YONAGUNI TOWN



"THE WEST" YONAGUNI ISLAND https://welcome-yonaguni.jp



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"THE WEST"
YONAGUNI ISLAND

Yonaguni Island

Explore the Island
Where Tales Come to Life

"THE WEST" — Explore the Island Where Tales Come to Life

Yonaguni, a solitary island situated on the western frontier of Japan, rests in the distant embrace of the ocean, a realm where nature and humanity coexist harmoniously. Nurturing its distinctive cultural exchanges, the island is rich with legends. What narratives will unfold on the canvas of Japan's westernmost island, a place constantly reshaping its vibrant landscapes without pause? Amid the visible and invisible, the sounds, and the signs of life, how will you chronicle the "today" of this unique island, standing as a truly unparalleled entity?





YONAGUNI ISLAND

Japan's westernmost island. Located 509 km southwest of the Okinawan main island, 127 km from Ishigaki island and circa 1,900 km away from Tokyo, the distance to nearby Taiwan is 111 km. A 27 km circumference and a surface of 29 km². Around 1,700 people live in the three villages scattered around the island. With a subtropical climate, it is warm throughout the year, having an annual average temperature of 23.8 °C / 74.8 °F. Fostering a distinct eco-system, a variety of flora and fauna exists on the island. While the majority of the island's circumference consists of steep cliffs, it hosts topographical and geological resources unique to the rough terrain.



The ebb and flow of the tides, the waxing and waning of the moon, the night sky, and the wind.

All convey the profound message of the

exceptional nature of each day.

photo: Kihachiro Aratake

FOUR ENTRANCES TO THE ISLAND TALES

Curiosity and imagination are your keys. Let's unlock and embark on your journey.



Unveil Japan's Last Sunset Island: The Gateway to the World

Yonaguni Island is only 111 km away from Taiwan, with its mountains visible to the naked eye on sunny days several times a year. In the past, it shared the same time zone as Taiwan and was an hour behind the rest of Japan. As the westernmost border island of Japan, Yonaguni has fostered enduring friendships with Taiwan, encouraging unique exchanges with the rest of the world over its long history. Shaped by winds and maritime navigation, this land has



Ocean

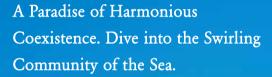
Venturing to Another Mysterious Site Around the Island

During the night, the entire island is embraced by a starry sky, almost as if it is slipping into outer space. Gazing at the embarked on a journey through time and space. The allure of the island extends into the depths of the sea, sparkling in azure hues under the influence of the Kuroshio Current. Along the southern coast lies the mysterious Yonaguni Monument or Submarine Ruins, an underwater landscape shrouded in secrecy. The questions of when, by whom, and why these underwater ruins were created have piqued global interest as research advances.



A Timeless World of Legend Persisting in Everyday Life

exchange of words. Let us exchange words as long as we live" (from Dunansunkani, one of Yonaguni's renowned folk songs). As you wander around the island, immersing yourself in its lifestyle and culture, you will encounte numerous legends and songs. These narratives carry the profound imprints of the challenges posed by being a the folk performing arts passed down as festival songs and South Seas, China, and the Ryukyu dynasty era in their



In the morning, a herd of horses moves together in search bidding farewell to the day. Throughout the day, these horses peacefully share the pasture with cows, embracing a carefree existence undisturbed by human presence, unyielding to the traffic on the road. As you become attuned to the pace of the horses, gazing back at you with keyword for life on this island is "coexistence." It intuitively imparts the meaning of acknowledging differences and













Yonaguni Island is surrounded by faults that run in three directions: northeast-southwest, northwest-southeast, and east-west, with steep cliffs embracing the coastline. Set amid a unique and powerful landscape unlike any other Yaeyama island, this setting has nurtured a distinctive culture and ecosystem.



Tindabana

Yonaguni Island.

A legendary spot believed to have

been the home of Sanai Isoba, a

female chieftain from the early 16th

century, who was the first ruler of

Yonaguni Airport

Mt. Dunan

Kuba Fountain

Palm Forest

red in the evening hours.



Sonai Por

Nantaham

Nantahama Beach

In the old days, island maidens would line up straw sandals on this beach to welcome officials from Shuri, the seat of the Ryukyu dynasty. Much like the sentiments echoed in the Yonaguni folk song "Dunansunkani," this beach also bore witness to poignant farewells.



