

# SADO ISLAND

Pure Japan

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# Welcome to Sado Island

With its stunning natural beauty, rich cultural traditions, and countless



Easily accessible by train and ferry from major international gateways such as Tokyo and Osaka, Sado is like a jewel in the Sea of Japan.

Thanks to thriving fishing and farming cultures, fresh local cuisine and sake are a speciality.

Many foreign visitors say that Sado offers the best of Japan, all within a perfect, compact size. For starters, Sado has a gracious climate, with four, wonderfully distinctive seasons.

A wide range of lodging (including hot spring inns, resorts and hotels) offers warm hospitality for every age and budget.





Two mountain ranges cradle a rich, fertile valley.  
Local festivals and performing arts events take place all year around.  
Sado is the only home in Japan of the endangered and cherished Toki (Japanese Crested Ibis).  
Sado's scenic coastal roads, with its beaches and tiny fishing villages, make touring by car or bicycle a memorable adventure.  
Perhaps most important of all, the friendly spirit of Sado Island's people will warm your heart. No matter how you choose to visit Sado, you will experience the essence of Japan.

Contents

- 1 Welcome to Sado Island
- 3 World-Class Cuisine
- 4 Spectacular Natural Beauty
- 5 Living Performing Arts Traditions
- 6 An Intriguing History
- 7 Attractions & Activities
- 9 Lodging
- 10 Planning a Visit





Japan is world famous for its cuisine and on Sado Island it is both local and fresh. With great pride, Sado's fishermen and small farmers provide seasonal delicacies all year round.



Yellowtail, abalone, crab, squid, shrimp, and oysters, to name a few, are the bountiful products of Sado's thriving fishing industry. On summer nights, you can see the lights of the fleet out at sea and anticipate delivery of the next catch.

Sado is also known for its delicious fruit: apple, pear, peach, grapes, and especially persimmon. Unusually sweet, Sado persimmon has no seeds, and is therefore prized throughout Japan. Dried and beautifully packaged, it makes a perfect gift to bring home.

A special variety of rice, Koshihikari, is nourished by fresh waters from the mountains. An important part of many meals on Sado and famous throughout Japan, this rice is revered for its quality and taste.

Cattle raised on the pastures of Mount Donden are known for producing excellent beef. And Sado's dairy cows yield especially rich and flavorful milk, one reason why Sado is home to the only cheese factory in the prefecture.

Other Sado specialities, such as fresh miso, shiitake mushrooms, soba (buckwheat noodles), and many varieties of edible sea vegetables create infinite possibilities for culinary adventure.

Some say it is worth a visit to Sado just to sample the gourmet cuisine at the island's many restaurants, inns and taverns. From noodle shops and sushi restaurants by the sea to private dining in your hotel room, Sado offers unique venues for every taste.

Because of its excellent rice and water, Sado is home to no fewer than six sake (rice wine) breweries. Crafted according to long-standing family traditions, Sado Island sake ranges from dry and refreshing to bold and flavorful. Several varieties have been chosen as the house sake by restaurants in major cities of the world, as well as by major airlines.



# Spectacular Natural Beauty



Sado is one of the most beautiful islands in Japan. With its northern mountain range (Osado), southern range (Kosado), and the beautiful Kuninaka Plains nestled in the middle, Sado offers a great diversity of landscapes to explore and enjoy.

The source of delicious oysters, and reflecting the grandeur of Mount Donden, Lake Kamo offers many opportunities for cycling, hiking and birdwatching.

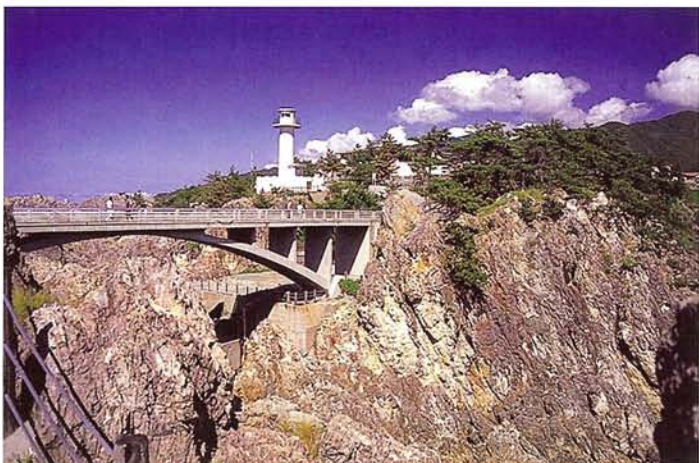
Sado's winding coastal roads make for excellent auto and cycle touring. Hidden coves, strangely shaped rocks, and lighthouses present new discoveries at every turn. In summer, Sado's beaches are perfect for relaxing and enjoying the warm, clear water.

