

1 The Oldest Saba Kaido Route Over Harihata Pass

Shortest, steepest, tunnel-free: Saba Kaido's oldest mountain route

Distance: 77.8 km Elevation gain: 1673 m
Approx. Duration: 7 hr. 10 mins Activity Level: Advanced

The Saba Kaido, linking Wakasa and Kyoto, fostered centuries of trade and exchange. It is a network of historic routes, the oldest being the Harihata Pass Trail. From Onyu, the route climbs the steep Harihata Pass to Kutsuki. A paved road parallels this historic mountain route, making it rideable. Said to be the shortest way to Kyoto, it crosses three major passes with nearly 2,000 m of elevation gain. Remote and tunnel-free, it runs through deep, tranquil nature. A rewarding view from Onyu Pass awaits those who complete it.



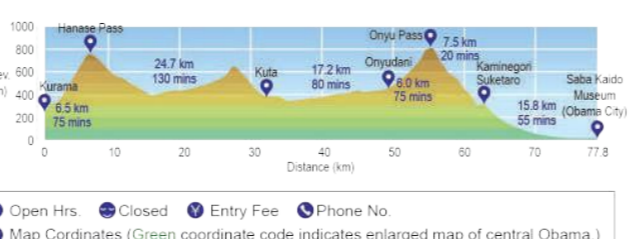
Hanase Pass (花野峠)
From Demachiyanagi, head north. With the Eizan Railway on your left, the route soon reaches Kurama, where an old townscape unfolds along the approach to Kurama Temple. Beyond lies the first challenge of the Saba Kaido, Hanase Pass. Over 6 km, the road climbs 500 meters in tight switchbacks. G12



The View from Onyu Pass (おにゅう峠からの景色)
Following the Harihata River, a forest road climbs toward Onyu Valley. About 4 km from the entrance is a famous sea-of-clouds viewpoint, where a forest road winds below. Continue to the summit of Onyu Pass, entering Fukui Prefecture. Beyond the mountains, the Sea of Japan comes into view. G6



Kaminegori Suketaro (上根来 助太郎)
A rest stop in Kaminegori set in a renovated Meiji-era farmhouse. Massive beams and an iron hearth evoke mountain village life. A quiet place to recover from the climb and sense the Saba Kaido's past. 10 am - 4 pm Open. Apr-Nov weekends G16



Mermaid Terrace (マーメイドテラス)
A beach marked by its mermaid statues, closest to the Saba Kaido's starting point. An ideal place to begin the journey toward Kyoto or to mark its completion. Enjoy sea breezes, views over Obama Bay, and fine sunsets. G2, F4

2 Western Saba Kaido: Threading the Tamba Mountains to Kyoto

Ride through Japan's timeless rural landscapes

Distance: 66.1 km Elevation gain: 950 m
Approx. Duration: 6 hr. 10 mins Activity Level: Advanced

The Western Saba Kaido is located on the western side of the Saba Kaido routes. Starting in Takahama (Fukui), it crosses the Tamba Highlands at around 800 m, linking Nantasho, Miyama, and Keihoku before reaching the Kyoto Imperial Palace, about 90 km in total. Along its main 65 km cycling stretch, the first half passes through seasonal mountains and thatched hamlets; nearing Takahama, it opens to the Sea of Japan and coastal breezes. With significant elevation change, the course suits experienced riders while offering many distinctive regional sights.



Scenic Views from Kurio Pass (栗尾峠からの眺望)
A 400 m pass on the old Shuzan Kaido. Since the Keihoku Tunnel opened, the road has closed to vehicles but is open to cyclists. Named among the Keihoku Ten Views, the lookout offers sweeping views over Shuzan. From the old-road entrances near the tunnel portals, the viewpoint is just 1 - 2 km, well worth a detour. G12



Michi-no-Eki Miyama Fureai Hiroba (道の駅 美山ふれあい広場)
The hub of the Miyama area, with a tourist information center and a market offering Miyama Milk and local products. Rich soft-serve and gelato attract many cyclists. "Hours vary by facility. Please check the website for details. 0770-59-1178 G9



