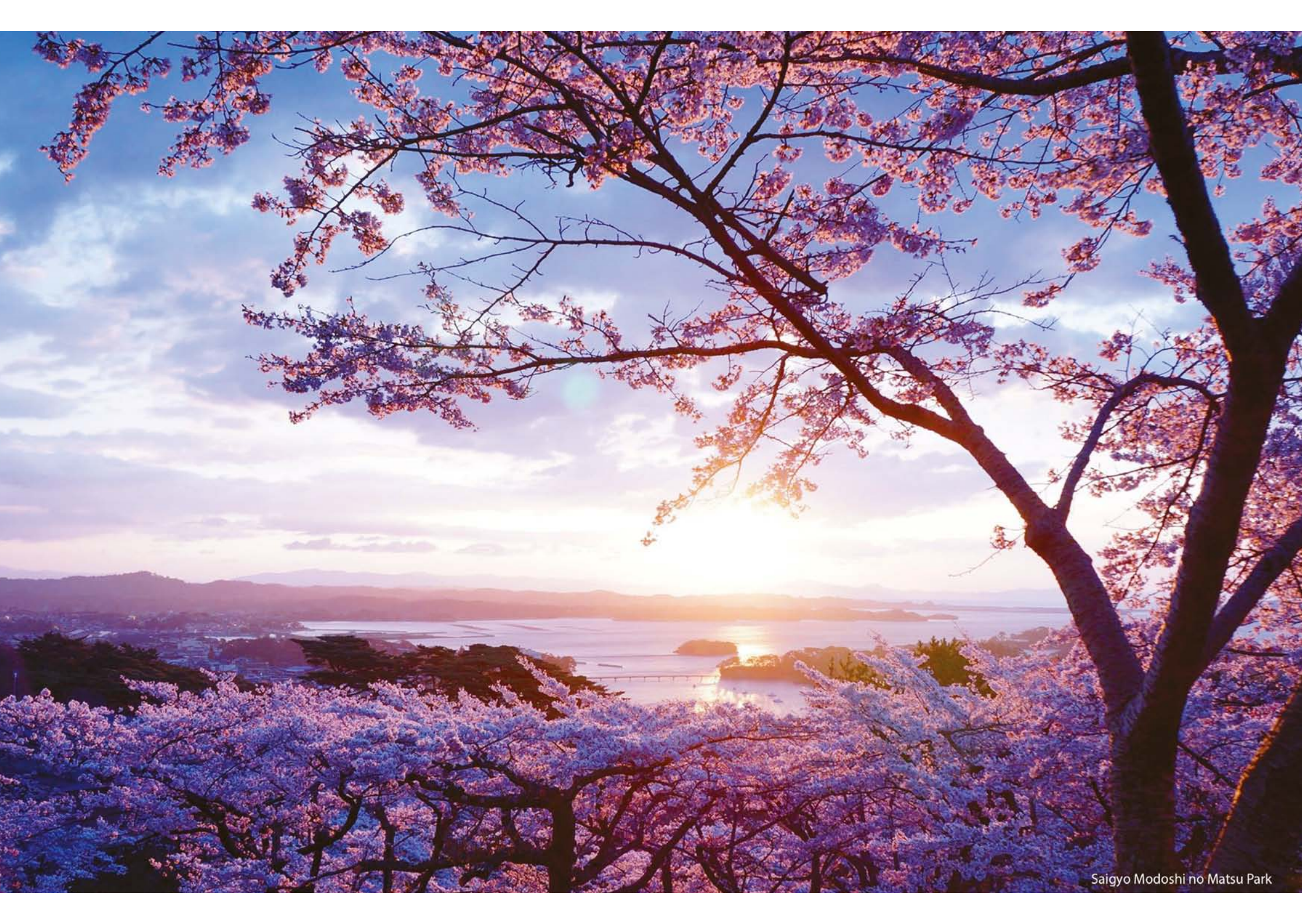




MATSUSHIMA
JAPAN





MATSUSHIMA ISLANDS



Since the Edo period some 400 years ago, Matsushima has been known as one of the "Three Most Scenic Spots of Japan." Recently, Matsushima has also been recognized internationally as France's Michelin Guide awarded Matsushima three stars, its most prestigious rating. In 2013, Matsushima became the first bay in Japan to be accepted into the "Most Beautiful Bays in the World" association, joining well-known bays including Mont Saint-Michel.

