

# Explore the Best of Shikoku by E-bike and SUP

Shikoku is an island in southwest Japan. It's the smallest, least developed of Japan's main islands. The centre of Shikoku is dominated by Mt. Ishizuchi whose dramatic peak is the remnant of an ancient caldera. On this adventure, we travel across Shikoku from the Seto Inland Sea, passing over the Ishizuchi range by e-bike and descending the Niyodo River by SUP to the Pacific Ocean. Our tour is conceived as an introduction to the best of Shikoku.



We first get on our e-bikes to cycle the Shimanami Kaido, a chain of islands and bridges crossing the Inland Sea. It was once home to maritime clans (pirates!), who took some cargo in return for guiding ships through the racing currents and whirlpools of the hazardous sea. From the islands, we can see Mt. Ishizuchi looming ahead.

The climb up to Ishizuchi is challenging, but e-bikes make it possible for any averagely fit person. Traversing the mountain on the 'UFO Line' is quite a trip – the views over Shikoku roll on and on, blending into the distant ocean.

The pure blue Niyodo River rises on Ishizuchi and flows down to the Pacific. We ride its translucent waters on SUP boards, stopping occasionally to jump off boulders and the rustic bridges used by local people.

Along the route, we meet the ancestors of pirates, the Shinto priests whose deities watch over the mountains and seas, and the craftspeople who use the water from the mountains to make beautiful washi paper and deliciously fresh sake.

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## Highlights:

- Pray for a safe trip to the gods of the sea and mountains at Shikoku's major Shinto shrines.
- Cycle the renowned Shimanami Kaido and take a boat ride into the racing currents that flow between the islands of the Seto Inland Sea.
- Climb 940 m up Mt. Ishizuchi on an e-bike and ride the loopy UFO Line along the mountain ridge.
- Paddle a SUP board down the pure, clear Niyodo River, visiting a sake brewery and a paper making atelier.

