

# Kumano, A Sacred Area for Healing and Revitalizing

## Kumano Hongu Taisha Grand Shrine



The main deity enshrined is Ketsumikono-Okami (Susanoo-no-mikoto), who is an emanation of Amida Nyorai (Amitayus Buddha). Originally founded at a location in Oyunohara in 33 B.C., the shrine celebrated the 2050th anniversary of its founding in 2018. In 1899 the shrine was spared from destruction by flooding and was moved to the present location. The shrine building is roofed with cypress bark, and is rich in an ancient atmosphere.

## Festival



**Oto Maturi Festival**  
Men dressed all in white and carrying torches run down the 538 stone steps of Kamikura-jinja Shrine all together during this stirring festival (Feb. 6).



**Kumano Hongu Taisha Annual Festival**  
During this Shinto rite a procession consisting of Shinto priests, portable shrines, little children carried on their fathers' shoulders, and so on makes its way on foot from the main shrine to Oyunohara. (Apr. 13-15)



**Nachi-no-Ogi Matsuri**  
Nachi-no-Ogi Matsuri is known as one of the three major fire festivals of Japan. In this Shinto rite the deities of Kumano Nachi Taisha Grand Shrine return home to Nachi Waterfall. (July 14)



**Mifune Matsuri Festival**  
An annual festival of Kumano Hayatama Taisha Grand Shrine. This race of nine fast boats recalls the dashing Kumano Suigun Navy of old. (Oct. 16)



**Yatagarasu**  
A three-legged crow, the Yatagarasu is said to have guided Emperor Jimmu from Kumano to Kashiwara in Yamato when he was unifying Japan. Based on this tradition, it is prayed to as a deity for giving guidance. It is worshipped at Kumano Sanzan as the messenger of the deities of Kumano, and a three-legged crow is also used as the emblem of the Japan Football Association.

## Kumano Hayatama Taisha Grand Shrine



The main deity enshrined is Kumano Hayatama-no-Okami (Izanagi-no-mikoto), who is an emanation of Yakushi Nyorai (Bhaishajyaguru Buddha). The original shrine where the gods of Kumano first descended was Kamikura-jinja Shrine, and that shrine was moved to the present location in the year 128 A.D. The custom is to put the leaves of the nagitree (Podocarpus nagi) inside one's clothes when visiting the shrine as a prayer for safety during one's travels. In the precincts of the shrine is a thousand-year old nagitree planted by Taira no Shigemori (1138-1179), which is treated as a divine tree.

