



- Explore the regions -



Irabu Ohashi Bridge connects Miyako Island and Irabu Island, in the Miyako Region, over an emerald-blue sea. Spanning some 3.5 kilometers, it's the longest bridge in Japan linking two remote islands.

## Island Paradise of Rare Culture and Cuisine

**T**he island group of Okinawa, at the southern end of Japan, comprises the main island of Okinawa, Miyako Island, Ishigaki Island, and others, each remarkable for its character and setting as well as culture, architecture, food, music, and crafts. This tropical paradise sees crystal blue waters under sunny skies, averaging 22°C annually.

In the north of the main island of Okinawa is Yambaru, replete with mangrove and subtropical forests, endemic wildlife, and a national park. In addition to abundant nature, you can see whale sharks at your leisure and theirs at Churaumi Aquarium. As for native crafts, Yachimun no Sato,

a centrally located village, has some 19 pottery ateliers where you'll find artisanal souvenirs. Naha City, Okinawa's urban center, is in the south, along with the ancient Ryukyu capital of Shuri and its historic castle.

Remote islands beckon, with flora and fauna beside emerald-blue seascapes. Dive in, literally and figuratively, to enjoy activities from snorkeling and sea kayaking to mangrove forest trekking and eco tours.

Be sure to experience traditional culture nurtured by the Ryukyu Kingdom, active between the 15th and 19th centuries. Cuisine everywhere is key to digesting savory culture, and Okinawa food reflects a subtle yet notable Asian flavor in one-of-a-kind dishes made from locally grown produce. Performing arts like Ryukyu dance and the three-stringed *sanshin* add their harmonies to a highly cultured atmosphere that includes longtime crafts like pottery, colorful textiles, dyeing, and glasswork, all using techniques special to each area.

Visit Okinawa and take delight in a leading tourist destination unlike anywhere else—a life of nature and ocean,



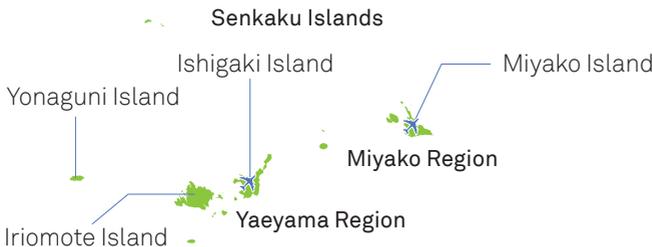
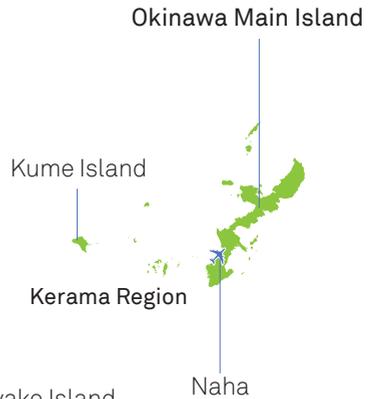
Made with local ingredients served fresh from field to table, Okinawa's traditional cuisine is known for dishes that sustain good health and longevity.

flavorful food to charm every gourmet, compelling historical architecture and rich culture incorporating crafts of vibrant artistry. Whether traveling solo or with family, friends, or colleagues, you'll journey to a place that makes lifelong memories.



Experience kayaking in Yambaru no Mori, Kunigami Village

**Getting There:** ANA serves Okinawa (Naha) from many cities across Japan, including Tokyo (Haneda and Narita), Osaka (Itami and Kansai), Nagoya (Chubu), Sapporo (New Chitose), and Fukuoka. ANA serves the remote islands of Miyako Island and Ishigaki Island from Okinawa (Naha), Tokyo (Haneda), Osaka (Kansai), and Nagoya (Chubu).





A leisurely ride on a carriage drawn by water buffalo passes homes on a white sand road, Taketomi Island, Yaeyama Region.



Ryukyu glassware is a blown-glass art of rich colors.



Yaeyama *minsa* textile, Minsa Kougeikan, Ishigaki Island

All photos courtesy of Okinawa Convention & Visitors Bureau

### Looking Ahead

The next theme of Get to Know Okinawa is Food, set for May, featuring *awamori*, renowned and powerful rice liquor, and cuisine unique to the islands.

### Handy URL

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