Hibi (暮らしの複合施設 hibi)
A restored 230-year-old farmhouse reimagined as a lifestyle complex. With a restaurant, cafe, shop, and shared spaces, it anchors local life. The cafe serves carefully brewed coffee as well as handmade pies and sweets featuring local ingredients. 11 am - 4 pm Thr 0770-59-1178 G5



Meikyodo Cave (明鏡洞)
A scenic landmark of Shiroyama Park, the former site of Takahama Castle. Through a wave-carved opening in the rock, the horizon appears like a natural mirror. Paths around the park offer views of Wakasa Bay and striking rock formations. A great spot for a photo with your bike. G4

3 Wakasa Kaido: the Busiest Saba Kaido Route

Take in the scenery of the Saba Kaido's main post town

Distance: 65.2 km Elevation gain: 1258 m
Approx. Duration: 6 hr. 0 mins Activity Level: Advanced

The Wakasa Kaido was the most heavily trafficked of all the Saba Kaido roads. Mackerel from the Wakasa Bay was transported on this route to the old capital of Kyoto, from Onyu to Kumagawa, Kutsuki over the Hanari Pass, Ohara and finally Kyoto. On this cycling course following the historic route, you'll ride a distance of 77 km from Kyoto to Obama. You'll mainly stay on the national roads, with occasional old paths offering a bit deeper adventure. In particular, from Kumagawa-juku onward, you can enjoy the authentic vestiges of the Saba Kaido roads.



Sato-no-Eki Ohara (里の駅 大原)
Farmers' market located in a peaceful farming village. In addition to locally-grown vegetables, there's mochi rice cake served fresh every morning, made from sticky mochi rice. The mochi with Ohara-grown shio (red perilla) is a must-try! Market 9 am - 4 pm / Restaurant 11 am - 3:30 pm Mon 075-744-4321 G13



Michi-no-Eki Kutsuki Shin-Honjin (道の駅 かつき新本陣)
A roadside station in Kutsuki, set in a former Wakasa Kaido post town. Its Saba-yuzhi is popular (Mar - Nov). Try saba-zushi (mackerel sushi) and tochi mochi (horse-chestnut mochi). Information 9 am - 5 pm / Market 8:30 am - 5 pm / Morning market 8 am - 12 am (Week Ends) 0740-38-2398 G7



Kumagawa-juku (熊川宿)
Kumagawa-juku was once among the largest post towns of the Wakasa Kaido, carrying the various Saba Kaido trade routes. Just one street off from the national road, you'll enjoy the historic townscapes, nationally designated as an important preservation district. There are also cafes and stores occupying renovated traditional buildings. The nearby roadside rest is the entry point to visit this area. G5



4 Nishi-Omi Shore Route along Lake Biwa

Sea to lake: a panoramic ride beyond the pass

Distance: 101.1 km Elevation gain: 952 m Approx. Duration: 7 hr. 50 mins Activity Level: Advanced

Branching from the Wakasa Kaido at Hozaka, this cycling route follows the Kurihan Kaido to Lake Biwa, joining the Nishi-Omi lakeshore route at Imazu before continuing south. Goods historically moved from Obama to Imazu by land, then toward Kyoto by boat or road. The scenery shifts from deep mountains to a sudden panorama of Lake Biwa beyond the pass. A lakeshore ride along this historic corridor offers a uniquely refreshing Saba Kaido journey.



Imazu Vories Street (今津ヴォーries通り)
A street of Western-style buildings by architect William Merrill Vories. Visitors are drawn by the retro streetscape, with the former Imazu Post Office and former Hyakusanji-San Bank (now the Imazu Vories Museum). Lake Biwa fish shops and a sake brewery invite a detour. 10 am - 6 pm 0740-25-8212 G7



STAGEX Takashima (STAGEX 高島)
A lakeside glamping resort marked by large windmills. Cabins, cafes, a bar, bathing facilities, and activities are offered all-inclusive across the spacious grounds. The cafe is also a convenient stop for cyclists. 10 am - 6 pm 0740-25-8212 G7



