succulent meat of snow crab, Tottori's most sublime winter delicacy.

Tottori is that kind of place — a well of surprises that awaits to be unleashed. If you dare to come along, we'll take you there, one picture, one story at a time.





ONE GRAIN OF SAND AT A TIME

The Tottori people have long believed that when life gives you sand, you make a natural wonderland. While the Tottori Sand Dunes in Japan (the largest are in northern Japan but are inaccessible to the public), they are the most welcoming and versatile. Spanning roughly 16 kilometers off the coast of the Sea of Japan and up to two kilometers wide, the dunes stretch visibly as far as the eye can see, creating an illusion of infinity, and with it, a sense of unprecedented freedom.

As soon as you reach the dunes, just a short drive from Tottori Sand Dunes Conan Airport, you'll feel this. There are painters with their canvases, relaxed camels and their patrons waiting for someone to take a quick ride, photographers of all ages and backgrounds pointing their lenses toward the dunes, paragliders flying high on the horizon, adventurers

testing their skills on bikes or sandboards on the dunes. You'll see students gathering for group photos as a momentum of their school trips and young children running carefree through the dunes. The sight of this all is a happy experience whenever you choose to visit.

Although the dunes are part of the San'in Kaigan UNESCO Global Geopark, an area designated as a national natural monument, some areas are open for (careful) adventures. From simple hikes to paragliding, sandboarding, sand sliding, fat-tire bike tours, and camel rides, there are numerous popular paid attractions that leave an unforgettable experience. The free attractions shouldn't be underestimated either — from counting your steps in the sand, summer or winter, to finding yourself in the dunes' middle of nowhere, the choices are as countless as the grains of sand.





PARAGLIDING

Offered in half-day and full-day tours, paragliding is one of the most sought-after adventures at the Tottori Sand Dunes. Taught by a team of top-level professional paragliders (among them is Japan's first hang gliding instructor), flying over the Tottori dunes is an unequalled experience. The few seconds you are in the air before landing back on the sands makes the heart pound and time stop in a near slow-motion, perfectly muted experience. The paragliding adventure comes with intensive hiking as well, thus allowing visitors to make the most of their experience.



FAT-TIRE BIKING

They look like regular bicycles, and with the dunes offering vast space to practice your riding skills, you'd think that fat biking is a piece of cake. But the moment you get on your bike, the realization that you can barely move that monster a centimeter ahead becomes very real. Fat biking on sand dunes is not for the faint-hearted nor for those who give up easily. But that's part of its charm — the harder you try, the better you become at it, and by the end of the tour, when you've completely mastered it (yes, you will), you have that indescribable feeling of accomplishment and self-pride. Taught by a friendly team of experienced instructors on a tour that takes visitors around the dunes and even helps them take exclusive no-filter photos at the perfect timing, the fat bike tour is one of the dunes' most memorable experiences.



SANDBOARDING

Available year-round where there's sand — and in Tottori, that's every day — sandboarding is nature's gift to all snowboard and surfer fans. Rent a sandboard and zip down the sand dunes as fast as you can all while taking in the crisp breeze and stunning view of the Sea of Japan spreading before you. For those refraining from dynamic sports and young children, sand sliders are also available for rent, offering an equally unique sand dunes experience.





UNDERNEATH THE STARS

Having so little of many life essentials — the presence of people, city lights, sound, buildings — can at times be an immense advantage. In Tottori, those are all scarce, but this has paved the way for one of the prefecture's most breathtaking attractions: stargazing.

Known as Japan's most beautiful destination for stargazing, Tottori proudly calls itself the "Star-Catching Prefecture" and confidently invites visitors to come and "Catch the Star" at its vast sand dunes. Here, the sky is so clean and clear, and the darkness so deep, that the Milky Way and an occasional shooting star can be seen from all locations within the prefecture. The stars feel within arm's reach and the silence is nothing but welcoming, romantic and beyond breathtaking.

With tours held throughout the year, stargazing at the dunes is a unique Tottori experience that offers a package of so much more than a stunning starry sky with your feet in the sand — it's a reconnection with nature, yourself and an experience essentially leading to the realization that no matter what you're going through, it's never as big as the borderless sky above.

Less than an hour's drive from the dunes is the Saji Astro Park, an observatory that offers an even more intimate experience underneath the stars. The leading open-air astronomical observatory in Japan, it is equipped with a reflecting telescope with an aperture of 103 centimeters and a variety of daytime and nighttime planetarium programs. It's a magical place that also offers a guest house and cottages with telescopes for one of those nights when you want to gaze at the night sky without the interruption of time.

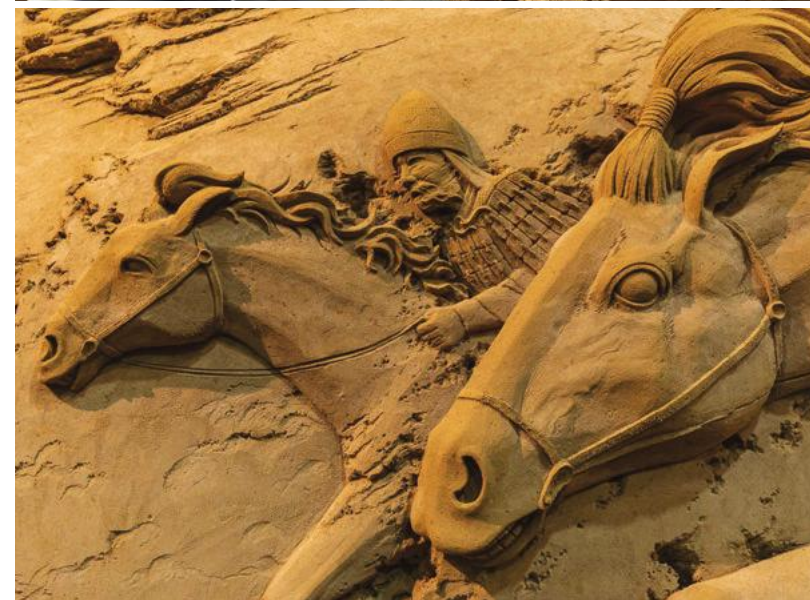


AN HOURGLASS OF THE EPHEMERAL

The sand is a vast, endless resource, but here at The Sand Museum, nothing ever lasts forever. Opened to the public in 2006, The Sand Museum, located a short walk from the dunes, is the world's first indoor sand museum dedicated to sand sculptures. Once inside, visitors are guided through three floors of a magnificent world of sand (and water) that truly captivates the essence of sand carving art — rigorousness, dedication, meticulousness; a floating through time experience that only lasts a speck of time.

The Sand Museum holds an average of one large-scale exhibition annually, produced by Katsuhiko Chaen, the expert sand creator from Japan and a winner of multiple domestic and international prizes for his artworks. Inspired to invite creatives worldwide, The Sand Museum launched its now recurring "Travel Around the World with Sand" exhibition theme. Thanks to this endeavor, Tottori is now regularly visited by world-renowned sand artists from every corner of the world who gather here to create their time-limited masterpieces.

In early 2020, shortly before the novel coronavirus pandemic would spread in Japan, 17 artists from ten countries gathered in Tottori to create the museum's 13th exhibition, "Travel Around the World with Sand: Czechia & Slovakia," which featured 19 giant sculptures — each standing several meters in height and even more in width — inspired by a folktale, event, tradition or social movements in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. At times when the world was reminded how simple pleasures in life — such as traveling — are ephemeral too, The Sand Museum, which opened the exhibition with several months of delay due to the pandemic, served as a place of comfort for travel-deprived visitors and a reminder that just like sand, nothing lasts forever — but that only gives us an excuse to live for the moment.



INTO THE WILD

White-sand beaches, infinite emerald-colored waters, countless carved tunnels, natural sea walls and caves formed by the raging waves of the Sea of Japan — step into Tottori's largest open-air naturally formed museum exhibiting all the wonders of geology.

Located within the San'in Kaigan UNESCO Global Geopark, the Uradome Coast is a stunning stretch of approximately 15-kilometer-long coastline at the far eastern tip of Tottori Prefecture. Earning a well-deserved reputation for its transparent waters (in some zones visibility extends down as far as 25 meters), and magnificent sights, the coast is an ideal destination for snorkeling, swimming, kayaking, a family beach day and other marine adventures. Home to mysterious pine trees sitting atop its rocks, to many, the coastline would be reminiscent of a beautiful bonsai tree garden. The raw beauty of this vast coastline is one of Tottori's best-kept secrets.

Taking a cruise tour is a popular way to fully embrace the beauty of the area. Hop on a vessel and let yourself be taken to unknown sites through jagged rocks and giant cliffs as you feel the power of the waves all the way through.





SEA PARADISE

Its proximity to the Sea of Japan gives Tottori the gift of some of the country's freshest and most delicious seafood. Scattered around the prefecture are many fish markets selling the latest catch from the sea. The fish markets in Sakaiminato City, one of Japan's leading fishing ports, and the Karoichi Fish Market in Tottori City are especially enjoyable for visitors. Bustling with the energy of its fishmongers and boasting delicious seafood taken in the area's freshwaters, the markets pride themselves with having Japan's largest annual crab and bluefin tuna catch. You can enjoy browsing at and tasting local delicacies, especially Tottori's famous crab in winter, Sakaiminato salmon in spring, and tuna and oysters in summer.



