

Kayaking and Stand-up Paddleboarding at Miyajima

The image of Itsukushima Shrine's floating red torii gate may be synonymous with Miyajima, but the entire island is dotted with shrines and sacred sites, many of which were traditionally approached from the water. The ferry ride from the mainland gives visitors glimpses of these sights, but for a closer look, stand-up paddleboarding and guided kayaking tours around the island are provided by several local companies. The island is part of Setonaikai National Park, but Miyajima itself has been considered sacred since long before the park was established. As a result, its natural beauty has been relatively untouched, despite its status as a popular tourist destination.

Full-day and half-day kayaking and paddleboarding courses are available, depending on the weather and participants' fitness. No prior kayaking or paddleboarding experience is required—before getting in the water, an expert guide will teach participants how to maneuver their ride and navigate the currents around the island. The standard course begins at Nagahama Beach, on the north side of the island, and continues past the ferry terminal and Itsukushima Shrine. Another route starts on the eastern side of Miyajima and takes in the nearby island of Enoshima, about 30 minutes away. A full-day course begins at the secluded Irihama Beach and circles around to the southwest side of the island, taking in some of the less well-known views of Miyajima. Keen participants can even combine the different courses into a longer session. English-speaking guides are available.