Omi Maiko (近江舞子)
A scenic lakeshore famed for its white sand and pine groves, included among the Eight Views of Lake Biwa. Clear emerald waters and a panorama of the Hira Mountains make it one of the finest photo spots on the west shore of Lake Biwa. With many cafes and lodgings nearby, it invites a leisurely stay. G10



5 Route through Keihoku's Satoyama Landscapes

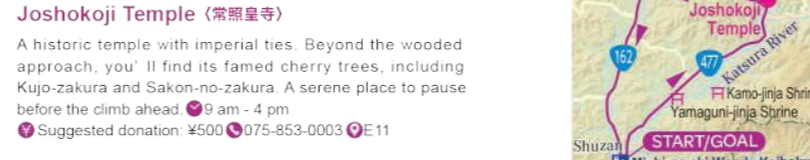
A wood-scented ride through forest heritage and history

Distance: 18.8 km Elevation gain: 255 m
Approx. Duration: 1 hr. 30 mins Activity Level: Intermediate

Sustained by the clear headwaters of the Katsura River, Keihoku once provided timber and food to Kyoto's imperial court. Starting at Woody Keihoku, Kyoto City's only michi-no-eki (roadside station), the course passes Yamaguni-jinja Shrine, the atmospheric Kamo-jinja Shrine, and Joshokoji Temple, renowned for cherry blossoms and autumn colors, before climbing Ido Pass. Shops along the route offer saba-zushi (mackerel sushi) and natto mochi (mochi with fermented soybeans) to enjoy local flavors and charm along the way.



Joshokoji Temple (常照庵寺)
A historic temple with imperial ties. Beyond the wooded approach, you'll find its famed cherry trees, including Kujo-zakura and Sakon-no-zakura. A serene place to pause before the climb ahead. 9 am - 4 pm Suggested donation: ¥500 075-853-0003 G11



6 Miyama Cycling through Japan's Rural Landscapes

Ride through Miyama's iconic thatched hamlets

Distance: 38.6km Elevation gain: 662 m
Approx. Duration: 3 hr. 30 mins Activity Level: Intermediate

Nantan City, comprising Sonobe, Hiyoshi, Yagi, and Miyama, is a nature-rich region, nearly 90% of which is covered by forests. As host of events such as the Kyoto Miyama Cycle Road Race and Kyoto Miyama Cycle Green Tour, it attracts cyclists each year as a premier riding destination.

In Kayabuki-no-Sato, where 39 thatched farmhouses remain, Japan's timeless rural landscape comes alive. Cafés and local soba spots make ideal stops along the ride.



Kayabuki-no-sato (粟山かやぶきの里)
Kayabuki-no-Sato, a nationally designated preservation district for traditional buildings, has about 50 houses, including 39 Edo-period thatched dwellings. Inquiries: Kyoto Miyama Tourism Association 0771-75-9030 G8



7 Scenic Hill Climb Course Overlooking Saba Kaido Entry Port

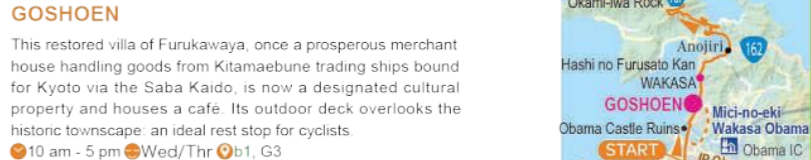
Head up the Angel Line Drive for the best view in all of Obama!

