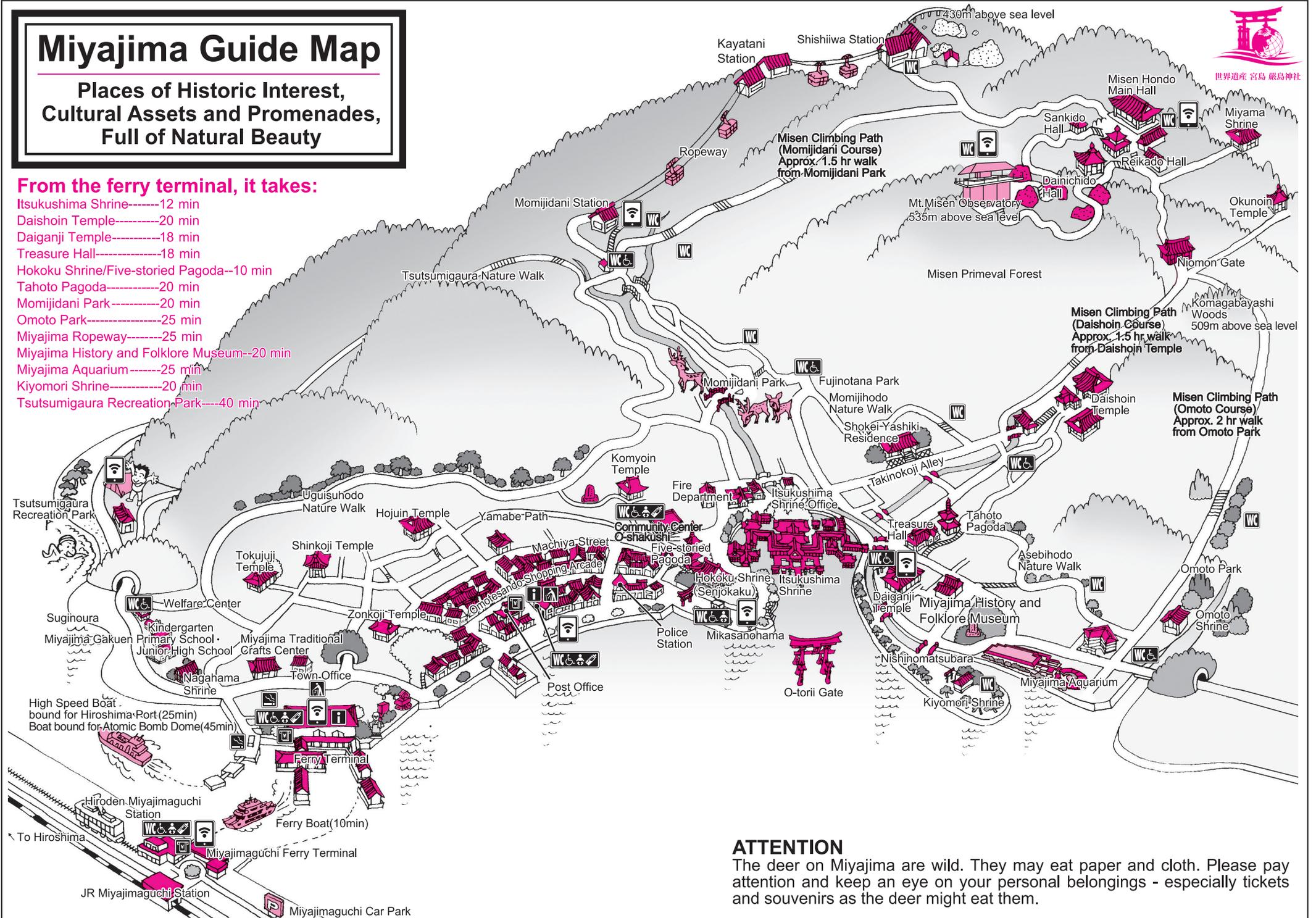


Miyajima Guide Map

Places of Historic Interest,
Cultural Assets and Promenades,
Full of Natural Beauty

From the ferry terminal, it takes:

- Itsukushima Shrine-----12 min
- Daishoin Temple-----20 min
- Daiganji Temple-----18 min
- Treasure Hall-----18 min
- Hokoku Shrine/Five-storied Pagoda--10 min
- Tahoto Pagoda-----20 min
- Momijidani Park-----20 min
- Omoto Park-----25 min
- Miyajima Ropeway-----25 min
- Miyajima History and Folklore Museum--20 min
- Miyajima Aquarium-----25 min
- Kiyomori Shrine-----20 min
- Tsutsumigaura Recreation Park-----40 min



ATTENTION

The deer on Miyajima are wild. They may eat paper and cloth. Please pay attention and keep an eye on your personal belongings - especially tickets and souvenirs as the deer might eat them.

History and Tradition with Blue Seas, Mountains, and Greenery... Full of Beautiful and Charming Highlights

Miyajima Island: A World Heritage Site

The Itsukushima Shrine was officially designated as a Cultural World Heritage Site by the World Heritage Committee in Dec. 1996. The area designated as a World Heritage site consists of 431.2 hectares, including Itsukushima Shrine, with the sea in front of it and the primeval forest of Mt. Misen (Natural Monument) behind it. This expansive World Heritage Site area covers some 14% of Miyajima Island.

Miyajima: One of the Three Most Scenic Spots of Japan

Shunsai Hayashi, a Confucian scholar, wrote a book about his experiences while traveling throughout Japan on foot. In the book, "Nihonkokujisekikou", he praised three sites with outstanding scenery, Matsushima (Miyagi), Amanohashidate (Kyoto), and Miyajima (Hiroshima), as the "Nihon Sankei" or the "Three Views of Japan".

■ Itsukushima Shrine

The Itsukushima Shrine is dedicated to the three Munakata goddesses of Ichikishima-hime, Tagitsu-hime, and Tagori-hime. These three goddesses are worshiped as deities of the seas, traffic safety, good fortune, and fulfillment of wishes. The shrine is known for its unique construction, which expresses the artistic beauty of the Shinden style of architecture. First built in 593, it was remodeled into its current grand structure by the powerful leader Taira-no-Kiyomori in 1168. Its placement on the water, beautifully framed by the mountain in the background is testimony to Kiyomori's extraordinary vision and achievement. Itsukushima Shrine consists of a main shrine, Noh stage, music rooms, worship and purification halls, Marodo shrine, and other structures, all of which are connected by corridors with an overall length of some 260 meters. The vermilion color of the shrine and O-torii Gate is considered to keep evil spirits away. The shrine buildings are now coated with a special vermilion paint that also protects against corrosion.

■ O-torii Gate

The O-torii Gate of Itsukushima Shrine has been designated as a National Important Cultural Property. It has a height of approximately 16.6 meters and weighs some 60 tons. The roof, made of thatched Japanese cypress bark, measures 24.2 meters in length, while the main pillars, 9.9 meters in circumference are made of natural camphor trees and the four supporting pillars are made of natural cedar. The present O-torii Gate, the ninth since the Heian period, was built in 1875. The top and under rails of the gate are formed in box shape and filled with fist-sized stones that serve as weights (total of approx. 4 tons). The gate is able to stand under its own weight.



■ Hokoku Shrine (Senjokaku)

Hokoku Shrine (also known as Senjokaku) is a library of Buddhist sutras that Hideyoshi Toyotomi started to build in the Irimoya style as a memorial for war dead. Although construction was suspended midway with the death of Hideyoshi and it remains unfinished to this day, it is the largest wood structure on the island.

■ Five-storied Pagoda

The Five-storied Pagoda, thought to have been built in 1407, has a height of 28 meters, and harmoniously combines Japanese and Chinese styles of architecture. A main feature is central pillar that stops at the second story for a construction that is highly resistant to wind.

■ Treasure Hall

This hall displays some of the treasures, sculptures, paintings, and handicrafts of Itsukushima Shrine, such as Heike Clan sutras replica used by the clan to pray for their prosperity. 130 of these items have been designated as National Important Cultural Properties.

■ Tahoto Pagoda

Built by a priest named Shukan in 1523, the Tahoto Pagoda has a height of 15.6 meters. Although mainly constructed in the Japanese style, some parts of the structure have Indian and Chinese architectural features. It presents the unique combination of a square shape on the lower level and a round shape on the upper level.

■ Daiganji Temple

This temple was responsible for the repair and construction of Itsukushima Shrine until the Meiji Restoration (1868). The Itsukushima Benzaiten of Daiganji Temple is known as one of the three most famous Benzaitens in Japan.

■ Daishoin Temple

As the headquarters of the Omuro School of Shingon Buddhism, Daishoin Temple is the oldest temple on Miyajima, having been in charge of the rituals as the "Betto" or administrator of Itsukushima Shrine prior to the Meiji Restoration (1868).

■ Miyajima History and Folklore Museum

This museum preserves the main house and part of the storehouse that formerly belonged to the Egami family who were wealthy merchants in Miyajima. It features some 1,000 items of Miyajima folklore materials on display including ancient documents, paintings, and wood crafts.



■ Miyajima Aquarium

Using the Seto Inland Sea as a main theme, this aquarium provides a relaxing atmosphere that allows you to get close to and even touch marine wildlife. Visitors can enjoy watching penguins swim as quickly in their water tank as birds in the sky as well as an up-close view of the sea lion show. There is also large-scale fish on display with more than 15,000 animals and some 380 species living comfortably in various sized water tanks.

■ Momijidani Park

This is a quiet park at the foot of Mt. Misen. It provides a particularly beautiful view in the fall with fiery colored autumn leaves and maple trees, while you can enjoy fantastic views of the lush greenery from spring until the start of summer.



■ Mt. Misen and Ropeway

Covered with lush primeval forest, Mt. Misen is the highest mountain on Miyajima, rising 535 meters above sea level. The mountain has been considered sacred and an object of worship since ancient times. There are temples related to Kobo Daishi, a great Buddhist monk, near the summit. There are also unusually shaped rocks and an observatory. The Miyajima Ropeway connects Shishiwa Station on Mt. Misen with Momijidani Park.



■ Miyajima Traditional Crafts Center

The Miyajima Traditional Crafts Center is a three-story building. The first floor consists of displays and sales of traditional Miyajima handicrafts such as wood crafts and clay bells. On the second floor, you can try your hand at making Momiji Manju (a sweet bean paste-stuffed cake shaped like a maple leaf). On the third floor, you can make your own "Shamoji" rice scoop and have a first-hand experience of Miyajima-style carving.

■ Tsutsumigaura Recreation Park

This park is located along the seaside with a beautiful sandy beach that extends for 570 meters along the north-east coast of the island. You can enjoy outdoor activities, sports, camping, fishing, and trekking in this park.

■ O-Shakushi (Big rice scoop)

This "world's largest rice scoop" was created to pass down the traditional handicraft of Miyajima woodwork and as a symbol of Miyajima as the birthplace of the rice scoop. Length: 7.7 m, Max. width: 2.7 m, Weight: 2.5 tons, Material: Japanese zelkova (270 years old)

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