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ISBN 978-1-74321-674-3

5 2 9 9 9



14TH EDITION

Published Sep 2015 USA \$29.99  
First Published Oct 1981 UK £18.99

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CHRIS ROWTHORN  
LONELY PLANET WRITER

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# Yakushima



southern Japan. Fit climbers should allow about seven hours return from **Yodogawa-tozanguchi** (淀川登山口) trailhead (1370m). Yodogawa-tozanguchi is about 1.5km (about 30 minutes) beyond the **Kigen-sugi bus stop**, served by two buses a day to/from Anbō (¥910, one hour). The buses do not give you sufficient time to complete the round-trip in a day – an early-morning taxi from Miyanoura (around ¥11,000) gives you time to make the second bus back to Anbō.

Finally, it's possible to make a traverse of Miyanoura-dake with a stop at Jōmon-sugi en route. Do not attempt this in a day; you'll have to spend the night in one of the *yama-goya* (mountain huts) above Jōmon-sugi. Typical routes are between Yodogawa and Arakawa or Yodogawa and Shiratani-unsuiyō. A full traverse of the island is described in Lonely Planet's *Hiking in Japan*.

If you're feeling a little less adventurous, a visit to **Yakusugi Land** (ヤクスギランド; admission ¥300; ☉9am-5pm) is a great way to see some *yakusugi* without a long trek into the forest. It offers shorter hiking courses over wooden boardwalks, and longer hikes deep into the ancient cedar forest. There are four buses a day to and from Anbō (¥720, 40 minutes).

## Onsen

Yakushima has several onsen (hot springs), from beautifully desolate seaside pools to upmarket hotel facilities. The seaside onsen listed here are *kon'yoku* onsen (mixed-sex baths) where swimsuits are not allowed; women traditionally wrap themselves in a thin towel for modesty.

## Hirauchi Kaichū Onsen

(平内海中温泉; admission ¥100; ☉24hr) Onsen lovers will be in heaven here. The outdoor baths are in the rocks by the sea and can only

# Yakushima

<b>☉ Top Sights</b>			
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		20 Naa Yuu Cafe .....	B4

be entered at or close to low tide. You can walk to the baths from the Kaichū Onsen bus stop, but the next stop, Nishikaikon, is actually closer. From Nishikaikon, walk downhill towards the sea for about 200m and take a right at the bottom of the hill.

## Yudomari Onsen

(湯泊温泉; admission ¥100; ☉24hr) This blissfully serene onsen can be entered at any tide. Get off at the Yudomari bus stop and take the road opposite the post office in the direction of the sea. Once you enter the village, the way is marked. It's a 300m walk and you pass a great banyan tree en route.

## Onoaida Onsen

(尾之間温泉; 136-2 Onoaida; admission ¥200; ☉7am-9.30pm May-Oct, to 9pm Nov-Apr, from noon Mon) In the village of Onoaida is a rustic indoor bathhouse that is divided by gender. Expect to rub shoulders with the village elders here. The water is naturally, divinely hot. It's about 350m uphill from the Onoaida Onsen bus stop.

## Sleeping

The most convenient place to be based is Miyanoura. You'll also find lodgings in larger villages and several bare-bones *yama-goya* in the mountains. In July and August and the spring Golden Week holiday, it's best to try to reserve ahead since places fill up early.

## Sankara Hotel & Spa

(HOTEL WWW) ☉0997-47-3488, toll-free 0800-800-6007; www.sankarahotel-spa.com; 553 Haginoue, Mugio; r per person with breakfast from ¥35,000; ☉☎☎) Overlooking Yakushima's southeast coast; this stunning collection of luxury villas blends ocean views with Balinese design

elements. Sustainable practices at Sankara include all water used on the property sourced from mountain runoff, and the restaurant utilising as much local and organic produce as possible, much of which is grown expressly for the hotel. Guests 15 years and older only.

The main restaurant's French fusion cuisine is created by Chef Takei Chiharu, who trained at several three-Michelin-star establishments in France. Staff can pick you up, but if you have transport, look for the green signs in English along the road between Hirano and Hara.

## MIYANOURA

**Miyanoura Portside Youth Hostel** (宮之浦ポートサイドユースホステル; ☎0997-49-1316; www.yakushima-yh.net; 278-2 Miyanoura; dm/d ¥3800/4400; ☉☎☎) This simple and clean youth hostel doesn't offer meals, but there are several good restaurants close by. It's a 10-minute walk from Miyanoura port – turn left off of the main port road and veer left after passing the portside park; it's about 100m further.

## Lodge Yaedake-sansō

(ロッジ八重岳山荘; ☎0997-42-1551; www1.ocn.ne.jp/~yakusima/lodge/index.html; Miyanoura; r per person with meals ¥8100; ☉) This secluded accommodation features Japanese- and Western-style rooms in rustic riverside cabins connected by wooden walkways. Soak up the beauty of your surroundings in the communal baths; children will enjoy splashing in the river. Meals served in the tatami dining room are balanced and exquisite. The lodge is located inland on the Miyanoura-gawa; staff can pick you up in Miyanoura.