CRAB MATTERS

If there is one thing that makes Tottori's people more proud than their sand dunes, it's the crab. The giant, sweet, succulent meat of freshly caught bright red snow "Matsuba" crabs, the most sought after winter luxury on a Japanese table. Also known as the "crabbing prefecture" for being the region with the largest annual crab haul in Japan, Tottori worships the catch so much that it has all sorts of dishes inspired by it. Crab *nabe* (hot pot) is a highly recommended one, especially on extra cold days. Tottori also has a crab museum, the Tottori Karo Crab Aquarium, where visitors can get acquainted with crabs with the longest leg span in the world. In December 2019, Tottori's Matsuba Itsuki-boshi crab brand was certified by the Guinness Book of World Records as the most expensive crab sold at auction — it sold for 5 million yen.

THE VIBRANT COLORS OF YODOE UMBRELLAS

The former town of Yodoe (now part of Yonago City) is known for its former mass production of hand-made *Yodoegasa* — traditional umbrellas that are today mostly utilized as decorative attributes in performances and festivals. These colorful umbrellas' history dates back to the early 19th century and is linked to one clever man who came, settled and forever changed the future of this beautiful but otherwise ordinary town. His name was Shuzo Kurayoshiya, an artisan who made Yodoe his new home and opened an umbrella shop to make ends meet. The lush bamboo forests in the district's vicinity were a rich source for the primary material for making umbrellas. At the same time, the wide sandy Tottori beaches facing the Sea of Japan provided the perfect location to dry dozens of them instantly. The snowy winters in the region further increased the business' demand, which thrived in the area for over a century since its establishment. By the early 20th century, there were 71 artisan shops in Yodoe, handcrafting some 500,000 umbrellas a year at peak times.

Made of bamboo frames as a base, woven with vibrantly colored silk threads beneath the canopy, decorated with oil-coated *washi* paper, and dried until perfection in the sun, the making of a single Yodoe umbrella required 70 detailed steps that were completed in the hands of multiple artisans. The umbrellas' quality and the dedication of Yodoe's artisans made the Yodoegasa popular all over Japan. The popularity continued until around the 1950s when the increased import of cheaper foreign umbrellas contributed to their gradual decline in demand.

The Yodoegasa craft was designated as an intangible cultural property in 1976. To preserve the tradition, local artisans founded the Wagasa Denshokan to nurture the artistry of the Yodoe umbrella, inviting visitors to learn about the tradition and even opt for making Yodoegasa-inspired crafts. Thanks to the locals' efforts to preserve the tradition, today, the Yodoe area is one of the few remaining Japanese places where traditional umbrellas still thrive. In modern days, Yodoegasa are used primarily in traditional festivals, such as the Shanshan Matsuri in August, weddings and other cultural events.



SHANSHAN FESTIVAL

A local legend says that once upon a time, an old man tried to save a town suffering from a prolonged drought by dancing with an umbrella until his last breath on earth. On the day he died, it started pouring rain and the town was saved. Today, the legend lives in the form of the Shanshan Festival, the largest and most colorful festival in Tottori City, held annually in mid-August outside Tottori Station. Some 4,000 kimono-clad dancers take to the streets, dancing the night away while carrying colorful umbrellas adorned with bells. More people stand by to watch and enjoy the rhythms. The celebration is part of Japan's Obon tradition, which honors the spirits of one's ancestors. The name "shan shan" derives from a Japanese onomatopoeia for the sound of a bell ringing. The Shanshan Festival is a special night that unites locals, travelers, young and old, in celebrating life, community and nature's blessings. In 2014, it was certified by the Guinness Book of World Records as the world's largest umbrella dance lasting for over five minutes.





KIRINJISHI: TOTTORI'S LION DANCE

When the day of the festivals comes, the red-adorned *kirin* tours shrines and people's homes to ward off evil under the sounds of flutes and taiko drums. This vibrant dance's history dates back to the early years of the Edo Period, some 350 years ago, when Mitsunaka Ikeda, the first generation lord of the feudal Tottori clan, constructed the Toshogu Shrine in Tottori and decided to introduce a new form of lion dance to celebrate the achievement.

The dance greatly resembles a typical lion dance (*shishimai*), which is practiced in various regions in Japan. The most striking difference is observed in the lion's mask, which in Kirinjishi is a kirin, a mythical creature of high virtue of Chinese origin. At first, Kirinjishi was confined to the Tottori Toshogu Shrine, but it later spread to nearly 150 places in the eastern part of Tottori. Today, the dance is practiced at various shrines in the prefecture, typically during autumn and spring festivals.

A group of about ten people performs Kirinjishi, but only two constitute the kirin — one wearing the mask and moving the forelegs, the second on the backside, acting as a supporter and guide. The two are led by a red-clad, red-haired and red-masked character known as Shojo, who carries a long wooden stick. The kirin dances to the tune of flutes, drums and bells and the movements are elegant and slow, somewhat reminiscent of the traditional Japanese theatrical art of Noh. Kirinjishi begins at shrines but continues to people's homes where they visit to "bite" residents on the heads for good luck and health.

Men traditionally performed the dance, but in recent years, mainly due to the declining population, women have also begun performing. Kirinjishi was designated as Japan Heritage, the first since the new Reiwa Era launch in 2019.

KAGURA: AMUSING THE GODS

When gods are watching, they want to see something extraordinary, something extravagant, something loud and clear that impresses them so much that they'd cast their mercy on people and give them safety and good fortune. If that's the case, then Kagura, one of the oldest living traditions in Japan, ticks all boxes.

The vivid costumes, elaborate masks and blasting chants tell the powerful story of Kagura, a sacred ceremonial dance dedicated to Japanese Shinto gods. Meaning "entertaining gods," Kagura was once performed by Shinto priests at festivals to pray for good harvests and ward off evil. Today, it is performed by dedicated artists who strive to preserve the tradition, which like many of its kind, is slowly losing its spotlight in contemporary Japan.

Kagura is ultimately a form of storytelling that reenacts classic Japanese folklore tales of good versus evil. As in every storytelling, Kagura is represented differently according to each region's take on the stories. Choreography, music and costumes vary too. Tottori Kagura strives to maintain the dance's traditional origins and has remained relatively unchanged since the late Edo period.

One of Tottori Kagura's most popular three-part acts is *Yaegaki Noh*, a powerful performance that hails from the myths of Izumo. It tells the story of Sun goddess Amaterasu who has banished her impulsive brother Susa-no-o, the god of storms and the sea, from the heavens. Lost and alone, Susa-no-o travels the earthly land of Izumo-no-Kuni where he meets an elderly couple whose daughter has been taken by an eight-headed serpent Orochi. Susa-no-o slays the serpent, saves the young woman and regains the gods' respect in a cumulative moment of Kagura that stays with viewers long after it has finished.



Masks commonly used in Tottori Kagura



SARUTAHIKO
Leader of the earthly deities and a bridge between the earthly and heavenly gods



SUSA-NO-O
The god of storms and the sea who is banished from the Shinto heavens



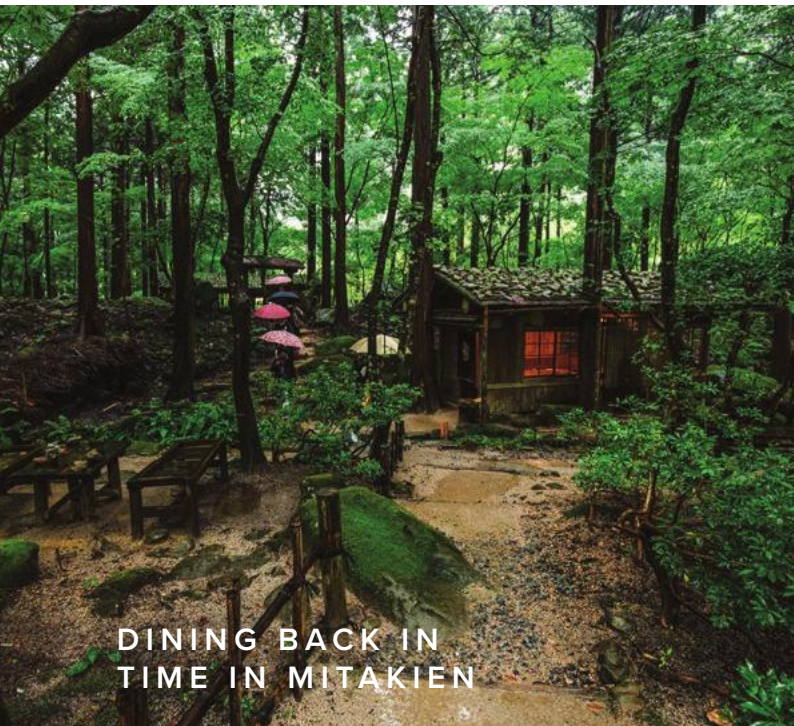
ASHINAZUCHI
An earthly deity. The father of the daughter taken by the giant serpent in *Yaegaki Noh*



INADAHIME
A goddess in Japanese mythology. One of the wives of the god Susa-no-o, who rescued her from the monster serpent Orochi



HANNYA
A jealous female demon



DINING BACK IN TIME IN MITAKIEN

The sound of rustling leaves, birds chirping and streams floating welcome you as you pass the main gate. Ahead of you stands a water mill, a thatched-roof building and an open hearth. On its opposite side is a small waterfall. Japanese persimmons decorate some of the buildings' exterior, but that isn't just aesthetics, they're there to dry before being served. Surrounding it all is infinite greenery and mountain echoes that take you far, far away from the big city's busy rhythm of life. Here is Mitakien, a Michelin Guide restaurant in Chizu Town where time has willingly stopped, inviting you to pause and enjoy the small gifts in life.

"He would often say that 'the countryside's time has come,'" says Setsuko Teratani, the owner of the restaurant of her husband, Seichiro, the former town mayor who built Mitakien nearly five decades ago as a place to celebrate the slow countryside life. Today, Mitakien occupies six different dining buildings, each inspired by an old Japanese countryside home. The cuisine served there is on par with the overall nostalgic ambiance — it's simple, handmade, additive-free and entirely locally sourced. Guests can choose from three different courses, all of which feature beautifully presented original dishes inspired by the season. From freshly grilled fish with original sansho miso to maple leaf tempura, tofu in miso dip and steamed mountain vegetables and rice — there are over a dozen small items on your table and every single one has a delightful taste.

