

Three-Island Traverse

A coast-hugging walk that passes through a historic hamlet and ends up at a viewpoint just above Kerama Airport

Route: Aka Harbor – Fukaji Viewpoint – Aka Harbor
Distance: 6.6 km (round trip)
Time: 100 mins
Level: Easy

Overview

Despite its rather imposing title, the Three-Island Traverse is actually rather easy, mainly because all the islands involved are small and flat! En route, you'll get an eyeful of Kerama Blue from the two bridges you cross, drop in on a historic house, and enjoy panoramic views of the entire cluster of Zamami islands.

Detail

Your starting point is Aka Harbor. From there, aim for the 530-meter-long Aka Ohashi Bridge to reach the neighboring island of Geruma. Take a moment in the middle of the bridge to enjoy a bird's-eye view of the Kerama Blue directly below and catch the refreshing breeze.

Once you are on Geruma, the road hugs the coastline. The walking is easy and half an hour or less will bring you to the little village of Geruma (pop. 62). Why not take a break and drop into the Takara House, one of the few surviving traditional Kerama seafarer's houses, with its massive typhoon-resistant walls, well-preserved interior, and outbuildings that evoke life on the islands prior to World War II? Wander through the grassy lanes edged by limestone walls and garcinia trees. Pay your respects at the Kobato no To War Memorial that commemorates the many children who perished in the mass civilian suicides that followed the American landing on the island.

When you've had your fill of Geruma, cross the Geruma Bridge to Fukaji. Having started on an island with a population of around 260 and moved to another with a population of around 60, you are now on one with a population of . . . zero! About 15 minutes' walk brings you to Kerama Airport. Note how the terminal, with its red-tiled roof, incorporates elements of Okinawan vernacular architecture. Look for the gate in the patch of grass facing the airport entrance. Pass through this (taking care to shut it behind you) and climb the hill to reach the Fukaji Viewpoint. From this vantage point you can gaze over the airport and the surrounding

forest of Okinawa pines on Fukaji, as well as back at Geruma and Aka in the south and to the uninhabited islands of Kuba and Yakabi in the west.

When you've cooled off, head back down and back to Aka by the same route. If you want to rent Nordic walking poles, you can do so at the Sango Yuntaku-Kan Visitor Center with its distinctive stone walls and red-tiled roof.

SUGGESTED PHOTO(S)

1. View from Fukaji (Hero image)
2. Aka Ohashi Bridge
3. Takara House
4. Geruma Green Alleyway
5. Geruma Bridge
6. Airport
7. View from Fukaji