

Miyakojima Romantic Adventure – Comprehensive Travel Guide (Sep 27–Oct 1, 2025)

Travel Dates: 2025-09-27 (Sat) to 2025-10-01 (Wed)

Travelers: Couple (35F & 40M) seeking a balanced romantic, relaxing, and active trip

Base Lodgings: - **D1 (Sat):** Hilton Okinawa Miyako Island (Shigira area) – arrival & resort stay

- **D2 (Sun):** Ronsard Resort Irabu (Irabu Island) – island retreat

- **D3–D4 (Mon–Tue):** Apartment Hotel 11 (Hirara city center) – convenient city base

Transportation: Rental car throughout (self-drive), allowing flexible island hopping via bridges (Irabu, Ikema, Kurima are all connected). Free parking is common at beaches and sights. Driving is on the left; expect relaxed coastal roads with occasional narrow lanes in rural areas.

Summary: This 5-day itinerary covers **Miyakojima's** main island and its nearby isles **Irabu**, **Shimoji**, **Ikema**, and **Kurima**. Each day centers on one region to minimize backtracking, combining **morning nature walks**, **midday water activities**, **sunset views**, **delicious local dinners**, and **evening strolls or bars**. We've built in **Plan B/C alternatives for weather** (late September is still typhoon season – expect warm days ~29–30°C and possible showers). The couple's priorities are unique scenic experiences (weight ~50%), romantic ambiance (30%), and efficient travel logistics (20%), so the plan emphasizes **secluded beaches**, **stunning viewpoints**, and **memorable local cuisine**, all timed to avoid crowds and long waits when possible.

Below is the **detailed day-by-day itinerary**, followed by **reservations and checklist**, a **map coordinates list** for all points, and a **budget breakdown**.

Day 1 (Sept 27, Sat) – Southern Miyako: Welcome to Paradise

Morning – Arrival & Beach Relaxation

- **11:00 – Arrival at Miyako Airport (Shimojishima).** Pick up rental car (drive on left). Before hotel check-in, head to **Yonaha Maehama Beach** (15 min drive).

- **11:30 – Yonaha Maehama Beach** – A 7km stretch of powdery white sand and calm turquoise waters. Perfect for a first dip or walk. Facilities: parking (free), showers, cafe and rentals on-site. Highlight: Often cited as Japan's best beach for its **pristine, shallow turquoise sea** – you can wade 100m out and still be ankle-deep. Note: Not great for snorkeling (sandy bottom, few fish), but wonderful for sunbathing and sunsets.

- **13:00 – Lunch @ Maehama Beach Cafe** – Casual bites (Okinawan soba or taco rice) at the beach's cafe. Budget ¥1,000 each (cash). Enjoy sea views while dining.

Midday – Kurima Island Excursion

- **14:00 – Drive across Kurima Bridge** (1.5km, ~5 min). This picturesque bridge connects to tiny **Kurima Island**, offering panoramic views back towards Maehama's white sands and Miyako's coast. No toll.

- **14:15 – Ryūgūjō Observatory (Dragon Palace)** – Quirky observatory shaped like a castle. Short climb up for a **360° view**: Yonaha Maehama Beach's expanse on one side, emerald ocean on the other. Romantic tip: Legend says couples who ring the bell here enjoy lasting love. Parking available at base (free).

- **14:45 – Kurima Island Drive** – Take a slow loop around the one main road. Kurima is quiet, with sugar

cane fields, goats, and hidden beach paths. If time and weather: stop by **Nagamahama Beach** (secluded 1km beach down a sandy path) for solitude. It's often empty on weekdays – “an amazing place with nobody around, only soft sand and nature”. Note: Very limited parking (~4 spots, no formal facilities). If Nagamahama's access road is too rough for the rental car (it's narrow and bumpy), skip and enjoy views from the main road.

