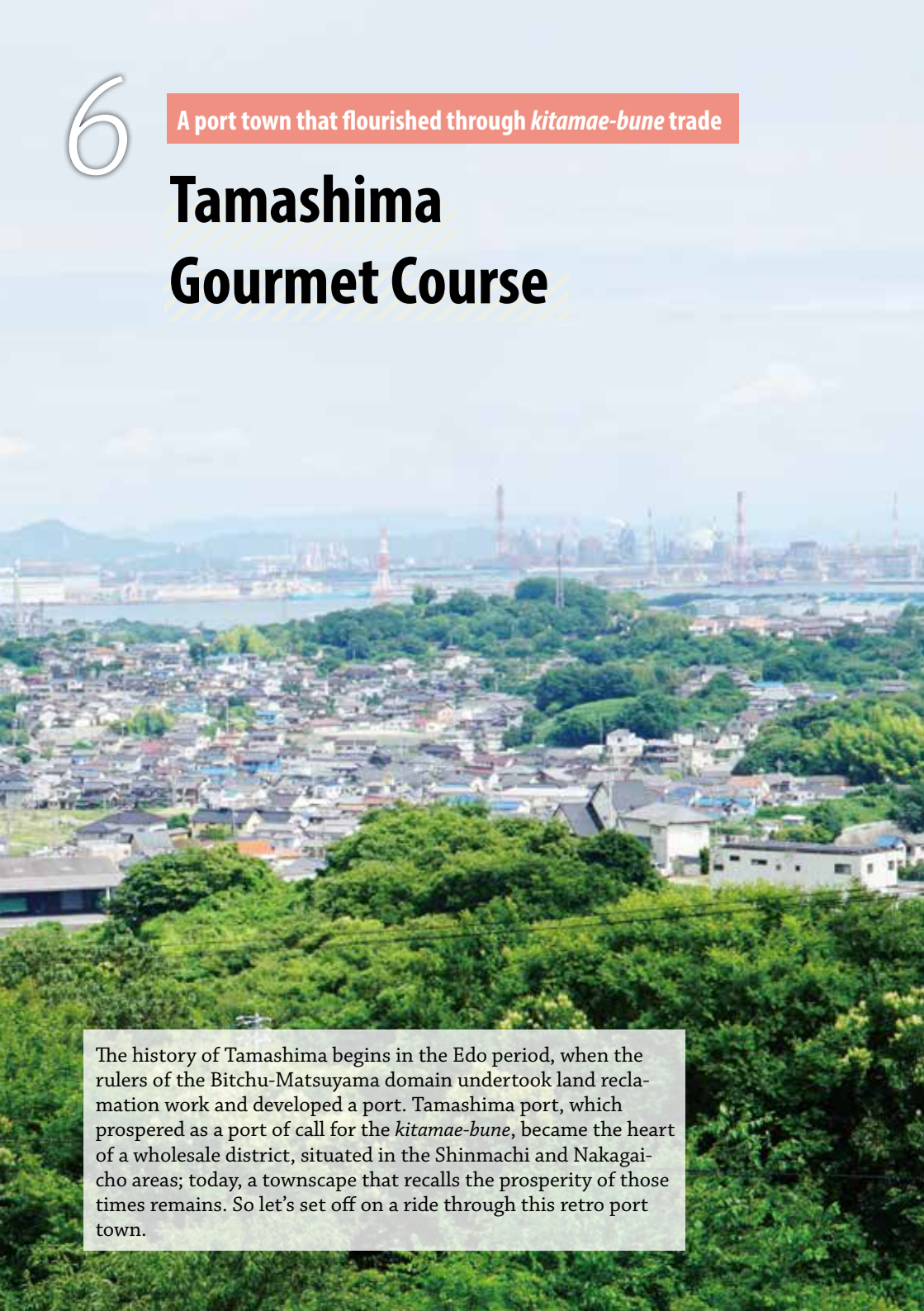


6

A port town that flourished through *kitamae-bune* trade

Tamashima Gourmet Course



The history of Tamashima begins in the Edo period, when the rulers of the Bitchu-Matsuyama domain undertook land reclamation work and developed a port. Tamashima port, which prospered as a port of call for the *kitamae-bune*, became the heart of a wholesale district, situated in the Shinmachi and Nakagai-cho areas; today, a townscape that recalls the prosperity of those times remains. So let's set off on a ride through this retro port town.