East Cape Lighthouse /East Ranch

Ubutanuhamati Beach ("beach the size of six tatami mats")



Uhutanuhamati Beach

DiDi Yonaguni Exchange Center

Sonai

Ubudumaihama Beach No Swimming

> Wind Power Generation

East Cape Observatory

Texas Gate

Human Face Rock

Arakawabana

Ayamihabiru Atlas Moth Muse

Mt. Urabu

Warship Rock

Sanninu Scenic Spot

Tategami Rock

Kubura Fishing Port

Kubura-Furishi

A unique landscape characterized by Ryukyu

limestone and sandstone. From this vantage

point, you can enjoy a panoramic view of the

Renowned as Japan's westernmost fishing port, it holds the distinction of yielding the country's largest catch of marlins in coastal waters. In the past, Kubura flourished as a port city for trade, adorned with restaurants, movie theater,





Cape Irizaki

A scenic cape offering views of the bordering sea and renowned as Japan's last sunset spot, During clear weather on several occasions each year, the silhouette of Taiwan becomes visible from this vantage point.



spectrum of vibrant colors on Yonaguni Island, depending on the time of day. Experience the tranguil white sands and blue sea bathed in the morning light, or witness the gradations of



Dannuhama

Beach

Kubura

Kubura-Bari

This vast rock chasm measures seven meters in depth and three meters in width. It is a site associated with tragic stories of pregnant women jumping over its edge as a desperate measure to decrease the population during the poll tax era.



Fishing Port

Kubur

Naamahama





Japan's Westernmost Monument

This monument was created in the hope of building an emotional bond between Taiwan and Yonaguni. The stone was sourced from Taiwan, with the characters also carved there.



South Ranch Road

Texas Gate

A driving route boasting spectacular views. Remember to maintain a safe distance from the horses along the



Higawa Beach

Higawa



Yonaguni Monument, or Submarine Ruins' Point

Beyond being a prime location for diving enthusiasts, this mysterious sight can also be explored from the comfort of a semi-submersible sightseeing boat.

"Dr. Coto's Clinic" **Filming Location**

This building once housed the Shikinajima Clinic, featured in the popular TV drama series and movie. "Dr. Coto's Clinic." Along Higawa Beach, right in front of the location, the sea shines beautifully during full



Tachigami Rock



Yonaguni Horses

One of the eight remaining native horse breeds in Japan. On Yonaguni Island, these animals were once employed as working horses until about 50 years ago. Designated as a natural monument of Yonaguni Town in 1969, around 130 of these petite and gentle horses are currently being raised on the island.

^{*}Exercise caution around cliffs and rocky areas, as they can be slippery and windy.



DISCOVER THE FOUR SEASONS OF Yonaguni Island

In the local dialect, the seasons from spring to autumn are referred to as baganachi ("early summer"), kadinunachi ("windy summer"), and akinunachi ("autumnal summer"). This reflects Yonaguni's warm climate, with an average annual temperature of 23.8°C and minimal yearly temperature fluctuations. Despite this, the islanders can still discern the changing seasons in various scenes through the dynamic shifts in flora and fauna. Since ancient times, the people of Yonaguni have synchronized their lives with these natural rhythms.



Easter Lily (Yonaguni's symbolic flower)

These lilies grace the rocky coastal areas and extend into the wilderness from the



for peaceful ocean waters and a prosperous fishing season, rowing competitions are held in Kubura and other parts of the island.

he weather is marked



Crape Myrtle (Yonaguni's

This sami-tall tree native to China

reaches a height of approximately

four meters. It blooms from around

June to autumn, and its extended

flowering period is reflected in its

other name. "100 Days in Red."

symbolic flowering tree)

Typhoon Season (July-September)

Kushiti Day

Second Sunday of December.

Kushiti is a term in the Yaevama dialect meaning "coriander." It is in season from December to February. This ingredient has formed part of a culinary tradition on Yonaguni Island for a long time, enjoyed in both restaurants and homes during this timeframe. The Yonaguni Island variant is known for its mildness and

Japan's Westernmost Yonaguni Island Marathon

Held on the second Saturday of

Sugarcane Flowers

When the sugarcane flowers bloom all at once, the fields take on a white-silver color. Shortly after, harvesting begins.



Dunansunkani Contest

This event is designed to accurately preserve and advance the island's symbolic folk song, "Dunansunkani (Yonaguni Shonkane)".