Distance: 15.2 km Elevation gain: 752 m
Approx. Duration: 1 hr. 50 mins Activity Level: Advanced

After about 7 km from Obama Station, you'll see Uchitomi Peninsula with the mountain ridge of Mt. Kusuyagadake on your left. Follow the Angel Line Drive from here, a 10 km scenic road with 600 m elevation. This route has a series of very steep slopes with inclines of 6 degrees and more, but the higher you climb, the more amazing glimpses you'll catch of the fantastic scenery ahead. At your goal, the panoramic view from the observation deck is truly the best in Obama. Look out across the sea and you may detect traces of the ancient trade route. *The Angel Line Drive is closed in winter (Dec to Mar)



GOSHOEN
This restored villa of Furukawaya, once a prosperous merchant house handling goods from Kitamaebune trading ships bound for Kyoto via the Saba Kaido, is now a designated cultural property and houses a cafe. Its outdoor deck overlooks the historic townscape - an ideal rest stop for cyclists. 10 am - 5 pm Wed/Th, 01, G3



8 Saba Kaido Temples and Shrines Cycling Route

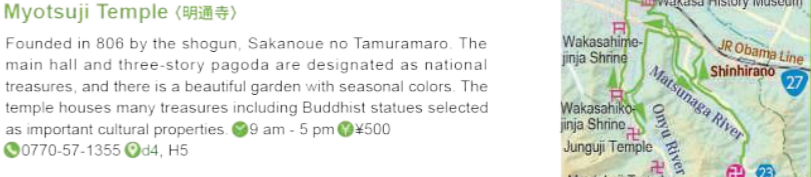
Enjoy historic spots in rural landscapes of "the seaside Nara"

Distance: 15.5 km Elevation gain: 135 m
Approx. Duration: 1 hr. 20 mins Activity Level: Entry

Wakasa, the gateway to the Sea of Japan, has been home to a diversity of culture connecting the ancient capitals and continental Asia through the Saba Kaido, giving rise to many valuable shrines and temples. The junction area, Onyu, was also once home to the provincial government, which led to the establishment of the two largest local shrines, Wakasahiko-jinja Shrine and Wakasahime-jinja Shrine. On this 15 km course starting from JR Higashi-Obama Station, you'll enjoy Onyu's historic townscapes, and seasonal attractions at temples and shrines.



Myotsuji Temple (明通寺)
Founded in 806 by the shogun, Sakano-no-Tamuramaro. The main hall and three-story pagoda are designated as national treasures, and there is a beautiful garden with seasonal colors. The temple houses many treasures including Buddhist statues selected as important cultural properties. 9 am - 5 pm ¥500 0770-57-1355 G4, H5



9 A Fresh and Breezy Riverside Cycling Route

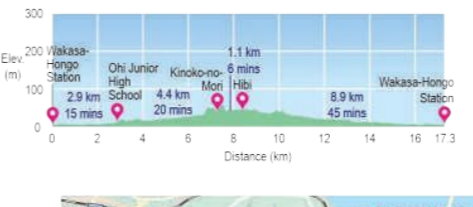
A blossom ride through Ohi's cherry avenue and plum orchards

Distance: 17.3 km Elevation gain: 95 m
Approx. Duration: 1 hr. 25 mins Activity Level: Entry

Ohi Town, between Wakasa Bay and forested hills, is known for local specialties such as mushrooms, plums, and mountain yams. New hubs like SEE SEA PARK and hibi have recently opened, adding fresh energy to the area. Starting from JR Wakasa-Hongo Station, this gentle riverside course is easy and beginner-friendly. Highlights include cherry-lined stretches of the Saburi River and nearby plum orchards. Enjoy a relaxed ride through the charms of Ohi.



Cherry trees along the Saburi River
Ohi's town flower is the cherry blossom, Japan's most widely planted cherry variety. Of the roughly 1,600 trees across the town, about 600 line a 10 km riverside avenue along the Saburi River, one of Kyū's finest cherry blossom spots. G4



10 Largest Post Town on the Saba Kaido - Mikata Five Lakes Ride

A quiet lakeside route with plum groves and five lakes of different hues

Distance: 77.9 km Elevation gain: 1913 m
Approx. Duration: 5 hr. 20 mins Activity Level: Intermediate

Starting from Kumagawa-juku, this course heads toward Five Lakes of Mikata, a source of fish for the capital. Eel from this area became a local specialty, valued in Kyoto during the Edo period. The course starts from the rural Toba River area, and then goes through Tagarazu, offering beautiful views of Wakasa Bay. Finally, reach Five Lakes of Mikata via a series of tunnels. Ride promenades around the lakes through peaceful nature, lined with plum groves, offering wonderful fragrance to early spring visitors. Each lake has a unique environment, such as the sea-linked Lake Kugushi and Hiruga, as well as Lake Suigetsu, famous for rare layered varved deposits.



