

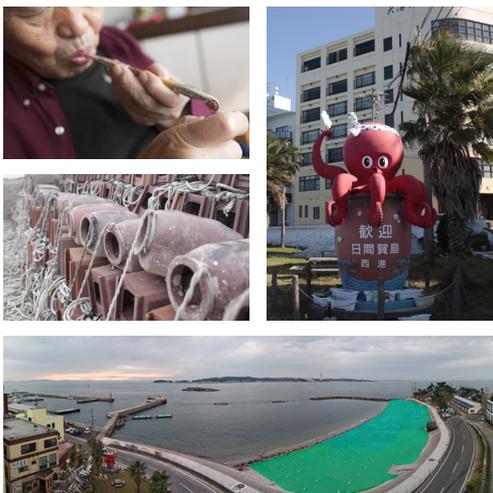
Let yourself flourish on Aichi's relaxing islands.

Crossing waters to Himakajima

Our late fall visit is the chance to channel your inner Wim Hof and jump in the ever inviting ocean. Well, it's not that chilly, but fall to winter does require Sunset Beach to be preserved by a green cover. If this were summer we'd likely witness dolphins playing. Weekends still bring crowds regardless, especially now, it's fugu season although octopus and shirasu are island favorites.

Arrival at either the West or East ports greets with cheery faces and specialty shops selling local treats. Stroll a bit, let your ears bath in a distinct dialect that, like the waters in the bay, sees cultural styles and speaking ways ebb with the tides. You've entered the playful world of Himakajima. Amidst different roles over the centuries, amazing seafood has remained a keystone to the community. Small fish and shellfish thrive in the aquatic rocks that form this island. The main trades are catching the seafood and preparing the catch for consumption. Today two areas secure distinct vessels at the ready. Long ago shark was the main catch. Now there are ships to free dive for crabs and clams, and those for catching fish, particularly shirasu. Usually, for fishing, three ships set out with five to seven fishermen aboard. Two ships work the nets together while the third ices and prepares the catch.

Unquestionably the octopus is the island mascot. Top-ranked as the tastiest in Japan, here octopuses can be caught and eaten year-round. You can't miss octopi drying on lines or netted cages, decorating manhole covers, tako-manju, the landmark Nisshi statue and even the police station decorated to resemble one. Visit one of the many local shops for a meal, attempt to catch your own, or bring back edible souvenirs of the local ocean delicacies.



Visit www.himaka.net for more info.



● GET THERE

From the peninsula there are two ports, Morozaki Port Ferry Terminal and Kowa Port. Check port schedule to find the time best for you.

● DON'T MISS

Shinojima has an epic sunset looking out into Mikawa Bay from an island hillside. Gaze into Mikawa Bay while relaxing on an almost private beach. Himakajima hilltop's "Heidi's Swing" looking out to sea is an Instagrammers dream. On both islands, taste the freshest torafugu, shirasu, tako and other ocean delicacies home to this region.



● BRING HOME

Share some of the islands with others. Stock up on yakinori (local roasted seaweed), himono (dried seafood), ebi senbei (prawn crackers), craft beer, ichigo-daifuku (strawberry mochi cake), and of course tako-manju (cakes shaped like Himakajima's mascot).



WHERE TO EAT

Barca

📍 Odochi-25 Himakajima, Minamichita, Chita District, Aichi 470-3504, Japan

☎ +81 569-68-2895

🌐 marukou-himaka.co.jp/barca_food/

Expect chill island vibes here. Barca brings a sleek Mediterranean feel just steps from the high-speed boat landing at Higashi Port. Order up a regional sake and shake up your taste buds. You can ask for recommendations, but seeing as this island is famous for octopus, fugu and shirasu, we say put that in your mouth. Lean traditional, order a shirasu don, tako-meshi octopus rice or try their bold fusion of local ingredients soaked in olive oil and served in a sizzling cast-iron skillet. Did we mention their killer sambal?



WHERE TO BUY FISH

Suzuen Fish Market

📍 Araiama-7 Himakajima, Minamichita, Chita District, Aichi 470-3504, Japan

☎ +81 0569-68-9110

🌐 www.suzuen.com

Old-time fishmongers are on hand to help you select some of the fresh local catch for your beach BBQ. They have a vast selection of sea breams, big clams, ise ebi, flounder, various shellfish and the perilous fugu.



WHERE TO STAY

Taikaro

📍 Araiama-40 Himakajima, Minamichita, Chita District, Aichi 470-3504, Japan

☎ +81 569-68-2144

🌐 taikarou.jp

This centrally located ryokan is a two-minute walk from the pier through numerous popular shops. Score one of Taikairou's Sunset Beach facing rooms, preferably traditional Japanese style with tatami mats. There also two Western-style rooms if you prefer. Taste the blessings of Himakajima here with their kaiseki meals of locally sourced seafood. No visit to a Japanese ryokan is complete without taking full advantage of their depth of services. Here they have an epic top floor public bath. How often can you soak in the sunset while literally bathing?