**Location:** Ehime and Kochi Prefecture, Shikoku Island

**Main Activity:** E-bike cycling and SUP

**Difficulty:** 3

**Tour Dates:** April to November



## Contents:

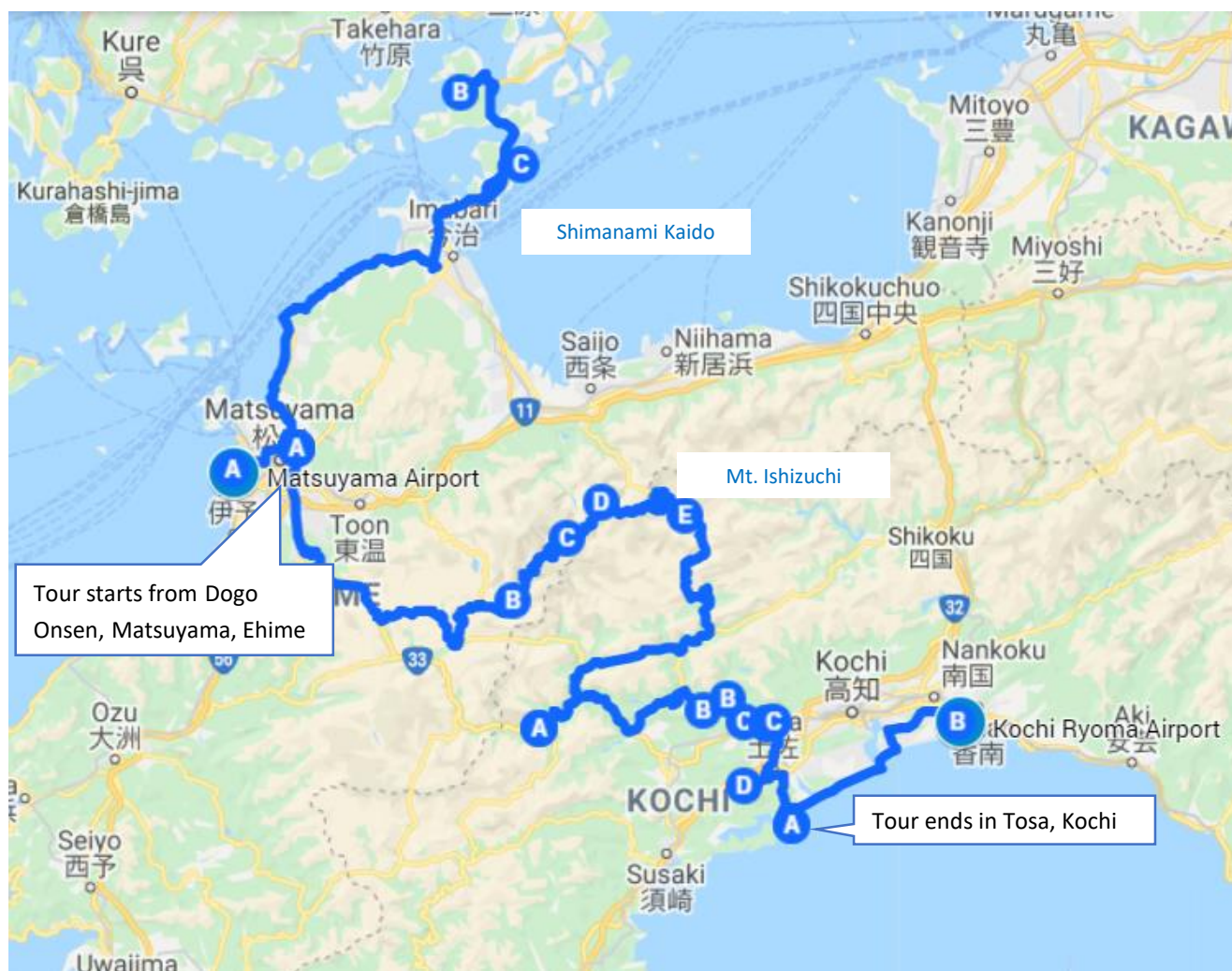
Route map

Day-by-Day Itinerary



# Explore the Best of Shikoku by E-bike and SUP

## Route map



## Day-by-Day Itinerary

### Day 1:

#### Arrive in Dogo, Matsuyama

You arrive in Dogo, Matsuyama, and check into your single room at the new Dogo Hakuro hotel. The hotel has its own hot spring bath, and is located close to the famous Dogo Onsen Honkan, Japan's oldest spa. After dinner, we have a short orientation covering what to expect during the adventure. Then you can have a relaxing soak at the hotel, or one of the local hot spring baths.

#### Dinner

Your guide, Rod Walters, will meet you at the hotel and take you to a local sake brewery to enjoy a sake tasting, followed by dinner featuring specialties of the Seto Inland Sea at Nikitatsu-an, the brewery restaurant.

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Nikitatsu-an Restaurant



Botchan Train



Dogo Onsen

### Day 2 :

### Cycle the Shimanami Kaido

The local baths in Dogo are open early, so if you fancy a dip, the opportunity is there.

#### Breakfast

The buffet at Hakuro offers an extensive choice of soups, breads, and salads to suit both Japanese and western palates.

A chartered bus takes us by a scenic seaside route to WAKKA on Omishima Island, a cycling base in the middle of the Shimanami Kaido, known as one of the most interesting cycling destinations. The e-bikes make it easy to explore the hilly islands and scoot up the ramps to the massive bridges. We cycle to romantic Oyamazumi Shrine, where Japanese warriors from time immemorial have dedicated their weapons and armour in thanks for victory, and we pray for a safe journey.

### E-bike from WAKKA to Oyamazumi Shrine and back

Distance: 8.2 km | Time: 1:00 | Up: 80 m, Down 70 m



#### Lunch

WAKKA provides a tasty boxed lunch which we can eat at some scenic spot whenever we feel like it.

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At the Murakami Suigun Museum on Oshima Island, we learn about the pirates of the Inland Sea. Then we take a boat out into the fast currents and whirlpools of the Inland Sea, passing the tiny island fortress of Noshima from where the pirates conducted their operations. Finally, we cross the great Kurushima Straits Bridge and drive through the mountains back to Matsuyama, where we stay another night at Hakuro.



### E-bike from WAKKA to Sunrise Itoyama

Distance: 31.4 km | Time: 1:40 | Up: 320 m, Down: 300 m



### Dinner

Seafood from the Inland Sea and local sake at an izakaya in Dogo.

**Activity:** E-bike cycling and boat cruise  
**Difficulty:** 3



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## Day 3:

### Cycle up Mt. Ishizuchi

This is your last chance for a morning bathe in the waters of Dogo.

#### Breakfast

Buffet at Hakuro.