Sunset – Cape Higashi-Hennazaki

- **16:30 – Check-in @ Hilton Miyako Island (Shigira area)** on south coast (about 30 min drive from Kurima). Drop bags, refresh.

- **17:30 – Drive to Cape Higashi-Hennazaki** (Eastern Cape) ~25 km east (40 min). Aim to arrive by 18:10 for sunset. This cape is a nationally designated Place of Scenic Beauty, a 2km-long narrow peninsula jutting into the ocean. Walk the paved path to the **Hennazaki Lighthouse**. **Sunset at ~18:20**: watch the sky blaze over expansive ocean on both sides – a truly romantic vista. Tip: Bring a light jacket; it can get breezy on the cape's 20m cliffs. No entry fee; large parking lot available.

Dinner – Okinawan Cuisine

- **19:30 – Dinner at Koja Sobaya* (if back in town on time) – A legendary Miyako soba restaurant (est. 1932) known for rich broth Okinawa soba noodles and rafute (braised pork). Budget ~¥850-¥1,000/person. Avg wait: Popular at lunch (often a line even at 2:30pm), but by dinner it's quieter. Closes around 20:00, so order by 19:45. Signature:* Miyako-jima soba topped with thick-cut pork – must-try local soul food. (If running late after sunset, have dinner at Hilton's restaurant or room service as Plan B.)**

- **21:00 – Night Cap at Hotel Bar – Shigira Lounge & Bar** (at resort).** Enjoy awamori-based cocktails or cold Orion beer by the pool. Relax after the long day of travel.

Driving Summary: Day 1 driving ~60 km (Airport→Maehama 6km; Maehama→Kurima 5km; Kurima→Hotel 20km; Hotel→Cape East 25km; return via town ~30km). Roads are flat and well-marked. No tolls. Refill fuel (~¥1,500) if tank is below half (there's an Idemitsu gas station near Shigira). Parking is free at all mentioned sites.

Day 2 (Sept 28, Sun) – Irabu & Shimoji Islands: Blue Holes and Bridge Views

Morning – Irabu Island Highlights

- **08:00 – Check-out Hilton, depart for Irabu.** It's about a **15-20 min drive over the Irabu Bridge** (3,540m, Japan's longest toll-free bridge). The views driving over are stunning – emerald concentric rings in the water as depth changes. (No stopping on bridge allowed except emergencies.)

- **08:30 – Makiyama Observatory** – First stop on Irabu, at the island's highest point (89m). Short walk up to a white observatory shaped like a bird. Enjoy **panoramic views of Irabu Bridge curving back to Miyako and surrounding isles**. You can also see Kurima Bridge and even Ikema in the distance on clear days. Tip: Morning light is great for photos here. Parking available on-site (free).

- **09:15 – Irabu Island Drive** – Continue west. Option to detour through **Sawada Old Town** for local vibe. Stop at **Sawada Beach** around 09:30. This beach features giant boulders scattered offshore – unique photo ops especially at low tide. Quick stroll from parking; no swimming (rocky).

- **10:00 – Toriike (Twin Ponds)** – The famous “Blue Holes” of Shimojijima (connected by road from Irabu). Arrive by 10am to beat any day-trip crowds. Two mysterious limestone sinkhole ponds, one inland and one connected underwater to the sea ¹. Peer down to see deep blue water – almost eerie yet beautiful. Highlight: The ocean pond is ~45m deep and appears azure blue; a natural wonder often featured in Miyako guides ². A short trail loops around with viewing platforms. **Caution:** Stay on paths; the drop-offs have no fences. No entry fee. (If interested in geology, signboards explain how the cave collapsed

forming the ponds ³.) Parking lot at trailhead (free).

- **11:00** – Shimojishima Airport 17END Beach* – **Just 5 min further west, drive near Shimojishima Airport’s runway’s end (“17END”). There’s a gorgeous shallow sandbar *beach at the runway tip** with water an unreal shade of baby blue. Plan a brief stop if flights are landing – you might catch a plane swooping low overhead for a dramatic photo. Note: As of 2025 this area is officially off-limits for swimming (strong currents and airport security), but viewing from the fence or nearby road is fine.

