

# We Recommend Visiting Oboke-Iya where You can get a taste of authentic Japanese life

*Presented by the students of Hannan University, Osaka, Japan*

We are the seminar students of Professor Teruya Adachi of the Faculty of International Tourism, at Hannan University. Our current theme of the study of tourism is how to develop the sustainable community-based tourism by taking advantage of unique Japanese culture. In addition to that, we would like to visitors from abroad to a marvelous and meaningful Japanese culture so that tourists will visit such rural communities is interact with local people, appreciate authentic Japanese culture and have lots of fun.

In the process of our research, we had an opportunity to collaborate with the friendly and warm people of Oboke-Iya in building up a system of community-based tourism. Oboke-Iya is located in Tokushima prefecture where a lot of splendid traditions with beautiful rural scenery still remains. Here, we present you with a brief overview of attractive sites you can visit and exciting activities that you can join in Oboke-Iya. If you are interested in this place region and rural life in Japan, we are pleased to give you more information while we are in Sydney from October 29<sup>th</sup> to November 4<sup>th</sup>.

## What is Oboke-Iya?

Oboke and Iya is the regional name of the western part of Tokushima prefecture on the island of Shikoku. The Tsurugi National Park is located in this region, and offers abundant natural diversities and sites such as Oboke-Kobokey, the Yoshinogawa River, and the Iya valley.

Oboke-Iya is also a place where local people have inherited various cultural legacies. Thus, this region is one of the precious areas in which the good old way of Japanese life.

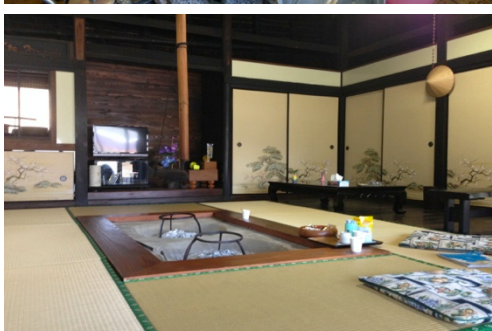
It is said that the fleeing Heike warriors, defeated in a power struggle in the 12th century, came to this place to hide, then eventually settled down. They brought to this region the high and noble culture of the time shared by the aristocracy.

Adapting to the mountainous district, people cultivate the sloping land to grow various grains and vegetables. Wild miscanthus grown in the open spaces is used for fertilizer. It is these the local people wisely utilize natural resources as much as they can in this limited environment.

Oboke is also well known for a hot spring that is good for in the treatment of rheumatism and skin disease. If you take a hot spring bath, you'll find your skin will become very smooth.

Visit Oboke-Iya to see the natural and historical sites and enjoy chatting with local people.

## The Beautiful Village of Ochiai in Iya Valley



This is a settlement where traditional architecture is well preserved. The village spreads out from the slope of the mountains past the Iya River and up to the junction of Ochiai River. The look of this vertical village is unique, as the flat land on which houses are built and farmland created, has been built by piling stones on the steep slope. Unfortunately, this technique or skill, that originated in the ancient times is not well used today. Only few seniors know how to pile the stones correctly. In Iya valley, there are quite a few private homes providing you lodging and meals. You can stay in a traditional Japanese house with a most friendly host. In such guest- houses you can join many activities such as making soba(a noodle made from buckwheat), making konnyaku (a gelatinous food made from devil's-tongue starch), making charcoal and taking a traditional Japanese bath.

We are very certain that you will spend a most valuable time in Iya valley, which you cannot have in an urban setting in Japan.



## What's else is in Oboke-Iya?

### Folktales still live in everyday life



There are unique folktales that people have handed down from generation to generation in this region. They are called the 'Yokai Densetsu', which are the stories of spiritual creatures inhabiting the forest, deep in the mountains, and along the river. People say there are more than 100 creatures and each of them carefully watches children so they don't approach hazardous places such as waterfalls, rushing torrent and dark caves. These creatures also symbolize the grace of nature that people receive from surrounding mountains. The most famous character is the 'Konakijiji' which was picked up in the popular comics 'Gegege no Kitaro' written by Shigeru Mizushima. Here you have the opportunity to see a lot of Yokai statues when you join the tour, and you might even see real Yokai.

There is a unique village in Iya valley. It is so unique that the total number of scarecrows exceeds the number of inhabitants. It is located in the inner part of Iya valley so that you can enjoy trekking or cycling on the mountain path. When you approach this village, you'll see many scarecrows in various poses such as playing to working on in the farm and climbing trees. These scarecrows are art rather than for scaring harmful birds and wild animals. They are the excellent work of Mrs. Tsukimi Ayano who is very clever with her hands. She loves to have visitors to her home and makes scarecrow modeled after her guests. If you visit this unique village of scarecrows and chat with her, you might find a scarecrow just like you.

