

Aze Prince Beach Seaside Park

Aze Prince Beach stretches for 1.5 kilometers along the northeast coast of Tokunoshima. The colorful scenery is striking: a green line of trees borders white sands dotted with dark rocks, with the cobalt blue ocean stretching to the horizon.

Exploring the lagoon

As with much of the island's coastline, a coral reef forms a tidal pool off the beach, though the lagoon at Aze Prince Beach is particularly large. The clear, protected shallows extend up to 200 meters from the shore. Fish and other marine creatures, including seahorses, yellowtail clownfish, pearl-spot chromis, and starfish, populate the waters, making it a great spot for snorkeling as well as swimming.

How the beach got its name

The name of the beach dates from a visit in 1972 by then Crown Prince Akihito (who would later reign as the 125th emperor of Japan, from January 1989 until his abdication in April 2019) and his wife Princess Michiko. The royal couple enjoyed the unspoiled, idyllic coastline and after their tour, the beach became known as Prince Beach.

Cooling off and camping in the park

In the park there are shady spots to take a break from the sun, including traditional-style arbors. Changing rooms, toilets, and shower facilities are all accessible at no charge. A lookout provides views of the surrounding scenery and Kakeroma Island in the distance.

A free campsite is available, and can be booked through Tokunoshima Town Hall. There is also a covered cooking area, toilets, and showers in the recreation area.

Brown sugar

Islanders use May 5, the Children's Day national holiday, to celebrate the Kurozato Matsuri ("Brown Sugar Festival"), which marks the traditional end of the harvest. Sugar cane is the island's main crop and an essential ingredient in a variety of products, including the distilled spirit *shochu*. As well as brown sugar products and cane juice, the festival features folk song and dance performances, and the chance to see the traditional method of squeezing sugar cane with a machine powered by a cow.

In 2017 the beach was designated part of Amami Gunto National Park, which stretches across the Amami Islands.

The sand is formed from coral and is quite coarse. (Sandals or similar footwear are recommended.)

Getting there

Aze Prince Beach is about a 25-minute drive across the island from the airport and free parking is available for around 100 cars.