

Exploring Oshima

Oshima is the island home of Nakatsu-miya, the shrine venerating the deity Tagitsuhime no Kami. As the closest accessible island to Okinoshima, Oshima also houses Okitsu-miya Yohaisho, a hall from which to worship Okinoshima (and Tagorihime no Kami, the deity enshrined there).

Life in a fishing community

Exploring the island gives visitors insights into the history of worship in the Munakata area, and offers a chance to experience the life of a small fishing community. From the fishing co-op near the ferry terminal that offers the catch of the day, to the Oshima Culture Center that has displays on local festivals and the deep historical connection between the island's people and Okinoshima, visitors can get an immediate sense of the deep respect the local people have for the sea.

Audio tours

For a self-guided tour of the island, visitors can rent an audio device at the Oshima Ferry Terminal, which uses GPS to impart interesting information as you travel around. Several spots of interest are within easy reach of the ferry terminal, and a regular bus runs a loop around the island to access other sites.

An inspiring islet

Yume no Sayoshima is a small island in the bay, framed by a red torii gate, that can be reached on foot during low tide. During the Muromachi period (1336–1573), the poet Sogi (1421–1502) visited Munakata and composed a poem inspired by this scenic islet.

Further afield

More recent history is reflected in the ruins of a canon emplacement, built on the north side of the island during World War II. One of the most unusual sites is Miura Cave, also known as "Johan's Cave." Not far from Oshima Light House, it is said to have been the hiding place of Father Johan, a Catholic priest who escaped from Nagasaki after Christianity was outlawed in 1614. Walking trails, part of the Kyushu Olle hiking course, traverse the inland of the island, covering most points of interest. Trails are well marked, and suitable for intermediate trekkers with no special equipment.