



Awa - The Home of "Ai"

Searching for the Supreme Blue of Japanese indigo

A trip to Awa, the homeplace of *ai*, Japanese indigo

Searching for the "mysterious blue" loved by Japanese people



Tokushima Prefecture

Tokushima-shi
Yoshinogawa-shi
Awa-shi
Mima-shi
Ishii-chō
Kitajima-chō
Aizumi-chō
Itano-chō
Kamiita-chō













Discovering the relationship between Awa and Japanese indigo



The Yoshino River
The photo shows a landscape
seen in Mima-shi.
During floods caused by
typhoons, etc., the submerged
bridge is hidden in the muddy
water, showing the power of the
violent Yoshino River during a
flood.



A shop curtain dyed with Awa-Ai.
The various color tones and textures are attractive.

Flooding of the Yoshino River gave birth to Awa (former name of Tokushima) ai (Japanese indigo).

In the plains of the Yoshino River basin, known as "Awa-no-Kitakata" (the northern part of Awa), indigo production has long been practiced. In the Edo period (1603-1867), Awa indigo was called hon-ai (authentic Japanese indigo) because of the beauty of its dyed products, and was popular throughout Japan.

The key to high-quality indigo production lies in the majestic Yoshino River. The Yoshino River, one of the three most violent rivers in Japan, frequently overflowed and caused extensive damage in its basin. On the other hand, floods brought fertile soil and abundant underground water, making the "Awa-no-Kitakata" suitable for indigo cultivation.





A story of the homeplace of *ai*, Japanese indigo

This area is the "homeplace of *ai*, Japanese indigo", where the indigo dye material called *Sukumo* is still produced, using traditional methods, and where the Awa culture that has developed along with indigo has been carefully passed down.

Here, the activities of masters who make *Sukumo* and the castle-like *Ai-Yashiki* (indigo mansions) are reminiscent of Tokushima, which once thrived on indigo.

Furthermore, the distribution of indigo led to the development of various cultures such as performing arts, which has continued to the present day. Indigo in Tokushima is loved by people as *Hon-Ai* (authentic Japanese indigo) in the past and Awa-*Ai* (Awa indigo) today. Let's go on a trip to the homeplace of *ai* and learn about it.

The landscape and climate of the homeplace of *ai*, Japanese indigo, tell us the history Visiting the historic places of *sukumo* production







● Tanaka Family Residence (*Ai-Yashiki*) [MAP-•] © 705, Aihata-takabatake, Ishi-chō, Myozai-gun, Tokushima

The stone walls are piled high to prevent flooding. The highest stone wall is 2.7 m high. Inside the house, an escape boat is hung from the ceiling to rescue people from the surrounding area in the event of a flood.

**A tour is available (Sundays and holidays only)

Mainakashima District [MAP-0]

Mishima-mai-nakashima, Anabuki-chō, Mima-shi, Tokushima

In this area, which is particularly prone to flood damage, high stone-walled houses, temples, and jizo (guardian deity for children) statues enshrined at high places can be seen everywhere.

Coexistence with harsh nature

In northern part of Awa, large mansions erected on high stone walls can be seen everywhere across the rural scenery that spreads out over the plains. These castle-like buildings are called *Ai-Yashiki* (indigo mansion), which is one of the unique landscapes of Awa. *Ai-Yashiki* were not only the residences of *Ai-Shi* (indigo masters) and *Ai-Shōnin* (indigo merchants) who were responsible for the production, processing, and distribution of *Sukumo*, but also the factories where *Sukumo* was produced and the places where business negotiations were held.

People who made their living by indigo production had to live in a situation where floods frequently occurred. For this reason, such mansions are equipped with various measures. The sceneries created by *Ai-Yashiki* tell us their passion for indigo production and the lifestyle of the time.

The magnificent *Ai-Yashiki* tells us the prosperity of those days.

Ai-Shōnin, who had become wealthy with indigo, competingly set up grand mansions to gain the trust of merchants from all over Japan who came to buy Sukumo, and to have business negotiations in their mansions. There were tea ceremony rooms and tatami rooms for entertaining the visitors, and it seems that the Ai-Shōnin spared no expense in their entertainment. This is the background that Ai-Yashiki is found here and there all over the region.



