



Connecting, nurturing, and living together

Yurihama

Yurihama Town, Tottori Prefecture
– Town Handbook 2024



Yurihama's natural hot springs

Blessed hot spring waters gush forth from Yurihama's lake

Seasonal vistas combined with steam rising from the hot water produce a soothing lakeside atmosphere.



An open-air bath at Sennentei (Hawai Onsen), a hot spring inn on the lake

Two hot springs draw tourists

The town is home to two hot springs: Hawai Onsen and Togo Onsen. Records of hot-spring water gushing forth from Lake Togo date as far back as the Edo period. The traditional inns were founded during the Meiji period and increased in number and in the level of prosperity as the economy grew rapidly in the years after the end of the Second World War. Sui-meï-so, the first people's inn in the country, opened its doors in 1957 at Togo Onsen and quickly became popular thanks to its beautiful scenery and excellent location. Hawai Onsen consists of ten traditional inns, including Bokoro, which is frequently used as the venue for shōgi and go title matches.



Footbaths

Seven footbaths are named after the seven deities of good fortune who had made use of the hot spring waters around Lake Togo. A number of locations in the town warmly welcome tourists and hikers and serve as places of relaxation for local residents. Some footbaths feature hot water pots for preparing onsen eggs and onsen stands so that you can draw hot spring water to take with you.

Fresh fruit with a wonderful texture passed down from generation to generation

The 20th century Asian pear is heralded as the best in Japan according to the lyrics of the “Togo Ondo” (traditional Bon Dance song). The wisdom of our ancestors and the bounty of the climate have been passed down through the centuries.



Togo 20th century Asian pear



A pear-growing orchard situated south of Matsuzaki Station

Pear orchards

Many pear orchards are located on steep slopes, which drain well and are thus ideal for cultivation. Unfortunately, steep slopes also make it difficult to introduce mechanization and other forms of labor-saving technology, which means that such sites necessitate substantial amounts of manual labor. In order to maintain orchards to overcome this problem, the town receives assistance from the prefectural government to convert rice paddies and otherwise develop flat pear-growing orchards. As of 2024, approximately 3.5 hectares of land in the town are being developed to make room for the introduction of around ten new people, including farmers, for the purpose of encouraging the growth of pears.

Research has helped nurture a key industry for the town

The 20th century Asian pear is a specialty product of the town that is loved by many people inside and outside the prefecture thanks to its juicy pulp and its refreshing combination of tartness and sweetness. Introduced to what was formerly known as Togo Town during the late Meiji period, these pears boast a long history of cultivation. Since that time, its reputation has been polished over the years thanks to the diligent efforts of our ancestors, efforts in research to improve cultivation techniques and quality standards, and work to overcome apple scab (black spot) disease.

Furthermore, the town's natural environment, ideal for pear cultivation, is a major factor in the development of this production area. This includes the lush mountainous terrain centered around Lake Tōgō, granitic soil, and the warm climate influenced by the Sea of Japan and the lake. While this allowed the town to become one of the leading areas for the production of the 20th century Asian pear, the lack of farmers capable of growing pears has become a serious matter, and the area under pear cultivation is now a mere one-sixth of what it once was at its peak. Given these circumstances, the town has partnered with concerned organizations to secure new farmers, maintain the prime orchards and ensure that farmers have successors lined up, introduce new varieties like the shinkansen and oshu pears,

and develop fruit tree orchards on the flat land.



Shinkansen pears



A surfer rides the crest of a rising wave

Yurihama's beaches

Chances to meet new people will draw you to our beaches

**A blue sea, white sand, and fresh seafood...the warmth of the local people
welcomes visitors to the ocean and nature's bounty flourishes anew.**

Revitalization of a fixed-net fishing sector creates jobs

The north side of the town faces the Sea of Japan, and the coast consists of a stretch of sand dunes. In addition to beaches that open in summer, this area features two fishing ports: Tomari Fishing Port, a category II fishing port, and Hawaii Fishing Port, a category I fishing port. Tomari Fishing Port supported the industry of the former Tomari Village during its heyday in the 1950s when it boasted an aggregate catch of 1,500 tons. These days, however, workers are aging, and there is a shortage of successors for the various fishing businesses. As such, a small-scale fixed-net fishing sector resumed operations in 2018 with the assistance of the prefectural and town governments in hopes of reviving the industry.



