

## **Tottori Sand Dunes Visitor Center**

Enrich your experience of the Tottori sand dunes at the Visitor Center, where exhibits address the dunes' geologic formation over tens of thousands of years; how this unique landscape has figured into people's lives in recent centuries; and the surprising flora and fauna that thrive in this tough coastal environment today. You can learn about the difference between dunes and deserts, view different kinds of sand from around the world under a microscope, and find out what kinds of animal tracks and insect signs to watch for as you explore the dunes right outside the door.

A four-meter-deep boring sample exhibited on the first floor shows in cross-section the layers of sediment that make up Tottori's famous dunes. Beneath the surface sand of our current geologic epoch lie volcanic ash and pumice blown from an eruption of Mount Daisen, 70 kilometers away, some 60,000 years ago. (Outside on the dunes there's an area where this same volcanic ash remains exposed, enabling you to see it in the wild, right up close.) The sample shows still more layers that reveal volcanic eruptions from as far away and long ago as Mount Aso in Kyushu, 90,000 years in the past.

A short film shown in the Sunakura theater on the second floor highlights the sand dunes' scenic beauty. The theater walls display molds of actual wind-ripple formations, and there are exhibits where you can learn about the different shapes these micro-topographical phenomena take and why. Don't miss the fifteen-minute demonstrations, conducted by a staff member several times daily, that show how wind ripples are created. The machine used is the only one of its kind in the world, and was developed and designed in collaboration with Tottori University.

A first-floor exhibit introduces the San'in Kaigan UNESCO Global Geopark, of which the Tottori sand dunes are part. A lecture room is available for groups of up to 50 people, with advance booking. Outside, a rest area has tables, benches, and water faucets for washing sand from your feet and shoes. Feel free to rest inside, as well—benches are provided just inside the entrance.

### **Activities at the Sand Dunes**

Staff at the Visitor Center can also provide information on these activities and nearby attractions:

- Guided tours

- Sandpainting classes
- Sandboarding
- Paragliding
- Fat bike tours
- Yoga and SUP yoga
- Segway rides
- Sightseeing chairlift
- The Sand Museum
- *Nashi* pear picking (autumn)
- *Rakkyo* shallot field visits
- Tanegaike pond and Uradome coast excursions