The Okumura Family Residence (Ai-Yashiki) [MAP-10] 172, Tokumei Maezunishi, Aizumi-chō, Itano-gun, Tokushima

(Upper photo) A view of the pond in the *Ai-Yashiki*. The splendid garden shows the prosperity of those days. (Right photo) A typical *Ai-Yashiki* has a main building in the center of the premises and a large courtyard in front of the main building. Then, *Nedoko*, a place for the production of indigo dye materials, is built around the courtyard.





"Ai-no-Yakata" Aizumi Town History Museum

The whole Okumura Family Residence is used as an exhibition and resource center where visitors can learn more about the history and culture of Awa- Ai. Visitors can also see the inside of the

Visitors can also see the inside of the Ai-Yashiki, including the Nedoko and tatami rooms, and experience the lifestyle of the Ai-Shōnin of the time.

Indigo dyeing experience is also available



Statue of Inubushi Kyūsuke [MAP-0]

 1, Matudani Yamanouchi-oku, Itano-chō, Itano-gun, Tokushima

A wooden statue of Inubushi Kyūsuke, a leading figure in the development of Awa-Ai, is enshrined at Aizen-An in Itano-chō.

Kyusuke, who worked on improving the process of manufacturing *Sukumo* made of fermented indigo leaves, is still known by the nickname *Aikyū-san*.



Feeling the techniques of producing Sukumo, passed down by Ai-Shi







▲Finished Sukumo product



● Ai-Shi checking the state of fermentation. The temperature and smell are barometers for the completion timing of Sukumo. ●In June, indigo fields are all over green. ●Fermentation of the indigo leaves are advanced. ●Indigo leaves are piled up on Nedoko. For about 100 days, the fermentation process is promoted by repeatedly sprinkling water and mixing well.

Traditional Japanese indigo production continues to this day

In Tokushima, the practice of *Sukumo* production, which has not changed since the Edo period, continues to the present day. In *Nedoko*, where *Sukumo* is processed, there are *Ai-Shi* (indigo masters) who are engaged in production of *Sukumo* with all their might. *Ai-Shi* repeats the process of spraying water on the indigo leaves to promote fermentation over and over again. The temperature of the fermenting indigo leaves exceeds 60°C, and the area of *Nedoko* is filled with steam and a pungent fermentation smell. Under such circumstances, *Ai-Shi* concentrates on their work. The work requires the wisdom of their predecessors and their own experience and intuition.



"WAZA NO YAKATA" [MAP-18]

32-4, Izumidani, Harahigashi, Kamiita-chō, Itano-gun, Tokushima



Kamiita-chō has the largest area of indigo cultivation and the largest amount of *Sukumo* production and shipment in Japan. In "WAZA NO YAKATA", visitors can easily experience indigo dyeing with careful guidance. Try to create your own unique indigo-dyed T-shirts or handkerchiefs.

*Reservations are required for the indigo dyeing experience.

[MAP-@]

Mima Tourism Center

9 45-1, Ōaza-Wakimachi, Wakimachi, Mima-shi, Tokushima

A tourist base facility located in a section of "udatsu-no-machinami" (The Historic Udatsu Area) in Wakimachi, Mima-shi. Visitors can experience indigo dyeing and Japanese umbrella making.

Please enjoy locally produced foods in the adjoining coffee shop.

*Reservations are required for the experience.



Started from Japanese indigo to various crops



◀ Spring Carrots

The landscape of northern land of Awa, once covered with indigo plants, is changing with the times. After the decline of Japanese indigo cultivation, sericulture flourished and many fields were converted to mulberry fields. Today, the area is one of the leading horticultural crop areas, growing spring carrots, pears, white melons, broccoli, and other crops that boast the highest shipment volume in Japan. In addition, the peat and sandy soil created by the many changes in the flow





path of the Yoshino River are used to grow lotus root and sweet potatoes, and even today, you can see that the northern part of Awa reaps the benefits of the Yoshino River.