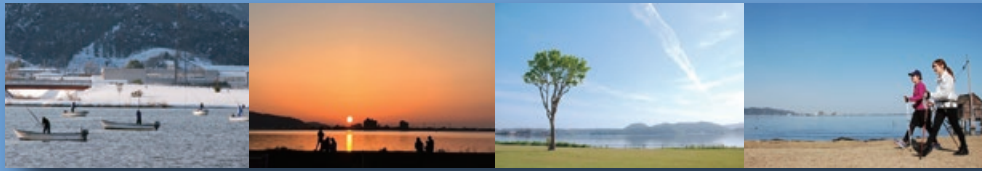
Tomari Fishing Port



Ishiwaki Beach

A coastline quietly regaining its liveliness

The town was once home to three beaches, but only one, Hawaii Beach, remains open. Now closed, Ishiwaki Beach is characterized by a gently sloping, beautifully arching shoreline and is known for its *singing sand*. In 2006, it was selected as one of the 100 Best Pleasure Beaches in the country by the Ministry of the Environment. Throughout the year, the sea at Ishiwaki is visited by the many surfers who are drawn to its waves and the warmth of the people who live here.



Living by and with the water's edge

Known fondly by local residents as Togo Pond, the healing lake changes its appearance from one season to the next.

A lake encircled by diverse resources

Situated in more or less the center of town, Lake Togo is sometimes called Crane Lake for the way its outline resembles a crane with spread wings. The brackish lake has a circumference of around twelve kilometers and a surface area of approximately four square kilometers; however, the scenic Lake Togo has been selected as one of the eight notable views of the San'in Region and as the site of one of Japan's 100 Most Beautiful Village Vistas by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. Hot spring water gushes from the bottom of the lake which blesses us with a large source of freshwater Shijimi clams and various other fish and shellfish.

Dragon canoes

The Lake Togo Dragon Canoe Convention in August of each year attracts many teams from within and outside the prefecture. A dragon canoe is approximately ten meters in total length and is crewed by one drummer, one steerer, and eight paddlers. In recent years, this convention has been held for educational trips. The importance of teamwork is taught to children and students both within and outside the prefecture through the experience of paddling a canoe in unison.



A spectacular view of the Sea of Japan, Mt. Daisen, and Lake Togo from the Izumoyama Observatory



Overlooking the Sea of Japan, Shiokaze no Oka Tomari is popular with many golf players throughout the year.

Ground golf, a sport born in Yurihama

**A sport that originated in our town and that is beloved in Japan and abroad
A worldwide circle of friendship and health.**

Thank you for creating this wonderful sport

In order to further promote ground golf and encourage participation in the annual Ground Golf International Championship held in the town, Mayor Masamichi Miyawaki attended the International Ground Golf Championship European Open held in Segovia, Spain, in 2024. It was there that a Spanish participant shared their heartfelt praise and expressed the sentiment stated above to the mayor in person.

Ground Golf was born in the former Tomari Village in 1982. Since then, the sport has spread as an activity that can be enjoyed by children and adults and has developed into a national sport with 3

million participants. Its popularity grew rapidly, especially among the elderly, because the rules are simple and a high level of skill is not required. Associations were set up at the village, prefectural, and national levels a year later. The first national championship was held in 1989, and in 1993, Shiokaze no Oka Tomari, a community park with a dedicated ground golf course, was completed. In these ways, the rapid and steady progress made by people involved in the sport helped it become a part of more people's lives than ever before.



