

## **Welcome to Gamagori**

The seaside city of Gamagori in central Aichi Prefecture is a leisure destination noted for its scenery. Its location on Mikawa Bay is approximately 45 minutes by train from Nagoya. Among the most famous sights in the area is **Takeshima**, a small island connected to the mainland by a 387-meter footbridge. The bridge leads to the torii gate of the twelfth-century **Yaotomi Shrine**, whose forested grounds cover the entirety of the island. Surrounding the mainland end of the bridge is a resort area with two prominent hotels, hot-spring baths, an aquarium, a park, museums, a long beachside promenade, and restaurants and cafés serving local specialties such as seafood from Mikawa Bay. The Takeshima area is part of Mikawa-wan Quasi-National Park.

The reputation of Gamagori and Takeshima as places for relaxation and sightseeing dates back to the early twentieth century, when the Nagoya-based businessman Taki Nobushiro (1868–1938) built an inn on the coast near Takeshima. Famous authors, including Tanizaki Junichiro

(1886–1965) and Nobel Prize winner Kawabata Yasunari (1899–1972), came to stay at Taki's inn, the Tokiwakan, where they enjoyed the calm waters, beaches, and hot springs of Gamagori. Their example and writings have inspired many to spend their vacations in the Takeshima area.

The Tokiwakan has been replaced by a museum focused on the aforementioned literary figures, but guests who would like to sense the heritage of the area on an overnight stay can reserve a room at the historic **Gamagori Classic Hotel**. Located on a hill overlooking Takeshima and Mikawa Bay, the hotel opened in 1934 as the Gamagori Hotel, and its castle-inspired main building and three annexes on the grounds have been designated for preservation. The other distinguished hotel near Takeshima is the seafont **Hotel Takeshima**, which is noted for its ocean views and hot-spring baths.

Next to the Hotel Takeshima is the **Takeshima Aquarium**. It highlights the sea life in Mikawa Bay and beyond, with a particular focus on deep-sea fish. Gamagori is the home port of the only deep-sea fishing fleet in Aichi Prefecture, and fish from depths as low as 700 meters figure prominently in the city's cuisine, which also incorporates local ingredients such as seafood

from shallower waters, high-quality beef, and fruit.

**Shunzeien** is a small park near the footbridge to Takeshima that commemorates courtier and poet Fujiwara no Shunzei (1114–1204). Shunzei established Yaotomi Shrine on Takeshima as well as the settlement that would become Gamagori while serving as governor of the area. Near a statue of Shunzei in the park is the **Takeshima Craft Center**, where one can learn about the long history of textile and garment production in Gamagori and try out traditional textile-making techniques.

Just beyond Takeshima is the larger, uninhabited island of **Mikawa Oshima**, where temporary restaurants and shops open in summer to cater to beach-goers. Mikawa Oshima is accessible by boat from a pier next to the Takeshima Aquarium. There are also several other beaches on the outskirts of Gamagori and on the Nishiura Peninsula to the west.