

## Landscape (long version)

Ise-Shima National Park's landscape is characterized by lush forests, mountains, steep cliffs, fragmented coastlines, and a contrast between the calm bays and inlets, and the rough Pacific Ocean. These landforms enrich Ise-Shima's marine life and strengthen people's connection to the sea.

The ria (a drowned river valley which remains open to the sea) coastline seen in Ago Bay is thought to have been formed by various factors. During the last glacial period, sea levels rose, causing river valleys to be drowned. This process formed interestingly shaped islands. These small islands were originally raised beaches along the original coast. Today, many areas are covered in a variety of broad-leaved evergreen trees. These forests thrive in the mild climate influenced by the Kuroshio Current. The bays are enriched by nutrients carried down from the forests by the rivers. This allows thick beds of seaweed to grow and nurtures marine life. It also makes Ise-Shima's sheltered bays a great place for pearl farming. Pearl rafts can be seen everywhere.

Ise-Shima's coastline is distinguished not only by its forms but also by the striated rocks. These patterns were formed over a long period by plate tectonics. An ocean plate is moving downwards under Ise-Shima, beneath the continental plate. The continuous movement of the plates against each other causes layers of sedimentary rock on the seabed to be pushed up onto the land. Ise-Shima's complex geology is characterized by rocks that are eroded at different rates by wave action and the flow of rivers. These geological factors have resulted in a coastline characterized by rias.

From numerous viewpoints throughout Ise-Shima National Park, these natural wonders can be fully appreciated. The summit of Ise-Shima National Park's highest mountain, Mt. Asama, allows visitors a panoramic view of the area and has a veritable cornucopia of plants.

Yokoyama Picnic Site's many observation areas offer different perspectives on Ago Bay's jagged coastlines, seas, and woods. Visit the Ugura Peninsula's observation points to see the heart-shaped inlet—a popular, romantic spot. Other landscapes include sea caves and lagoons (such as the one that can be appreciated from the Nankai View Point).

Kamishima Island has an unusual karst limestone coast. A combination of groundwater and rain have eroded the white stone into distinctive jagged peaks. The bright, white rocks of this natural wonder create a striking contrast with the surrounding sea and greenery.

The inland areas of Ise-Shima feature mountains and thick, green forests- especially around Ise Jingu, the most important *jinja* (Shinto shrine) complex in Japan. In 1923, a 200-year cypress-planting

project was established by Ise Jingu's secretariat. The aims of this plan are to conserve Ise Jingu's own forest and to ensure that it will be able to provide Ise Jingu with a sustainable supply of cypress for rebuilding the *jinja* every twenty years. These efforts include trimming the cypress trees to promote growth. This pruning also allows more light to enter the forest, in turn allowing young trees and small plants to flourish. Forest management has made the ground in this area more absorbent, thus providing a natural way to prevent river flooding. Although Ise Jingu's forest is not open to the public, there are many other forested areas of Ise-Shima that can be explored. Hiking through these areas one is sure to see many types of plants and observe a range of bird species and their habits.

Thanks to the warm Kuroshio Current that flows offshore from the Kumano Sea, there are many relatively warm days and only short periods of frost in the winter.