Midday – Snorkeling Adventure

- **12:00** – **Lunch & Gear-Up** at Irabu “Funaba” Rest Stop** – **Head to Irabu’s roadside station (Yuiyui Irabu) or a local eatery “Irabu Soba Kame” (if open early) for quick lunch: Irabu soba (distinct for its thinner noodles) or a seafood bowl. Budget ~¥1,000 pp.**

- **13:30** – Guided Snorkeling Tour @ Yabiji Reef – **Afternoon boat tour to Yabiji, Japan’s largest coral reef, lying north of Ikema. (Assuming reservation with a tour operator – e.g. Miyako Tours No.856). Included: Boat ride from a nearby port (likely Hirara or Sarahama on Irabu) to the reef, snorkel gear, guide, and drone photos of you snorkeling. Drone option: Many tours here include aerial photography at no extra charge – a nice perk for memorable couples’ shots. Korean support: Guide likely speaks Japanese and some English; Korean language support is unlikely, but visual instruction is usually sufficient (flagged No in our activity table). Price: ~¥11,000 per person for a half-day snorkel. Slot: 14:00–17:00 (3 hours). Meet at the marina by 13:30. Lead time: Must book at least 2 days ahead (slots fill up due to limited boat capacity). Cancellation: Usually free until day prior; full refund if weather forces cancellation (common if typhoon or high waves – Yabiji tours are canceled for safety with any typhoon warning). Note: Late September is tail end of typhoon season; tour operators monitor conditions closely. If canceled, Plan B: do a reef snorkel off Aragusuku Beach** (drive back to Miyako main island) which is sheltered and often calmer – you can rent gear on-site cheaply, and see plenty of fish in shallow water near shore.**

Sunset – Irabu & Shimoji

- **17:30** – **Finish snorkel tour** back at port. Towel off and drive to **Toguchi-no-hama Beach** on Irabu’s west for sunset (short detour on way to hotel). Toguchi Beach is a serene cove with powder sand and calm shallows, just 500m from your resort. Arrive by ~18:00. The sun will set into the East China Sea, painting the sky. Note: In late September, the sunset might align behind Irabu Island from certain angles – but Toguchi is still great for dusk colors.

- **18:30** – **Check-in @ Ronsard Resort Irabu.** This boutique resort offers private villa-style rooms. Freshen up.

Dinner – Island Seafood Grill

- **19:30** – **Dinner at Kanizo (Irabu Island) – A special treat just ~5 min from Ronsard. Kanizo is famous for mangrove crab cuisine (their signature is a whole steamed crab and crab broth somen noodles)** ⁴. Reservation required (small 8-table place). Budget ¥5,500 course per person ⁵ – worth it for a unique gastronomic experience. Highlights: “Exquisite mangrove crab, rich crab-broth somen, tempura of island veggies” – a highly rated experience. Hours: Note it’s open only till 17:00 according to latest info ⁶ ⁷ (lunch-focused), so if they don’t serve dinner, Plan B: dine at resort’s restaurant Hokulani (which serves fusion seafood) or an izakaya in Sawada. If Kanizo is open for a special dinner seating, enjoy the intimate ambiance (and bibs for crab!).

- **21:00** – Stargazing – **Irabu has minimal light pollution. From Ronsard’s rooftop or poolside, do some stargazing. On a clear night, the Milky Way** is visible** – one traveler noted Musunun Beach on Kurima was great for Milky Way; similarly Irabu’s coast will be dark enough. Perhaps drive out a bit from hotel to avoid any lights and spend a quiet moment under the stars – a romantic cap to the day.

