Shimonoseki: a town with a 1000 year-old history

Shimonoseki, situated on the westernmost end of the mainland of Japan has prospered as a gateway to Eurasia as well as a strategic stop for land and sea transport in the area. The town, boasting attractive scenery along the Kanmon Strait, has witnessed so many important events in Japan’s history that it forms an integral part of its culture.

As the location of a famous naval battle in the War between the Genji and the Heike clans in 1185, Shimonoseki played a key role in the transition from aristocratic to warrior rule in Japan. The city has places of natural beauty and historical interest typical of a castle town, such as ancient samurai residences and clay walls. Visitors will enjoy the distinctively Japanese atmosphere they exude.

With its wealth of historical sites, ethnic ambience, beautiful scenery and Japanese food, Shimonoseki is a town that will capture your heart.
The War of the Genji and Heike clans

The aristocratic army "Genji" and the samurai army "Genji" fought the decisive Dannoura War of Genji and Heike in Shimonoseki after having conducted numerous skirmishes over several years in various regions of Japan. Having led Genji to victory "Minamoto no Yoshitsune" is still hailed as a great hero.

Miyamoto Musashi Versus Sasaki Kojiro

Musashi was fundamentally a two-sword samurai but he used a boat-paddle longer than Kojiro’s long sword in order to cope with his opponents unusually long sword. At 39.37 inches it is said that Kojiro’s sword was the longest among all samurai swords in those days.

Battle Island “Gannryujima Island”

400 years ago, Miyamoto Musashi and Sasaki Kojiro, both of whom were claimed to be strongest samurai, fought a life-and-death fight to win the swordsman’s crown at “Gannryujima Island” in the Kanmon Strait. Miyamoto Musashi won, but after his victory stopped dueling with anyone else. He later wrote a book on the secrets of swordsmanship entitled “Go Rin no Sho” (The Book of Five Rings).

Shimonoseki is surrounded to the south by Seto Inland Sea National Park and to the north by Kitanagats Seaside Semi-national Park, both of which boast a rich natural environment and mystic scenery.

As with Shimonoseki Island in the Sea of Japan, the setting for a Toyota Lexus commercial, a host of movies and various dramas, the scenic attractions of the Kanmon Strait are circumvented by 700 ships of all sizes daily. In particular, the beautiful night scene of the Kanmon Strait viewed from “Mt. Hinoyama” (Fire mountain) nearly the Strait will remain an unforgettable memory. “Mt. Hinoyama” owes its name to the fact that this mountain in ages past was friendly to losers rather than winners, as witnessed by its support for the “Heike” losers of the Genji and Heike War, or the “Kojiro” defeated by Musashi. Shimonoseki is famous as a health resort. At the resorts, you can watch the sun rise or set or luxuriate in hot, medicinal spring water, sometimes supplemented with cosmatically effective ingredients.

Kaiykoyan Aquarium

Kaiykoyan Aquarium is a landmark in the Kanmon Strait. It is an aquarium with some 100 varieties of puffer fish from the world’s oceans along with uniquely Japanese dolphins and sea lions shows. Both children and adults have a great time learning about marine creatures. (A new large scale exhibition facility for penguins will be opened in March, 2009) Business hours: 0900 to 1730 hours

Amusement

Bubble blowing displays by finless porpoises Finless porpoises blow truly amazing bubble rings in the water, a spectacle that can only be seen at this aquarium.

Specialty products of Shimonoseki

There are a variety of local specialty products born in the City’s long history and unique culture. They make ideal souvenirs to take back home.

Gannryujima Island

"Musical of 1,000 years of History" is performed in the Akama Shrine.

The Kanmon Walker Submarine Tunnel

The Kanmon Walker Submarine Tunnel is a rare submarine tunnel through which one can pass through on foot. The 780 meter long tunnel, which features a display showing the middle point of the Kanmon Strait is a rare feat of engineering. It is a popular tourist attraction.

Tsunoshima Island

Shimonoseki is surrounded to the south by Seto Inland Sea National Park and to the north by Kitanagats Seaside Semi-national Park, both of which boast a rich natural environment and mystic scenery.

Amusement

Bubble blowing displays by finless porpoises Finless porpoises blow truly amazing bubble rings in the water, a spectacle that can only be seen at this aquarium.

Specialty products of Shimonoseki

There are a variety of local specialty products born in the City’s long history and unique culture. They make ideal souvenirs to take back home.

Gannryujima Island

"Musical of 1,000 years of History" is performed in the Akama Shrine.

The Kanmon Walker Submarine Tunnel

The Kanmon Walker Submarine Tunnel is a rare submarine tunnel through which one can pass through on foot. The 780 meter long tunnel, which features a display showing the middle point of the Kanmon Strait is a rare feat of engineering. It is a popular tourist attraction.

Tsunoshima Island

Shimonoseki is surrounded to the south by Seto Inland Sea National Park and to the north by Kitanagats Seaside Semi-national Park, both of which boast a rich natural environment and mystic scenery.

Amusement

Bubble blowing displays by finless porpoises Finless porpoises blow truly amazing bubble rings in the water, a spectacle that can only be seen at this aquarium.
The Shimonoseki Strait Festival

The Shimonoseki Strait Festival held every year on May 3 and 4 is a festival based on an actual historical event that took place in the Kanmon Strait. The Festival reenacts various historical events associated with Shimonoseki, such as the “Parade of court ladies of the Sentei (Former Emperor) Festival” of ladies dressed in gorgeous costumes, sea parades of more than 80 ships, and the “Samurai Parade” depicting the heroic march of Samurai Warriors in full armor.

A splendid fireworks display is staged by shooting around 13,000 fireworks into the night sky from both banks of the Kanmon Strait on August 13 every year. They form a delightful contrast with the beauty of the natural scene. (Held rain or shine but cancelled in inclement weather)

The Shimonoseki Strait Festival

Population: 292,000
Area: 276 square miles
Distance to Shimonoseki from major cities:
- Sapporo - 930 miles (Two hours and a half by air)
- Tokyo - 620 miles (Two hours by air)
- Kyoto - 280 miles (Three hours by Shinkansen bullet train)
- Osaka - 250 miles (Two hours by Shinkansen bullet train)
- Hiroshima - 125 miles (One hour by Shinkansen bullet train)
- Fukuoka – 50 miles (Half an hour by Shinkansen bullet train)

Surrounded by the sea on three sides, Shimonoseki is a veritable storehouse of fresh marine products. In particular, Shimonoseki boasts the largest fugu (blowfish or globefish) catch in Japan, and has begun exporting fresh fugu to the United States. The Fugu Dish served here is renowned for being delicious all year around. You really must savor the real fugu of Shimonoseki.

Topics!

Members of the party of the City Mayor of Pittsburg, California, sister city of Shimonoseki, were also dressed in historical costumes.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DIVISION AT CITY HALL +81-83-231-9653
http://www.city.shimonoseki.yamaguchi.jp/seisaku/kokusai/y_english/ E-mail sskokusa@city.shimonoseki.yamaguchi.jp