Aiming for the mutual promotion of sports tourism

After the municipal amalgamation, the town organized a Junior Ground Golf Birthplace Tournament in hopes of promoting the sport among younger people. Since 2015, the Japan Ground Golf Association and the prefectural government have worked together to promote the sport overseas. Key initiatives for internationalization have been undertaken to introduce the rules and provide guidance on practical skills to governmental bodies and competition organizations abroad, encourage mutual participation in international tournaments, and supply and sell equipment and gear. Association activities have been carried out in over ten countries around the world. With the establishment of the International Ground Golf Federation (IGGF) in 2019, further growth in the popularity of the sport is expected. The town will host a

ground golf competition at the World Masters Games Kansai 2027, a global festival celebrating lifelong sports. It is hoped that the success of this festival will further popularize ground golf and promote sports tourism through a love for this game.



Maldives

The Ministry of Gender, Family & Social Services decided to introduce the sport in all regions in order to promote the health of elderly citizens.



Spain

A Japanese woman residing in Madrid founded a local association. In 2023, this organization was officially recognized by the Spanish government.

Showcasing what people are doing to help popularize the sport in different countries



Malaysia

Exchanges with the town have taken place since 2018. A member of the Penang State Legislative Assembly developed a course in a park located in the state.



Mongolia

Exchanges with the town have taken place since 2016. The number of enthusiasts has risen dramatically. The country has helped to popularize the sport in Eastern European countries.



Employees of Aspryer

Gear that is indispensable for popularization

Since it is difficult to obtain ground golf gear overseas, the town asked enthusiasts across Japan to donate clubs and balls that are then refurbished before being supplied to overseas associations and other such organizations. In addition, Yurihama Machidukuri Co., Ltd., started selling gear in overseas markets in 2018. Yonemoc (based in Tottori City), a company that has been involved in developing gear since the birth of the sport, has been manufacturing gear ordered by companies certified by the Japan Ground Golf Association for the handling of gear and established the limited-liability company Aspryer in the town in 2022. This company became certified to handle the gear and has been developing gear branded as being connected to the birthplace of ground golf through a collaboration with the town.

Hawaii and Hawaii



The connections formed through
the spirit of *aloha* span the ocean

**With summer comes friends ...
learn about the culture of others
while reflecting on your own.**

A long history of exchanges
inspired by the name of the
local town

Before municipal amalgamation, the local town was known as Hawaii Town. It has had a long history of exchanges with Hawaii County in the US state of Hawaii. Even after municipal amalgamation resulted in the town of Yurihama, these exchanges continued and deepened over time. Exchanges with Hawaii County began with the establishment of a sister-city affiliation in 1996. Mutual understanding of their cultures and customs has deepened since then through Aloha Mates, a program designed to allow middle-school students from both places to participate in a homestay experience, and the Hawaiian Festival, an event that brings together hula dancing teams from Hawaii, the home of hula dancing, and across Japan.

Made using syrup derived from the Togo 20th century Asian pear, a specialty product grown in the town, Yurihama Pear Kau Coffee is being jointly developed with an eye towards eventual commercialization. Every summer, *aloha* shirts are worn as a matter of custom by people working for local businesses. This initiative infuses the town with a refreshing atmosphere in conjunction with the Hawaiian Festival that is held annually in July.



Immerse yourself in the history that remains very much alive



Ueshi Castle Prefectural Historic Site

Ueshi Castle was built atop Mt. Ueshi by Sadamune Nanjo in 1366. The castle has since fallen and been restored many times due to attacks by the likes of the Amago, Mori, and Oda clans during the Warring States Period and was abandoned after the Battle of Sekigahara. In 1931, descendants of the Nanjo clan built a mock castle tower. In 1990, the castle was rebuilt by the town into the three-storied castle tower that currently stands on the site.

Legend of the *tennyo* (celestial maiden)

According to legend, a celestial maiden was unable to return to heaven after a man hid her heavenly robe, which she had removed earlier. She became the man's wife and gave birth to two children. Eventually, the celestial maiden returned to heaven, leaving behind her children. In her memory, the children played a drum and flute in a performance of the song their mother loved. It is said that the heavenly robe was placed on Mount Ueshi, while the children performed their mother's song on Mount Utsubuki in Kurayoshi City. Another version of the legend identifies the celestial maiden's husband as Sadamune Nanjo, the first lord of Ueshi Castle. The photograph to the right shows the *Hagoromo Celestial Maiden*, a monument symbolizing this tale and the efforts made by the town to honor and preserve the story.