Tamashima Course



Start at the south exit of Shin-Kurashiki Station



Start your cycling tour of Tamashima here!

1 JR Shin-Kurashiki (Rent-A-Cycle)

Rent a bicycle from the Rent-A-Cycle counter at the Tourism Information center on the second floor of the station building.

Rent-A-Cycle Counter ☎086-526-8446
 ☎9:00-17:30 📅Year-end (Dec 29-Jan 3)
 🚲Standard bikes ¥300 (1 day), electric bikes ¥500 Rental period: 9:00-16:30 (rental service not available 12:00-13:00)



The Rent-A-Cycle service is available at the Tourism Information inside the station

Learn the history of Tamashima as a "port flowing with people and information"

2 Tamashima Citizens Exchange Center

On the first floor of the Kouryu Building you will find the History, Folk, and Maritime Exhibition Room, which houses a collection of important materials and resources about the history and folk culture of Tamashima as a place that has developed in harmony with the sea.

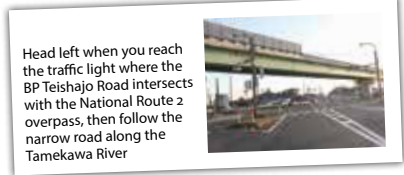
☎086-526-1400 ☎9:00-22:00 📅Fourth Monday of the month in May, Aug, Nov, Feb (if Monday is a national holiday, closed on Tuesdays instead). 🆓Free



Exhibits include models of *kitamae-bune* (also known as *sengoku-bune*) and *takase-bune* ships and picture scrolls showing views of Tamashima



Turn left at the third traffic lights along the wide road in front of the station (Hiroshima Bank will be on your left)



Head left when you reach the traffic light where the BP Teishajo Road intersects with the National Route 2 overpass, then follow the narrow road along the Tamekawa River



The center also has a cafe inside

A crow *tengu* on the roof tiles, overlooking the port town

3 Haguro Shrine

In 1658, when Mizunoya Katsutaka, lord of Bitchu Matsuyama domain, ordered land reclamation work to begin around Tamashima, he also ordered the construction of Haguro Shrine on what was then Amidasan Island, a small island in the Seto Inland Sea. The current main hall (*honden*) was rebuilt in 1845, followed by the worship hall (*heihaiden*) in 1852. An *odachi*, a great sword crafted and engraved by the swordsmith Henmi Yoshitaka, is enshrined here; it is a prefecturally designated Important Cultural Property.

☎086-522-2695 📅N/A 🆓Free



Crow *tengu*

The temple mascot, Haguron, greets you at the entrance

This mark indicates destinations that are Japan Heritage cultural properties.



The *kinako ohagi* are generously filled with red bean paste

4 Amato no Mise Yamato

Every single *ohagi* (sweet rice ball) on sale here is made by hand, freshly each morning, with 100% made-in-Japan ingredients, from the glutinous rice to the *kinako* (roasted soybean flour), to the Hokkaido-grown soybeans. These *ohagi* are distinctive for their natural sweetness. There are just two varieties on offer (each priced at ¥70 per ball), *anko* (red bean paste) and *kinako*, and if you head to the store just after opening time you can watch them being made. The store closes once the *ohagi* have sold out; on most days, this means the store has closed by midday.

☎086-522-5055 ☎9:00 until sold out 📅Wednesdays



Don't worry - the waiting time isn't too long even when a queue has formed.



Lodgings, office, and a factory stand side-by-side



A long-established company famous for its Tate Brand Sauce

5 Teshimaya

First opened in 1720 as a wholesaler of cotton and marine products, before switching to the production of soy sauce in the Meiji period. Come the Taisho period, the company also started to produce vinegar, then launched production in 1933 of what is now its main product, Tate Brand Sauce. The company store is located in an area that was at the very heart of Tamashima during its years of greatest prosperity. If the office is open, you can buy products and take a look at advertising signs, posters, and leaflets from years gone by.

☎086-522-2148 ☎8:30-17:00 📅Sundays, national holidays, second Saturday of each month



Focus

Tamashima Port and Shipping

Until the beginning of the Edo period, the areas of Funao, along the right bank of the western branch of the Takahashi River, Nagao, and the coast of Tamashima comprised a river delta and tideland area with many islands linked together. The reclamation of land from these shallows began in the Edo period, resulting in the development of a port in Tamashima. Goods landed at the port included dried sardines and boiled herring, both of which were used as fertilizer for cotton, while locally-grown cotton would be loaded onto ships alongside other goods including salt and iron. Soon, the streets of the port town were lined with some 43 wholesalers and more than 200 warehouses, and Tamashima was flourishing as a trading center of Bitchu cotton, dubbed the "Naniwa of the west" after the busy port in Osaka. According to the records of the Yunoki family, in the 7th year of the Anei era (1778), a total of 430 ships (both *kitamae-bune* and passenger ships) arrived in Tamashima, including 162 from Chikuzen, 119 from Sanuki, 93

from Banshu, 20 from Kaga, and 10 from Suo.

Haguro Shrine, which looks down over the port town, was built on the orders of Mizunoya Katsutaka, lord of the Bitchu Matsuyama domain, in order to pray for the success of the land reclamation project. The *tamagaki* fence posts surrounding the shrine are engraved with many of the places from where traders came: Hakodate, Akita, Noto Wajima, Kyoto, Osaka, Kaga, Ashu, Unshu, Bingo, Onomichi, Geishu Otake, and Bakan. These were dedicated to the shrine by the merchants and *kitamae-bune* ship owners who traded with Tamashima; hanging within the shrine are many *ema* (votive pictures) asking for safe sea passage. The *kitamae-bune* were ships that travelled along the western sea route between Hokkaido and Osaka during the Edo and Meiji periods. They would load up with herring, salmon, and *kombu* (kelp) in Hokkaido, trading those goods at each port of call along the Nihonkai coast and Seto Inland Sea. These "floating trading houses" played a pivotal role in shipping during this period.



VIEW POINT!

A gently swaying commuter bridge serving local residents

6 Steel Drum Bridge

Built in 1980 as a floating bridge to connect the 1-chome and 2-chome areas of Tamashima along north to south, this bridge uses steel drums instead of piers. It is known affectionately as Steel Drum Bridge. Here you'll see local residents strolling leisurely across the bridge as well as children crossing on their bicycles.

Opposite Kurashiki City Tamashima Library



Encounter the riverside district running along the banks of Tamekawa River

8 Tamashima Port Bridge Plaza

Next to the Tamekawa River Draining Pumping Center, built to resemble a *shirakabe* white-walled warehouse, stands the new port, where sea water runs into the Tamekawa River. That's why, depending on the season, you might find local people fishing for Japanese sardinella here. The old port lock, which was one of the locations for the feature film *ALWAYS: Sunset on Third Street*, became dilapidated and was removed. There is, however, a monument made with some of the old parts of the lock now standing in the park developed near the entrance to the Torimachi *shotengai*.



Take a short break while admiring the riverside view



The oldest *shotengai* in Tamashima running along a former National Route

7 Torimachi Shotengai

This *shotengai* (covered shopping street) is unusual in that it runs along a former National Route, and is home to a number of well-known stores and confectionary shops, including some that have been open for more than a century. The entire street is enveloped in a retro atmosphere recalling the days of the Showa and Taisho periods.

☎Varies by store (many stores closed on Thursdays)



Walk 1 or 2 minutes from the Tamekawa River Drainage Pumping Center and you'll find the only manhole cover in Tamashima to be part of the national "Manhole Card" project, namely multiple series of collectible cards featuring decorated manhole covers from around Japan; have fun searching the streets for this colorful cover.



A true taste of Showa, unchanged since shop opening

9 Olympic Shokai

These *fufuyaki*, a type of grilled and filled pancake, are popular for the soft and fluffy pancake texture and the subtle sweetness of the *an* (bean paste) filling. Choose from *azuki-an* (red bean paste) or *uguisu-an* (green pea paste) fillings; each type is ¥100 a piece. The store is now run by a third-generation owner who is committed to continuing the authentic Showa taste, unchanged since the business began in 1933.

☎086-522-2511 ☎10:00-18:00 ☒Thursdays



Chuka Soba Mizukawa

The quaint décor of this restaurant is a match for the converted warehouse in which it is housed. The *chuka* soba (Chinese-style buckwheat noodles) is the go-to item on the restaurant menu.