## Kumano Nachi Taisha Grand Shrine

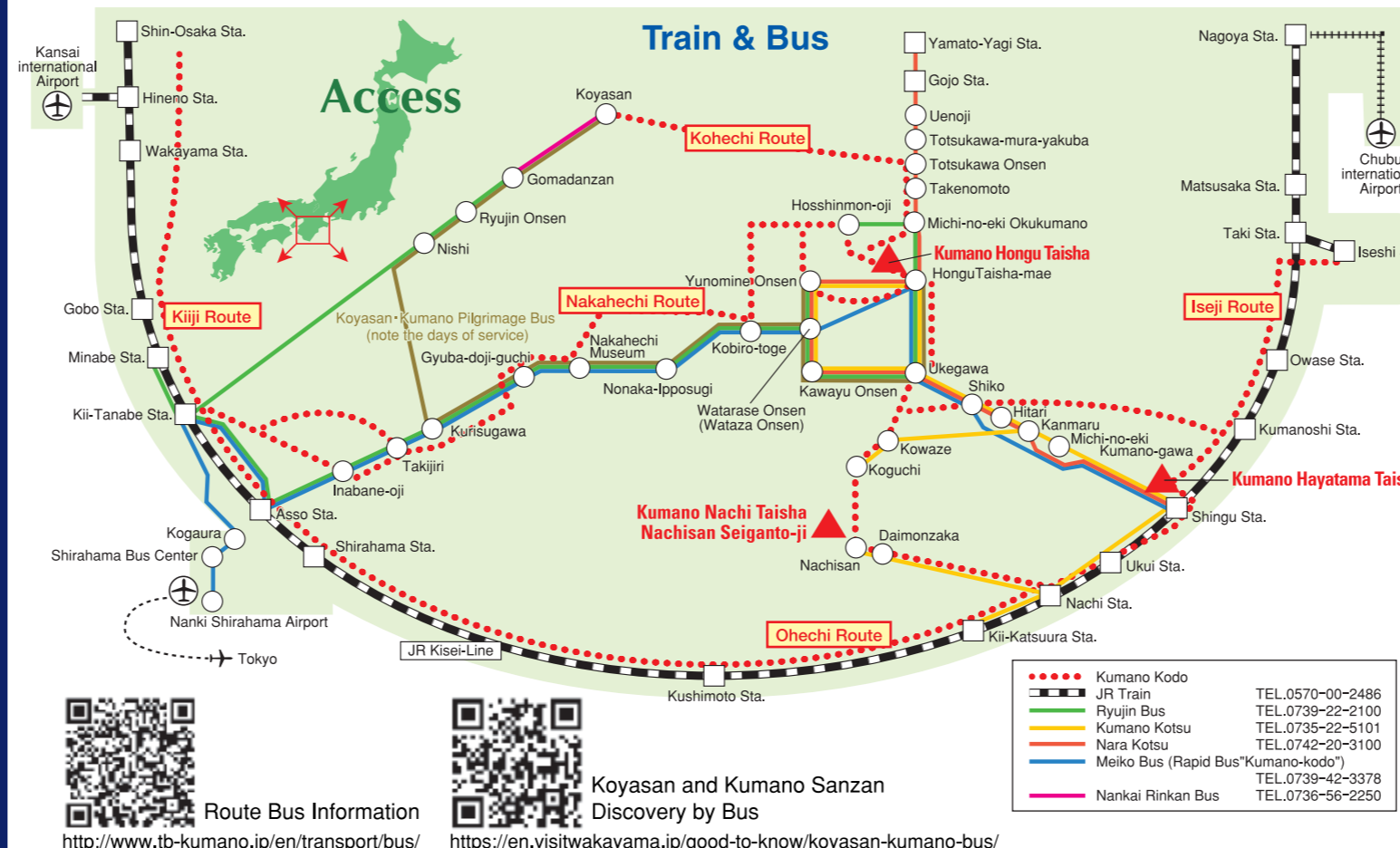


The main deity enshrined is Kumano-Fusumi-no-Okami (Izanami-no-mikoto), who is an emanation of Senju Kannon (Thousand-armed Avalokitesvara). The shrine was moved to the present location from Hiro-jinja Shrine in 317, and celebrated the 1700th anniversary of its founding in 2017. Nachi Waterfall, which is the divine embodiment of the related Hiro-jinja Shrine, is the most magnificent waterfall in Japan with a drop of 133m. In front of the main shrine is the Karasu-ishi (crow-stone). The three-legged crow called Yatagarasu that guided Emperor Jimmu to Yamato transformed itself into this stone.