Matsushima's name (*matsu* means pine and *shima* means island) is said to have come from Emperor Toba's gift of a thousand pine trees after hearing the story of Kenbutsu Shonin. Matsuo Basho, a 17th century haiku poet was reportedly quite fond of the area.

In the present day, the bay can be enjoyed from one of the Four Panoramic Views; each highlights the mystery, beauty, and dynamism of the islands which appear to float on the sea under a never-ending expanse of sky.

Tomiyama
The Beautiful View



Ogitani
The Mysterious View



Tamonzan
The Dynamic View



Otakamori
The Gorgeous View



SIGHTSEEING

Zuiganji Temple

Zuiganji Temple, a National Treasure and an Important Cultural Property, is one of the most famous Rinzai Buddhist Zen temples in northern Japan. Founded in 828 by Jikaku Taishi, the temple as it is today was rebuilt by samurai ruler Lord Date Masamune in 1609 to be his family temple. Long ago the caves here were used for meditation practice.



Entsuiin Temple

Entsuiin Temple contains the mausoleum for Lord Date Masamune's grandson, who died at age 19. Due to the plentiful Western imagery this site was closed during the two hundred year period of Japan's national isolation. In modern days during the autumn the maple trees are illuminated at night. Guests can also craft their own Buddhist prayer bead bracelets here.

Oshima Island

This island is where the ascetic monk Kenbutsu Shonin, who was of the mystic Tendai sect of Buddhism, came to practice meditation 900 years ago. It is said that he gained supernatural powers after reciting sutras 60,000 times over the course of ten years. Many monks came here afterwards to follow in his footsteps, and it is for these reasons that Oshima is considered a sacred island to this day.



Godaido Temple

Named for the five Buddhas of Wisdom housed within, this symbol of Matsushima was founded in 807 and reconstructed by Date Masamune in 1604. Adorning the roof of this structure are statues of the twelve Zodiac Animals, and leading to the island temple are vermillion bridges with unusual spaces between the planks.



CUISINE

RELAXATION



Local Foods

Oysters are Matsushima's specialty. From late October to early March visitors can enjoy all-you-can-eat grilled oysters at oyster shacks, or *kakigoya*. Some lunchtime cruises of the bay feature oyster *nabe* stews, and many local restaurants offer *kakidon*, or oyster-over-rice specials. The town is also famous for *anago*, or conger eel, which is in season from June to September.

Hot Springs

Relax in a complimentary footbath or take advantage of the skin-beautifying hot springs while enjoying the sunrise or gazing at the moon of Matsushima that made it a favorite place for samurai Lord Date Masamune and haiku poet Matsuo Basho. These natural waters will leave even the most weary traveler feeling refreshed.



Regional Foods

Miyagi's prefectural specialties include *gyutan*, or beef tongue, *sasakamaboko* fish cakes, and *zunda*, or ground, sweetened edamame bean paste. To the south of Matsushima is Shiogama City. Situated near a prolific fishing ground, Shiogama's sushi is renowned nationwide.