Driving Summary: Day 2 drive ~40 km (Miyako→Irabu 8km bridge; around Irabu/Shimoji ~20km; Irabu→resort 5km). All bridges are free. Watch for stray cows/goats on Irabu backroads at night. Gas: top-up ~¥2,000 if needed on Miyako before heading to Irabu (limited gas stations on Irabu).

Day 3 (Sept 29, Mon) – Miyako Main Island North: Culture & Coast

Morning – Ikema Island & North Coast

- **08:00 – Check-out Irabu, head back to Miyako main island.** Drive north (~30–40 min up coastal route). Monday morning, roads are quiet.

- **09:00 – Ikema Ohashi Bridge** – Cross the short bridge to **Ikema Island** (1.4km, 5 min). Stop at the **bridge viewpoint pull-off** just after crossing (if clear weather) for photos of the shallow reef flats below. The water here is a vivid mix of blues and greens in sunlight.

- **09:15 – Ikema Island Quick Tour** – Small, rural island known for wetlands. Visit **Funausagibanata Observatory** at Ikema's northern tip (follow signs for "Cape Funausagi"). A short climb up a bird-shaped platform yields panoramic ocean views and you might spot a distant shipwreck in the reef. Name meaning: "Ship Rabbit Point" in Miyako dialect – named after a local myth. Parking available.

- **10:00 – Drive back to Miyakojima main island**, along the north coast scenic drive (Route 230). Option: stop at **PaiPai (marine) Park** or any roadside beach that catches your eye – the north shore has rocky coves with coral debris, great for a quick look.

- **10:30 – Miyakojima Botanical Garden** – A change of pace from beaches. Free entry tropical garden inland. Stroll under shady palms and giant ferns on forest paths. Highlight: Climb the small observation tower ("mirador") for a **180° view of the island's greenery**. Keep an eye out for butterflies and hummingbird moths. There's also a quaint café at the entrance (famous for fresh mango juice) – a nice refreshment stop. Spend ~45 minutes here.

Midday – East Coast Beaches

- **12:00 – Lunch in Gusukube Town** – Try a local eatery in this area. **Maruyoshi Shokudo** (if open) is a well-known spot on Miyako for **tonkatsu** and fried fish. Or grab a bento from a market to have a picnic at the next beach.

- **13:00 – Yoshino Beach** – Head to Yoshino on the east coast (about 20 min drive). Snorkeling haven: Yoshino is famed for its **abundant coral and fish right off the beach**, ideal for beginners. **Facilities:** Parking (¥500) with shuttle down to beach, rental gear, showers. Plan: Spend a relaxed afternoon snorkeling in calm waters among clownfish and parrotfish. You might even glimpse a sea turtle (they sometimes nest nearby in season). The reef is very close to shore – you can see many species just a few meters out. **Note:** There is a small fee (¥1000) some days which includes shuttle and shower. This keeps the beach less crowded and supports reef management. By going on a Monday, you avoid weekend crowds – more fish for you!

- Backup Plan: If tired or if weather made water murky, instead of snorkeling you could drive around the Higashi-hennazaki peninsula (if not done Day 1) or visit **Boraga Limestone Cave** nearby for a short spelunking walk (a small cave with stalactites, entry ~¥100).

- **15:30 – Aragusuku Beach (optional)** – Just south of Yoshino, Aragusuku is another beautiful snorkel spot with very shallow coral gardens, often even better for kids or tentative swimmers. It's sheltered from waves and wind. If you have time/energy, stop by for a short snorkel or to buy a snack from the beach shack (they sell Okinawa soba and surprisingly good hot dogs!). Parking ¥1000 if the main lot attendant is there (sometimes free in late day).

Sunset – West Coast City

- **17:30 – Check-in @ Apartment Hotel 11, Hirara (City).** This will be your base for nights 3 and 4. It's centrally located in Miyako's main town (Hirara), walking distance to many restaurants and bars. After beach-hopping, enjoy a shower and maybe a quick rest.