A chartered bus takes us through the lovely scenery of Kuma Highland to the foot of Mt. Ishizuchi where we meet our e-bikes again. From the pretty Omogo River valley at 600 m, we make a long ascent by paved road that winds up through deciduous woodland before emerging above the tree line at 1,500 m. Here, weirdly shaped peaks rise above slopes cloaked in dwarf bamboo. At the Tsuchigoya rest stop, we're greeted by mountain priests blowing conch shells and receive a traditional Shinto blessing.



Ishizuchi Shrine



Ishizuchi Peak



UFO Line

### E-bike from Omogo to Tsuchigoya

Distance: 22.2 km | Time: 2:00 | Up: 940 m, Down 250 m



▲ Highest Point 1,510 m

▼ Lowest Point 570 m

#### Lunch

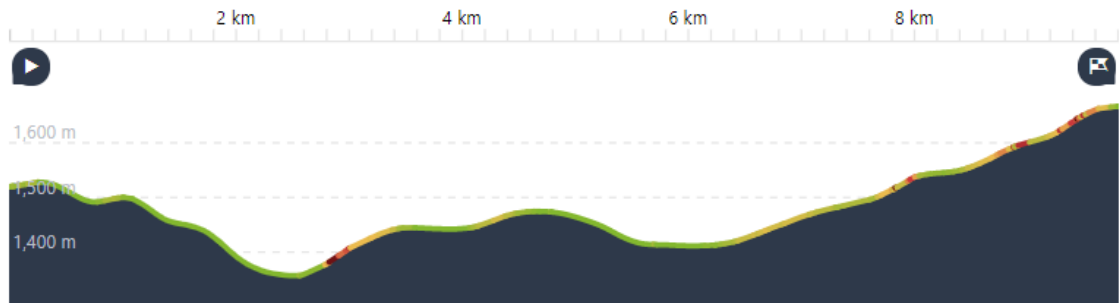
At Tsuchigoya Terrace, we're served a delicious pasta with locally sourced wild boar sausage.

After lunch, we cycle the dramatic UFO Line, a largely flat traverse across the shoulder of the mountain to Mt. Kamegamori, with views of Ishizuchi and vistas stretching over much of Shikoku.

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## E-bike from Tsuchigoya to Mt. Kamegamori trailhead

Distance: 9.81 km | Time: 1:00 | Up: 390 m, Down: 250 m



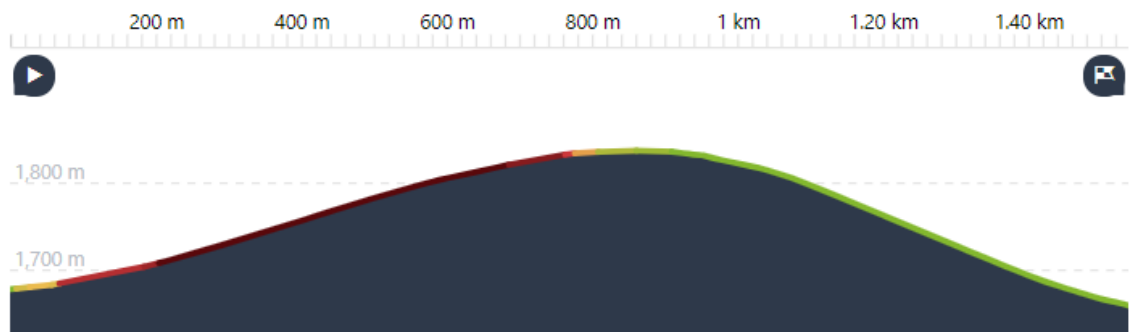
▲ **Highest Point** 1,670 m

▼ **Lowest Point** 1,360 m

We get off our bikes to hike up over and down the peak.