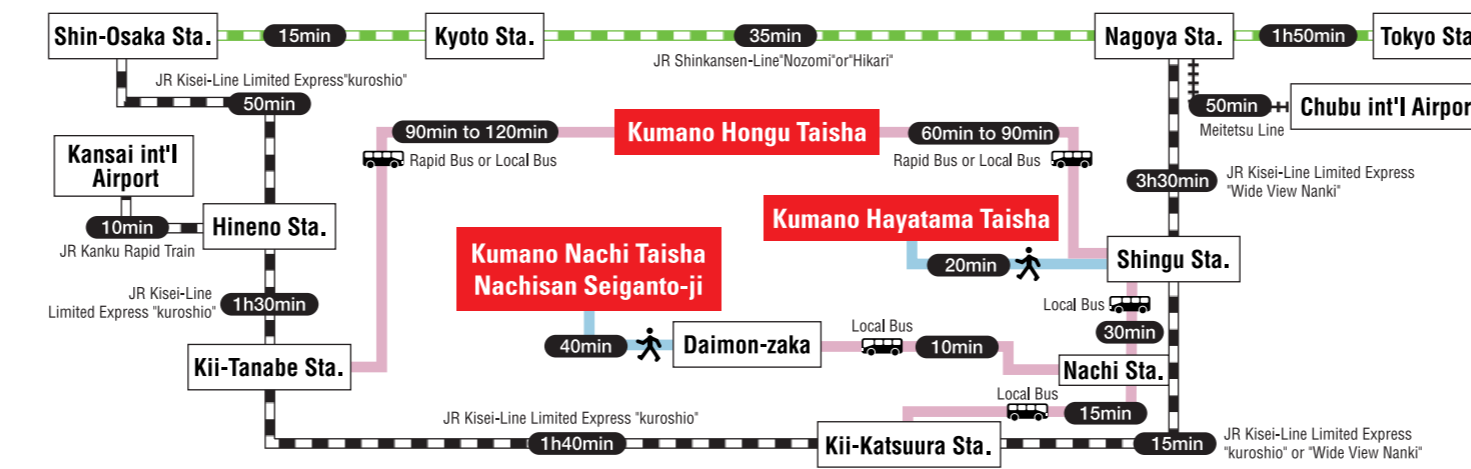
## Nachisan Seiganto-ji Temple



The main deity enshrined is Nyoirin Kanzeon (Chintamanichakra), who is said to have appeared in Nachi Waterfall. This is the first site among the Thirty-three Pilgrimage Sites of Kannon in Western Japan, celebrating the 1300th anniversary of the beginning of the pilgrimage route in 2018. Until the Meiji era separation of Shinto and Buddhism the temple was united with the adjacent Kumano Nachi Taisha Grand Shrine, forming a single center for religious austerities based on the fusion of Shinto and Buddhism focused on Nachi Waterfall.



## Access to Kumano Sanzan



## Kumano Sanzan Tourism associations

**Kumano Hongu Tourist Association**  
100-1 Hongu, Hongu-cho, Tanabe City, Wakayama Prefecture 647-1731  
TEL.0735-42-0735 <http://www.hongu.jp/en/>  
Open from 8:30 thru 17:00

**Shingu City Tourist Association**  
2-1-11 Jofuku, Shingu City, Wakayama Prefecture 647-0020  
TEL.0735-22-2840 <https://www.shinguu.jp/en/>  
Open from 9:00 thru 17:00

**Nachi-Katsuura Town Tourism association**  
6-1-1 Tsukiji, Nachikatsuura-cho, Higashimuro-gun, Wakayama Prefecture 649-5335  
TEL.0735-52-5311 <http://www.nachikan.jp/en/>  
Open from 8:30 thru 18:00

# UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE KUMANO SANZAN TOURIST GUIDE

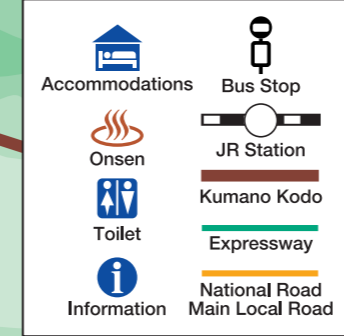


## KUMANO KODO

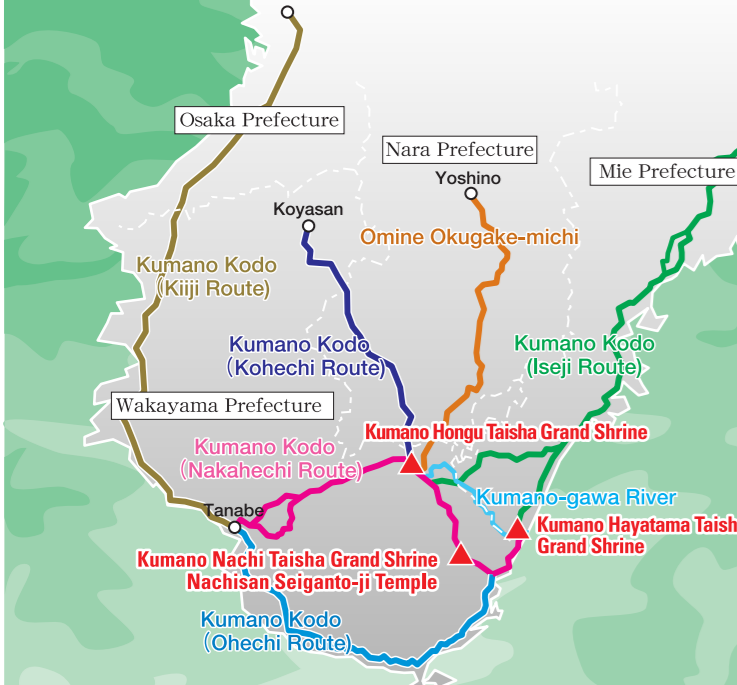


熊野古道





**Kumano Kodo, a pilgrimage trail linking Kumano Sanzan**



Kumano Sanzan is the general name for the grouping of three shrines, Kumano Hayatama Taisha Grand Shrine, Kumano Nachi Taisha Grand Shrine, and one temple, Nachisan Seiganto-ji Temple. It is said that Hayatama Shrine purifies transgressions committed in past lives, Nachi Shrine creates connections in this life, and Hongu Shrine brings salvation in future lives. It was thought that a person who makes a pilgrimage to Kumano Sanzan will attain peace in the past, present, and future, and so many people have walked along the Kumano Kodo trails on pilgrimage to Kumano Sanzan since ancient times. Kumano Kodo is a path of prayer many people have walked to gain the blessings of Kumano Sanzan. Kumano Sanzan has been registered by UNESCO as World Heritage Site among the Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range.

**Tourist Spots**

<p><b>1 Katsura Onsen</b> Famous as a hot springs town on a lovely seaside, enjoy the hotels and inns facing the ocean with carefully designed open-air baths. Nearby is Yukawa Onsen, which has flourished as a place for purification on the Kumano pilgrimage. Nanki Katsura Onsen Ryokan Union TEL. 0735-52-0048</p>	<p><b>2 Kawayu Onsen</b> Dig into the riverbank and hot water springs forth at this hot spring unusual even in Japan. In the summer visitors can enjoy the river along with the hot spring, and in the winter visit the large open-air bath called Semnin-buro. Kumano Hongu Tourist Association TEL. 0735-42-0735</p>	<p><b>3 Heian Costume Experience</b> Walk along the Kumano Kodo trails wearing a Heian period costume to fully savor the ancient atmosphere of the Kumano pilgrimage. (Children's sizes are also available.) Kumano Nachi Taisha Grand Shrine TEL. 0735-55-0321 Daimonzaka Chaya TEL. 0735-55-0244 Kumashiroya TEL. 090-3285-9046</p>	<p><b>4 Rental Bicycles</b> Explore the World Heritage Sites at your own pace. Rentals of bicycles capable of handling the mountain roads are also available. Kumano Hongu Tourist Association TEL. 0735-42-0735 Shingu City Tourist Association TEL. 0735-22-2840 Nachi-Katsura Town Tourism association TEL. 0735-52-5311</p>
<p><b>5 Wataze Onsen</b> Enjoy one of the largest open-air baths in western Japan, along with its hotels, health resorts, camping grounds, bungalows, and so on, combining a visit to a famous hot spring with outdoor living. Kumano Hongu Tourist Association TEL. 0735-42-0735</p>	<p><b>6 Yunomine Onsen</b> Historically flourishing as a place for purification on the Kumano pilgrimage route, this hot spring contains the Tsubuyu bath registered as a World Heritage Site as part of the pilgrimage route. Kumano Hongu Tourist Association TEL. 0735-42-0735</p>	<p><b>7 Kumotori Onsen</b> The slightly greenish milky white water of the hot spring is rare in western Japan. This is a herbal bath using tendai uyaku (spicebush), famous from the legend of Xu Fu. Takada Greenland Kumotori Onsen TEL. 0735-29-0321</p>	<p><b>8 Tour of Kinomatsushima</b> The most beautiful seaside area of southern Wakayama is known as Kinomatsushima, and cruises through the area are available. Enjoy course including a dolphin show on Saturdays. Kinomatsushima Tours TEL. 0735-52-8188</p>
<p><b>9 Tuna Auction Market</b> The fishing port of Katsura is the largest fishing center for fresh tuna in Japan. Visitors can observe the lively auction sales. Katsura Region Wholesale Market TEL. 0735-52-0951</p>	<p><b>10 Whale Watching</b> Watch the whales and dolphins that follow the Japan Current from early spring to the summer. Nanki Marine Leisure Service TEL. 0735-54-0725 Kiyomaru Ferries TEL. 0735-52-5574</p>	<p><b>11 Doro-kyo Gorge Jet Boat Tour</b> See the rock walls along the vast gorges soaring up from the river's surface on a pleasure boat. Experience the natural beauty of the four seasons from the fresh green of spring to the red leaves of autumn. Kumano Travel Shiko Jet Boat Center TEL. 0735-44-0331</p>	