Carrying on the founder's legacy, Mitakien's charming "ochakosan" — the women and men kindly serving the meals and always taking the extra time to explain each dish — have worked tirelessly to make the place Mitakien is today: a step back in time when every day is a good old day.





THE SWEETEST THINGS

KAKI PERSIMMONS

A land rich in delicious fruits and vegetables, Tottori never runs out of sweet deals. From its deep red watermelons to its large and juicy *nashi* pears, the prefecture is a proud producer and exporter of a great variety of natural treats. A leading local favorite that often gets overshadowed by other popular products is the *kaki* — Japanese persimmon. What many don't know about this delicious fruit is that it's extremely rich in dietary fiber, vitamin A and vitamin C (more than lemons) and tastes heavenly.

The Tottori kaki can be identified by their large sizes and refined sweetness that exceeds this of most peaches and even melons. The leading brands grown in the prefecture are *Kitaro*, a registered Tottori original product since 2010, *Hanagosho*, said to be the country's sweetest, and *Saijyo*, adopted from Hiroshima Prefecture but developed locally. It is known for the absence of any astringent taste and is often consumed when dried. Tottori's kaki season is at its peak from early October through early December, during which time the prefecture exports most of its annual shipment of nearly 3,000 tons of the fruit.

A leading producer of kaki in Tottori's Yazu Town is the Okazaki Farm, which has run as a family business across four generations for over 100 years. Its current owner, Akito Okazaki, took over the business from his grandfather, who continued growing kaki until the age of 101. Striving to protect the business and promote the prefecture's sweet kaki deal, Okazaki operates the farm solo, caring for its over a thousand trees, one kaki at a time.





WATERMELON

Grown in the mineral-rich black soil at the foot of Mount Daisen are Tottori's famous watermelons known for their extra sweetness, juiciness and large sizes. Typically harvested in June, Tottori's watermelons are massively shipped throughout the country, earning the prefecture the reputation of one of Japan's top producers of the expensive fruit. The three main Tottori watermelon signature brands are the Daiei Watermelon, characterized by its high sugar content, size and crunchiness, the thin-skinned, soft and extra sweet Kurayoshi Gokumi Watermelon and the black-skinned Gaburiko Watermelon, a watermelon as sweet as candy that has almost no seeds.



NASHI PEARS

A great Tottori pride is its locally grown, perfectly round-shaped *nashi* pears, the Japanese fruit closest to perfection. Though commonly translated as "pear" in English, nashi has an excessive juiciness and mild sweetness, which greatly differs in taste from the solid texture associated with most overseas-grown pears. The fifth-largest producer of nashi and an exporter of some 15,000 tons of the fruit annually, Tottori has been growing nashi for over a century. There are many varieties of the fruit, though a local would most likely recommend the main five, Nijisseiki nashi, Akibae, Natsuhime, Oushuu and Shinkansen (name not to be confused with bullet trains). Nashi orchards are a common sight in the

prefecture and the fruit is so revered that it even has its own dedicated museum, the Tottori Nijisseiki Pear Museum, or "Nashikkokan" as it is locally known, in Kurayoshi City. The museum is the only facility of its kind in Japan and it is much larger than one could expect from a museum dedicated to one single fruit. The museum's main hall boasts a giant nashi tree with branches stretching out some 20 meters, but this is only the first surprise — interactive exhibits and informative displays, in addition to delicious nashi treats, are just some of the many experiences visitors can enjoy. Nashi are grown from summer through autumn, making it the perfect treat to satisfy one's thirstiness on a hot, humid day.

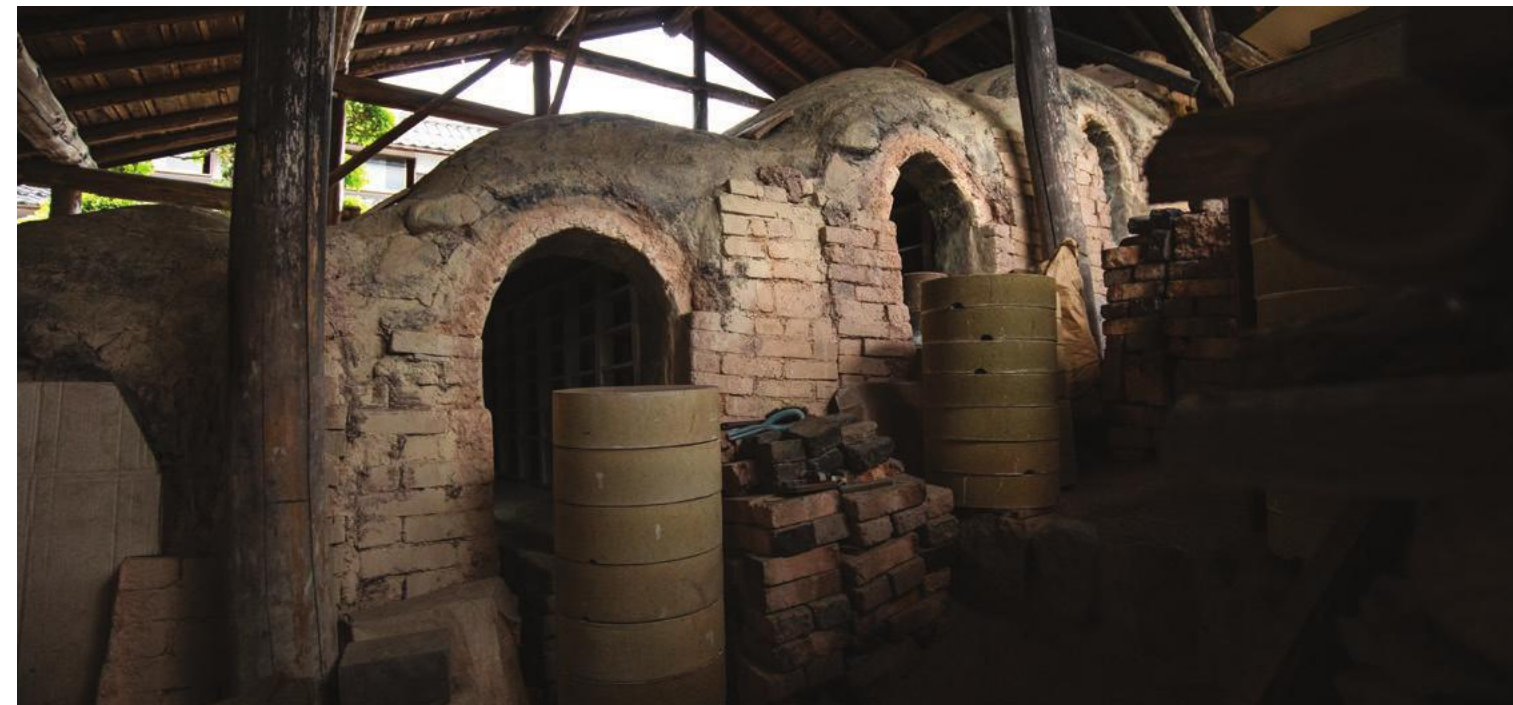


TOTTORI “MINGEI” FOLK CRAFTS

The term *mingei*, most commonly translated into English as “folk craft” or “folk art,” is composed of two of the most simple Japanese characters — those for “art” and “people.” It was this simplicity that art critic Soetsu Yanagi wanted to emphasize when he coined the term in 1926. Yanagi wanted to express the aesthetics of crafts made by anonymous artisans, or in other words, demonstrate that some of the world’s most beautiful art is made in the hands of people who don’t necessarily have noteworthy titles on paper. Yanagi founded the *mingei* movement in Japan in the late 1920s and 1930s, paving the way for generations of artisans.

One man who was greatly inspired by Yanagi’s movement was Shoya Yoshida (1898-1972), a Tottori native medical doctor who actively produced folk crafts in the prefecture and worked tirelessly in his promotion of Tottori Prefecture’s folk crafts. Today, he is known as the “father of Tottori’s *mingei* movement” and it is thanks to him that many of Tottori’s kilns have crossed the sand borders to become domestically and internationally known. Many of these Tottori classics are now on display at the Tottori Folk Crafts Museum, which Yoshida opened in 1949 near Tottori Station with the mission to display the “beauty of folk crafts” and to guide artisans in the creation of their own unique *mingei* crafts. Through his work, Yoshida continued to inspire artisans to produce “shinsaku *mingei*,” new folk crafts that use traditional techniques but are innovative, contemporary and, most of all, practical.

Such “new folk crafts” continue to be produced and sold today — and one of the key players in the industry is Inshu Nakai Kiln in the town of Kawahara in Tottori City.





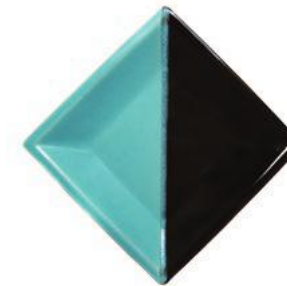
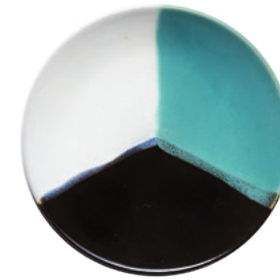
THE GREEN, BLACK AND WHITE GLAZE: INSHU NAKAI KILN

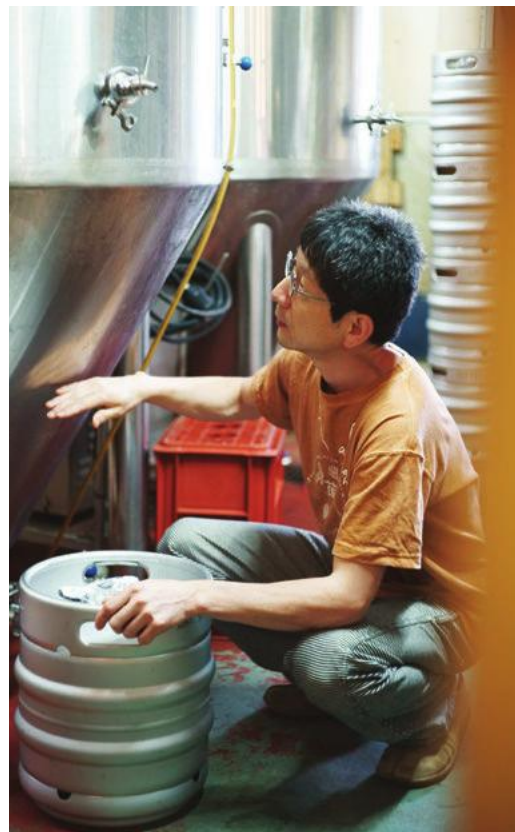
Inshu Nakai Kiln's trademark product's distinct, clean and eye-catching design is easily recognizable, although "some people would think it's northern European, not Japanese," as Akira Sakamoto, the third-generation owner of the kiln, likes to joke. Since its opening in 1945 in Tottori, Nakai Kiln has continued making modern, stylistic ceramics with a vivid tricolor — green, black and white — glaze as their trademark, under the supervision of Shoya Yoshida, and later on Sori Yanagi (1915-2011), an industrial designer and modernist who merged simplicity and practicality with elements of traditional Japanese crafts. In the spirit of creative mingei crafts, the kiln has devoted its work to creating wholesome pottery that can be used in everyday life, but also please the eye whenever displayed.

Nakai Kiln's products are made of natural materials, such as charcoal-burned straw and sandy soil found in Tottori Prefecture, in a *somewake* (separated glaze) style using the brand's all three signature colors or a

combination of two of them. In particular, Nakai's two-colored plate with traditional green and black glaze is one of the kiln's — and Tottori's — most famous craftworks.

A winner of numerous folk craft awards, Nakai Kiln's beautiful and practical products, the range of which covers everything that can fit in a regular kitchen or restaurant (including giant vases), have drawn attention from popular nationwide stores, including the popular brand BEAMS, resulting in a growing market of younger buyers. Sakamoto, who is currently training his son to take over the family business, says that the key to success is simple: doing something that no one else is doing.





**SELF-MADE, SELF-OWNED:
TALMARY**

When a nomad family decides to settle down permanently, it says a lot about the place they choose. For Itaru and Mariko Watanabe from Talmary (“Tal” for Itaru and “Mary” for Mariko), the last destination on their ever-changing map was Chizu in southeastern Tottori, known as “the most beautiful village” in Japan. Surrounded by mountains and with more than 93 percent of the village’s total area being lush forest, the greenery stretches as far as the eye can see. With a little over 6,300 people and some of the purest streams in western Japan, this small Japanese village hides one of the largest pure natural resources found all across Japan.

But that is not the only reason why the Watanabes moved to Chizu. Itaru is a baker who has long relied on natural yeasts to make his delicious, simple bread. He is also a beer brewer, a passion he acquired after realizing that if he started brewing beer in the same way he baked bread, it would not only be delicious but would also conveniently provide him with a stock of yeast for baking.

The couple started Talmary in 2008 in Chiba near Tokyo, their hometown. Tired of the city’s busy life, the two always dreamed of moving to the countryside to pursue a better quality of life. But when the post-earthquake and tsunami nuclear disaster struck the country in 2011, they decided to move to southern Japan in search for safer food business grounds. This took them to Okayama Prefecture first and then finally to Chizu, where they decided to settle permanently in 2015. Chizu had the purest waters, the cleanest air and the perfect location for sustaining their business using mostly local ingredients. The place they chose as a base for their restaurant and brewery was a former nursery, close to Tottori’s border with Okayama. The site was sitting on a well, which provides pure water for Talmary’s beer, bread and coffee. It is also surrounded by vast greenery spaces where Talmary grows its own hops and where the Watanabes hope to grow barley in the future. Their mission is to go fully self-made and self-sufficient and they are already on the right path: Talmary is currently one of the very few breweries in Japan that ferments all of its beer with wild yeast.

Aside from their fascinating business culture, for locals and visitors, Talmary is a place to celebrate healthy, natural food and a place to enjoy the extraordinary found in the very ordinary we have. To maintain this vibe, the Watanabes have preserved the nursery’s former look, keeping toys, objects, and blackboards used by the kids in the past. The restaurant offers homemade freshly baked bread, pizza, scones, hamburgers and sandwiches, and various meals cooked with local vegetables and meats. It’s the perfect location for a slow but fulfilling life — something that the Watanabes had been pursuing all their lives.



A RITE OF PASSAGE: OOE VALLEY STAY

There is a beautiful place in the town of Yazu, a short drive from Chizu Town, that can help every traveler turn back time to their early years of school life. The large yard, the spacious gym, the symbol adorning the building and the guest rooms, all carry the memories of their past: just until three years ago this building used to be the Ooe Elementary School, the local primary that closed its doors for good in 2017. Today its classrooms have been transformed into the Ooe Valley Stay, a contemporary inn in the local Oenosato Resort, surrounded by magnificent nature, mountains and near a clear stream.

Despite its modern look and interior design, Ooe Valley Stay is a resort inn that provides the luxury of a simple stay. To shut away the noise of the exterior and help guests spend a quiet time away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life, the hotel rooms are not equipped with TVs. Instead, guests are invited to listen to the mountain's sounds, look at the starry sky or take a moment to unveil and relax with a good book in hands while looking at the splendid scenery from the hotel. For those seeking entertainment, the hotel's gym — which occupies the former school gym and looks very much like it did back in the days — is the place to go to (literally) play like a child. Here you will find trampolines and bouldering walls, or you can play basketball, ping pong, badminton or any other games that come to the mind of the inner child within you.

Ooe Valley Stay is equipped with various room types fit for both budget and luxury travelers and solo, couples and families. Guests will be served a traditional breakfast that includes locally grown rich-flavored "Tenbiran" raw eggs (a specialty of Oenosato Resort) on steamed white rice and other simple dishes cooked with local ingredients. A good collection of sake and beer from Tottori is also in store for those wishing to end a day at the school with a glass of something more suitable for adults. On the next day, before heading back to reality, ride one of Ooe Valley Stay's rental bikes and tour the area at your own pace. Just a short bike ride from Ooe Valley Stay you'll find Oenosato Natural Farm, a farm, restaurant and a natural amusement park that serves one of Japan's fluffiest and most delicious pancakes (as well as puddings and various other mouth-watering sweets) in addition to offering a variety of activities and events for children and adults alike.





SOAK AND HEAL

Tottori's ten hot spring districts, all equipped with multiple luxury accommodation facilities, boast radon hot springs that are believed to be effective in speeding up the metabolism, boosting the immune system and aid the body's natural healing powers. Paired with stunning views and clean air, these hidden from the ordinary world springs invite for the ultimate relaxation.



KAIKE HOT SPRINGS

An unparalleled destination that combines a sand beach resort and hot springs, Kaike Onsen in Yonago City is one of Tottori's most multifaceted landmarks and the largest hot spring resort in the San'in area. The resort comprises some 20 hotels and Japanese-style ryokan (inn) lined along the Sea of Japan coast, providing a refined location to enjoy a full package of healing hot springs, a day at the beach, delicious local cuisine and a stunning view of Mount Daisen in the background. Kaike Onsen has been selected as one of Japan's "100 selected views of Japanese

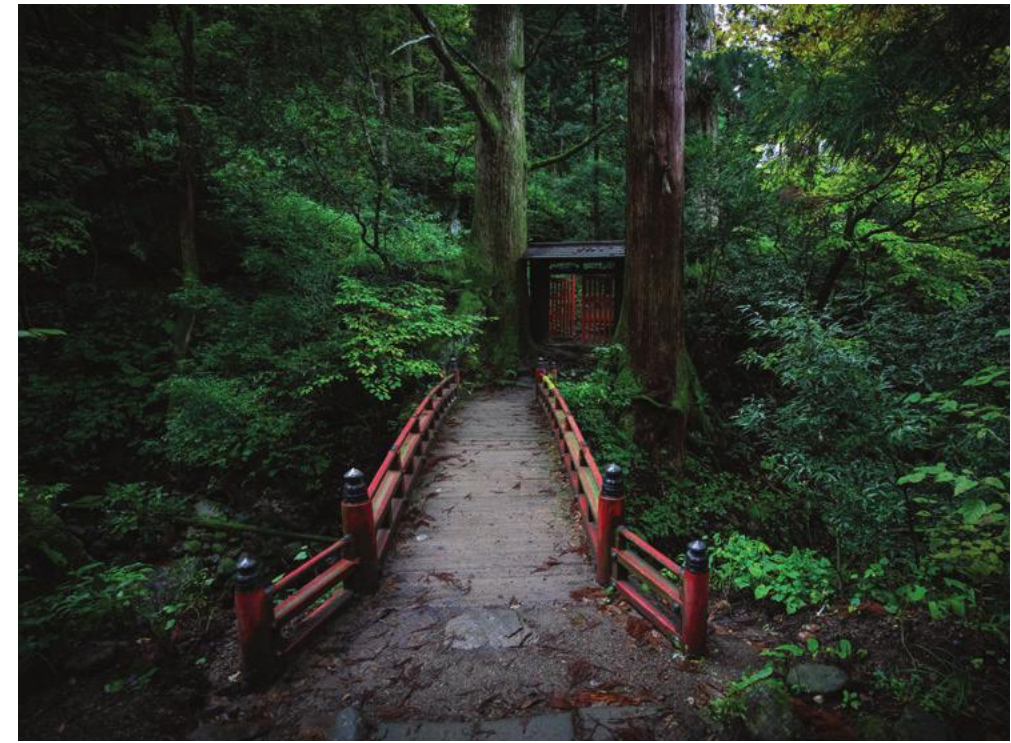
sunsets and sunrises," a prestigious landscape award presented to cities with exceptionally scenic urban views. Kaike Onsen's hot springs are welled up from the Sea of Japan and are high in sodium and calcium chloride, a combination that thoroughly warms up the body. Thanks to its salty waters with a groundwater temperature of 63 to 83 degrees, the resort is a popular venue for people practicing thalassotherapy, a natural remedy for various health and beauty conditions.



