

## **Seto Ohashi Bridge**

A feat of modern architectural engineering, the Seto Ohashi Bridge connects the city of Sakaide in Kagawa Prefecture on Shikoku with Kurashiki in Okayama Prefecture on the main island of Honshu. The bridge structure consists of a series of connected two-tiered bridges; the upper deck is for cars and the lower is for trains. Seto Ohashi is the world's longest double-deck bridge. Passing over the Shiwaku Islands in the Seto Inland Sea, it is approximately 12 kilometers long and was built over a period of nearly 10 years, from 1978 to 1988—almost a century after the idea to connect Honshu and Shikoku with a bridge was first proposed by politician Okubo Jinnojo (1849–1891), a native of Kagawa. The bridge replaced a regular ferry service and has been a significant boon to tourism and the local economy. Driving across Seto Ohashi takes about 15 minutes, as does the train trip between Sakaide Station on the Shikoku side and Kojima Station in Okayama. Visitors who are not afraid of heights can learn more about the bridge by joining one of the Seto-Ohashi Bridge Sky Tours. These guided tours take participants inside the massive structure, pass through a maintenance corridor right next to the JR Seto-Ohashi Line railway tracks, and climb to the top of one of the bridge towers, 175 meters above sea level. The two-hour tours are given on select days in spring and autumn and must be reserved in advance.