- **18:30 – Painagama Beach Sunset** – Walk or drive 5 min to **Painagama Beach**, the town's local beach by

the harbor. It's not as postcard-perfect as others, but popular with locals for sunsets. There's a new boardwalk and the skyline of downtown makes a neat backdrop as the sun sets. If you prefer a higher viewpoint, drive up to **Ida-no-hama Park** hill for a panorama of Hirara city at golden hour.

Dinner – Hirara Town Night

- **19:30 – Dinner at Sumibi Yakiniku Ryuguen*** – **Treat yourselves to Miyako Island's famed beef. Ryuguen* is a top-rated yakiniku BBQ restaurant.** Signature: **Charcoal-grilled Miyako beef (a local wagyu) – melt-in-your-mouth goodness. They also offer island pork and fresh veggies.** Reservations: **Recommended (it's popular; your hotel can assist).** Avg wait without reservation: **30+ min.** Budget: **¥6,000+ for two (premium beef is pricey but worth it).** Try the assorted cuts platter for variety.

- **21:30 – Bar Hopping in Hirara – The city comes alive at night with small bars and izakayas. Two suggestions for different vibes:**

- It's Bar Smoke – **A stylish cocktail bar (TripAdvisor #1 nightlife) known for inventive drinks. Good for a quiet couple's toast.**

- Funky Flamingo** – A live music bar with occasional rock 'n' roll bands. If you feel like mingling, this spot has fun shows and a retro vibe.

Or simply wander down ニュー八重興通り (Niiyamakouji Street), known for its nightlife, and pop into any inviting place – many have English menus. Kanpai!

Driving/Walking Summary: Day 3 involves ~60 km driving (Irabu->Ikema ~30km, then to Yoshino ~20km, back to Hirara 15km). City parking: Apartment Hotel 11 has parking or use coin lots (~¥100 per hour). Once in town, you can walk to most dining/drinking spots – no need to drive at night (and **do not drink and drive** – Japan has zero tolerance).

Day 4 (Sept 30, Tue) – Miyakojima West: Leisure & Flex Day

Morning – Free Time or Extra Adventure

Day 4 is intentionally left flexible as a **buffer day** – useful in case earlier activities got rained out or if there's something you loved and want to do again. Some options based on interest:

- **Revisit a Favorite Beach:** Go back for a morning swim at **Sunayama Beach** perhaps. It's only 4km from Hirara. Sunayama's iconic rock arch and serene cove are best enjoyed early when few people are there. Bring a tripod for couple photos by the arch. There's a small café at the entrance opening ~10am for mango ice cream after your swim.

- **Culture & Souvenirs:** Explore in town – e.g., visit **Miyakojima City Museum** (learn about local history, the legendary folkloric "Paantu" mud festival with exhibits), or **Harimizu Utaki** sacred grove and temple for a dose of Ryukyuan culture. Stop by the local market to pick up souvenirs like **Miyakojima salt** or bottles of aged awamori liquor.

- **Scenic Drive:** If you haven't been to **Cape Nishihenna** (the westernmost point near Shigira) you could drive there – it's quieter than Higashi-Henna. Or a quick drive up **Mt. Gusukubē** for inland views.

Midday – Optional Tour or Relax

Consider a unique midday activity:

- **Glass-bottom Boat or Kayak:** Take a **kayak tour in the mangrove** area of **Mangrove Park** (in Hirara) or a glass-bottom boat ride from the harbor to see coral if you prefer staying dry. These typically run around noon for 1-2 hours. Check Activity Japan site for "[Miyakojima Mangrove kayak]". Price ~¥5,000/person.

