

Innojofuta: “Wild Dogs,” Eyeglass Rock, and Humpback Whales

The shoreline at Innojofuta on Tokunoshima’s northwest coast is remarkable for its unusual rock formations and striking cliff faces, sculpted over time by wind and rain. The limestone reef was thrust out of the earth between 1 and 1.5 million years ago and is geologically the newest layer of the island.

This section of coast is part of the Amamigunto National Park, established in 2017, which stretches across much of the Amami Islands. While the first *kanji* character of Innojofuta means “dog,” the story that it relates to a pack of wild canines that once prowled the area is now thought to be unfounded. The true origins of the name remain unknown.

Unusual Rock Formations

The best-known rock formation at Innojofuta is Megane-iwa, or “Eyeglass Rock,” a set of two sea arches that resemble a pair of spectacles. It provides a perfectly framed view of the East China Sea, especially striking at sunset. Another series of rock formations, which appears to have sprouted from the sand, is called Kinoko-iwa, or “Mushroom Rocks.” Erosion of their lower parts has left them with bulbous tops that are footholds for tenacious grasses and shrubs. Concrete paths lead to these and other rock formations, but some parts are quite steep. A large, concrete lookout provides a 360-degree panorama of the rocks, cliffs, ocean and back across Tokunoshima Island. Humpback whales can sometimes be seen off the coast, most commonly between January and March.

How to Get There

Innojofuta is about a 10-minute drive from the airport and about a 45-minute drive from Kametoku Port, where the ferries to and from the other Amami Islands dock. The turnoff to Innojofuta is in the middle of sugarcane fields. Public toilet facilities are available, but there are no shops or restaurants nearby.