(Upper photo) Lotus root field (Lower photo) Carrot field

Distribution and Prosperity of Awa-*Ai* Enjoying the performing arts fostered by *Ai-Shōnin*

Awa, a "place of performing arts" nurtured by Ai-Shōnin

Awa indigo expanded its sales channels throughout Japan, and *Ai-Shōnin* also became active on a national scale. *Ai-Shōnin* were the key players of cultural exchange with other parts of Japan and influenced various cultures in Tokushima. *Awa-Odori* dance, which is synonymous with Tokushima, also gives us a sense of the *Ai-Shōnin* of Awa who were actively traveling across the country.



Awa *Ai-Shōnin* loved performing arts and was generous with their money. In those days, they frequently invited puppet troupes from Awaji and enjoyed their puppet shows. From this point on, "*deko*" (wooden doll) culture, such as "*Awa-ningyo-joruri*" (puppet show with dramatic recitation to





◆ Awa-Odori dance The rhythm of Awa-Odori dance is said to have something in common with "Rokucho" of Amami Yaeyama, "Kachaasi" of Okinawa, "Haiya-bushi" of Kyushu, and "Yassa-bushi" of Hiroshima. "Awa-ningyo-joruri" A puppet play performed by three parties: joruri recitator, shamisen (Japanese banjo) player, and puppeteers. Since many of the performances were held outdoors, large, shiny puppets are used, and the play is performed with a dynamic gesture known as "Awa-no-te". Today, nearly 40 ningyo-za (puppet troupes) are still active. Awa-Deko Sanbasō-Mawashi A blessing performing art in which two wooden boxes are filled with "Sanbaso" and "Ebisu" dolls to celebrate people's good health and business prosperity. Even today, the performers visit nearly 1,000 houses on New Year's Day.



Awaodori Kaikan

[MAP-B]

2-20, Shinnmachibashi, Tokushima-shi,
 Tokushima



A facility where you can enjoy Awa-Odori dance throughout the year. Performances are held daily, and visitors can dance together with the dancers. There is also a museum of Awa-Odori dance and a shop selling local products in the building.

Tokushima Prefectural Awa Jūrōbē Yashiki

 184, Miyajima Motoura, Kawauchi-chō, Tokushima-shi, Tokushima



music), started flourishing.

A facility where visitors can watch Awa-ningyo-joruri. In addition to regular daily performances, special performances of various programs are held. There is also an exhibition on the history of Awa-ningyo-joruri.

The Yoshida Family Residence

[MAP-@]

 53, Ōaza-Wakimachi, Wakimachi, Mima-shi, Tokushima

This is the residence of an Ai-Shōnin located in The Historic Udatsu Area. It is open to the public, and visitors can feel the splendacious architectural style and the lifestyle of the Ai-Shōnin of the past. There is also a souvenir store and a coffee shop adjacent to the residence.





The Historic Udatsu Area

[MAP-m]

 2, Ōaza-Wakimachi, Wakimachi, Mima-shi, Tokushima

At the top of "Udatsu" are roof tiles with an ogre's mask glaring down. Since it cost a considerable amount of money to build "Udatsu", people who could not success in life came to be called "udatsu-ga-agaranai" (those who can't build Udatsu).



The Historic Udatsu Area remaining in an indigo gathering place

In Minamimachi, Wakimachi, Mima-shi, which was responsible for the distribution of Japanese indigo, The Historic Udatsu Area built by Ai-Shōnin still remain. "Udatsu" were originally firewalls built to prevent the spread of fire from neighboring houses. However, it gradually took on a more decorative meaning to show off one's honor and wealth, and Ai-Shōnin began to compete with each other to build luxurious "Udatsu". The houses of wealthy merchants with "Udatsu" on their roofs reveal the prosperous lifestyles of the time.

Mima-shi



Mima Tourism Center [MAP-@1

- 💡 45-1, Ōaza-Wakimachi, Wakimachi, Mima-shi,
- ☎ 080-2976-5532



Mimakara

The raw material is "Mimakara green chili pepper", which has long been cultivated in Mima region. Extremely spicy condiment flavored with soy sauce, dried bonito flakes, etc.