**World Heritages: the pilgrimage routes of Camino de Santiago and Kumano Kodo**

Kumano Kodo and Camino de Santiago of Spain entered into a sister relationship in 1998 to share the wonder of pilgrimage all over the world. A passport for registering those who visit both pilgrimage routes is being created, and guests from all over the world are visiting Kumano.

<http://www.spiritual-pilgrimages.com/en>

**Kumano Kodo Hiking Courses**

**A 4 HOUR COURSE**

Hongu-Taisha-Mae Bus Stop  
↓ 15min Ryujin Bus  
Hosshinmon-oji Bus Stop  
↓ 7km 2h30min  
Kumano Hongu Taisha Oyunohara (Former Kumano Hongu Taisha)  
(Stay 1h)

An easy course with gentle slopes following the trail through beautiful mountain villages.

**B 3 HOUR COURSE**

Hongu-Taisha-Mae Bus Stop  
↓ 45min Kumano Kotsu  
Shingu Sta.  
↓ 35min Kumano Kotsu  
Michi-no-eki Kumano-gawa Bus Stop  
↓ (Stay 30min)  
River Boating 90min  
Kumano Hayatama Taisha (Stay 20min)

Boating trip downriver along the Kumano River, the waterway of the World Heritage Kumano Kodo. With a storytelling guide, enjoy the history and magnificent nature of Kumano. (Reservations: Tanabe City Kumano Tourism Bureau)

**C 3 HOUR COURSE**

Kii-Katsura Sta.  
↓ 20min Kumano Kotsu  
Daimon-zaka Bus Stop  
↓ 1.3km 40min  
Kumano Nachi Taisha Nachisan Seiganto-ji (Stay 30min)  
↓ 1km 20min  
Nachi Waterfall (Stay 20min)  
Nachi-no-Taki-mae Bus Stop  
↓ 25min Kumano Kotsu  
Kii-Katsura Sta.

This course offers the best selections, from ascending Daimon-zaka Slope retaining the ancient appearance of the Kumano Kodo to visiting the area of Nachi. Heian period costumes to wear on the course are available.

**D 2 DAYS 1 NIGHT COURSE**

In ancient times those who completed the pilgrimage to Kumano returned to Hongu by this route. The route has steep places, but the spectacular views from the mountain passes and moss covered paving stones give a strong sense of the mystery of Kumano.

Kumano Nachi Taisha Nachisan Seiganto-ji (Stay 30min)  
↓ 15km 7h  
Stay 1 night at Koguchi  
↓ 13km 5h30min  
Kogumotori-goe Section Route  
Ukegawa Bus Stop  
↓ 5min Meiko Bus Ryujin Bus Kumano Kotsu  
Hongu-Taisha-Mae Bus Stop  
Kumano Hongu Taisha (Stay 20min)

**E 4 HOUR COURSE**

Shingu Sta.  
↓ 5min  
Miwasaki Sta.  
↓ Koya-zaka Slope Route 5km 90min  
Asuka-jinja Shrine (Stay 20min)  
↓ 1.4km 20min  
Kumano Hayatama Taisha (Stay 20min)  
↓ 1km 10min  
Kamikura-jinja Shrine (Stay 50min)  
↓ 1.2km 15min  
Shingu Sta.

Visit the World Heritage sites in the area of Kumano Hayatama Taisha Grand Shrine. From Koya-zaka Slope there is a panoramic view of the beautiful coastline and the grandeur of the Pacific Ocean.

**Tanabe City Kumano Tourism Bureau**

We provide outlines of Kumano Kodo, walking courses, and information on bus routes, and can make reservations for accommodations and optional tours.

◆ **Kumano Kodo Storytelling Guide**  
The guide will explain the many historical and cultural attractions of the Kumano Kodo trails and Kumano. (Guides are available for courses other than courses A through E.)  
TEL. 0739-26-9025  
<http://www.tb-kumano.jp/en/>