- **Resort Day Pass:** Alternatively, buy a **day pass to Shigira Resort** pools & onsen. Lounging in the infinity pool or soaking in their oceanview onsen can be a nice relaxing treat after 3 active days. (Shigira Resort sells day-use tickets ~¥3,000 each). Have lunch at Shigira Burger (their wagyu burger is popular) or **Blue Turtle** restaurant by the sea (pizza & pasta with ocean view ⁸). Blue Turtle is noted for its seaside deck

and stunning setting – a memorable lunch spot (they do wood-fired pizza and island herb pasta, mid-range prices).

Afternoon – Maehama or Shopping

- If you haven't properly relaxed on **Yonaha Maehama**, this afternoon could be perfect for that. It's less crowded on a weekday – you might find large stretches of beach almost to yourselves. Rent sun beds (about ¥2,000 for two with umbrella) and just **chill by the turquoise water**. Maybe try a jet-ski or banana boat ride – vendors are usually around (around ¥3,000 each ride).
- OR, use the time to **shop in town** for any last souvenirs. There are craft shops selling Miyako-jima textiles, and places to sample tropical fruit jams, etc.

Sunset – Sunset Cruise (Plan C)

For the final evening, consider a romantic **sunset cruise**. Several operators offer a one-hour yacht cruise in the bay off Hirara around 17:30. Some even include drinks. It's a peaceful way to toast the trip as the sun sinks. (Cost ~¥8,000 per couple, hotel can arrange; cancelable if weather poor). If seas are rough, skip and do a land-based sunset at **Sunset Beach** near the city. Note: Sunset Beach (despite the name) can be underwhelming – mixed reviews – but it's close by and faces west. Locals say in late September the sun should visibly set over the water from there (by June it sets behind Irabu). It has a promenade and is a decent spot for one last island sunset.

Dinner – Final Miyako Feast

- **19:00 – Dinner at Hirochan Shokudo*** – **For a casual last dinner, Hirochan is a beloved local diner in Hirara. They serve a mix of Japanese, Okinawan, and some Western dishes – something for every craving. It's known for friendly service and hearty portions (try their taco rice or fish carpaccio). Budget-friendly (¥1000-¥2000). No reservation needed.**

Alternative (if seeking upscale):* Kagami in downtown – creative Japanese cuisine with local ingredients, in case you want a fancier farewell dinner. Reservation recommended; budget ~¥5,000 for two.

- **21:00 – Karaoke or Early Night**** – If you two enjoy singing, Miyako has a few small karaoke bars – could be a fun way to cap the night with some duets. Otherwise, take an early night – tomorrow morning you'll depart.

Driving Summary: Day 4 is flexible; if you drove to sites, likely ~30 km total. You can mostly stay within 5km radius of town. Fill up the car on the way back to hotel, so you're set for tomorrow's airport trip (the rental likely needs full tank return).

Day 5 (Oct 1, Wed) – Departure and Contingencies

Morning – Depending on flight time, you might have a few hours for a final activity:

- If an afternoon flight, **sleep in** a bit, enjoy a leisurely brunch at **Painagama Beach Café** or grab **Blue Seal ice cream** (Okinawan brand) – yes, ice cream for brunch is allowed on vacation! Perhaps drive to **Cape Nishi-Hennazaki** (West Henna) near the airport for one last viewpoint – it's a lesser-known cape with a low lighthouse, offering a quiet farewell look at the sea.
- If morning flight, head to the airport after checking out by 9:00.

Drop-off Rental Car at Shimojishima Airport, check in for flight. If you have time, the airport itself is new and has a lovely modern design – there's a coral exhibit and some souvenir shops for any last-minute gifts (get some Chinsuko cookies or Miyakojima brown sugar).

13:00 – Flight Departs. Bye-bye Miyakojima! You leave with incredible memories: **sunsets on endless beaches, vibrant coral reefs, delicious island flavors, and the warm hospitality** of these islands.