Numerous migratory birds can be spotted in Yonaguni in spring and autumn. The island is also frequented by stray butterflies, carried to the island by strong



August, and October.

Yonaguni Atlas Moth

Referred to in the local dialect as

ayamihabiru, this majestic moth is

among the largest and most

beautiful in the world, reaching

sizes of up to 24 cm. These moths

usually make their appearance in late March to early April, mid-June,



Summer



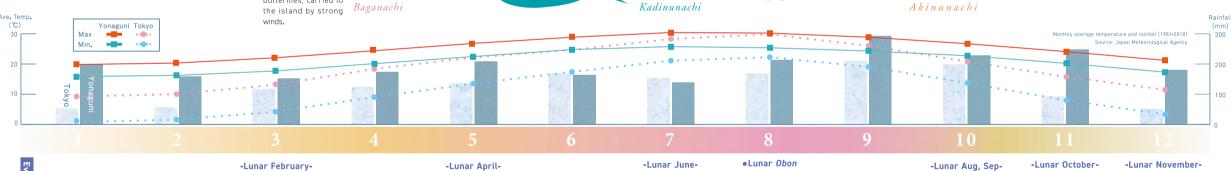
Autumn Akinunachi



Arrival of the Hammerhead Sharks

The best period for observing schools of sharks is from December to May

Winter



The island's festivals are intricately linked to a complete cycle, from sowing seeds to harvesting. Here, we will introduce some of the approximately 30 festivals, both large and small, that mark each significant milestone.

> The island's festivals are considered sacred rituals. We kindly request that you observe the appropriate etiquette during the festivals.

Tananduri

("Sowing Festival")

At home, locals make a large rice bowl, known as ihati, shaped like a stack of rice straw, and present it as an offering to the rice nursery. The song "*Inigadaniayu* is then performed.

Tsahamunun

• Tsabamunun, Fuumunun

This is a ritual of insect expulsion performed during the weeding season

Fuumunun

As the rice ears are formed, the islanders pray for the absence of droughts and strong winds. Together with their safety and prosperity, as well as abundant harvests, they wish for 10 nights of rain, believing it will bring a prosperous year for agriculture and fishing.

- •Higawa Harvest Festival
- •Sonai Harvest Festival

Honensai Harvest Festival

pulling a large rope.

the lunar calendar, this festival is a time for

islanders to express gratitude for a

prosperous year and pray for a bountiful

prayers, each village displays its symbolic

hatagashira poles and performs various

traditional dances. Teams representing the

•Kubura Harvest Festival

Shiti Festival

Celebrated on the day of the Fire Horse in In this exorcism prayer festival, people ward off evil spirits by the Chinese zodiac, falling in or after June of winding *Nbanuha* vines (a climbing fern known as kanikusa in Japanese) around the pillars of their houses, wells, and garden trees. At night, a harvest in the coming year. Following the lion dance is performed at each community center to banish evil spirits. It is customary for each east and west participate in a tug-of-war, family to partake in feasts, marking the beginning of a new year.

Shiti Festival

Kubura Machiri Festival

Originally intended to invoke protection

against outsiders and pirates, this festival

aimed to deter frequent invasions by external

enemies seeking to plunder the island's

resources and livestock. As a symbolic gesture

affirming that the island was inhabited by

giants, large sandals were tossed into the sea.

According to legend, this practice led to the

cessation of enemy attacks. Following this

tradition, people used to craft and release

large sandals into the sea during the festival.

•Kubura Machiri (Protect

- Ura Machiri (Prayers for
- Shiti (Prayers for marriage

• Konpira Festival (Prayers for

Antadumi

The priestess concludes the 25-day festival schedule with a final prayer during the Antadumi ritual, bidding farewell to the

•Nmanagama Festival

• Ndan Festival

Andadumi

- ★Yonaguni's folk performing arts carry the legacies of the South Seas, Chinese, and Ryukyu dynasty cultures.
- The songs and dances performed at events retain their ancient forms, earning recognition as important intangible folk cultural properties of Japan in 1985.

• Tananduri ("Sowing Festival")

* Please check event and festival details in advance, as they may be subject to postponement, cancellation, or other changes for various reasons.

HANDICRAFT OF AFFECTION: BONDING PEOPLE TOGETHER

Each crafted piece, born from the island's abundant blessings, carries a tale of island life and a heart full of gratitude. As locals say, "One crafts for another," as the island's handicrafts teach us about the connecting bond among people.



