

TITLE ELEMENTS

The arrival and flourishing of Christianity

Explore the landscapes and traditional culture of the Hidden Christian villages

Ikitsuki Island

2.5-hour tour

5. Ikitsuki Island Museum “Shima no Yakata”

Ikitsuki Town, Minamimen 4289-1

A broad selection of artifacts and videos linked to Ikitsuki’s Hidden Christian community. This museum is a great place to learn about the traditional culture passed down through generations on Ikitsuki Island and in western Hirado.

5 minutes by car

6. Grave of Gaspar Nishi Genka

A large cross commemorates Gaspar Nishi Genka (1556–1609), a martyr who was executed on this spot. Behind the cross is Saint Gaspar’s Grave, a tiny graveyard with a grave marked by heaped-up stones.

Enjoy the panorama from the viewpoint.

7. Nakaenoshima Island

The Kakure Kirishitan regard Nakaenoshima as a sacred place, and collect water that seeps from the rocks to use as holy water. The island is a World Heritage Site; however, it is not open to the public.

5 minutes by car

8. Yamada Church

Ikitsuki Town, Yamadamen 440-2

French priest Father Jean François Matrat and 17 members of his congregation built this church in 1912, making it the town’s second-oldest after Hōki Church. Note the butterfly-wing collages in the interior.

10 minutes by car

9. Yakiyama

The name, meaning “burning mountain,” derives either from a church being burned down here or from murdered Christians being crammed into a hole and burned. There is now a hall here where Kakure Kirishitan hold ceremonies.

30 minutes by car and foot

10. Danjiku-sama (Giant Reeds)

A Hidden Christian family was hiding in the giant reeds on the shore here when a child accidentally gave them away, resulting in their execution. A memorial ceremony is conducted for them on January 16 every year.

Left hand boxes (PART 2)

Hirado West Coast 2-hour tour

5. Ikitsuki Island Museum “Shima no Yakata”

Ikitsuki Town, Minamimen 4289-1

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5 minutes by car

11. Kasuga Village and Mt. Yasumandake

Kasuga Town, 166-1

After being converted by missionaries in the sixteenth century, the people here maintained their Christian faith in parallel with ascetic Buddhism even while Christianity was banned throughout Japan. They secretly revered *nandogami*, or closet gods, in their houses.

15 minutes by car

12. Hirado Christian Museum

Ōishiwaki Town, 1502-1

Most exhibits here are related to the Hidden Christians of Neshiko Village. Learn about the *nandogami* (“closet gods”) they worshipped, and how they passed their faith down over generations.

1-minute walk

13. Ushiwaki Wood

Graves from the Kirishitan period have been excavated here. According to the oral tradition of the village of Neshiko, Ushiwaki is a sacred place where people were martyred.

RIGHT HAND COLUMN

TITLE ELEMENTS

The arrival and flourishing of Christianity

Learn about the Age of Exploration when Christianity came to Japan.

2-hour tour

1. Hirado Dutch Trading Post

Okubo Town, 2477

Originally built in 1639, this warehouse was the largest building in the Trading Post. The shogunate ordered its demolition because the design of the façade featured a year from the Christian calendar. (The present building is a 2011 reconstruction.)

5 minutes’ walk

2. Francis Xavier Monument

The monument is situated in Sakigata Park, high on the hill behind the Dutch Trading Post. The park offers a fine view of the town and Hirado Strait.

5 minutes' walk

3. Matsura Historical Museum

12 Kagamigawa

The former private residence of the Matsura family, the lords of Hirado, this historic place once hosted many important visitors from overseas. Many unique historical artifacts are on display.

10 minutes' walk

3. St. Francis Xavier Memorial Church

259-1 Kagamigawa

Named after St. Francis Xavier, this church is a Hirado harbor landmark. The view looking up to the church with the temple in the foreground is considered a classic.

INSIDE RIGHT BOTTOM TEXT

TITLE ELEMENTS

80-minute tour

Mt. Yasumandake

Hirado's highest peak

Enjoy some gentle hiking.

BOXES

(P) Yasumandake Parking

From the parking lot to the summit takes around 30 minutes each way. The path is well maintained and highly walkable. There are toilet facilities in the parking lot.

Start your trek

Walk the shrine approach

This 250-meter-long historic stone path is portrayed in pictures from the Edo period. It's a bit uneven, so please watch your step.

30 minutes' walk

View from the summit

Go around the side of the shrine on top of Mt. Yasumandake to get a splendid view. Ikitsuki Island and Kasuga Village are right in front of you, with the Gotō Islands in the distance. (Please stay well away from the cliff edge here.)

BOTTOM FAR RIGHT

TITLE ELEMENTS

The ban is lifted and Christianity revives

2-hour walk

Visit the beautiful churches that symbolize the revival of Christianity.

14. Himosashi Church

Himosashi Town, 1039

This reinforced concrete church from 1929 was built on the site where most preaching was done from the Meiji era onward. Because of this, it is one of the most significant churches in the entire prefecture.

10 minutes by car

15. Grave of Father Matrat

Father Jean François Matrat was the pastor of Himosashi Church and Hōki Church, as well as multiple other churches. He died in 1921 and was buried in the graveyard for foreigners on Tasaki Hill.

15 minutes by car

16. Hōki Church

Hōki Town, 1170

Father Matrat supervised the construction of this 1898 church, which is the oldest in Hirado. Somewhat unusually, the façade is of brick while the rest of the church is made of wood.

20 minutes by car

17. Tabira Church

Tabira Town, Kotedamen 19

This brick church, consecrated in 1918, has a beautiful exterior and interior and has both historical and architectural value. It has been designated a Nationally Important Cultural Property.

* There are many other churches in addition to those shown here.