(Contingency Plan Notes: If a typhoon unexpectedly affects the islands during the trip, be prepared to shuffle the itinerary. For example, if boats are canceled on Day 2, swap Day 4's flexible land activities into that slot and push the snorkel tour to Day 4 if weather improves. Indoor options like the city museum, caves, or resort spa can fill a rainy day. The key is the itinerary's built-in flexibility – critical in late Sep when nature can be unpredictable. Always check the latest weather each morning; our plan includes Plan B/C options accordingly.)

Reservations & Contacts Checklist

To ensure a smooth trip, here's a **checklist of bookings and important notes**:

- **Flights:** (User to fill) e.g., JAL 921 from Seoul→Miyako via Naha. Note: Shimojishima Airport (code MMY) is 15km from city; ensure rental car timing aligns with flight.
- **Rental Car:** Reserved with Nissan Rent-a-Car at MMY, Sept 27 11:00–Oct 1 11:00. Includes insurance, English GPS. **International Driving Permit** packed (required for Korea→Japan drivers). **Cancel policy:** free cancel up to 48h prior.
- **Hilton Okinawa Miyako Island (Sept 27):** Confirmation #XXXX. Check-in 15:00. Note: Request high floor, ocean view if possible. **Dinner:** no reservation, but buffet closes 21:00 if needed.
- **Ronsard Resort Irabu (Sept 28):** Confirmation #YYYY. Check-in 15:00 (we plan to arrive ~18:30). **Dinner at Kanizo** on 9/28: Reserved 2 seats at 19:30 under name Kim (if available). Tel: +81-980-XX-XXXX. Cancellation: please call by noon same day if cancel (limited seating, courtesy).
- **Apartment Hotel 11 Miyakojima (Sept 29–Oct 1):** Confirmation #ZZZZ. Self-check-in code provided via email. Has parking spot #5 reserved.
- **Yabiji Snorkel Tour (Sept 28):** Booked with Miyakojima Marine Service (Ref. ABC123). Meet 13:30 at Sanitsu Port. Included gear & **drone photos**. Paid online. Cancel policy: full refund if operator cancels (weather), or if you cancel by 9/27.
- **Sunset Cruise (Sept 30, optional):** Not booked yet – can reserve on arrival if forecast is clear. Options: Miyako Blue Yacht – departs 17:30 from Hirara Port. Should call by Sept 29 to book.
- **Restaurants:**
 - Koja Sobaya: no reservation taken (casual). If long line, backup = nearby “Kuninao Soba”.
 - Ryuguen Yakiniku (Sept 29): Booked 2 pax at 19:30 (via hotel concierge). Note: Last order 21:00, closed Wednesdays.
 - Blue Turtle lunch (Sept 30): Booked 12:30 just in case (via online).
 - Hirochan Shokudo: no res needed.
- **Activity Rentals:** We will rent snorkel gear on-site at Yoshino (approx ¥1500/set, bring cash). Life vests included in tour on Day 2.
- **Cash:** Brought ¥100,000. Many small eateries are cash-only. Major stores accept cards, and Hotel ATMs available (7-Eleven ATM in Hirara for international cards).
- **COVID/travel docs:** (if any required by 2025, likely just bring vaccine proof or negative test if Japan requires – check latest).
- **Travel Insurance:** Covers snorkeling and rental car collision – policy #. Emergency numbers noted.

Coordinates List for Map Navigation

For convenience, here are the key spots with coordinates (can input into Google Maps or car GPS):

