

Kanmon Undersea Footpath

Anyone claiming to have walked from Kyushu to Honshu, or vice versa, will likely be met with a raised eyebrow. After all, the two islands are separated by the Kanmon Strait, a huge waterway that is more than half a kilometer across at its narrowest point. Even so, pedestrians regularly cross between the islands on a walkway far beneath the waves.

The Kanmon Tunnel opened to vehicle and foot traffic on March 9, 1958. The upper part of the tunnel was initially a one-lane roadway, and the lower part of the tunnel was reserved for walkers and cyclists. The 780-meter-long tunnel is accessed by a 55-meter-deep elevator shaft on the Shimonoseki side and a 60-meter-deep shaft on the Moji side. Walkers can use the path for free, but there is a ¥20 charge to push a bicycle or moped from one island to the other.

On foot, the journey under the strait takes around 15 minutes. The undersea border between Yamaguchi and Fukuoka Prefectures is marked with a thick line midway across, at the tunnel's deepest point. Many first-time pedestrians take advantage of the rare opportunity to straddle two prefectures (and snap a photo) as traffic rumbles overhead. The tunnel is also popular with walkers and joggers as an air-conditioned track that is totally sheltered from rain or wind.