

Miyajima Aquarium

With a focus on the marine life of the Seto Inland Sea, Miyajima Aquarium is the best place to see what is under the water surrounding the island. The aquarium is one of the oldest in Hiroshima Prefecture, but the building was completely remodeled in 2011, with a traditional facade to match its traditional surroundings. The entrance hall even has the same red-and-white color scheme as Itsukushima Shrine.

Across two floors, the aquarium faithfully re-creates the island's marine ecosystem, starting with a reproduction of the Miyajima coastline inside a glass tank. The artificial mudflats have their own high and low tide points, showing how the ecosystem changes over the course of a day. On the second floor is a traditional oyster farm, complete with a wooden raft just like the ones that float off the coast. A series of tanks depict the water cycle from the mountains to the sea, and feature different creatures at each stage.

Most of the marine creatures on display live in the Seto Inland Sea and were caught locally. The aquarium houses about 350 different species, from fish to crustaceans, but the finless porpoises are a highlight. The only mammals native to the Seto Inland Sea, the friendly creatures have their own tank, where visitors can see them being fed. There are also some popular nonnative animals, including sea lions, penguins, and otters, all of which have regular public feeding times.

Outside, the Live Show Pool hosts a trained sea lion show multiple times a day. Kids and parents can watch the sea lions wave, slide around the pool, catch rings, and even race each other.