**Yashima North Ridge**

At the scenic North Ridge visitors can observe the natural features of Yashima up close. The ridge is circled by a paved 4.6-kilometer trail that offers an introduction to the history, geology, and plant and animal life of one of the first places in Japan to be designated a national park. Rock faces along the trail preserve evidence of lava flows that occurred here up to 14 million years ago and formed the hard bedrock that gives Yashima its distinctive shape. The clay soil on top of this volcanic rock supports plants that can survive on very little water, such as oaks and mountain cherry trees. They in turn provide a habitat for dozens of bird and mammal species, from ospreys and bats to monkeys and *tanuki* raccoon dogs. Yashima is surrounded by steep cliffs on all sides, affording impressive vistas from the lookouts along the trail on clear days. The scenery of the Seto Inland Sea archipelago is best viewed from the Yukakutei lookout at the northern end of the path. From there, a hiking trail leads to Nagasaki no Hana, a historic cannon battery at the tip of Yashima.