Five Lakes of Mikata (Mikata Goko) (三方五湖)
These lakes are known as Five Lakes of Mikata. Their varying salinity levels and unique properties give them different hues, resulting in their name which means "five-colored lakes." During medieval times, fishing and shipping industries prospered here. The areas are also known as a major producer of plums. G2



11 Seaside Chill-Spot Cycling Route

Ride into spectacular seascapes and endless blue

Distance: 33.4 km Elevation gain: 376 m
Approx. Duration: 3 hr. 10 mins Activity Level: Intermediate

Takahama Town, framed by sea and mountains, is Fukui's western gateway. An 8 km sweep of white sand lines the coast, and the town's landmark, Mt. Aoba, known as "Wakasa Fuji," shapes the horizon. From Takahama Beach, the sun sets behind the mountain, ranked among Japan's Top 100 sunset views. The route traces Takahama's blue coast, white beaches, and quiet coves, with shifting views of Mt. Aoba. Fresh local seafood along the way completes the ride.



Seaside Cycling (Shirahama Beach) (白浜海水浴場)
A 7 km seaside promenade from Wakasa Wada Beach to Hamanasu Park Beach runs between beachside hills and sand. Larking cyclists ride right along the beach. A fresh and fun ride down the beautiful shore of Takahama. G4



12 Imazu - Makino Scenic Ride: Lake Biwa & the Famed Tree-Lined Road

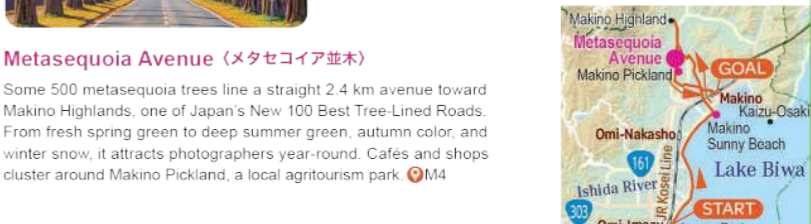
From the coastal pines of Lake Biwa to the tree-lined highland roads

Distance: 19.2 km Elevation gain: 130 m
Approx. Duration: 1 hr. 45 mins Activity Level: Entry

Starting in Imazu, once a thriving Saba Kaido relay hub, this cycling route follows Lake Biwa's western shore northward to Makino Highlands. Highlights include the famed Metasequoia Avenue, one of Japan's New 100 Best Tree-Lined Roads, and the Nishi-Omi lakeshore's white-sand pine shores with views to Chikubushima Island.



Metasequoia Avenue (メタセコイヤ並木)
Some 500 metasequoia trees line a straight 2.4 km avenue toward Makino Highlands, one of Japan's New 100 Best Tree-Lined Roads. From fresh spring to deep summer green, autumn color, and winter snow, it attracts photographers year-round. Cafes and shops cluster around Makino Pickland, a local agritourism park. G14



Cycling Hubs · Roadside Station

- **Machi-no-Eki Startto Home Takahama**
A gateway and the start/end point of the Wakasa Bay Cycling Route, equipped with cyclist-friendly facilities. G1 G2 G3 G4
- **JR Wakasa-Hongo Station**
A convenient rail access point for the area. Rental bicycles are available for exploring the town and nearby sightseeing. G1 G4
- **Kyoto Tamba Kogen Quasi-National Park Visitor Center**
An information hub in the nature-rich Kyoto Tamba Highlands. Ideal for checking cycling routes and taking a break. G1 G5
- **Michi-no-Eki Woody Keihoku**
A rest stop in the Kitayama cedar forest area, offering local foods, meals, and souvenirs. G12
- **Otsu Port Cycle Station (O-PORT-able)**
A lakeside hub with bike rentals and water refills, ideal for starting Biwaichi or taking a break. G10 G15
- **Michi-no-Eki Kutsuki Shin-Honjin**
A rest stop on one of the Saba Kaido routes, popular with mountain riders for its Sunday market. G17
- **Michi-no-Eki Mikata Goko**
A base for exploring the Five Lakes of Mikata. Rent a bike for scenic rides through this Ramsar wetland. G10 G12
- **Saba Kaido Museum / Machi-no-Eki**
A "Saba Kaido Starting Point" monument stands outside the facility. Ideal photo spot for starts or finishes. G10 G12
- **WC** • **Bicycle rental** • **Cycle rack** • **Water supply**
- **E-Bike Charging** • **Map Coordinates**
(White coordinate code indicates Obama Center Enlarged View.)

