Kochi Prefecture is blessed with beautiful and abundant nature under a shining sun such as the coastline with the Kuroshio Current (Japan Current), clear rivers such as Shimanto River and deep green forests. It has a history and environment which produced many pioneers and great men such as Sakamoto Ryoma. Kochi's free and daring characteristics creates generous yet deeply strong residents called "Igossu" or "Hachiking," and the wisdom and activity of the people of Kochi, who are full of ideas, gave birth to special gardening crops and industrial technologies. Also, the unique regional culture represented by "Yosakoi Festival" has been developed.
**Spring**

In Kochi, there are cherry blossoms that bloom the earliest in Japan. How about experiencing the most comfortable season of the year in Kochi earlier than anywhere else in Japan after the winter cold has loosened its grip?

**Summer**

Summer is the most exciting season in Kochi. The streets are filled with the power of Yosakoi Festival dancers. You will surely love the summer when Kochi as a whole becomes so lively.
Autumn, when the summer heat has relented and the mountains are ablaze with beautiful colors, is when abundant seasonal ingredients become available in the prefecture. Kochi, which has won first place in several questionnaire surveys on which prefecture has the most delicious local food in Japan, is a perfect place for you to enjoy local cuisine and scenery.

Winter comes around even in Kochi which is located in the southern part of Japan. In the winter, water and air become perfectly clear while the ocean, rivers and skies turn blue and beautiful. Kochi is a perfect place for those people who want to see snow and frozen waterfalls but do not like the intense cold weather of a snowy country.
Kochi, which is situated in southern Shikoku and faces the Pacific Ocean, boasts spectacular nature, is relatively warm in winter, and is surrounded by mountains. Mountains, rivers and the sea are located in a relatively small area. You can feel and enjoy the passing of the four seasons when you see changes in the landscapes in Kochi, such as cherry blossoms in spring, the azure ocean in summer, tinted leaves in autumn and snowy landscapes in winter.

A divine pet

### Sea of clouds

A sea of clouds is a natural phenomenon in which fog and a bank of clouds form across a wide area, mainly on mountains. The phenomenon is called because the mountain appears as if they are all in a sea of clouds. You can see a stunning scenery of sea of clouds from the observation deck. The sea of clouds condition can change from day to day, therefore, you need to check the weather forecast before you make your plan.

A cave called Ryuga Cave, which is located in the town of Shikoku, is known for its natural beauty. The cave is painted with natural light and offers a unique experience to visitors.

### Icefall

Icefall is a natural phenomenon that occurs in winter. It is a frozen waterfall that forms when water from a meltwater stream freezes. Icefall is usually created in a series of cycles and can be up to 30 meters in length.

### “Hiburi-ryo”

“Hiburi-ryo” is a traditional fishing method in Kochi in which fishermen hit the surface of a river with rocks under torchlight, surprise the fish, and chase them into a net set up in the river. Torch flames glowing in the darkness are reflected on the surface of the river during the fishing. Such a summer feature can be seen in the Shimanto River, known as Japan’s last remaining impetuous stream, and the Nyodo River, among other rivers in Kochi.

Kochi has been called “Tosa” since ancient times. The name is said to date back to an ancient myth about how the province was formed. In the myth, which is how Kochi was called Tosa-no-Ashi, Takeyamahiko was described as a yoroi province. The Choshu clan, unified Tosa, but Yamashita Katsumoto became the lord of Tosa in 1601 after the Choshu clan was defeated in the 1600 Battle of Sekigahara. Thus, Katsumoto became the new lord of Tosa. The lord of Tosa during the Edo period was based in Kochi. At the end of the Tokugawa shogunate in the late 19th century, many reform-minded people who played a key role in overthrowing the government appeared in Tosa. They included Sakamoto Ryoma, who is particularly popular with many people throughout the country. Since then, numerous great figures, such as thinkers, businessmen and scholars, have hailed from Tosa.

### Shikoku Henro

(Pilgrimage to 88 sacred places)

Keiko Danilo, a Buddhist monk, is known to have traveled in a Sensei’s blue pod set up by Japanese more than 1,500 years ago. His journey is known as “Henro” or pilgrimage to 88 sacred places. Henro is a traditional Japanese religious practice that involves traveling to sacred places in Japan. Henro is considered a spiritual journey, and the goal is not to reach the destination but to find spiritual growth along the way.