Yonaguni Weaving: Capturing the Colors of the Island

Yonaguni's woven textiles, known as *Yonaguni-ori*, encompass four main styles: *hanaori*, *dutati*, *shidadi*, and *kagan-nu-buu*. Honed over the past 500 years, these weaving techniques showcase enduring originality. The island's native plants, including banyan and fukugi trees, Indian hawthorn, and hibiscus, contribute to a vibrant color palette in these textiles. Proudly handed down through generations, these unique handicrafts from Yonaguni reflect the lasting richness and beauty of the island.



Yonaguni Hanaori ("Yonaguni Flower Weaving")

This woven fabric has been handed down as tribute offerings to the royal government, influenced by Shuri, the seat of the Ryukyu dynasty.

Distinguished by geometric patterns, the designs include dachin-bana ("eight-dot flower"), ichichin-bana ("five-dot flower") and duchin-bana ("four-dot flower")



Yonaguni Dutati

This cotton woven fabric features a lattice pattern in white, navy blue, and black. In the past, men wore a striped pattern with a black background known as sumidi, while women wore light blue stripes known as midirudi. People still wear this traditional fabric during the harvest festival and other island rituals.



Yonaguni Shidadi

The number of patterns designed on the fabric include five ("forever"), seven ("peaceful"), and nine ("nine wishes coming true)" to express these sentiments. It served as a heartfelt gesture to convey emotions to someone special, and sisters would gift it to brothers embarking on a journey as a protective talisman for safe voyages.



Yonaguni Kagan-nu-buu

Kagan (kagami in Japanese) translates to "mirror," nu (no in Japanese) signifies "of," and bu means "string," forming the term "strings of a mirror." Mainly used as a belt for dutati, the fabric features a mituda splashed pattern in the center, symbolizing a married couple. The entire design depicts the love between a man and a woman.



Uburu, a water-drawing tool



Kuba strings used for securing crops

Everyday Tools Made from Fountain Palm Leaves

Islanders have used nearby palms to craft tools for daily tasks, tailored to the local climate. These tools have evolved through the rhythms of daily life. *Kuba*, known as *birou* in Japanese and fountain palm in English, is the symbolic tree of Yonaguni Island and one of its signature materials. It continues to play a vital role in various aspects of island life and rituals. The *uburu* (right center of the photo) serves as a water-drawing tool, crafted from a single *kuba* leaf. On Yonaguni Island, folk utensils are also made using a vine plant called *yamaitou* ("mountain thread").



Kubagasa (Kuba hats)

These hats are worn for sun protection. Those with wide brims are designed for field workers, while those with narrow brims are for sea workers. A distinctive feature of Yonaguni hats is the charm attached to the top.



Yamaitou mingu



Kuba mochi (Kuba rice cake)

Taste the Blessings of Yonaguni Island.

Enjoy the island's flavors, filled with the vitality of the earth and sea.



Choumeisou (Longevity Grass)

There is a belief that consuming a handful of this plant adds an extra day to your life. In recent times, various products have been developed through collaboration with the longevity grass of Yonaguni Island.



Hanadagi ("Flower Spirits")

This is a unique variant of awamori, with an exclusive distillation process in Yonaguni and a notable 60% alcohol content. The island also presents a selection of other alcoholic beverages, featuring a distinctive mellow aroma that captures the essence of the island's climate and natural surroundings.



Kokutou (Brown Sugar)

This pure brown sugar is made from sugarcane grown in Yonaguni. Each of the Yae-yama Islands is known for producing brown sugar with its own unique and distinct flavor.



Kuroshio Genryuen
(Kuroshio Gurrent Salt)

This mineral-rich salt is harvested from the seawater of the Kuroshio Current surrounding Yonaguni. The extraction process involves boiling the seawater for approximately 10 days to obtain the salt.



Kajiki

Yonaguni boasts abundant fishing grounds, earning it nerputation of being "right in the middle of the fishing grounds." Particularly renowned is the martin grown in the Kuroshio Current. A wide variety of processed products are also available.

The featured products are available for purchase at local shops on the island and at the airport. For details, please refer to the Yonaguni Tourism Website. → https://welcome-yonaguni.jp (automatic translation)

10

Embark on a Journey to Discover Your Unique Story.