## Hike over Mt. Kamegamori

Distance: 1.54 km | Time: 1:00 | Up: 160 m, Down: 180 m



▲ **Highest Point** 1,840 m

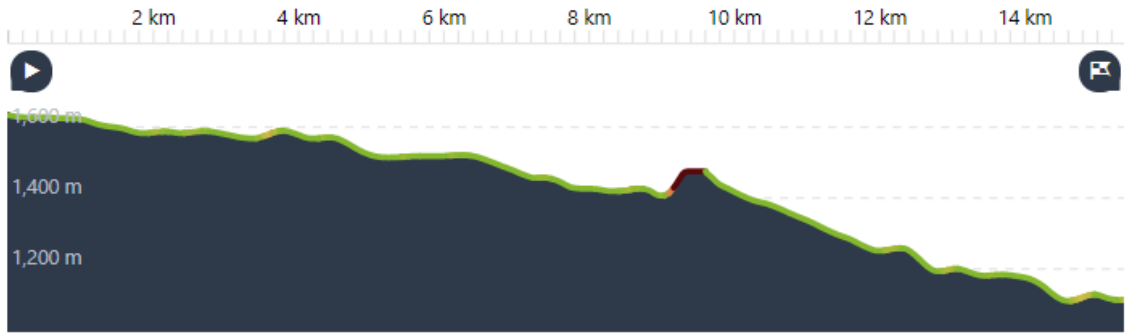
▼ **Lowest Point** 1,660 m

The support vehicle meets us at the other end with our bikes. After the hike we cycle mostly downhill to the Kanpuzan rest stop.

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## E-bike from Mt. Kamegamori to Kanpuzan

Distance: 15.4 km | Time: 01:00 | Up: 160 m, Down: 680 m



▲ **Highest Point** 1,630 m

▼ **Lowest Point** 1,110 m

At the next rest stop, we meet the bus for the drive to Akiba no Yado, an inn with Japanese-style rooms beside a reservoir on the Niyodo River.

### Dinner

Local cuisine with ingredients sourced from the rivers, mountains, and ocean of Kochi.

**Activity:** E-bike cycling and hiking

**Difficulty:** 3



## Day 4:

### Descend the Niyodo River by e-bike and SUP

At breakfast time, the dawn sky is reflected on the lake below the inn. Today, we actually get into the river.

### Breakfast

We're served a traditional Japanese breakfast of locally grown rice with fish, pickles, and miso soup.

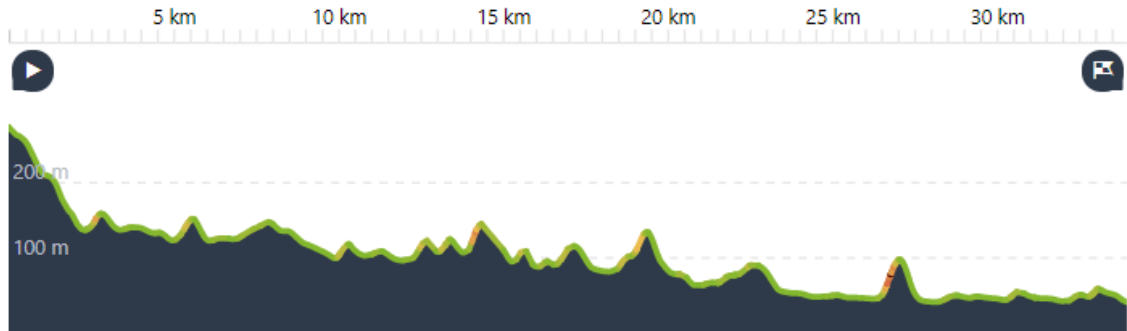
The Niyodo River is known for its translucent, turquoise blue water and the beauty of the scenery along its banks. From the inn, we cycle on a paved road beside the river to the Ainosato Waterside Station.



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## E-bike from Akiba no Yado to Ainosato

Distance: 33.9 km | Time: 1:40 | Up: 410 m, Down: 650 m



▲ **Highest Point** 270 m

▼ **Lowest Point** 40 m

## Lunch

The Waterside Station is a market for local agricultural produce, and lunch features the vegetables and traditional processed foods of the region.



*SUP*



*Niyodo River*



*Kanpo no Yado Hotel*

At the Waterside Station, we switch to SUP boards to continue our curving descent of the river to the SUGGOI Sports base. Our route includes some highly picturesque bends in the river, with deep, calm stretches, and some shallow rapids for a bit of excitement. There are also opportunities for a refreshing leap off boulders and bridges. You're sure to see some big river fish and numerous kinds of birds.

## SUP from Ainosato to SUGGOI Sports

Distance: 10 km | Time: 4:00 | Up: 0 m, Down: 5 m

From SUGGOI Sports, the bus takes us to the nearby riverside hotel, Kanpo no Yado Ino, a modern hotel with an extensive selection of onsen baths.

## Dinner

We eat a selection of the famed dishes of Kochi such as braised tuna in the big dining room of the hotel.

**Activity:** E-bike cycling and SUP boarding

**Difficulty:** 3

# Explore the Best of Shikoku by E-bike and SUP

## Day 5:

### Explore the products of the Niyodo River

The early morning view of the Niyodo River from your hotel balcony invites you to follow its course all the way to the sea.