### Kochi Castle

Fifteen structures at Kochi Castle, including its tower and the Otomo main gate, have been designated by the national government as important cultural properties. The castle was originally built in 1631 on the order of Yamauchi Katsumoto, lord of the Tosa domain, but was burned down in a massive fire in 1727. The current castle tower was rebuilt in 1748. Kochi Castle is Japan’s only castle where all the structures constituting its main building have been preserved. Since the castle’s structures are compactly situated, you can see its most important parts in a short period of time. Its tower is one of the 12 Castle Keeps that are still preserved in Japan. Kochi Castle is known as a popular photo spot because it is a unique site - even in Japan - where you can capture both its Otomo and its tower in a single shot.

http://visitkechijapan.com/things_to_do/nature

http://visitkechijapan.com/things_to_do/history
Tourist Attractions

There are a variety of cultural traditions that have been nurtured in Kochi over a long period of history, including “Tosa washi” - traditional handmade Japanese paper, historical townscape such as Kochi Castle, old sake breweries, traditional markets and railways are well preserved. These spots are popular with many local residents and not just because of their value as historical legacies but also as symbols of their hometowns. The prefecture is dotted with hot springs where you can refresh yourself both physically and mentally while visiting these tourist spots.

Events

Kochi holds a wide variety of festivals and events. They include the Yosakoi Festival, an energetic fiesta which draws Japanese and foreign dancers alike, and local festivals which are hundreds of years old. You will never be far from watching them, so please enjoy them if your itinerary enables you to visit one of these festivals.

Hot Springs

Kochi has many hot-spring baths, and is seen to be suitable for a variety of water quality. Hot springs are popular not only because their ingredients are effective for health but also because their therapeutic effects help you relax. Just from getting cold, you will feel relaxed both physically and mentally after taking a hot-spring bath. Why don’t you visit many of Kochi’s hot springs with different water quality while driving around Kochi?

Streets of Kiragawa

Kiragawa used to greatly prosper as a shipping port of “Tosa washi” (paper) from its high-quality clays and its rivers. It was protected from strong rain and floods by using Tosa paper and walls. It is a unique scenery.

Hirome Market

A gathering of a variety of more than 60 shops with distinctive traits, such as restaurants where you can enjoy the tastes of Tosa, finely fish shops and unique miscellaneous shops. It's atmosphere is more like a "food stand" crowded with local people than it is like a market.

Ekin Festival

The Ekin Festival is held only in July but the Ekin Museum in the town greets visitors all year round.
Food Culture

Katsuo no Tatak (seared bonito)

Bonito, also known as “seared bonito,” is a type of fish that is a part of the Scombridae family and is known for its delicious flavor and tender texture. It is often used in traditional Japanese cuisine and is known for its umami flavor. Bonito is commonly consumed in various dishes, such as in donburi (rice bowls), soups, and as a topping for sushi and sashimi.

Kinmedai (alfonsine)

“Kinmedai” is a type of fish that is known for its rich, umami flavor. It is a type of fish that is often found in the waters of the western Pacific Ocean, and is known for its ability to withstand extreme temperatures. Kinmedai is a popular fish in Japanese cuisine and is often used in soups, salads, and as a topping for sushi and sashimi.

Wild vegetables

Apart from fish and meat, the list of local delicacies, the wild vegetables are too good to miss. They are produced in forests. Of all the prefectures in Japan, Kochi boasts the highest ratio of forests. Among the wild vegetables are “shibazuke” bamboo shoots that are unique to Kochi and available only for about a month from mid-October, and “tadpole” (Japanese knotweed) that is available between April and May and popular for its crisp and crunchy texture, as well as “sawara” (red fox) and “udo” (a sort of wild asparagus). Various mountain vegetables in season, even though they may not look gorgeous, can be made into delicious food items, such as stir-fried dishes, tempura, rice and vegetable sushis.

Sake (rice wine)

Locally brewed brands of sake are praised for their dryness with smoothness in the throat and they go very well with local cuisine using fresh foodstuffs from the sea and mountains in Kochi. They do not adversely affect or disturb the taste buds, yet they help improve the quality and taste of foodstuffs. The smooth palate makes it possible for Kochi people to drink a lot of sake. The local culture of enjoying drinking has been nurtured in Kochi and there is a drinking party or banquet with a game called “hakusak,” which is unique to Kochi. “Hakusak” is a sort of sake cup. This is a simple party game in which people shake a dice-like object with images of strange-shaped cups. People at the party have to drink sake using the sake cup suggested by the dice spot. But the cup is not stable and has a hole in it. Therefore, one cannot put it on the table until it is emptied.

