

Jinoshima Island

Jinoshima is a mountainous, forested island off the coast of Fukuoka, famous for its roughly 6,000 wild camellia trees, which bloom from late January through March. The island is a popular day-trip destination, with two ports accessible by ferry from Konominato Port on the mainland. In 1996, two mountain roads were planted with camellia trees to create an attractive walking path along the length of the island. The route can be covered in under two hours.

Camellias

The thousands of camellia trees growing across the island bloom from late January through March. At the Jinoshima Camellia Festival in March, food stalls sell locally caught seafood, and there are musical performances. In fall, the mature camellia seeds are collected to produce camellia oil, which is used for cooking and as a moisturizer for the hair and skin.

Tomari Fishing Port

Jinoshima has two small fishing ports, Tomari and Toyoka, and the ferry stops at both. Tomari Fishing Port is closer to the mainland. Traces of the original stone wharf remain, which was constructed on the orders of Kuroda Nagamasa (1568–1623), the ruler of Chikuzen Province (modern-day Fukuoka).

Toyoka Fishing Port

Toyoka is the island's smaller fishing port, located on the west side. The only shop and only restaurant on the island are at Toyoka. A small Shinto shrine, Maki-jinja, overlooks the port. A camellia-lined path leads from the port to Kurase Observatory on the northernmost tip of the island.

Itsukushima Shrine

This small Shinto shrine near Tomari Fishing Port venerates the Three Female Deities of Munakata, who protect sea routes. In July, residents of the island hold the Jinoshima Gion Yamakasa Festival to pray for protection from disease and disaster. Starting from Itsukushima Shrine, residents wheel a decorated float through the town, then transport it by boat to Toyoka Fishing Port before returning it to the shrine.

Fishing

One of the main industries on Jinoshima is fishing. Ceramic octopus traps can often be seen lined up on the shore at Tomari Fishing Port. Freshly cooked seafood is sold at stalls during the Camellia Festival. Common catches include octopus, squid, black sea bream, sea urchin, and abalone. Female *ama* divers once lived and worked on the island, free diving for shellfish, before rising water temperatures reduced the catches of abalone, sea urchin, and turban shells. *Wakame* seaweed flourishes off the southeastern coast of Jinoshima. The fronds are the most commonly used part of *wakame*, often in miso soup, but Jinoshima residents also eat the root (*mekabu*), which is usually boiled, chopped, and served on rice.