MISASA HOT SPRINGS

A nostalgic visual departure from Kaike Hot Springs' contemporary look is Misasa Onsen in the town of Misasa, a hot spring resort with a retro vibe known as "the healing spring" of Tottori. The Misasa springs boast extremely high radon levels, making this area a popular health resort for people seeking help in improving their metabolism, muscle soothing, stress-relieving and an overall immune system boost. Most of Misasa Onsen's traditional Japanese inns are lined along the banks of the Mitoku River, creating a look of a historic town in an almost time-slip experience. The Kajika Bridge downstream and the popular among couples Koitani Bridge (also known as "La Vallée de l'amour") upstream add to the area's visual perfection and form a lovely place for a stroll. The peaceful environment, combined with its healing waters, invite travelers for a rehabilitative retreat, with many ending up staying for weeks, sometimes even months at a time. But as the local saying goes, one should stay for at least "three mornings" (the literal translation of "Misasa") — for it is believed that those who stay to enjoy three mornings in the hot springs will find all of their ailments cured.

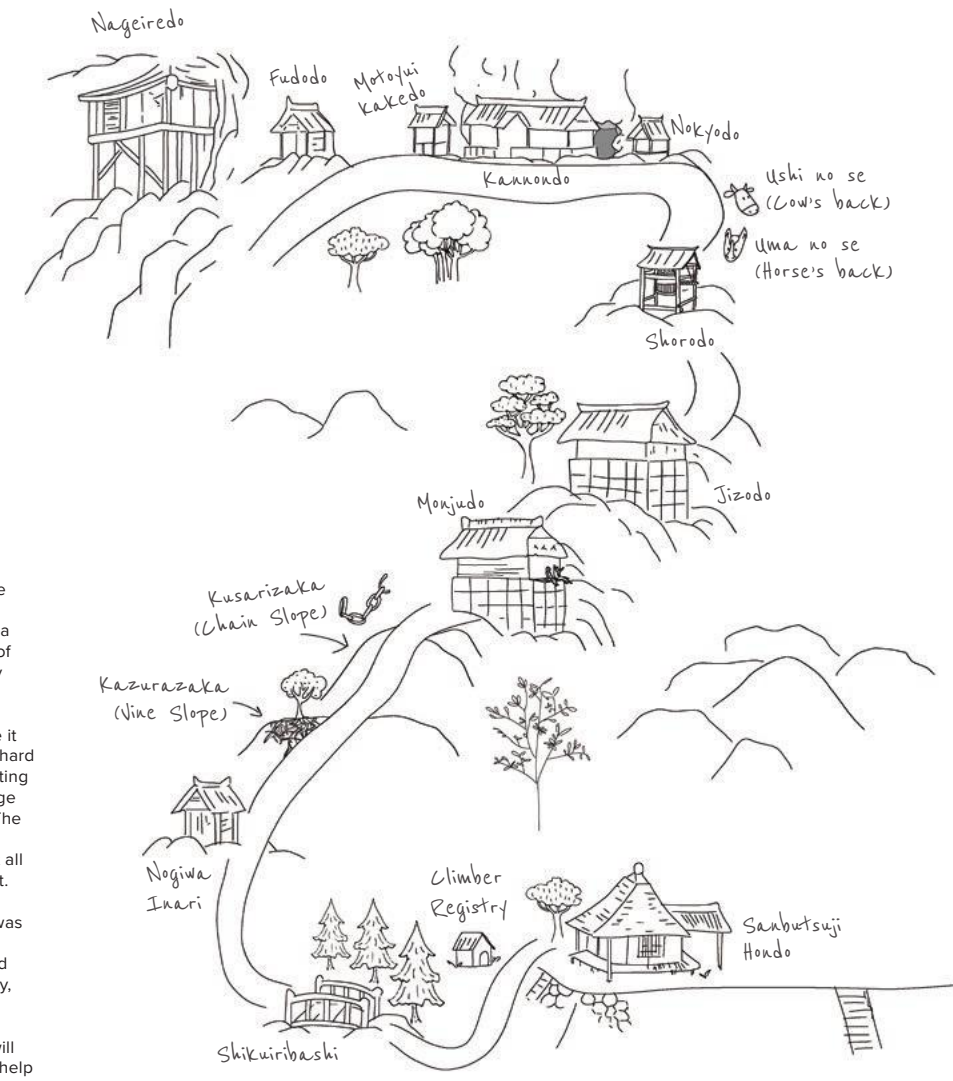




A PILGRIMAGE TO ANOTHER WORLD

There is a small red gate not too deep into Tottori's Mount Mitoku that symbolizes the separation between the mortal and the spiritual world. On one of its sides is the world of imperfect human existence; on the other is where nature's gods reside, a world of ultimate purification. This is the symbolic explanation. The physical is that this gate leads you to Nageiredo, a wooden temple mysteriously built on a massive rock 900 meters above ground inside the mountain. It is known as Japan's "most dangerous national treasure," but also, one of the most spiritually rewarding destinations to tick off of one's Japan conquer list. To reach it, one must endure a long, challenging pilgrimage up the mountains that requires excessive strength, utter determination and a bit of extra courage. The reward for taking on this journey is a breathtaking midway view from over 450 meters above a gorge of trees dotting the mountain below — and ultimately, the incomparable feeling of satisfaction for having crossed over into the other side at the final destination.





How and when Nageiredo came to existence is still largely unknown. According to a local legend, however, Buddhist monk En no Gyoja used magic to cast Nageiredo into the side of the mountain some 1,300 years ago, thereby giving the temple its name, which translates as “thrown and inserted.” The mystery and spirituality surrounding the place have made it an object of worship ever since, and it’s not hard to see why. It’s an unexplainable but captivating sight: a wooden building lodged into the edge of a cliff, like a fantastical ancient creature. The long road to there is a process to test one’s endurance, purify the mind and forget about all earthly desires — and it’s completely worth it.

Like every pilgrimage, reaching Nageiredo was never meant to be easy. The journey to the temple begins right after one crosses the red gate. From there on, it’s a long hike (arguably, a climb) characterized by steep and slippery narrow paths and muddy grounds, at times formed on precarious tree roots. Travelers will occasionally spot chains along the way that help them pull their bodies up. Surprisingly, this hike’s recommended footwear is straw sandals, which one may obtain at the beginning of the journey. Straw, as the locals will assure travelers, is the least slippery option. Along the way, you may also hear the echoes of “*sange sange rokkon shojo*,” a chant that monks who train on this pilgrimage use, referring to the act of leaving all earthly sins aside and purifying one’s six senses.

Before reaching Nageiredo, the hike takes travelers to eight temples and shrines in the Mitokusan sanctuary. At midpoint, you can take a rest at the Monjudo Hall, one of the temples

along the route. You’re invited to sit on the edge of the wooden building and take a moment to realize that you’re out there in the wild, sitting at over 450 meters height from the ground with no protection whatsoever. You’ll hear your heart beat faster, feel your sweat dripping off your cheeks before the fear gradually reaches its peak — only to be replaced by ultimate peace and a sense of fulfillment of realizing how far you’ve come, overseeing one of Japan’s most breathtaking views.

The last challenge on the way to Nageiredo is passing through a small, pitch dark tunnel representing a mother’s womb. The saying goes that you pass through a rebirth process before reaching here, and it truly feels like one. You have officially crossed to the other side and as odd as it may feel, you feel reborn and enlightened. Essentially, the road to Nageiredo is a battle with oneself — it’s a story of passing into the spirit realm and conquering a chasm of arduous trials before eventually returning to the mortal world stronger and wiser.

WALKING ALONG THE GOOD FORTUNE WAREHOUSES OF KURAYOSHI

A thirty-minute drive from Nageiredo takes you to the city of Kurayoshi, a small but famous city reminiscent of an old movie scene. There, the stone bridges and red-tiled roofs accompanied by the peaceful sound of the local Tamagawa River contrast beautifully with the white mortar of the Kurayoshi White Wall Warehouses. Designated as a nationally important preservation district, these Kurayoshi alleys, lined with dozens of white-walled former warehouses dating back to the Edo period, look like a retro movie set. In the past, these buildings were used for storing products of traditional enterprises, such as soy sauce or sake, but today they are attracting tourists from all over the world in pursuit of a glimpse of a nostalgic Japan. Here, despite the time passing, the city of "good fortune warehouses," has changed very little over time.