Togo Ronin Odori Prefectural Intangible Folk Cultural Asset

The Togo Ronin Odori began on the shores of Lake Togo to mourn those killed in a battle between the Nanjo and Mori clans in 1579. Even after Ueshi Castle subsequently came to be abandoned, wandering samurai without masters to serve (known as *ronin*) would suddenly gather together out of nowhere to dance and then disperse at dawn. This dance later came to be known as the *ronin odori* (dance of the *ronin*) and is performed these days by the local preservation society at the Suigo Festival held on the shores of Lake Togo in July of each year.

Developing products using the town's own specialty products

The Love Yurihama Project (Ice Cream)



The Love Yurihama (Ice Cream) Project is promoted by the town's Tourism Association in accordance with the slogan: *Loving Yurihama More and More Every Day*. Ice cream is made from specialty fruits and vegetables grown locally. The pièce de résistance of this project is the *shijimi miso* soup ice cream, which contains large chunks of *shijimi* clams harvested from Lake Togo. This product allows those who try it to savor the subtle aroma and *umami* taste of *shijimi* clams.

Nokyō Ume Project



The Chamber of Commerce has commercialized a range of products made with *nokyō ume* plums, a specialty of the town. Members of the Chamber of Commerce engaged in the confectionary, dining, and other sectors developed the products by harnessing what they bring to the table. A wide range of products, including cookies, cakes, salad dressings, and *ume* miso have been released. Gelato, squash drinks, and more can be enjoyed at the beginning of summer.

A town of lifelong activities for sustaining vibrant minds and bodies

Stay happily healthy in both body and mind throughout your life by remaining physically active with friends and family.



Aerobic exercise and strength training

Aiming to nurture a healthy, multigenerational community where residents lead fulfilling lives with peace of mind, the town has promoted well-being through two popular lifelong athletic activities—ground golf and hiking. To support this goal, health classes, nursing-care workshops, and other initiatives have been organized for local residents. In 2018, the town partnered with Tanita Health Link, Inc., and the prefectural government to develop Yurihama food products and foster a healthier community. As part of this initiative, the Yurihama Healthy Club was established, utilizing Tanita Health Link's health programs. The club lends activity-measuring devices to members, encouraging them to take charge of their health and fitness. More recently, the town has focused on preventing that state of frailty, that is considered to lie between good health and the

need for long-term nursing care. Since aerobic exercise and strength training are effective in combating said frailty, the Yurihama Minna-no-Genki Hall was established in 2022. Located within the Tomari Branch of the Central Community Center, this training room is equipped with various health and fitness devices. Additionally, it offers a range of programs led by exercise instructors, helping individuals of all ages improve their physical strength and overall well-being.

A town where it is easy to raise children together with the entire community

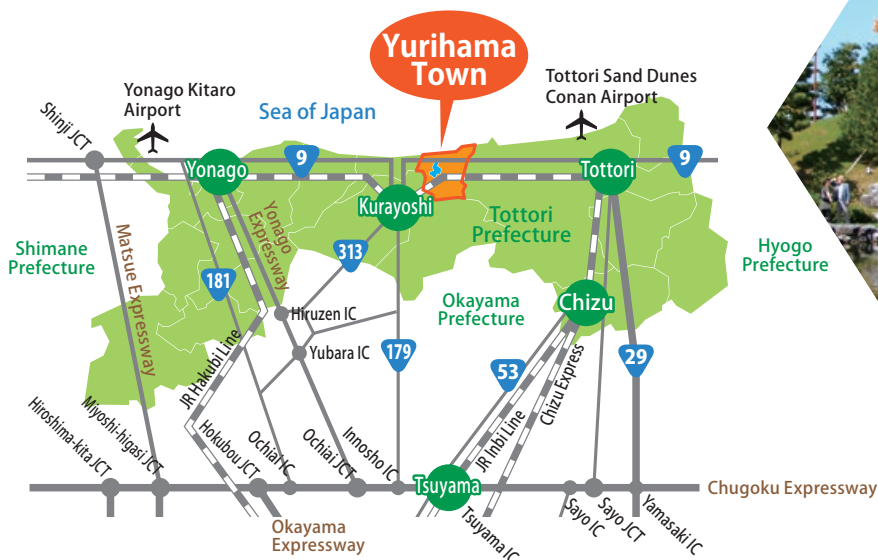
The warm gaze of locals embraces parents whose sense of security brings a smile to the faces of their children.

