

Geruma Village

Geruma Village: Kerama-style Slow Living

Villages in the Keramas have changed greatly over the last seven decades. Many of the original wooden houses were destroyed in the American naval bombardments of March 1945. With the advent of peace, larger concrete structures largely replaced original single-story wooden buildings, and the hedges and old coral limestone walls that surrounded the houses became concrete block walls. Geruma, however, retains much of its original Okinawan character, with many of the old walls and windbreaks still in situ.

Experience “Kerama Green”

The modest hamlet of Geruma (pop. 62) on the island of the same name is a great place to get an idea of what the villages in the Keramas looked like in pre-World War II days. You can walk along unpaved alleyways of sand or lush grass between walls of chunky coral or rows of garcinia trees (which function as a natural windbreak), while enjoying encounters with colorful birds, butterflies, and wildflowers. This is the world not of Kerama Blue, but of Kerama Green!

Here are a couple of places to visit in Geruma.

• Traditional Seafarer’s House

The homes of Kerama natives who made their fortunes from seafaring were known as “captain’s houses.” The Takara House, an unusually well-preserved example, sits behind the grandest set of coral walls in Geruma, and gives insight into how prosperous families lived in the Keramas until well into the twentieth century.

• Memorial to the Children

On a sadder note, you can climb up to the Kobato no To War Memorial, which commemorates 13 village children who lost their lives in the mass suicides that took place after the American landings in March 1945, and 22 children who died as a result of the fighting in the Japanese-governed islands of the North Pacific Ocean. It overlooks the hamlet and the local school to make the children’s souls feel properly at home.

SUGGESTED PHOTO(S)

1. (hero image) Aerial View of Village /View of an old Alleyway
2. Takara House
3. Kobato no To (or “over-the-shoulder shot” of view from there)