An extensive network of trails on Sado's two mountain ranges are perfect for trekking. Walking the ridgelines, you can see great expanses of the island and the surrounding Sea of Japan.

Sado is famous for its wildflowers. They are not only abundant, but uniquely distributed due to nearby ocean currents. This creates several different collections of flowers, north and south.

Visitors travel from many parts of Japan just to see the amazing variety. From Japanese hydrangea and azalea, to camellia and wild yellow lily, Sado is a popular destination for wildflowers. The Sado Tourism Association offers special tours for flower viewing.

Sado also has deep, lush forests with rare stands of old cedars. Local, bilingual guides may be hired to explore these mysterious areas.



# Living Performing Arts Traditions



Sometimes called "Isle of Performing Arts", Sado is home to many living performing arts traditions. Unlike some other parts of Japan, where these traditions have faded, dance, song, theater and music are a part of everyday life on Sado.



Sado's unique history as a crossroads of cultural influences created a deep-seated appreciation among its residents. For example, the island has more Noh theaters per capita than any other region of Japan. There are currently more than 30 theaters, and an ongoing restoration project. In warm weather months, torch-lit performances of Noh, Kabuki and Kyogen are common in many areas of the island. Enjoy a picnic dinner in beautiful surroundings until firelight transforms the theater into a world of phantoms!

Three different forms of puppet shows – Sekkyo, Noroma, and Bunya – are still performed on Sado Island. With a history that goes back more than 250 years, these forms have been designated as important national intangible cultural assets.

Passed down through the generations, local festivals are held in many towns and villages in every season. These include lantern-lit Bon festivals, Onidaiko, street parades, and local celebrations to observe events such as planting and harvest times, or bringing well-being to families. Music, drumming, dancing, juggling, masks and elaborate costumes are often part of these events. The Deer, Demon and Lion dances are especially thrilling to watch.

Sado Okesa is one of Japan's most popular forms of folk music, dating back to sailors' drinking songs in the early days of Japan's maritime transport history. Various graceful dance forms often accompany Sado Okesa.

**Earth Celebration** Each August, Sado is home to its greatest festival of all: Earth Celebration. Musicians, fans and visitors come from all over the world to enjoy three days of exciting music, great food, and local cultural events, all against the backdrop of Sado's stunning natural beauty. For over twenty years, Earth Celebration has been hosted by the world famous drumming (taiko) and performance group, Kodo, who live in the southern part of Sado.

<http://www.kodo.or.jp/ec/>



Kodo also operates the Sado Island Taiko Centre, where visitors of all ages can attend presentations and workshops. Situated high on a hill, overlooking the sea, the Taiko Centre offers a fun, interactive way to experience this powerful tradition directly.

# An Intriguing History



Sado has a long, fascinating history as a center of traditional Japanese culture. For centuries, as a hub of maritime trading activities, Sado constantly absorbed fresh influences from different parts of Japan. This attracted many talented artists, performers, craftsmen, warriors, monks and other interesting people to the island, as it still does today.

The result is a local culture with an unusually strong and complex character that is utterly unique.

What is more, for a period of time Sado became home to aristocrats, intellectuals, and politicians who had been banished from the mainland by powerful regimes. This added even more talent to Sado's already vibrant local culture.

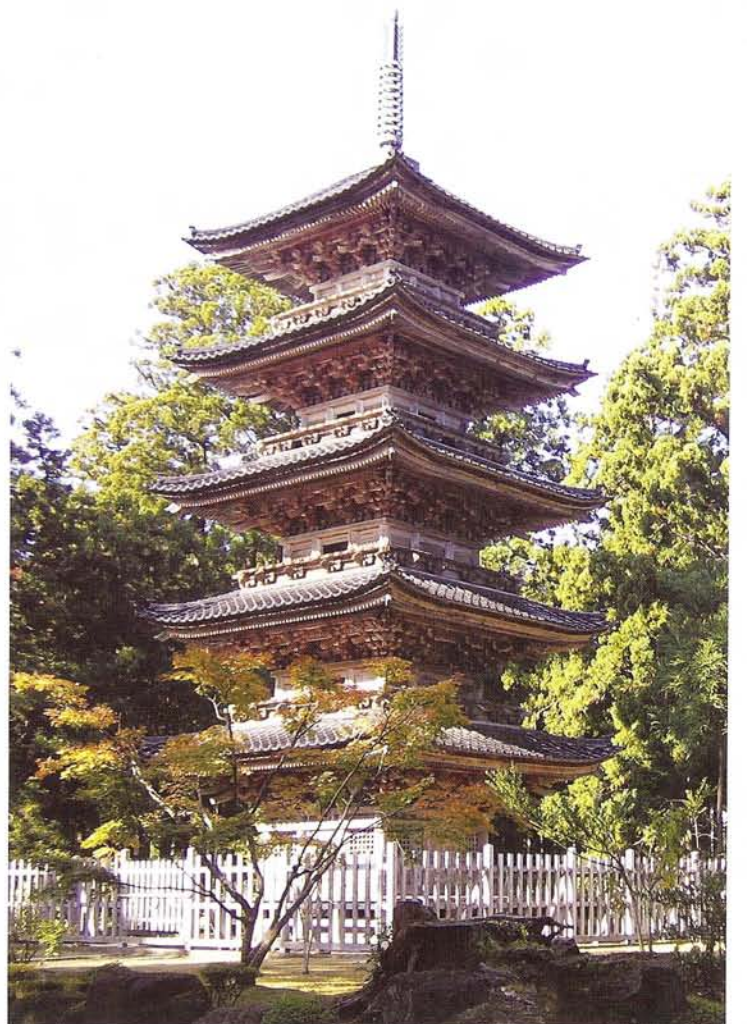
A wide variety of museums, temples and historic sights offer direct experience and insight into Sado's past.