#### Breakfast

We're served a hearty Japanese breakfast of locally grown rice with tofu, fish, pickles, and soup.

The mulberry trees and glue-bearing vines that grow along the Niyodo River are essential for making traditional paper, a material of great importance in Japanese life. We cycle to the Ino Paper Museum to learn about the steps required to turn these plants into high quality paper, and we visit an atelier to try our hand at making some washi paper by the traditional method. Be prepared to be amazed by the sophisticated applications of simple paper.

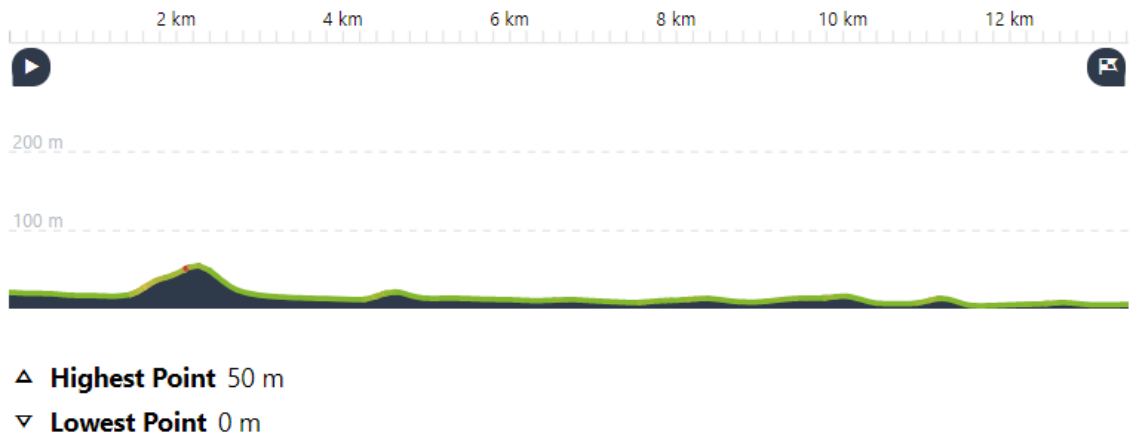
#### Lunch

Uokane is a fishmonger with a focus on sustainability. Lunch features sweetfish from Uokane, caught with a rod by a local fisherman.

After lunch, we cycle from Uokane to the mouth of the Niyodo River where it flows into the Pacific Ocean.

### E-bike from Uokane to the mouth of the Niyodo River

Distance: 13.4 km | Time: 1:00 | Up: 80 m, Down: 90 m



Water from the Niyodo River and its tributaries is an essential ingredient of the excellent sake brewed in Kochi. We drive to Kameizumi Brewery, whose name means 'the spring that never dries up', where the master brewer takes us on a tour of the facilities and serves tastings of the brewery's extensive lineup.

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From the brewery, we drive to Tosa Ryu Onsen Sanyo-so, a spa ryokan on a peninsula jutting into the Pacific Ocean near the mouth of the Niyodo River. There's time to visit nearby Shoryu-ji, one of Shikoku's eighty-eight pilgrimage temples.

### Dinner

We're joined again by the master brewer of Kameizumi for our last meal together, a luxurious ryokan dinner paired with select sake from Shikoku's eternal spring.



## Day 6: Onward travel

The morning finds you on the southern edge of Shikoku beside the vast Pacific Ocean. You can see the great curve of Kochi stretching away into the distance.

### Breakfast

Befitting the location, breakfast features locally caught fish with rice.

Now it's time to say goodbye to your guide and travel to your next destination. You've seen some of the best of Shikoku and learned about the history and traditions that set the island apart from other regions of Japan. We hope you've enjoyed the expansive scenery, the delicious food and sake, and the simple hospitality of the people. And we hope you'll be back some day to experience some of the many other adventures that remain to be discovered here.

### Accommodation:

Days 1 and 2: Dogo Hakuro, hotel, double room with shower + toilet, onsen

Day 3: Akiba no Yado, Japanese-style futon room, shared bath + toilets

Day 4: Kanpo no Yado Ino, single room with shower + toilet, onsen

Day 5: Tosa Ryu Onsen Sanyo-so, twin room with shower + toilet, onsen

All accommodation is non-smoking, with free Wi-Fi and coin laundry.