Kurayoshi is also known for its *kurayoshi-kasuri*, a traditional handmade indigo kimono woven by women only in this region. Travelers can see the handmade manufacturing process of this unique textile at the Kurayoshi Furusato Souvenir Shop in the area and can even opt for wearing one. A popular local attraction includes renting a kasuri and strolling down the warehouses, many of which have been carefully restored, transformed into boutique cafes, vintage and souvenir stores, while others continue the trade as sake or soy sauce breweries. Local street foods like *taiyaki* (fish-shaped sweet baked pastry) or the more contemporary "egg waffle" are always available on the go, serving as a wonderful attribute to the many selfies one subconsciously opt to take while in the area.





A STOP AT KURA

A favorite stop at the Kurayoshi White Wall Warehouses area is Kura, a coffee shop famous for having its customers grind their own coffee. Kura has a traditional coffee shop on its second floor where customers are invited to take it slow, and a more contemporary cafe on its first floor where tourists can buy various picture-perfect drinks and traditional *dango* (sweet rice dumplings) sweets on the go.

And, of course, coffee, but they have to work hard for that sip. A large stone grinder welcomes customers as they enter the cafe. The staff would put just the right amount of coffee beans in it before they let customers grind the coffee — it's one of the attractions here. After the beans are ground, the staff takes it from there. In a short time, you'll be served a cup of delicious coffee with red *azuki* beans instead of sugar — a la Kurayoshi style.

For those willing to enjoy their bites on the go, Kura offers three kinds of *dango* mochi on a stick, the signature *mitarashi* (sweet soy sauce) and two seasonal flavors. Drinks in special bottles are also on offer, providing the perfect blend of tradition and modernity for travelers taking it slow in the area.





TOTTORI WAGYU BEEF

Tottori's cattle may not necessarily receive extended massages and prolonged pampering, but this is largely because there's no need for it. Surrounded by clean air and infinite green lands and exposed to the pristine waters of Mount Daisen, Tottori's cattle lead a naturally luxurious life in a completely stress-free environment. As a result, Tottori produces Japan's highest quality wagyu beef, exceptionally lean meat, which boasts an impeccable flavor and melt-in-the-mouth texture. Tottori Wagyu is a high-quality wagyu brand of only about 2,000 cattle per year, bred in abundant nature. It is the proud owner of a prestigious champion title, too, after winning the top spot for meat quality at the Japan's 2017 "Wagyu Olympics" (The National

Competitive Exhibition of Wagyu), a nationwide competition held every five years to determine the best beef in the country. Tottori Wagyu's sublime taste derives from its exceptionally high (over 55 percent) concentration of oleic acid, a major component of olive oil that provides a top-quality umami taste and tangible health benefits, including reduced low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol. Tottori Wagyu can be enjoyed in various culinary styles — from tender steaks to *yakiniku* grilled meat to *sukiyaki* and *shabu shabu* simmered and hot pot style. A trademark of Tottori, the Tottori Wagyu Beef is an ultimate culinary pleasure, one that no beef lover should miss.





ALL ROADS LEAD TO MOUNT DAISEN

“Daisen san no okage.” It is all because of Mount Daisen.

Standing at the height of 1,709 meters and revered as the highest, most sacred mountain in Japan’s Chugoku region, Mount Daisen has long been worshiped as a sacred home of gods. It is home to the holy Daisenji Temple, a 1300-year-old Buddhist temple overseeing the base of the mountain and is part of the Daisen-Oki National Park. Its beautiful landscapes have earned it a substantial presence on the list of Japan’s 100 famous mountains.

For the people of Tottori, Mount Daisen’s majestic presence, spiritual symbolism and profound relationship with their day-to-day lives far exceeds the role of a natural landmark. Here, the locals strongly believe that the mountain had blessed their lives with fewer natural disasters, abundant natural resources, farm produce, livestock, and the region’s famous crystal-clean mineral water, that altogether sustain their longevity, livelihood, health and wealth. Thanks to this belief, today, the mountain’s abundant pure nature has inspired the region’s most prominent festivals, local attractions and products that continue to be loved by locals and tourists alike.

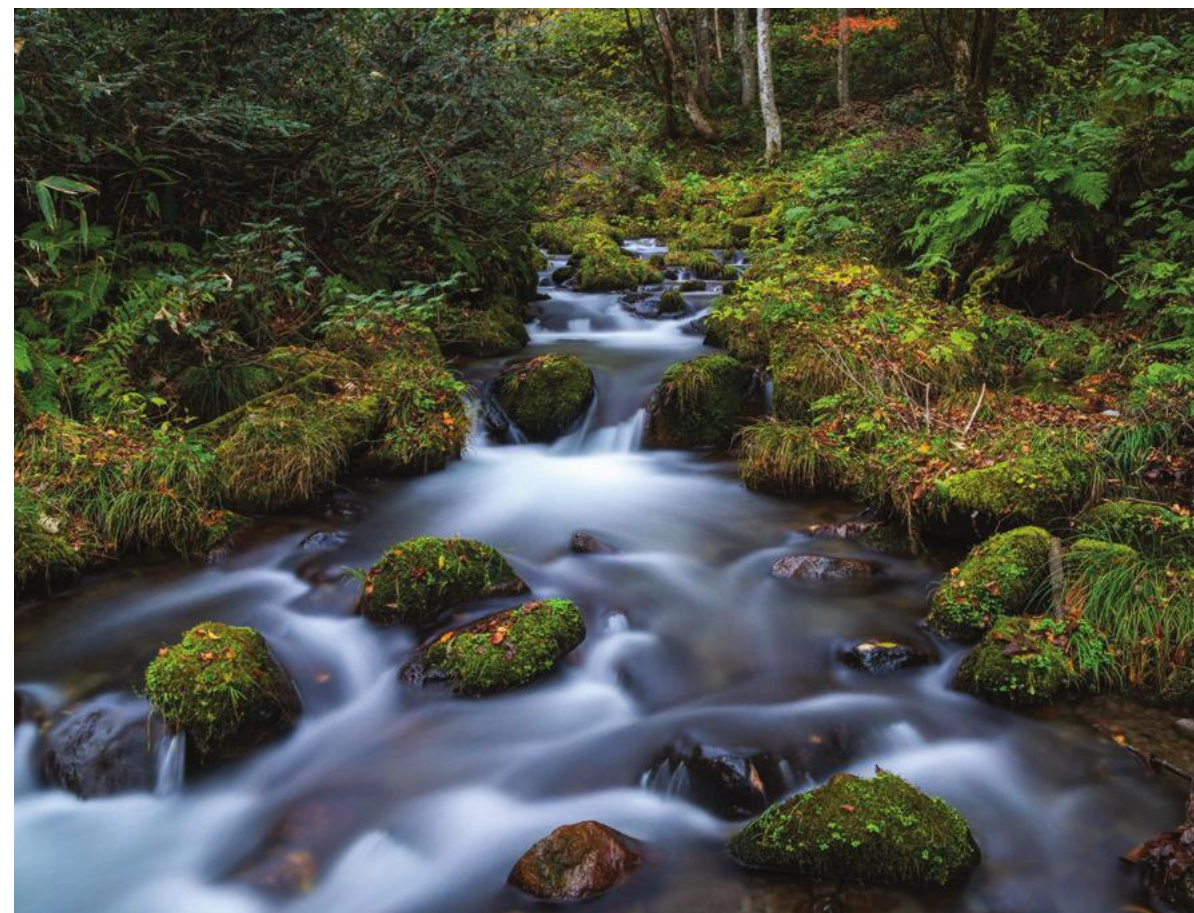
Mount Daisen, beautiful in all seasons, is also a popular tourist destination for red foliage viewing in autumn and skiing and snowshoeing in winter.





FOLLOW THE FLAME

You can feel the heat before you see it as you make your way up the mountain toward the shrine. The presence of other participants is comforting and the darkness gradually turns to light as more people draw close. It is the beginning of summer and everyone has gathered at Mount Daisen for the annual Summer Opening Festival, a two-day traditional event marking the opening of the climbing season. Held in the first weekend of June, the event begins with a Shinto ceremony called "Natsu Yama Biraki" (the opening of the mountain in summer) where participants climb to the mountain summit to perform a purification ceremony at Ogamiyama Shrine to ask for safety and protection during the season. The festival's highlight is the Parade of Torch, where 2,000 people carry torches from the shrine down the mountain.



DAISEN SPRINGS

Deep forests and untouched grounds, clean mountain rivers and fresh mountain breeze. Aside from pleasing the eye with its ever-changing beauty throughout seasons, Mount Daisen is also the source of Tottori's purest mineral water. These pure waters are used in the making and growing of most of the region's best known produce, including rice, sake, meat, vegetables and fruits.

The secret to Mount Daisen's pure water lies in its untouched deep and vast beech forest. Revered as a sacred mountain since ancient times, climbing Mount Daisen was restricted up until the Meiji Era in the late 19th Century. Largely thanks to this, the mountain has been preserved untouched by the human hand. Mount Daisen's mineral water is abundant in sodium, calcium and iron ion among numerous other essential minerals and is one of Japan's most sought after mineral water brands. And where there is good water, there is good food — and drinks.

SAKE GROUNDS

With access to pure water from Mount Daisen and clean air from the Sea of Japan, Tottori is blessed as one of the country's best regions for the production of Japanese sake, whose prime ingredients are rice and water. Home to over a dozen prominent breweries scattered throughout the prefecture, Tottori proudly stands behind some of Japan's signature sake labels: *Chiyomusubi* from Sakaiminato City, *Hiokizakura* from Tottori City, *Suwaizumi* from the town of Chizu, or *Furei* from Hokuei Town. The prefecture further exclusively cultivates the special sake rice "Goriki," used in many of its labels. A sip of any of those will help you understand the meaning of the old Japanese saying, "Where there is good water, there is good sake."



