

## **Shirasaki Ocean Park**

The limestone formations along the Shirasaki Coast have long captured the imagination of travelers and seafarers, and are referenced in an eighth-century poem. Shirasaki Ocean Park covers a 1-kilometer stretch of headland on this celebrated coast. A lookout built atop one of the formations in the park affords views of the coastline and its distinctive karst topography.

The limestone formations date back 250 million years to the Permian Period. These masses of calcium carbonate are made of biological matter, such as shells and coral, that accumulated over centuries. A walk alongside the formations in the park may reveal fossils of crinoids (also known as sea lilies or feather stars) and fusulinids (extinct single-celled organisms) embedded in the rock. It takes about 30 to 60 minutes to walk around the park and visit the observatory.

The park facilities include camping grounds and a visitor center that sells produce and other local specialties, such as citrus fruit juices. Meals are available at the restaurant in the visitor center, including *akamoku* rice bowls. *Akamoku* is a species of brown macroalgae harvested locally. It is typically seasoned with soy sauce and served on top of rice with other ingredients such as whitebait, avocado, egg, and perilla leaf.