Anabuki Sta [MAP-0]

🔾 5-1, Anabuki Iwade, Anabuki-chō, Mima-shi,

There is an information desk about Awa-The Home of Ai " on the premises

Awa-shi

Awa City Donari Historical Museum [MAP-®]

🔍 46-1, Donari maruyama, Donari-chō, Awa-shi, Tokushima



Local historical documents, including the Tezuka Family documents, which are constituent cultural properties, are exhibited

☎ 088-695-5038



Tarai Udon (noodles in a tub) A local dish of Donari-chō, Awa-shi, Freshly boiled noodles in a tub.

Japan Heritage Map of the Homeplace of Ai, Japanese indigo

Awa-shi

Awa City Donari Historical Museum (19)

The Historic Udatsu Area (1) (2) Family Residence 16 Mima Tourism Center

Mainakashima District 10 17 E

Mima-shi

Kawata

Yamase

The Wariishi Family Residence

The Ai-Yashiki of Suwa,

(B) Nishio - Awa-Kawashima

Nishi-Oe

Awa-Yamakawa

Yoshinogawa-shi

Yoshinogawa-shi



Nishioe Hachiman Shrine

155-1, Nishi-Oe Dannohara, Kamojima-chō, Yoshinogawa-shi, Tokushima

The guardian dogs, "*Ryōbu-Torii*" (two-part shrine gate), and arched bridge remind us of *Ai-Shōnin* who contributed to the development of the region.

Ume-shu(plum wine)

Misato District was the first district in Japan to be designated as a "special district for plum wine". The "ume-shu" (plum wine) is made from various local varieties of "ume" (plum) fruit.



Misato Commercial Market



463-3, Misato Touge, Yoshinogawa-shi, Tokushima

Please enjoy the superb products of Misato produced in the wonderful nature where fireflies inhabit.

Ishii-chō



The Tanaka Family Residence

705, Aihata Takabatake, Ishi-chō, Myozai-gun, Tokushima

Fuji-Yasai (wisteria colored vegetables)

Vegetables whose color is that of wisteria, the flower of Ishii Town.



German-style additive-free ham & sausage



The owner learned the production method in Germany, the homeplace of ham & sausage, to reproduce the authentic taste.

☎ 088-637-4567 (Natural Ham Craftsman Shop, LiebeFrau)

Kamiita-chō



WAZA NO YAKATA [MAP-16]

- 32-4, Izumidanihara Higashi, Kamiita-chō, Itano-gun, Tokushima



Dried Persimmon Chips

Dried persimmon chips made by low-temperature drying of persimmons produced in Kamiita-chō.

Itano-chō



"Bunka-no-Yakata" in Itano-chō [MAP-@]

- 13-1 Inubushi Higashidani. Itano-chō, Itano-gun, Tokushima
- ☎ 088-672-5888

Japanese indigo in Itano-chō is exhibited at the entrance of the facility.

net Tsukemono-Zamurai Itanosuke

Itano-chō's specialty
"pickles" produced by
the local Young
Entrepreneurs Group
of Chamber of Commerce and Industry.



Michi-no-Eki Itano



Opened in April 2021. In addition to direct sales shops and restaurants, a dog run and bicycle rental facilities are available.

39-5 Nakatesaki, Kawabata, Itano-chō Itano-gun, Tokushima

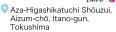
Aizumi-chō



"Ai-no-Yakata" Aizumi Town History Museum [мар-€]

- 172 Tokumei Maezunishi. Aizum-chō, Itano-gun, Tokushima
- **ក** 088-692-6317

Exhibition Room, Historic Site of Shōzui Castle Ruins [MAP-0]

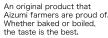




Shōzui is also known as the birthplace of Awa- ${\it Ai}$. You can learn about its history.