UMETSU SHUZO

Settled in Tottori since 1865 is Umetsu Shuzo, a family-run sake brewery in Hokuei Town. Today, owned by Fuminori Umetsu, the sixth-generation sake master from the Umetsu family, the brewery, at a glance, looks like a small wooden house, but a quick step into its entrance makes you realize you're at the right place for buying and tasting sake or touring the brewery. The Umetsu brand is known for producing its liquor entirely by hand. The wooden brewery has many rooms, each dedicated to a precise step in making the labels — from mixing the rice and adding the mold, to mixing and fermenting, to distilling, pressing and storing. Umetsu relies on the slow-brew traditional fermentation method, known as *kimoto*, that uses only the power of natural lactic acid bacteria. The result is a deep, complex taste of several unique in taste signature labels, including the most popular *Furei* (or "Hurrah!"), a *junmai* label, brewed using only rice, water and *koji* yeast; *Sakyu Nagaimo Shochu*, a shochu, distilled liquor, and *Nokyo Ume*, plum wine made of the giant Nokyo plums only available in the area. Rich in taste and culture, the Umetsu Shuzo sake brands are a sip into perfection.





**DAISEN G BEER:
FROM BARLEY TO HOP**

Serving local tables and bars since 1997, Daisen G Beer brewery was launched by local sake manufacturer, Kumezakura Sake Brewery, in a spur of an experience aiming to prove that if a prefecture has all the factors it needs to produce delicious sake, it can also make a world-class beer. The experiment proved on point and now, over two decades later, Daisen G Beer's two main problems are securing enough seats for the dozens of customers coming for the beer at the company restaurant Gambarius, and picking a creative label for its ever-expanding lineup of signature and seasonal brews. It's not an exaggeration to say that Daisen G Beer has completely changed Tottori's drinking scene.

Much of this is thanks to Daisen G Beer's head brewer, Hideki "Hide" Iwata, a man who lives for the brew and brews for a living. A man of science (with a degree in applied microbiology), Hide became interested in joining Kumezakura Sake Brewery after rumor reached his ears that the company

was to start making local beer — something unheard of before in the region. The novelty of the idea triggered him to invest his knowledge into the unknown and eventually help launch Daisen G Beer after graduating from college.

Using Mount Daisen's clear spring water when brewing and its mineral-rich black, fertile soil called "kuroboku," to produce crops, several of Daisen G Beer's seasonal lables are made of original barley (Daisen Gold), hop (Weihen Hop), and, in some labels such as the Daisen G Yago, Yamadanishiki, a type of rice used in the making of high-quality sake. Since its founding, Daisen G Beer has evolved to produce four signature labels, the classic Weizen (a winner of the 2016 International Beer Cup), Pale Ale and Stout, in addition to a range of limited editions and seasonal bottles. In 2019, the brewery produced the Daruma Ale in collaboration with Kaike Onsen, the resort's first original brew.



SHOJI UEDA MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Growing up in his hometown of Sakaiminato, Shoji Ueda loved hiding on the roof of his house. Away from everyone, there he would find an undisturbed setting to gaze at the endless greenery stretching as far as he could see. While he most likely wasn't aware of it yet, he was already looking through the lens of his future. Not too many years later, he would become a photographer who would make Tottori's landscapes internationally acclaimed.

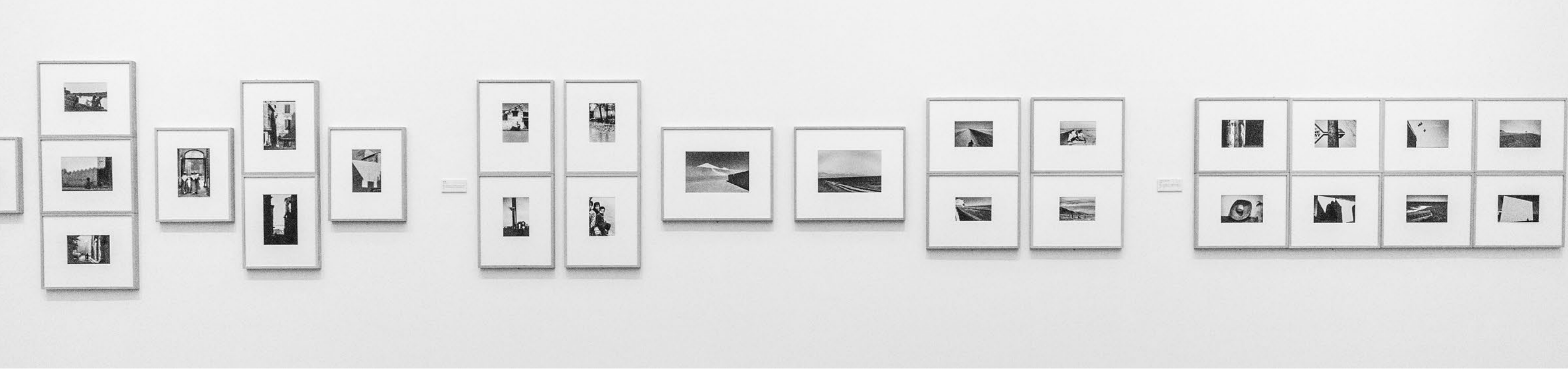
With the exception of the few years he studied at the Oriental School of Photography in Tokyo, Shoji Ueda (1913-2000) spent most of his life in Tottori Prefecture capturing the everyday sights in and near the city of Yonago where he owned a studio and gallery. Ueda captured the happiness in




the ordinary — his wife and children, umbrellas, hats, silhouettes, often with the dunes as a backdrop, giving birth to masterpieces like "Doodle Face" (1949), "My wife in the dunes" (1950) and "Hat" (1980).

Built in 1995 after Ueda donated his works to the local town, Shoji Ueda Museum of Photography archives more than 12,000 of Ueda's photographs in its award-winning building designed by famed Japanese architect Shin Takamatsu. The building, which resembles four giant boxes lined up when viewed from afar, is the sole establishment in the vicinity of lush agricultural land, built face-to-face with Mount Daisen as if the two were having a conversation. It is the perfect setting for a museum dedicated to a surrealist artist who cherished simplicity just as much as he loved his homeland Tottori.

When visiting the museum, stop by to spend an undisturbed moment gazing at the sight from its large windows — you may feel as if you were stepping in young Ueda's shoes, back in time when he was enjoying a similar sight from his roof.





DOWN THE SPIRITUAL ROAD: THE WORLD OF MIZUKI SHIGERU

The supernatural power can be perceived at its strongest when you stroll down the Mizuki Shigeru Road in Sakaiminato City, an alley, celebrating the dozens of mischievous “yokai” folklore creatures created by the legendary manga artist and Tottori-native, Shigeru Mizuki (1922-2015). As you walk down this boisterous street, you’ll see them hiding behind shops, sitting on benches, looking at you from atop street lights, crawling on sculptures and surprising you from every corner. You’ve officially entered their kingdom and they are more than happy to have you there. But worry not — despite them looking frightening at times, they are harmless and have co-existed with their human counterparts for decades (on paper) and centuries (in folklore).

Born as much from his imagination as from his experience as a child, Mizuki’s creatures are characters with supernatural powers, big attitude and somewhere down inside them, unprecedented kindness to all living things and their surroundings.

GeGeGe no Kitaro character images ©MIZUKI Productions
Photographs by David Jaskiewicz



When Mizuki was growing up, there was more darkness than light. Deep in the Japanese countryside back in the late 1920s and early 1930s, many houses lacked much of today’s comfort. The darkness was often accompanied by a squeak in the wooden houses, a footstep-resembling sound in the distance, a chilling to the bone cold in winter and the mysterious smoke from the hearth. The setting of this nothingness frequently triggered Mizuki’s imagination. Considered an odd child who wouldn’t speak a word until the age of four, Mizuki absorbed everything around him, including the many supernatural tales NonNonBa, the family’s helper and a grandmother-like figure to Mizuki, (who also served as inspiration for many of his future works), would share with him. Mizuki’s childhood experiences with yokai, which he became fully immersed in, influenced his life and oeuvre. Today, known as the master of yokai manga, Mizuki’s works span countless creatures, the best known of which is Kitaro from the 1960s series “GeGeGe no Kitaro.”

You’ll find the story of his life toward the end of the Mizuki Shigeru Road at the Mizuki Shigeru Museum, a place housing the spirit of Mizuki and his creatures in a haunting yet somewhat heartwarming ambiance. The museum is a wonderful insight into the author’s life and works, featuring rare early

drawings, notes, and many of the writer’s personal belongings. A tour of the museum also helps reveal the many other faces of Mizuki — the historian who published works relating to Japanese and world history, and his own World War II experience, and the husband and father who would live a life (until the very end) much supported by his wife, Nunoe Mura’s patience and humor.

The 800-meter-long Mizuki Shigeru Road, partially an open-air museum, partially a theme park, is undeniably the most popular attraction in Tottori’s Yonago-Sakaiminato area. It’s a lively place, boosting with shops, eateries and amusement, where children and adults can enjoy immensely at daytime and nighttime when the creatures are lit-up and accompanied by mystifying music. If you start counting, you may find 177 of them — though keep in mind that there are probably many more who prefer not to reveal their appearance.

While there, allow yourself the pleasures of the unknown — stop by at the Yokai Shrine and draw a fortune slip, take photos with your favorite supernaturals, or surprise yourself with a letter of the future at the Yokai Post, where you can post a handwritten note to self and receive it five years later. Last but not least, treat the yokai with respect — they’re watching and most likely judging you too.



GOSHO AOYAMA MANGA FACTORY

While Shigeru Mizuki's yokai are hovering around the Mizuki Shigeru Road mischievously chasing you around, the case is different at the Conan Street, down the Yura "Conan" Station in the town of Hokuei, about an hour's drive from Sakaiminato City.