Town Walk Audio Guide

Audio commentary available for the Kumagawa-juku, Obama Nishigumi, Onyu, and Nishizu areas.

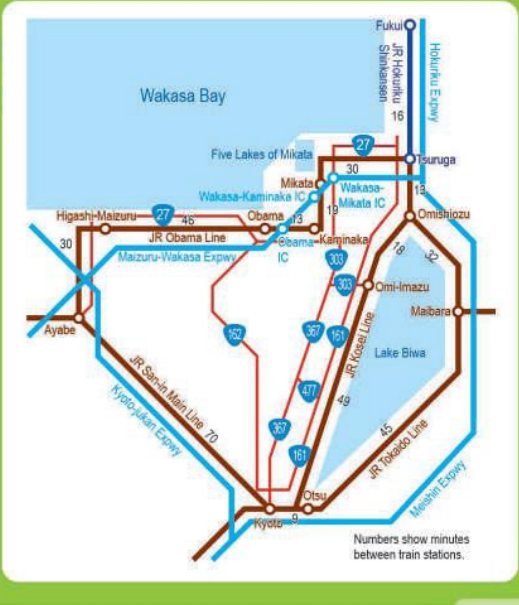
Museums

- **Wakasa History Museum (福井県立若狭歴史博物館)**
Located in the Onyu area of Obama City, adjacent to Wakasa-no-Sato Park. Exhibitions about the origins of Wakasa, its festivals, and more. Serves as a local center of history and culture. G1
- **Kumagawa-juku Shukubakan (若狭熊川宿関川宿資料館「宿場蔵」)**
Located in Kumagawa-juku, this Western-style building was once the Kumagawa Village Office. Learn the deep history of the area and traditional lifestyle. G5
- **Saba Kaido Museum (Wakasa Town) (熊街道ミュージアム)**
Museum attached to Michi-no-Eki Wakasa Kumagawa-juku. In cooperation with Kyoto Seika University displays easy-to-understand museum exhibitions of Saba Kaido history. G5
- **Saba Kaido Museum (Obama City) (熊街道ミュージアム)**
Located 10 minutes on foot from JR Obama Station, the museum for the Saba Kaido as National Heritage. Discover the city's culture and traditional performing arts. G7
- **Miketsukuni Wakasa Obama Food Culture Museum (御食国若狭お食事食文化館)**
Museum focused on Japanese food culture, such as sushi. Features a kitchen and other traditional craft facilities for hands-on workshops. The venue also has a public bath. G1

Cycling Maps for Nearby Areas

- **Kyoto Tamba Cycling Routes**
Five routes across the Kyoto Tamba region (Kameoka, Nantan, and Kyotamba). Issued by: Kyoto Prefecture
- **Wakasa Bay Cycling Route**
A 126 km coastal route from Tsuruga to JR Wakasa-Takahama Station. Issued by: Wakasa Bay Cycling Route Promotion Council
- **BIWAICHI Cycling Map of Lake Biwa**
Cycling courses around Lake Biwa & the surrounding area. Issued by: Shiga Prefecture

Saba Kaido: Traffic Map



Saba Kaido Cycling Map (Sabaichi)

Inquiry: Japan Heritage Utilization Promotion Council of Obama City and Wakasa Town
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Miketsukuni Brand Strategy Division, Obama City
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Date of Issue: March 2026
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