☎086-527-6700 ☎11:00-15:00 (last orders 14:30), 18:00-21:00 (last orders 20:30) ☒Sundays



Tamashima Three Top Old & New Gourmet Drop-in Spots

Toita Takoyaki-ten

Rich and creamy *takoyaki* (grilled octopus cooked in batter) is soul food for Tamashima locals. Just ¥150 for 8 pieces!

☎086-526-3356 ☎10:00-17:00 ☒Mondays, Thursdays, and one Sunday per month

GELATO OBLATE.

The owner of this gelateria, whose parents ran a dairy shop, trained in Florence, Italy, before opening in Tamashima in 2018.

☎090-4806-8753 ☎11:00-18:00 *Closes at 17:30 in winter ☒Mondays, Tuesdays *Open on national holidays



A long-established *wagashiya* trading for over 130 years

10 Shotoen

This *wagashiya* (traditional Japanese confectionery store) was opened in 1888 by first generation owner and tea ceremony aficionado Kameyama Yoshitaro, who demanded his confectioners make “sweets to treat guests”. Each subsequent owner has inherited Yoshitaro’s passion for confectionery, and the store holds around 50 tea ceremonies a year.

☎086-526-7655 🕒8:30-18:00
📌Open year-round except for New Year (1-2 Jan)



Jonamagashi (fresh and moist sweets of the highest quality) to celebrate the season

The store’s famous *sengoku-bune* (wooden freight ship) confection resembles a ship’s sail to symbolize the prosperity of Tamashima as a port town



Nationally Registered Tangible Cultural Property

11 Former Yunoki Residence (Saiso-tei)

This building is said to have been built during the Tenmei era (1781-1789) of the Edo period by the Yunoki family, who served the lord of the Bitchu-Matsuyama domain, to house the lord whenever required. As such, the building is as elegant as one would expect for an abode of a feudal lord, with exquisite garden views and exceptional taste. This is also where, towards the end of the feudal period, a retainer named Kumata Ataka committed ritual suicide to absolve the entire domain of its enemy status.

☎086-522-0151 🕒9:00-17:00 📌Mondays (excluding national holidays, closed Tuesday instead), year-end (Dec 28-Jan 4) 🆓Free



Guiding ships along a safe route to Tamashima Port

12 Old Tamashima Lighthouse (Old Tamashima Port)

This old lighthouse started lighting the way for ships sailing in between Mount Hachiman in Tamashima-Kashiwajima and Tamashima Port in 1951. It carried out its role for 42 years, before being decommissioned and the upper part of its structure being moved to a corner of Kawasaki Minato Park for conservation. This is a popular walking route for local people.



A warehouse with a stunning *namakokabe* interior that exemplifies how wholesalers prospered

13 Saigokuya Hall

Now available for hire as a multi-purpose space, this restored building, which previously housed a shipping agent during the most prosperous period for the Shinmachi wholesale district, retains the imposing structure and high ceilings of the original *shirakabe* white-walled warehouse. The interior of the warehouse, which features the black and white geometry of the *namakokabe* wall finish from ceiling to floor, is truly masterful.

☎086-525-5711 🕒9:00-19:00 (reservations required) 📌Please enquire 🏠From ¥5,250 (please enquire) / visit only (please enquire)

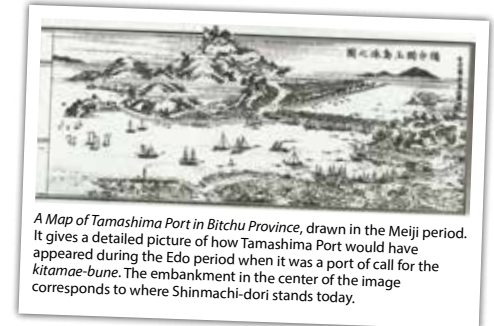


Merchant houses and warehouses that still tell of port town prosperity

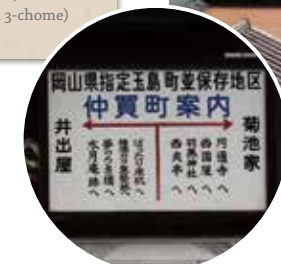
14 Tamashima Townscape Preservation District

The Tamashima Townscape Preservation District, made up primarily of the Shinmachi, Nakagaicho, and Yaidecho areas, was designated as a townscape preservation district by Okayama Prefecture in 1995. Within the district are many merchant houses and warehouses with traditional *nuriyazukuri* mud daub coating and *honkawarabuki* tiled roofs that also retain such distinctive architectural features as: *mushiko-mado* latticed windows, *koshi* latticework, *shikkui-kabe* lime plastering, and *namakokabe* wall finishes. The townscape is the perfect place to cast your mind back to Tamashima at the height of its prosperity.

