



- Explore the regions -



Bingata dyeing uses light colors then darker colors for a blur effect giving a 3D look to the design. © Okinawa Convention & Visitors Bureau (OCVB)

## Experience Vibrant Craft Culture of the Islands

**S**ixteen products of Okinawa Prefecture are designated by Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry as traditional crafts of Japan, 13 of them dyed or woven textiles, a clear indicator that a vital and vibrant artisanal culture thrives here. The weaving and dyeing derive from overseas techniques discovered between the 14th and 16th centuries during trade with China, Southeast Asia, and India.

One greatly valued dyeing style of Okinawa is Bingata, which involves a stenciled-resist technique. It incorporates vivid hues, bold color pairings, and simple patterns that

integrate Kyoto's *yuzen* dyeing style with India and Java chintz methods as well as Chinese pattern techniques of paper stenciling known in Japan as *katagami*.

Bashofu fabric is woven with fibers of the stalk of *itobasho* (a fibrous banana variety) and is primarily produced today in Kijoka, Ogimi Village, north on the main island of Okinawa. Created with delicate thread that is made only after a long, complex process of many steps, this elegant textile is sturdy yet breathable and therefore comfortable on the skin.



Hands-on Shuri cloth weaving, Shuri-ori Kogeikan, Naha. © OCVB

In the heyday of the Ryukyu Kingdom, Bashofu was worn as a summer garment by common people as well as the royal family and family members of the samurai class.

On Okinawa's main island is a wide array of textiles



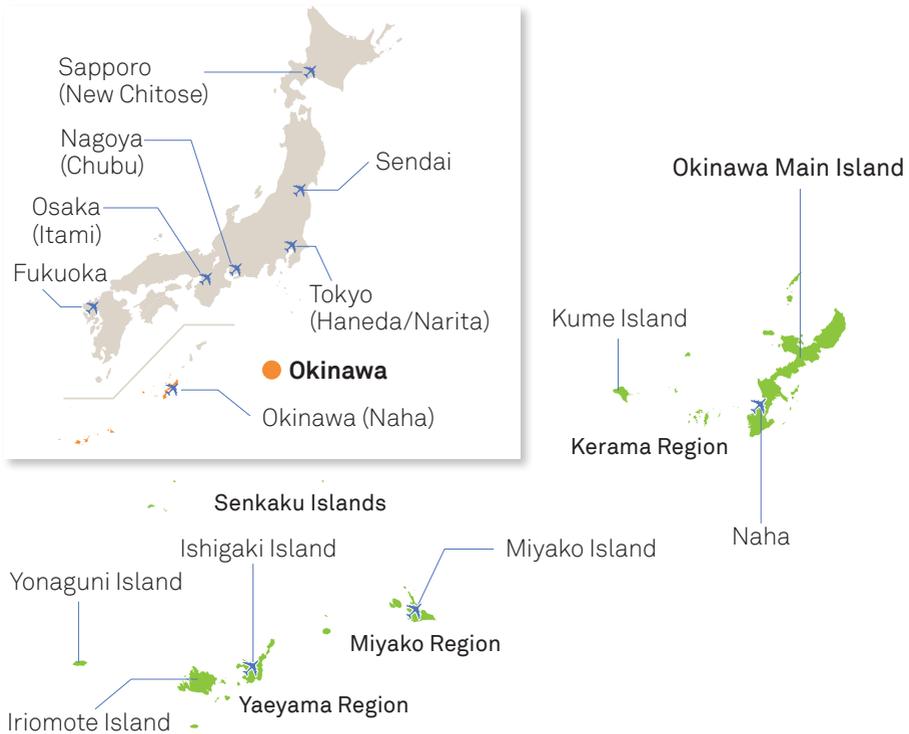
Bashofu textiles, sturdy and breathable, are primarily produced in Kijoka, Ogimi Village, north on the main island of Okinawa. © OCVB

and craft methods that differ according to their northern, central, and southern locations. Remote islands also have unique, high-quality textiles like such hemp-based fabrics as Yaeyama Jofu and Miyako Jofu, woven with threads from fibers of a type of nettle known as *choma*.

These traditional Okinawan textiles, made with historic yet timeless dyeing and weaving techniques, remain vital today for enjoyment not only as clothing but interior décor. They bring value to the home and to the body, and make the perfect lightweight souvenir. Experiencing Okinawan artisanal textiles is a joy you won't want to miss, including hands-on craft workshops, as noted below.

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**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.





Bingata kimono worn by dancers during a festival parade.



Yomitanzan *hanaori* cloth's floral and geometric patterns. © OCVB

## Hands-On Craft Workshops

- Naha-shi Dento Kogeikan (Naha City Traditional Arts and Crafts Center) (098-868-7866)  
Five hands-on workshops: Bingata dyeing, Ryukyu lacquerware, Shuri cloth weaving, Ryukyu glassmaking, and Tsuboya pottery (¥1,540–¥3,240)
- Gusuku Bingata Some Koubou (098-887-3414)  
Bingata dyeing of tote bags, tapestry, etc. (¥3,500 each)
- Yomitan Dento Kogei Sogo Center (098-958-4674)  
Make a coaster a la Yomitanzan *minsah* weaving (¥1,500)
- Minsah Kogeikan (Craft Center) (098-082-3473)  
Make your own coaster, table runner, or tapestry (from ¥1,500 each)
- Miyakojima Taiken Koubou Mura (Craft Village) (090-7165-9862)  
Make lanyard, place mat, etc., with Miyako textile of *choma* thread (from ¥2,000 each)

Call to get the latest information (in Japanese) and to make reservations required for all workshops.

### Looking Ahead

The next theme of Get to Know Okinawa is Sightseeing, set for July, featuring Yambaru no Mori, in the northern region of the main island of Okinawa, and Iriomote Island.

### Handy URL

Visit the special website of Tastes of JAPAN by ANA Okinawa.



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