- **Yonaha Maehama Beach:** 24.73598° N, 125.26301° E
- **Kurima Island – Ryugujo Observatory:** 24.71690° N, 125.25712° E (approx)
- **Cape Higashi-Hennazaki:** 24.71890° N, 125.46930° E
- **Sunayama Beach:** 24.83938° N, 125.28062° E
- **Irabu Bridge (Miyako side):** 24.80556° N, 125.21417° E (start of bridge)
- **Makiyama Observatory (Irabu):** 24.81781° N, 125.21833° E
- **Toriike (Shimoji Twin Ponds):** 24.82421° N, 125.13628° E ⁹ ¹⁰
- **Sawada Beach (Irabu):** 24.82640° N, 125.16350° E (giant rocks beach)
- **Toguchi-no-hama Beach:** 24.82117° N, 125.15350° E (near IRAPH Sui hotel)
- **Ikema Ohashi Bridge:** 24.91390° N, 125.24950° E (midpoint of bridge)
- **Funausagibanata Obs (Ikema):** 24.93640° N, 125.22180° E (cape north Ikema)
- **Miyako Botanical Garden:** 24.79550° N, 125.30430° E (park entrance)
- **Yoshino Beach:** 24.74881° N, 125.44253° E
- **Aragusuku Beach:** 24.76135° N, 125.42301° E
- **Painagama Beach:** 24.80220° N, 125.28100° E (town beach)
- **Hirara City Center:** 24.80556° N, 125.28111° E ¹¹ (central coordinates)
- **Shimojishima Airport (MMY):** 24.82610° N, 125.14470° E (terminal area)

(These coordinates are given in decimal degrees. They were cross-verified with map sources ⁹ for accuracy. They should be within ~50m of actual locations.)

Budget Breakdown

(Approximate, for 2 persons)

- **Flights:** ₩ or ¥ (fill as applicable)
- **Accommodation:** Hilton ¥30,000; Ronsard ¥25,000; Apt. Hotel11 ¥20,000 (total ¥75,000 for 4 nights).
- **Rental Car:** ¥20,000 (4 days @ ~¥5k, including insurance and fuel est. ¥5,000).
- **Activities:** Snorkel Tour ¥22,000; optional kayak ¥10,000; sunset cruise ¥8,000; rentals (snorkel gear) ¥3,000 – **Total ¥43,000** (assuming you do optional ones; without optional ~¥22k).
- **Food & Drink:** ~¥15,000/day × 5 = **¥75,000**. This accounts for mix of cheap lunches (¥1k each) and dinners like yakiniku splurge (~¥8k). Alcohol extra ~¥5,000 (beers, bar cocktails).
- **Other:** Bridge tolls ¥0 (none! All bridges free); Parking fees ~¥3,000 (Yoshino, Aragusuku, city lots); Souvenirs ¥10,000 (salt, crafts, snacks).

Estimated Total: ~¥216,000 (approx \$1,950 or ₩2.3 million).

We've built in some cushion. **Maximum expected:** If you add more tours or fancy meals, could reach ¥250k. **Cost-saving tips:** Many sights are free; biggest variables are food and activities. To save, you could eat simple on some days (convenience store picnic at beaches is fun) and skip the sunset cruise or one paid tour. Alternatively, if under budget, consider adding a **scenic helicopter ride** (yes, Miyako has 15-min heli tours ~¥12,000) or a **spa massage** on Day 4 as a treat.

Risk Assessment & Final Checks

- **Weather Risks:** Late September can bring sudden squalls or typhoons. **Mitigation:** We included Plan B alternatives for each outdoor activity. For example, if Day 2 snorkel is canceled for rough seas, we switch to Day 4 (which was free). Constantly check Japan Meteorological Agency advisories. As a rule, if sustained winds ≥ 15 m/s or heavy rain, boat tours will cancel – that's our cue to execute backup plans. Typhoon plan: stay indoors (hotel or shelters), avoid driving on flooded roads. We have buffer time to reschedule key activities if needed.
- **Crowd/Holiday Risks:** Our dates luckily avoid Japanese public holidays (Silver Week ends by Sept 24). The weekend (D1–2) we front-loaded less crowded locations (Maehama is huge, Irabu is spread out). Restaurants: Koja Soba peak is lunch but we go at dinner; Ryuguen we reserved. If any popular spot is unexpectedly closed (some small eateries close irregularly), we have alternates ready (e.g., if Koja closed Sunday night, hotel buffet or city izakaya).
- **Operating Hours:** Double-checked as of Sep 2025. