

海女 Ama

Professional Woman Diver

Ama Divers

There are about 1,000 professional woman shellfish divers called "Ama" in the Ise-Shima area. They are vigorous working women of Ise-Shima and say cheerfully, "A full-fledged Ama diver has the guts to even feed her husband." Traditionally, they dive into the sea without diving equipment like oxygen tanks to catch shellfish and seaweed. Their fishing method has a long history and can be traced back through some ancient records. It is definitely part of the Japanese life culture. While working in the sea, they breathe in a unique way to avoid damage to their lungs. Their breathing method is called "Isobue" (literally "sea whistle"). It sounds really plaintive and was once selected as one of the 100 Sounds of Japan.



Come Across the Ocean, People and Smiles



Nowadays, Ama divers wear wetsuits.

Amagoya Experience

"Amagoya" literally means a hut where Ama divers take a rest and amuse themselves with their fellow divers after diving. Visitors can enjoy the fine flavor of char-grilled local fresh seafood while listening to the stories told by the vigorous and cheerful real Ama divers in their white diving suits.



Toshijima Amagoya

This Amagoya is located in Toshijima Island of Toba City. The islanders serve you with local food which they grill on their own. Besides, you can enjoy the stories told by real ama divers about fishing and themselves except in the summer season where they go fishing.

- Charge
Lunch 3,000 yen or above
- Inquiry
Shima-no-tabi-sha
(Phone) 0599-37-3339



Women can realize one of their dreams

"Ishigamisan"

Ama divers are motivated to engage in such hard and dangerous work because of their profound faith in "Ishigamisan", the goddess enshrined at the approach to Shinmei-jinja, a Shinto shrine located in Osatsu, Toba City. This goddess is famous for her mystical power to realize just one dream of each woman and therefore visited by a great number of people. Long ago, it used to be believed that there was a monster in the sea. Ama divers drew a symbol called "Domanseman" on their tools as a charm against evil. At the office of this shrine, visitors can buy talismans with that symbol printed on them.



■ Strap with a talisman of Ishigamisan
1,000 yen

■ Talisman of Ishigamisan
800 yen

■ Love fortune-telling of Ishigamisan
100 yen



Ishigamisan

Ama Diver Goods



These goods are available for sale at Osatsu Ama House Gozaya, etc.

Osatsu-kamado "Ozegosan" "Mae-no-hama"

This Amagoya stands on the quay with a beautiful ocean view. You may have a chance to see real Ama divers diving into the sea if you are lucky.

■ Charge
Amagoya Experience 2,000 yen
Lunch 3,500 yen

■ Inquiry
Osatsu Ama Culture Museum
(Osatsu Ama Culture Governing Council)
(Phone) 0599-33-7453

This roomy Amagoya is located near a tranquil fishing port and serves meals to its guests in a relaxing atmosphere.

■ Charge
Amagoya Experience 2,000 yen
Lunch 3,500 yen

■ Inquiry
Osatsu Ama Culture Museum
(Osatsu Ama Culture Governing Council)
(Phone) 0599-33-7453



Hyokichiya Hachiman-kamado

Hachiman-kamado is a real Amagoya for Kachido-ama divers who dive into the sea on their own without help of a boatman. The staff members, mostly those divers, entertain their guests with excellent teamwork.

■ Charge
"Meal" Experience 3,500 yen or above
"Teatime" Experience 2,000 yen or above

■ Inquiry
Hyokichiya
(Phone) 0599-33-6145



Azurihama Amagoya

An Amagoya is a place where Ama divers warm themselves and take a rest. The fresh seafood they grill on the Irori hearth is amazingly delicious. Once you come here, you can never forget the amusing and interesting conversation you have with them as well as the food they serve.

■ Charge
Food set 5,500 yen or above
+ Service charge for Ama divers 3,000 yen

■ Inquiry
Shima City Tourism Association Shima Branch
(Phone) 0599-85-1212



Ijika-amagoya

This Amagoya is located at a fishing port and used by real Ama divers. (Observation only)

海女
Ama



Sea-Folk Museum

(Uramura-cho, Toba City)

海の博物館

Umino Hakubutsukan

This beautiful museum, once selected as one of the 100 Public Buildings, the 100 Japanese Architectural Spaces and so on, exhibits and stores more than 50,000 materials related to its theme "Relations between Human Beings and the Sea."

■Admission Adult 800 yen
Student 400 yen

■Inquiry (Phone) 0599-32-6006



Osatsu Ama House Gozaya (Remodeled from an old private residence)

(Osatsu-cho, Toba City)

相差 古民家 海女の家 五左屋

Osatsu Kominka Amanoie Gozaya

This facility, which was remodeled from an 80-year-old private residence, is located at the approach to Shinmei-jinja, a Shinto shrine. Seafood caught by ama divers, "Doman-seman"-related items as charms against evil and the like are available for sale. Besides, you can take a break at the cafe inside it. Agar-agar made by ama divers only from the agar weeds caught in the sea of Osatsu enjoys great popularity.

■Admission Free

■Inquiry (Phone) 0599-33-6770



Ama Museum

(Shima-cho, Shima City)

海女資料館

Ama Shiryokan

This museum, located right next to the Amagoya Experience facilities, exhibits Ama divers' tools including the "Totokaka-bune" (literally "Husband and Wife's Boat") used by an Ama diver and her husband back in the Showa period (1926 - 1989). An Amagoya, which is a hut where Ama divers take a rest after diving, has been reproduced inside it and visitors can learn about their long history and profound culture. Anybody is welcome to come here.

■Admission Free

■Inquiry (Phone) 0599-85-1212



Mikimoto Pearl Island

(Toba, Toba City)

ミキモト真珠島 Mikimoto Shinjushima

This island is known as the place where Kokichi Mikimoto succeeded in pearl cultivation for the first time in the world. The diving performance of Ama divers in their traditional white diving suits called "Isogi" is a must-see. As a tourist spot, Mikimoto Pearl Island was awarded two stars by the Michelin Guide.

■Admission Adult 1,500 yen

Child 750 yen

■Inquiry (Phone) 0599-25-2028

Osatsu Ama Culture Museum

(Osatsu-cho, Toba City)

相差海女文化資料館

Osatsu Ama Bunka Shiryokan

This museum, located in Osatsu where the largest number of Ama divers live in the Ise-Shima area, conveys the culture and history of the divers as well as their hometown. Besides, it is a popular spot among those who enjoy a stroll and communication with people in Osatsu.

■Admission

Free

■Inquiry

(Phone) 0599-33-7453



Area Map of Ise, Toba and Shima



Ise Toba Shima Inbound Association
Office: Toba Chamber of Commerce and Industry