Tackling declining birthrates through childcare and migration policies

According to a survey of population trends conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 727,277 births were recorded in Japan in 2023, approximately 43,000 fewer than the previous year. As the declining birthrate becomes an increasingly serious issue nationwide, the number of children in the town has also been decreasing. However, in recent years, the town's population of children has remained relatively stable. In 2022, the town's total fertility rate—a measure of the average number of children a woman is expected to have in her lifetime—stood at 2.15. This rate was significantly higher than the prefectural average of 1.6 and the

highest among all municipalities in the prefecture. The town's higher fertility rate can be attributed to the development of residential areas, made possible by its convenient proximity to the cities of Tottori and Kurayoshi. These cities offer a relatively large number of businesses and shopping facilities that are easily accessible. Moreover, the town has implemented various initiatives to support child-rearing and promote itself as an ideal place for young families to settle and raise children.





Hyogo Prefecture



Town emblem

The town emblem is constituted of the letter Y, which is the initial letter in the name Yurihama Town, and is arranged to resemble a pair of wings flapping in the sky. These wings come in the colors of blue, green, and white and represent the richness of the natural world (comprising the elements of the sea, lakes, hot springs, pears, and sandy beaches found here). The emblem as a whole conveys the unity and fraternity, as well as the dramatic pace of development, achieved by the town, a place where nature, people, and industry coexist in a state of sublime harmony with the promise of a bright future.



Town flower:
Veronica ornata

Designated a Class II Vulnerable Species (VU) by the Ministry of the Environment, *Veronica ornata* can be found in the prefecture only in Yurihama Town. Its pale blue and purple flowers bloom between August and October.



Town tree: Pear

Pears belong to the Rosaceae fruit family, and the trees from which they are harvested produce beautiful white flowers in spring and large fruit that ripen around September. Yurihama Town is home to many pear growers and is famous for its 20th century Asian pear.



Town bird:
Japanese paradise flycatchers

The beautiful Japanese paradise flycatcher has a cobalt-blue beak and cobalt-blue eye-rings and migrates to and from the woodlands in the town every year. The bird reportedly received its moniker—*sankō-tori*—because its call sounds like *tsuki, hee, hoshi* [moon, sun, and stars], *hoi, hoi, hoi*.
(Photograph courtesy of Yuichiro Nakamae)



Town fish/shellfish (inland waters):
Shijimi clams

A specialty product found in Lake Togo, Yamato Shijimi clams are known as black diamonds thanks to their large size, color, and luster. These clams are sought after locally as an ingredient in *miso* soup and sell for high prices in markets outside the prefecture because of the large size and the exquisite flavor of the meat.



Town fish/shellfish (sea):
Iwagaki oysters

Iwagaki oysters are a valuable seafood product that can only be caught domestically in Tottori Prefecture and a few other select locations along the Sea of Japan. Rich in minerals and vitamins, these oysters are known as *the milk of the sea*. The Natsuki brand is among the most exclusive brands of *Iwagaki* oysters that can be purchased.

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Yurihama Town
Yuririn
the Celestial Maiden
(Tennyo)

Yuririn is a Hawaiian celestial maiden whose creation was inspired by Hawaii Onsen. Adorned with the flowers of the 20th century Asian pear tree, her hair color also represents the color of the pears produced as a local specialty by this tree. Strung around her neck is a lei made of evening glory flowers, which makes an appearance in the legend of the *tennyo* (celestial maiden). Her dress has a pattern of waves symbolizing the Sea of Japan. She is a cheerful and energetic celestial maiden whose essence is evocative of the beautiful natural wonders of Yurihama.

Yuririn can be found on one of the pages of this handbook. Find Yuririn!