Akaushi (Tosa red cow)

The Tosa red cow is a rare variety of brown-colored cattle, accounting for only 0.1% of all “wagyu” beef cattle in Japan. Its key feature is the deliciousness of its red meat - marbled beef that contains refined intramuscular fat in such a way as to maintain a good balance between red meat and fat. The meat melts and rich flavor spreads swiftly in the mouth. The wagyu beef is tender and tasty. It is a sort of low-calorie, healthy beef as it is reasonably marbled.

Nabe-yaki Ramen (Ramen served in pot with broth)

A very simple dish of chicken soy sauce soup, chewy thin noodles, and toppings of green onions, fish sausage, and raw egg, Japanese-style ramen has a certain nostalgia. Its best point is the earthy rich, it is served in allowing you to enjoy the soup at the end.
Activity

Against a backdrop of the rugged Shikoku mountain range and overlooking the Pacific Ocean, Shikoku is a treasure house of nature and adventure. What better way to enjoy nature and the outdoors than to embark on an adventure that combines the thrill of flying with the tranquility of the ocean? Paragliding in Kochi provides just that experience.

Paragliding

You can experience paragliding in Kochi. A paraglider is a vehicle that will help you fly as a bird come true. It is a sky sport which lets you fly freely in the sky as if you had wings. You would need quite a bit of practice in order to be able to enjoy paragliding on your own. But if you paraglide in a two-seater with a professional, you will be able to enjoy an exhilarating flight from a hilltop, surrounded by grand mountains with lush greenery. Sometimes you can also take in a broad view of the Pacific Ocean, directly feel the changing seasons and have a bird’s eye view of the landscape.

Whale watching

For those who enjoy marine life, there are many points where people can watch dolphins or whales with their parents and their children together. Swimming at a short distance, you can get an up-close look at these magnificent creatures so that you may safely cruise to points where whales or dolphins can be seen. Dolphins leap up from the water, surfing in parallel with the boat. You can see whales spout, swim and even their voices form up close. The lagoon where the whales reside i

Surfing

There are a large number of surfing spots in Kochi, and they are famous in Japan for their good waves. There are many venues for not only domestic surfing competitions but also international ones. Because Kochi stretches east to west extensively, surfers can enjoy different atmospheres and waves in both the eastern and western parts of Kochi. Surfing points are also at river mouths, reefs and beaches, making it possible for both beginners and advanced-level surfers to enjoy the water sport. Shikoku is a popular destination for surfing-loving travelers.

Kochi Prefectural Makino Botanical Garden

One of the most comprehensive botanical gardens in Japan, the Makino Botanical Garden was established in 1903 by Saburo Makino. Located in an elevation zone in the Shikoku region, it is home to over 3,000 types of seasonal plants and tropical plants. Visitors can enjoy a medicinal plants section, a Japanese garden, and a European garden. There are also gardens and popular restaurants using ingredients of Kochi.

In Kochi, there are various historical tourist attractions which a wide range of people can enjoy, including museums on prominent figures and scholars representing Japan toward the end of the Tokugawa shogunate, an informative museum on the lifetime careers of scholars, and a museum with unique exhibition pavilions which maximizes the terrain overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Some museums are nestled deep in the mountains or have eccentric exhibits.

Ekin Museum

A museum of painter Kinks (nick-name: Ekin) at the end of the 19th period made by innovating a wood painting. Twenty-three folding screen drawings handed down to the town were collected. Two works can be seen at all times by looking through a hole drilled in the wall. The atmosphere of Ekin’s life can be enjoyed while looking at replicas exhibited in dimness.

Ashizuri Underwater Observation Tower

The tower, located inside Ashizuri-Uwakai National Park, is a huge 24-meter tall observation tower standing in the water which is one of the clearest offshore areas in Shikoku. Inside the tower are an observation room above sea level and an underwater observation chamber from which visitors can see tropical fish gathering near the 7-meter-deep ocean floor and schools of fish that change in variety from season to season. Goliath, porcupine fish and butterfly fish can be seen from the underwater observation room throughout the year. Visitors may be able to observe sea turtles and other sea life.
“Enjoy Kochi at Leisure” Course
This is a travel plan in which you can experience the history, traditions and natural blessings of Kochi while touring its leading tourist spots.