Many of Sado's temples were established by important religious figures from diverse traditions. The five-storied pagoda of Myosenji, for example, was influenced by one of Sado's most famous residents, Nichiren. Myosenji is over 200 years old, and a breathtaking sight.

Touring Sado's famous Gold Mine, with its interactive exhibits, is a powerful experience.

Take a ride in one of the small, round wooden boats still used by local fishermen to harvest sea vegetables and shell fish.

Visiting the tiny fishing village of Shukenegi, with its remarkable museum and full sized merchant sailing vessel, will take you back in time.



# Attractions & Activities



Rich with atmosphere from a time long past, Sado's famous Gold Mine offers a window into one of the island's greatest treasures. During the Edo Period, Sado was the most productive gold and silver mines in Japan, and the culture that grew up alongside this astonishing venture has been re-created on the original site. Stroll down into the mine itself and see accurate replicas of real mining operations, complete with lifesized robots.



The people of Sado know the importance of conserving natural resources, while having fun at the same time. Rent one of our electric-assist bicycles and cruise for surprising distances without using a drop of fuel. These innovative bikes are simple to use, and great for exploring small regions and towns. Pick up one of our special cycling maps and enjoy a tour you will never forget.

The Toki Museum in Toki-no-Mori Park is located close to the Japanese Crested Ibis (toki) Conservation Center. Since their virtual extinction, toki have practically become national symbols in Japan, and everyone is hoping for their successful return to the wild.

Sado's museums, temples, shrines, parks, sake breweries, and friendly small towns offer many choices for exploring Japan's rich traditions.



On Sado, you will never run out of exciting things to see and do.



For touring larger portions of the island, rental cars are readily available. Pack a picnic and head out for the day. Small country roads lead to countless discoveries, and the Osado Skyline Drive takes you across the heights of Mt. Kinpoku. On Sado, it is easy to meander and explore at your leisure.

Sado Island's hot springs (onsen) are a great way to relax at the end of the day. With their different characters and compositions, Sado's thermal waters are cherished for their healing properties and for their ability to erase tension. From tiny, hidden onsen to elegant spa resorts with saunas, whirlpools and restaurants, hot water is a traditional specialty on Sado.



Shopping for gifts and souvenirs is a pleasure on Sado. Talented artisans and craftspeople produce work in pottery, textiles and bamboo, as well as fine art in diverse media.

Many Sado Island craftspeople offer hands-on workshops for all ages. Visit miso or salt makers, or try your hand at pottery. Stop by the Sado Island Taiko Centre and beat a big drum.

Other activities on Sado Island include fishing, hiking, swimming, diving, kayaking and much more.

# Lodging



Warm hospitality has a long tradition on Sado. From youth hostels, small inns (ryokan) and guests house to full service hotels and resort, Sado offers accommodation for every taste and budget.

If you have never ended the day with a soak in a hot springs and a multi-course meal served in your room, there is no better place to try it than Sado Island.



Sado also has many camp sites; a great way to experience Sado's natural beauty up close.



# Planning a Visit



Sado Island is easy to reach from nearly anywhere in Japan. Catch a train to Niigata Prefecture and one of its port towns—Niigata, Naoetsu or Teradomari. Then board a jet foil or car ferry and cross the sea to Sado.

Transportation on Sado is also easy and efficient. There are no trains on Sado, but rental cars, taxis, and buses can get you almost anywhere. (And don't forget those electric-assist bicycles!)