### Village of Scarecrows



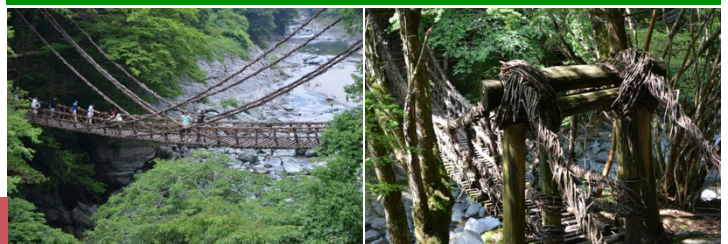
### Enjoy rafting at Yoshinogawa River



The Yoshinogawa River is famous for its rapid current. It flows through Oboke and Koboake and is one of the top-rated rafting courses in Japan. There are two levels of rafting courses: A rapid stream course for thrill-seekers and a slower course for beginners and families. Which ever course you choose, you'll get to enjoy the magnificent panorama of Oboke-Koboake ravine with the friendly rafting guides.

The Kazurabashi Bridge is a suspension bridge made of 'Shirakuchi vines'. It is designated as an Important Cultural Asset. The bridge is 45 meters long, 2meters wide and suspended 14 meters above the water. Legend says that this bridge was made of vines so the Heike samurai warriors who escaped to this region could stop their pursuers at bay by cutting down the bridge.

### Kazurabashi Bridge of Iya



### Enjoy Local Cooking



There are unique cooking methods in this region that you can enjoy a. 'Hirarayaki' is one of them. People use a flat stone found at the riverside for a plate to cook vegetables and fresh fish. Japanese miso plays an important part in this cooking to protect the ingredients and soup keep the from flowing from the plate's, so miso becomes the plate's embankment.



# How to reach Oboke-Iya?

## Recommended Routes Using Public Transport

Before or after you have visited the famous tourist cities of West Japan such as Kyoto, Osaka, Nara and Kobe, we strongly recommend you to visit Oboke-Iya region on the island of Shikoku where you can escape from the hustle and bustle of a great cities and feel more comfortable and relaxed.

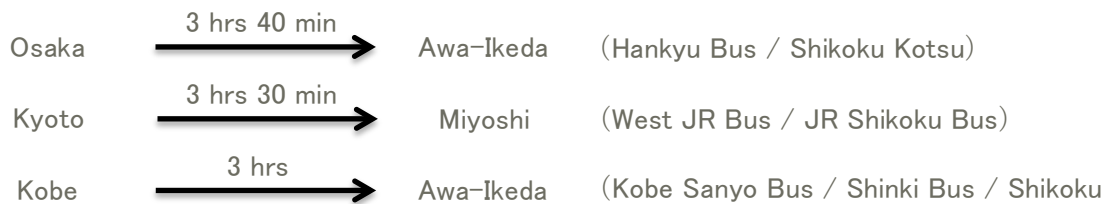
Here is how to get to Oboke-Iya from Osaka. Get on a train or an express bus as soon as you can!

### From Osaka (or Kansai) to Awa-Ikeda in Tokushima prefecture

#### By JR (Japan Railway)



#### By Express Bus



## Further information on Oboke-Iya



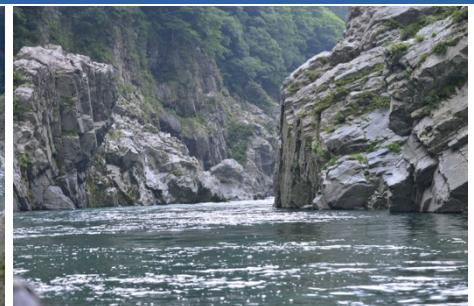
The statue of a Peeing Boy

This is known as the most dangerous spot in Iya valley. In the old days, young boys stood up here and urinated from the cliff to prove their manhood. Today, 200 meters above the river on the rock, stands a statue of a little boy peeing from the cliff.



Hinoji Valley

The 'Hinoji Valley' is so named because this section of the Iya valley is shaped like the Japanese character 'ひ' (hi). This area provides a spectacular view of the Iya valley.



Oboke Ravine

An emerald green river slices through white rock faces and cliffs. During spring and summer, the river valley is surrounded by a brilliant, green forest that turns a beautiful bright golden yellow and red in the autumn.