☎ 088-641-3466

Aizumi Green Onion



Tokushima Airport



☎ 088-637-3120 (Industrial Support Office, Construction Industry Division)

(Tokushima Awaodori Airport)

Itano-chō

Itano

Bunka-no-Yakata in Itano Town

Aizen-An and Statue of Kyūsuke Inubushi 9

(15) "WAZA NO YAK<mark>ATA"</mark>

Kamiita-chō

The Okumura 3
Family Residence

Ikenotani= Bando-

Shōzui Castle remains and *Shugo-Machi* Shōzui ruins

The Fujita Family Residence Shozui 🛱

(2) Kitajima-chō Town Library & Sosei Hall

Kitajima-chō

The Tanaka Family Residence

2 The Takechi Family Residence

Ko

Tokushima Prefectural Awa Jūrōbē Yashiki

The Yoshino River Tokushima Castle remains

Tokushima

dori Kaikan

Ishii-chō **Oezuka**

Ushijima ojima e Hachiman Shrine

Shimoura

Ishii

Aizumi-chō

Tokushima-shi

Kuramoto

Tokushima-shi



Tokushima Prefectural Awa Jūrōbē Yashiki

- **☎** 088-665-2202
- 184, Miyajima Motoura, Kawauchi-chō, Tokushima-shi, Tokushima



Taki-no-Yakimochi (baked rice cake)

Yakimochi (baked rice cake) offered by tea shops at Ootaki-san Jimyō-in temple, which is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Tokushima, a castle town that thrived on indigo.



Awaodori Kaikan [MAP-®]

- 2-20, Shinnmachibashi, Tokushima-shi, Tokushima
- ☎ 088-611-1611

Tokushima City Industrial Support Exchange Center

1F&9F Amico Building, 1-24, Motomachi, Tokushima-shi, Tokushima

Exhibits and Sells locally produced goods such as indigo-dyed products and woodworks.



Kitajima-chō



Kitajima-chō Town Library & Sosei Hall

- 91, Minamikoden, Shinkirai, Kitajima-chō, Itano-gun, Tokushima
- Historical documents and folk tools are displayed in the Cultural Resource Center.
- ☎ 088-698-1100

Sourmet Sudachi monaka

Monaka (bean-jam-filled wafers) made with sudachi (a type of citrus fruit) produced in Tokushima Prefecture.







kitajima'am

Chocolate-flavored sweets handmade from the local specialty, *Naruto-Kintoki* sweet

☎ 088-698-5279 (nakano farm)

Access to Tokushima

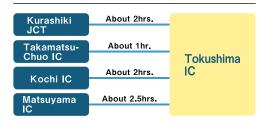
By Highway Bus



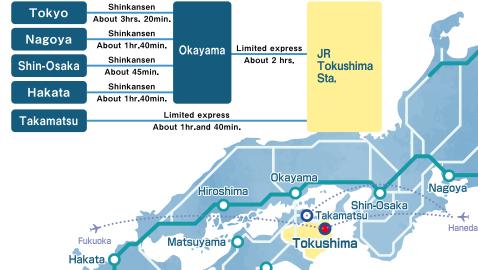
By Airplane



By Car



By Train



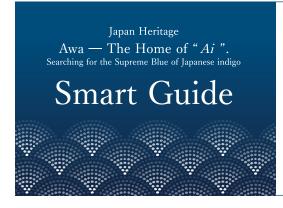
Kochi

Inquiries about constituent cultural properties, etc.

Kagoshima-

Chuo

- ●Lifelong Learning Division, Yoshinogawa Board of Education ------ ☎0883-22-2271
- ◆Community Learning Promotion Division, Mima City Board of Education ----- ☎0883-52-8011
- ●Social Education Section, Ishii Town Board of Education ----- ☎088-674-7505
- ◆Kitajima Town Board of Education ---------- **2**088-698-9812
- ●Social Education Division, Aizumi Town Board of Education ------ ☎088-637-3128
- ●Itano Town Board of Education -----
- ●Kamiita Town Board of Education -----



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Please use your smartphone or tablet to access.





Smart Guide TOP

Voice Guide TOP

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■ For inquiries about this pamphlet, please contact Promotion Council for "Ai no Furusato Awa(Awa-the home of Ai)" (Social Education Division, Aizumi Town Board of Education) TEL 088-637-3128 Produced and written by / Promotion Council for "Ai no Furusato Awa(Awa-the home of Ai)" Translated by Miyake Emi



