

Kanamizaki Palm Tunnel and Lookout

A 200-meter stretch of fern-like palms forms a long, picturesque arch that leads to the Kanami headland shoreline. The winding path under the densely packed fronds of this ancient species creates a tropical island atmosphere, as well as providing respite from the heat.

The palms (actually cycads, known in Japan as *sotetsu*) have been here for at least three centuries. They were originally planted to mark the borders of local fields and protect crops from the winds that blow in from the nearby ocean.

Visitors are advised to stick to the middle of the paths as venomous *habu* vipers occasionally appear among the trees. The snake is endemic to the Ryukyu Islands, but rest assured that *habu* bites are extremely rare these days.

The Kanami Lookout at the end of the Palm Tunnel provides a spectacular panorama over the lush greenery of the tunnel and its surroundings; the East China Sea and the Pacific Ocean; and on clear days across to the islands of Yorojima, Ukejima, and Kakeromajima. You can also see the Tonbara Rocks, a popular spot for diving and fishing a few kilometers offshore.

The Kanami shoreline is also impressive. The beach is dotted with black rocks (sandstone and mudstone), outcroppings of limestone formed 100 million years ago, and huge boulders deposited by powerful typhoons. A path from near the lookout leads down to the shoreline and a lighthouse.

The Kanami Lookout is also accessible via the road to the right of the Palm Tunnel.

The Kanami area is part of Amami Gunto National Park, which stretches across the Amami Islands.