

# Welcome to Yoshino Omine Koya

## Pilgrimage to Yoshino/Omine & Koyasan: 1,300 Years of Sacred History

The sacred areas of "Yoshino and Omine" and "Koyasan" are all registered as part of the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage "Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range" area.

"Yoshino and Omine" is the center of "Shugendo," a religion of ascetic training that combines mountain worship with elements of Buddhism and other beliefs.

"Koyasan" is a sacred site of Shingon Buddhism founded by the visionary monk Kukai.

Both of these sites were frequently visited by pilgrims up until about 100 years ago, with many traces of their activities still remaining in the area to this day.

Let's go on a pilgrimage to the sacred sites of "Yoshino and Omine" and "Koyasan"—unique cultural landscapes with over 1,300 years of history.

Introduction movie



## Experience

Experience morning religious services, copying sutras, and meditation

You can experience the morning religious services held at Kinpusen-ji in Yoshinoyama and at the temple lodgings at Koyasan (guests only), training on Mt. Omine (only for men) copying sutras, meditation and more.



Morning religious services



Copying sutras



Meditation



Training on Mt. Omine



## Lodging

Stay in temples, Shugendo lodges, historic townhouses, and more

There are a variety of charming places where visitors can find overnight accommodation, including over 50 temple stay (shukubo) options in Koyasan, the so-called "Shugendo villages" of Dorogawa Onsen and Yoshinoyama, and townhouses in the 400-year-old castle town street of Gojo Shinmachi-dori, Gojo City.



4 Koya



3 Tenkawa (Dorogawa Onsen)



## Foods

Savor shojin ryori in Koyasan and other local delicacies

Experience shojin ryori Buddhist vegetarian cuisine when you stay the night at a temple in Koyasan. Delight in seasonal vegetables served at popular local restaurants in Gojo City. Local traditional cuisine of the wider region includes kaki no ha-zushi (persimmon leaf sushi), konnyaku, and goma dofu (sesame tofu).



4 Koya (Shojin ryori)



Kaki no ha-zushi



6 Gojo



## Main Sightseeing Spots

A famous cherry blossom spot that represents Japan

Over 1,300 years ago, the founder of Shugendo, En no Gyoja, carved the primary icon of worship in Shugendo, the deity Zao Gongen, out of cherry tree wood and enshrined it on Mt. Omine. Since then, cherry trees have been revered as sacred and planted continuously throughout centuries of time in the Yoshinoyama area by worshippers. The approximately 30,000 cherry trees covering the mountainside are symbols of faith, cherished and protected by local residents.

1 Yoshino



Yoshino

1,300 years of history as the birthplace of Shugendo

Mt. Omine is located along the Omine Okugake-michi Path, which connects Yoshinoyama to the Kumano Sanzan (three main Kumano shrines). Located at the summit is Omimesan-ji Temple, the designated Important Cultural Property with the highest altitude in Japan and a World Heritage Site. Nishi no Nozoki is famous as an ascetic training site on Mt. Omine where practitioners are suspended upside down over a sheer cliff face. Due to religious reasons, women are currently forbidden from entering the area of Mt. Omine.



3 Tenkawa



Omine

A sacred site of Shingon Buddhism

Koyasan, surrounded by tranquil nature at an altitude of about 800 meters, was founded by the monk Kukai in 816 CE. It has flourished as a center for Buddhist training and is home to 117 temples, including the head temple Kongobu-ji, the central temple complex of Danjogaran and the sacred grounds of Okunoin.

Koyasan has served as a place for training and prayer for visitors for over 1,200 years.



4 Koya



Koya