The 1.4-kilometer-long alley stretching from the station is dedicated to the life and work of Tottori-native manga artist Goshō Aoyama, the author of *Detective Conan* ("Case Closed"), the long-running comic (and later anime) series about a genius high school detective who ends up looking like an elementary-school kid after members of a crime syndicate force him to drink an experimental poison as a punishment for witnessing their crime.

Conan Street is lined with numerous bronze statues of the detective, his partners in (solving) crimes and various objects that appear in the series. Among the most popular places on the Street are a restaurant and shopping complex inspired by a house and a cafe that are often seen in the series.

The Conan Street eventually takes visitors to the Goshō Aoyama Manga Factory, a museum housing all of Aoyama's masterpieces and original drawings. Divided into seven sections, including Aoyama's studio, a gallery, and interactive replications of some of the tricks played in the Conan stories. Like with the Mizuki Shigeru Museum, here you can discover more about the author's (and Conan's) curious life and work.

Detective Conan character image ©GOSHO AOYAMA/SHOGAKUKAN Photograph by Ear Lew Boo

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sandboard.jp

SAJI ASTRO PARK

1071-1 Takayama, Saji-cho,
Tottori City
+81(0)858-89-1011

city.tottori.lg.jp/www/
contents/1561690420288/index.
html

TOTTORI SAND DUNES

THE SAND MUSEUM

2083-17 Yuyama, Fukube-cho,
Tottori City
+81(0)857-20-2231

sand-museum.jp/en

URADOME COAST

Uradome, Iwami, Iwami District,
Tottori
+81(0)857-72-3481

iwamikanko.org

KAROICHI FISH MARKET

3-27-1 Karochonishi, Tottori City
+81(0)857-38-8866

karoichi.jp

SAKAIMINATO FISHERIES PROMOTION ASSOCIATION

9-33 Showamachi,
Sakaiminato City
+81(0)859-44-6668

sakaiminato-suisan.jp

WAGASA DENSHOKAN

796 Yodoe, Yodoe-cho,
Yonago City
+81(0)859-56-6176

yonago-navi.jp/en/

MITAKIEN

707 Ashizu, Chizu-cho,
Yazu District
+81(0)858-75-3665

ashidumitakien.jp/en/

OKAZAKI FARM

335-1 Ichinotani, Yazu-cho,
Yazu District
+81(0)858-71-0565

okazakifarm.com

TOTTORI NIJISSEIKI PEAR MUSEUM

198-4 Dakyoji-cho, Kurayoshi City
+81(0)858-23-1174

1174.sanin.jp/en

INSHU NAKAI KILN

243-5 Nakai, Kawahara-cho,
Tottori City
+81(0)858-85-0239

nakaigama.jp

TALMARY

214-1 Ose, Chizu-cho, Yazu District
+81(0)858-71-0106

talmary.com

OOE VALLEY STAY

331 Shimotsuke, Yazu-cho,
Yazu District
+81(0)570-008-558

ooevalley.jp

KAIKE ONSEN

Kaikeonsen, Yonago City
+81(0)859-34-2888

kaike-onsen.com

MISASA ONSEN

Misasa, Misasa-cho, Tohaku District
+81(0)858-43-0431

misasaonsen.jp

NAGEIREDO

1010 Mitoku, Misasa-cho,
Tohaku District
+81(0)858-43-2666

mitokusan.jp

KURAYOSHI TOURISM MICE ASSOCIATION

2568-1 Uomachi, Kurayoshi City
+81(0)858-24-5371

kurayoshi-kankou.jp/eng

KURA

1-2424-2 Shinmachi, Kurayoshi City
+81(0)858-23-1130

kura05.com

DAISEN TOURISM BUREAU

45-5 Daisen, Daisen-cho,
Saihaku District
+81(0)859-52-2502

tourismdaisen.com/en

UMETSU SHUZO

1350 Odani, Hokuei-cho,
Tohaku District
+81(0)858-37-2008

umetsu-sake.jp

DAISEN G BEER

1740-30 Maruyama, Houki-cho,
Saihaku District
+81(0)859-68-5570

g-beer.jp

SHOJI UEDA MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY

353-3 Sumura, Houki-cho,
Saihaku District
+81(0)859-39-8000

houki-town.jp/ueda

MIZUKI SHIGERU MUSEUM

5 Honmachi, Sakaiminato City
+81(0)859-42-2171

mizuki.sakaiminato.net/lang-en

GOSHO AOYAMA MANGA FACTORY

1414 Yurashuku, Hokuei-cho,
Tohaku District
+81(0)858-37-5389

gamf.jp/english

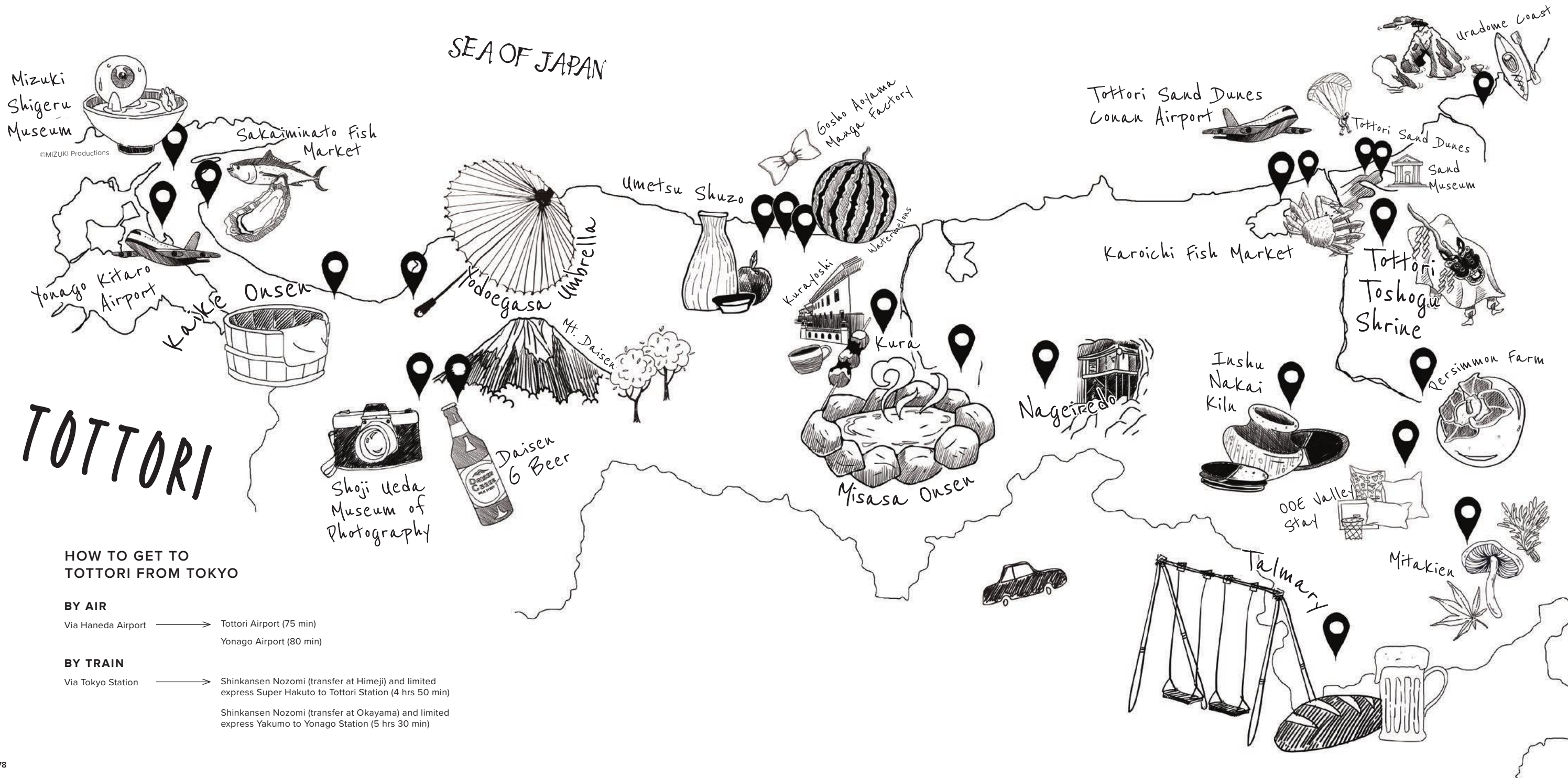
For more information on Tottori,
see the prefecture's official
sightseeing website at
tottori-tour.jp/en

For press tour or other press
related inquiries and information
contact:

**TOTTORI PREFECTURAL
GOVERNMENT
TOURISM AND EXCHANGE
BUREAU INTERNATIONAL
TOURISM ATTRACTION DIVISION**
1-220 Higashimachi, Tottori City
+81(0)857-26-7629

kokusaikankou@pref.tottori.lg.jp

*Tottori is a place of wonder.
Standing on its dunes leaves you speechless. Flying above them makes you breathless.
Climbing up to Nageiredo and back changes you as a person.
At the end of every journey here, you're happily fulfilled yet oddly impatient to go back.
Tottori leaves you lost for words and then turns you into a storyteller.
May you find your story here.
The one that will help you leave your own footprints in the sand.*



HOW TO GET TO TOTTORI FROM TOKYO

BY AIR

Via Haneda Airport → Tottori Airport (75 min)
 Yonago Airport (80 min)

BY TRAIN

Via Tokyo Station → Shinkansen Nozomi (transfer at Himeji) and limited express Super Hakuto to Tottori Station (4 hrs 50 min)
 Shinkansen Nozomi (transfer at Okayama) and limited express Yakumo to Yonago Station (5 hrs 30 min)



TOTTORI

The Land, The Lives, The Stories