• Shinmachi (part of Chuo-cho 1-chome, Tamashima, Kurashiki City), Nakagaicho (part of Agasaki, Tamashima), Yaidecho (part of Tamashima 3-chome)



A Map of Tamashima Port in Bitchu Province, drawn in the Meiji period. It gives a detailed picture of how Tamashima Port would have appeared during the Edo period when it was a port of call for the *kitamae-bune*. The embankment in the center of the image corresponds to where Shinmachi-dori stands today.



The townscape as seen along Shinmachi-dori from Haguro Shrine

Nakagai in Japanese means “brokerage”. As the name suggests, this area used to be where brokers gathered. Today it is home to many traditional local industries, including miso, soy sauce, and sake brewers.

This mark indicates destinations that are Japan Heritage cultural properties.

Tamashima Course

Two business days are enough to make this bakery healthy miso bread famous

15 Artefato

This bakery might only be open on Fridays and Saturdays, but it has plenty of fans thanks to its owner-baked bread. Its renowned *miso-pan* (miso bread / miso bakes), crafted with miso (fermented soy beans) made by Tamashima Miso Shoyu, are particularly addictive when filled with the bakery's home-made cream. You can also enjoy the bakery's very own blend of coffee once the lunch rush is over.

☎086-525-5711 🕒10:00-18:00 📅Sundays through Thursdays



Indulge in the luxury of a meal served in a secluded private room

16 Bingoya

This scenic, secluded *ryokan* (traditional hotel), surrounded by *ubame* oak trees and boasting a view overlooking Tamashima Bay, has been welcoming visitors to Tamashima since 1914. Each of the rooms, which are scattered across the mountain slopes, has a distinct style and offers a private space where you can enjoy lovingly prepared dishes that showcase the bounty of the Seto Inland Sea.

☎086-522-3432 🕒11:30-14:30 (last orders 13:45), 17:30-21:00 📅Irregular closings; reservations required for dining and accommodation; please enquire about garden access only



Telling the history of a wholesaler teeming with brokers

17 Tamashima Miso Shoyu

This company has been in operation since the mid-Edo period and was established in its current form as a specialist seller of miso (fermented soy beans) and *shoyu* (soy sauce) in 1920. Today, the sixth generation owner, Nakano Shunichi, focuses on telling visitors about the history of Nakagaicho as a wholesaler district, while also ensuring that the long-standing taste of his miso and *shoyu* remains unchanged.

☎086-522-3418 🕒9:00-17:00 📅Saturdays, Sundays, national holidays *Visits must be booked in advance



A Kurashiki brewery where sake is made to the strains of Mozart

18 Kikuchi Brewery

Kikuchi Brewery, established in 1878, is known as the home of the Sanzen label of local Kurashiki sake. The background music at the brewery is provided by Mozart; against the strains of his music, the brewers use the best of Okayama-grown brands of brewers' rice, such as Omachi and Asahi, to brew sake that is not only renowned in Japan but is lauded in overseas tasting competitions as well.

☎086-522-5145 🕒10:00-16:00 (closed from 12:00-13:00) 📅Saturdays, Sundays, national holidays



This spot, along the Ryokan Taigu trail, is famous for its gorgeous fall leaves

19 Entsu-ji Temple & Entsu-ji Temple Park

Entsu-ji Temple, of the Soto school of Buddhism, is where the monk-poet High Priest Ryokan-san, trained during his youth. Take a short walk from the solemn atmosphere of the rock garden and reed roofed-buildings to discover Entsu-ji Temple Park. The park is particularly busy during spring and fall, thanks respectively to its beautiful cherry blossom and fall foliage.

☎086-522-2444 (Entsu-ji Temple) *If coming by bicycle please be aware that the approach to the temple is along a long, ascending path



VIEW POINT!



The view from Entsu-ji Temple looking out across the whole of the Tamashima townscape



The rock garden