

The Keramas' "Big Island"

Tokashiki is the largest of the Kerama Islands. Located around 32 kilometers west of Naha in Okinawa, it is long and thin, measuring 9 kilometers from north to south, and 2.8 kilometers across at its widest point. Its landscape is dramatic, with steep mountains soaring straight up out of the sea to heights of 200-plus meters in the center (Mt. Arari) and the north (Mt. Akama), and sandstone plains covered in windswept pines at Aharenmisaki Enchi at the southern tip.

Out of necessity, people live and farm in the flat and low-lying parts of the island. (Thanks to its mountainous topography, Tokashiki has plenty of fresh water, which makes it good for rice farming.) The island has three villages: Tokashiki on the east coast, where the ferry from Naha arrives, is the largest; then there is Tokashiku, a small hamlet, a little further south and over on the west coast; and south of Tokashiku is Aharen, from which the Mitsushima Inter-Island Ferry departs to Aka and Zamami islands.

Despite its forbidding cliff-lined shoreline, Tokashiki possesses a couple of idyllic beaches—Tokashiku Beach and Aharen Beach—which sit in serene coves, protected from the elements by the surrounding mountains. With a dramatic landscape, Tokashiki is a great place for walks with spectacular views, with eight viewpoints and two nature trails.