

## Nature and History

Located on the eastern tip of the Shimane Peninsula, the enchanting historical harbor town of Mihonoseki features an impressive cape and numerous coastal inlets. These inlets form what is called a “rias coast” and can be enjoyed from either an observation deck or a sightseeing boat. The town itself once flourished as a port for large trading ships called *kitamaebune* that distributed goods along the coasts of Japan and the Asian continent.

Mihonoseki is home to Miho Shrine, headquarters for the approximately 3,400 shrines across Japan that enshrine Ebisu, the god of prosperity and fisheries. Residents of the town have performed rituals for Ebisu at the shrine and along this magnificent coast for centuries. Historic Aoishidatami Street, located not far from Miho Shrine, is paved with green stones from the Mihonoseki coast and boasts a number of nineteenth-century inns and houses. A walking path leads to an impressive lighthouse and observation deck at the tip of nearby Cape Jizozaki. Though visitors cannot climb to the top of the lighthouse, the cape still offers an extensive vista of the Sea of Japan and Mt. Daisen, with the Oki Islands floating off in the distance. Mihonoseki Lighthouse was constructed in 1898 and stands about 90 m above sea level. The seaside restaurant next door once served as the lighthouse keeper’s home and provides visitors with an opportunity to enjoy local cuisine along with a spectacular view.

## Activities

Visitors to Mihonoseki can choose scenic cruises along the shoreline, try their hand at the traditional method of catching *tobiuo* (Japanese flying fish), or participate in numerous marine activities. According to legend, Ebisu, the god of fishermen and prosperity, once fished in this area. Travelers are welcome to attend the daily morning rituals held year-round at Miho Shrine, which features a serene and graceful performance called the “Maiden Dance.” The one-hour hike through the forest from Gohonmatsu Park to Cape Jizozaki provides stunning views of the Shimane Peninsula regardless of the season. From late spring through early May, visitors to Gohonmatsu Park can also enjoy more than 5,000 azalea (*Rhododendron*) shrubs in full bloom.