**Day 1**

11:00  Kochi Ryoma Airport

11:20  Harimaya Bridge, lunch

13:10  Kutsurahama Beach

14:40  Makino Botanical Garden

15:40  Chikurin-ji Temple

Stay overnight in Kochi City

Kochi Ryoma Airport, the air gateway to Kochi, has been popularly known since 2003 as Kochi Ryoma Airport named after Sakamoto Ryoma, a great historical figure from Kochi.

There is a marionette clock to the east of Harimaya Bridge. Artificial figures in the shape of Kochi Castle, Yosakoi Festival, Kutsurahama Beach and Harimaya Bridge appear from four sides of the clock to perform every hour to the tune of a traditional Yosakoi folk song.

This is one of the most scenic spots in Kochi where the statue of Sakamoto Ryoma stands as if he were viewing the splendor of the Pacific Ocean.

This is one of the leading botanical gardens in Japan dedicated to Dr. Tomitaro Makino, a world-renowned botanist from Kochi.

This is one of the 88 temples associated with Buddhist monk Kobo Daishi on Shikoku Island. You are recommended to see the five-story pagoda – the only structure of its kind in Kochi – and the garden which is designated by the central government as a place of scenic beauty.

**Day 2**

5:00  Kochi City

10:00  Niyodo River: Houseboat cruising

11:30  Experience making “Tosa washi” Japanese paper (1 hour), lunch

15:30  Ryuga Cave

Stay overnight in Kochi City

Riding on a sightseeing houseboat, you can see the so-called “Niyodo blue,” the azure water color of the Niyodo River that boasts the best water quality in Japan, right before your eyes.

This is one of the three major calcareous caves in Japan. You can take either an ordinary route or an adventure route.

**Day 3**

10:00  Kochi City

10:30  Nishijima Flower Garden (fruit picking), lunch

Here you can eat strawberries, melons and watermelons as well as picking fruits in season in the nursery where a variety of tropical flowers and trees grow.

Kochi Ryoma Airport
KOCHI MAP

West

Western Kochi is a nature-rich area popular for outdoor activities. Situated in this region are the Shimanto River, which is called Japan’s last remaining limpid stream, Cape Ashizuri, which commands a grand panoramic view of the Pacific Ocean, and the Tengu Highland, which becomes a skiing ground in winter. You can enjoy a variety of foods from the sea, mountains and rivers. This is a region to enjoy with your five senses.

Shimanto City

Shimanto River

Central

Central Kochi is full of popular tourist spots, including the symbolic Kochi Castle, as well as the Sunday Market and the Hirome Market. If you travel a bit further, you will see the Niyodo River, known for its mysterious blue water, and find unique museums.

Start your tour of Kochi in the central part of the prefecture, which is the gateway to key local tourist spots, as Kochi Station and Kochi Ryojima Airport are situated in this area.

Kochi City

Kochi Castle

East

Eastern Kochi is a district with a markedly international character; an international surfing event is held in Toyo Town; the Murota Global Geopark, which has been designated by the Global Network of National Geoparks, is situated in Murota City; “yuzu,” or a lemon-like Japanese citrus exported to France and other countries, is grown in Umajii Village; and the only authorized replica of Claude Monet’s garden outside France is Klagawa Village.

At the same time, many old-fashioned, attractive streetscapes remain in eastern Kochi. Ride a train on Tosa Kuroshio Railway’s Gomen-Nahari Line that runs along the eastern coastline to thoroughly enjoy the various tourist attractions in eastern Kochi.
Access Info

Shikoku is one of the islands that make up the Japanese archipelago. It is one of Japan’s four main islands, which also include Hokkaido, Honshu and Kyushu, and is the smallest of the four. Shikoku is connected with Honshu by three bridges across the sea and is easily accessible from the Kansai (Osaka & vicinity) and Chugoku (Hiroshima & vicinity) regions. Kochi Prefecture covers most of Shikoku’s southern half, and it takes about 1h20min to fly from Tokyo to Kochi and 45 minutes from Osaka.

Organization name  Kochi Visitors & Convention Association
Location  5th floor, Kochi Prefectural Government Main Building, 1-2-20 Marunouchi, Kochi City, Kochi
http://visitkochijapan.com/