Explore serene retreats or engage in vibrant adventures—the choice is yours.

The travel plans presented here are merely a glimpse. What type of island adventure do you envision?









12





Aerial panorama of the Yaevama Islands (during the flight from Ishigaki to Yonaguni)

ESSENTIAL TRAVEL INFORMATION

Yonaguni Island offers diverse travel styles with a variety of unique accommodations, including hotels, guesthouses, and bed and breakfast houses. Tailor your holiday experience to your preferences. In the summer, when the sea is relatively calm, we also recommend taking a ferry trip to Yonaguni.

Getting to Yonaguni -

By plane: Ryukyu Air Commuter (RAC)

*Japan Airlines group company

- From Naha Airport (OKA) on Okinawa main island to Yonaguni Airport (OGN): Approx, 80 minutes, OKA-OGN 2 flights/day, OGN-OKA 1 flight/day.
- Ishigaki Airport (ISG) to Yonaguni Airport (OGN): Approx. 30 minutes, ISG-OGN 2 to 3 flights/day, OGN-ISG 3 to 4 flights/day.

≪Ryukyu Air Commuter≫

TEL+81 (0)570-025-071 https://www.jal.co.jp/jp/en/

By ferry: Ferry Yonakuni (Fukuyama Kaiun)

- Ishigaki to Yonaguni: Approx. 4 hours, with departures at 10 a.m. on Tuesdays and Fridays (twice weekly).
- Yonaguni to Ishigaki: Approx. 4 hours, with departures at 10 a.m. on Wednesdays and Saturdays (twice weekly).

≪Ishigaki Port≫

TEL +81(0)980-82-4962

≪Kubura Port≫ TEL +81(0)980-82-4962

Getting around

Car Rentals

Pre-booking is highly recommended due to limited availability.

- SK Rent-a-Car TEL+81(0)980-87-2441 https://yonaguni-okinawa.com/ (in Japanese)
- Yonehama Rent-a-Car Airport Branch TEL +81(0)980-87-2148 https://www.yonehama.com/ (in Japanese)
- Yonaguni Honda TEL +81(0)980-87-2376 http://www.yonagunihonda.jp/ (in Japanese)
- Taxi Service (Note: Unavailable at night) Pre-booking is highly recommended due to limited availability.
- SSK TEL+81(0)980-87-2441

Motorbike & Bicycle Rentals

Explore additional options with scooter and electric bike rentals. https://welcome-yonaguni.jp/access/ (automatically translated)

Mark Your Journey to Japan's Westernmost Point!

The airport tourist information center and designated sales offices on the island provide a "Japan's westernmost certificate" featuring a print of the westernmost monument. Each certificate is priced at ¥500.

Learn a Yonaguni Dialect!

Discover the island's essence by delving into its distinct dialect, dunanmunui. Gain a deeper connection to Yonaguni by exploring the local language. Let's try!

• fugarassa—arigatou—thank you

• warii—irasshai—welcome (used in shops, etc.)

•gandukiwaruna—ogenki desu ka—how are you?

• Dunan — Yonaguni — Yonaguni Island • kadi—kaze—wind

abvan—kirei—beautiful

•duguiwari—oyasumikudasai—good night/sleep well!

- The Yonaguni Life-Line Bus (free service) Yonaguni Town offers a complimentary bus service available to everyone.
- Nine buses/day (running approximately from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.)
- 17 bus stops ※Information as of April 2023 Timetable: https://welcome-yonaguni.jp/access/



Nature on Yonaguni Island

Geckos and various insects may cross your path in the open air as well as within the hotels and guesthouses. This is a natural occurrence on the island, distinct from the urban environment. If you are concerned, consider using insect repellent and aim to coexist peacefully with the lovely creatures! Additionally exercise caution, as some plants may cause irritation upon contact.

Three ATMs Across the Island

ATMs are available at three locations: JA Okinawa and the two post offices. Given that many shops do not accept credit cards, it is advisable to have some cash prepared before your arrival.

- ·Please be aware that, although with some exceptions, many facilities are able to provide services only in Japanese.

 • Please note to bring your original drivers license from your country plus an international drivers
- There is no money exchange. We advise to exchange money before arrival in Yonaguni, e.g. in Naha or





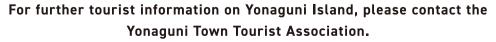












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Yonaguni Tourist Website https://welcome-yonaguni.jp



15

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