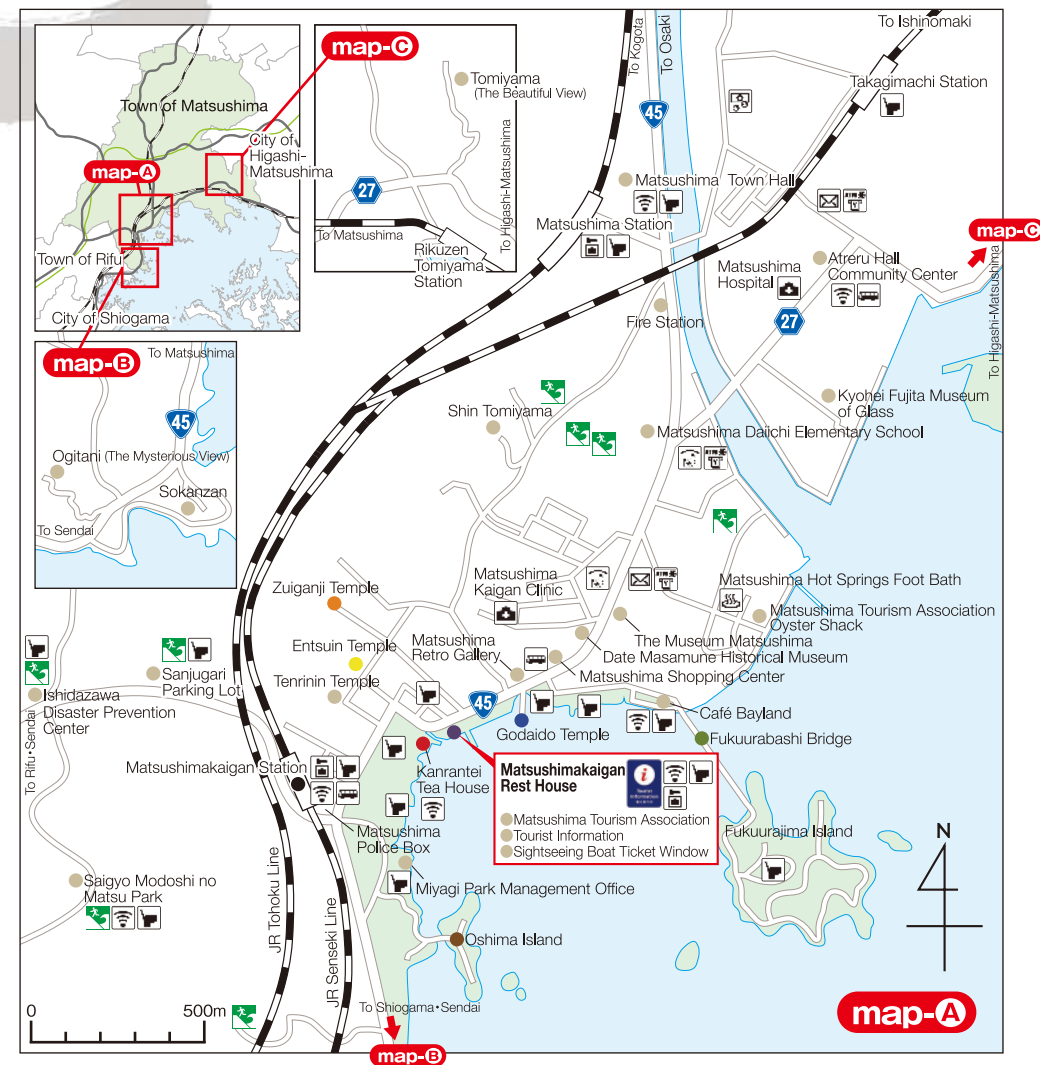


Cruises

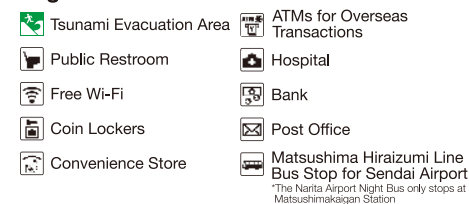
Board one of several sightseeing cruises to see each of the unique islands up close. There are round trip ventures, one-way ships to the nearby Shiogama, and lines that make stops at some of the larger inhabited islands in the bay. Higashi Matsushima City offers summer cruises around Sagakei Gorge.




MAP



Legend



 **Tsunami Evacuation Area** This is a sign indicating an evacuation area or high ground.

Protecting yourself from a tsunami: Evacuate immediately to a safe place, such as high ground or a Tsunami Evacuation Area if:

- *You feel a strong quake while in a coastal area or near the mouth of a river.
- *You hear an announcement or siren warning of a tsunami, even if you feel little or no shaking.

-Do not return until after the tsunami warning and/or evacuation advisory is lifted.

-A tsunami is a series of waves that may continue for hours. Do not assume that after one wave the danger is over.



Access

By Bullet Train

appx. 1.5 hours from Tokyo Station to Sendai station

By Train

appx. 40 min. from Sendai Station to Matsushimakaigan Station on the JR Senseki Line

appx. 25 min. from Sendai Station to Matsushima Station on the JR Tohoku Line

appx. 25 min. from Sendai Airport to Sendai Station on the Sendai Airport Access Line

By Bus

appx. 55 min. from Sendai Airport to Matsushimakaigan

By Boat

appx. 50 min. from Marine Gate Shiogama to the Matsushima Sightseeing Boat Pier

Produced by the Town of Matsushima Industries and Tourism Division, Tourism Section, March 2018 with support from the Miyagi Area International Tourism Conference. Page 1 and 2 cherry blossom photo provided by Tomoko Inagaki. Page 3 moon photo and page 5 Light Up photo provided by the Matsushima Tourism Association. Page 7 beef tongue photo provided by the City of Sendai. Page 7 sushi photo provided by the City of Shiogama.

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Matsushima Bay Wonderland