Timetables and other details are available from the Sado Tourism Association.

*For further information, please contact us directly.*

**Sado Tourism Association**  
2F Ryotsu Port, Terminal Bldg.  
53 Ryotsu-minato, Sado Niigata,  
952-0014 Japan

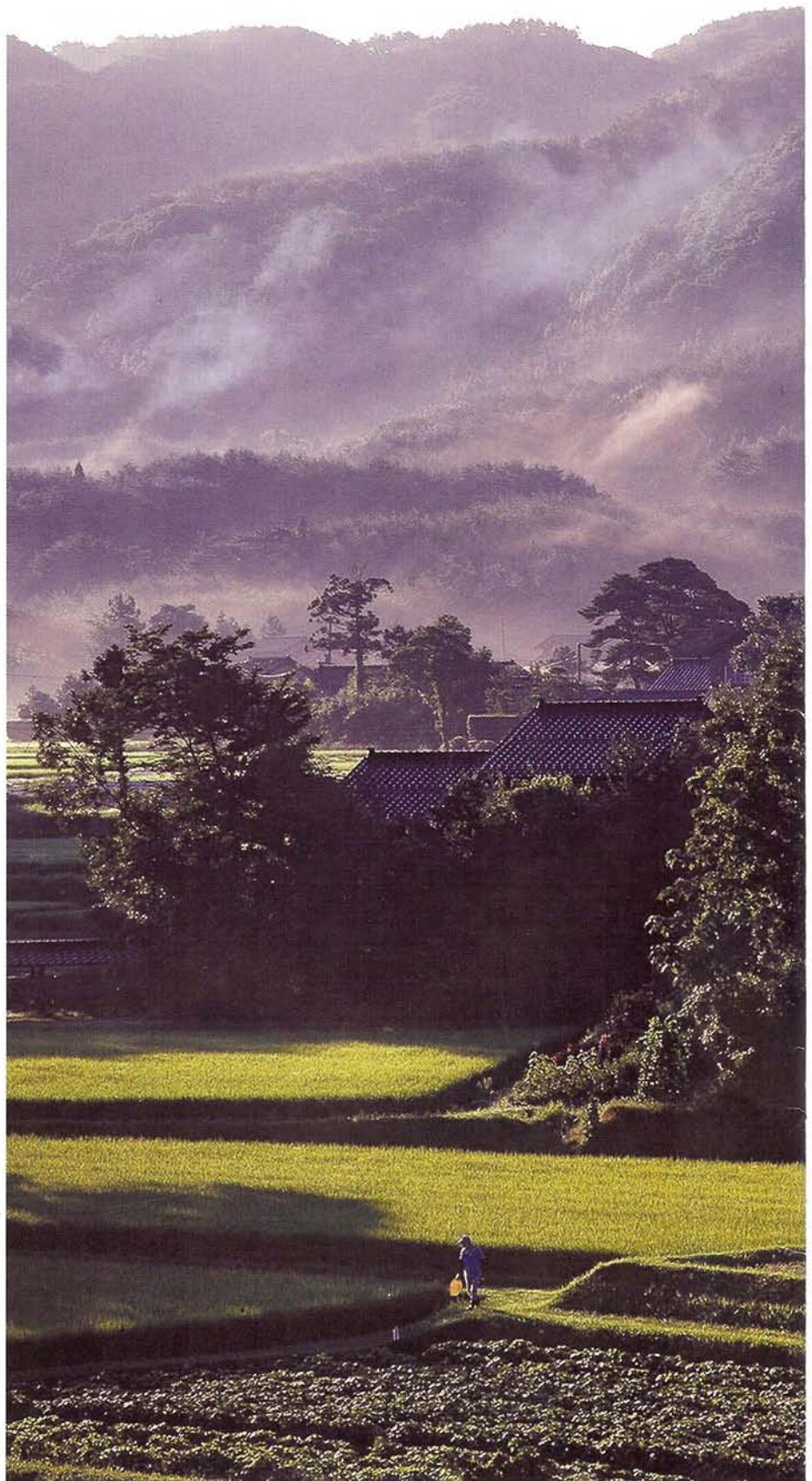
Phone 0259-27-5000

Fax 0259-23-5030

E-mail : [info@visitsado.com](mailto:info@visitsado.com)

[www.visitsado.com](http://www.visitsado.com)





佐渡観光協会  
**Sado Tourism Association**

2F Ryotsu Port. Terminal Bldg.  
353 Ryotsu-minato, Sado, Niigata,  
952-0014 Japan

Tel. 0259-27-5000  
Fax. 0259-23-5030

E-mail: [info@visitsado.com](mailto:info@visitsado.com)  
<http://www.visitsado.com>