

Taketomi's Unique Natural and Cultural Heritage

Taketomijima is surrounded by the beautiful coral reefs of Sekisei Lagoon. The area was designated a national park in 1972. The major part of the three villages were together designated a National Important Preservation District for Groups of Traditional Buildings in 1987.

The island is known for the beauty of its natural environment and cultural landscape. In 1977, the *Tanadui matsuri* (festival) was designated as a National Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property. In 1989, textiles like *Yaeyama Jofu* and *Minsaa* became nationally recognized Japanese Traditional Craft Products. The richly evocative folk performing arts and handicrafts cultivated for festivals and rituals are still part of daily life on Taketomijima. Great effort is made to educate and train the younger generations in the island's traditions, from music and theater to crafts. Conserving the environment and preserving and passing down traditional culture are fundamental to sustainable community development.

Many festivals and ceremonies are held throughout the year on Taketomijima. At the center of these events are sacred sites known as *on*. The spirit of respect for the island's gods is connected directly to environmental conservation and the preservation of traditional culture.

1. Taketomijima has many visitors. Please take any rubbish home with you.
2. Do not enter areas bounded by rock walls around houses. These are the residents' private spaces.
3. The villages are where residents live their daily lives. Do not walk through villages in revealing clothes or swimwear.
4. Spending the night anywhere except in accommodation facilities is forbidden. You may not camp or sleep outside.
5. Flowers, plants, shellfish, fish, and butterflies are to be observed only, not touched. Each one is a tiny life.
6. *On* are sacred sites. Do not enter. Please understand the meaning of "sacred".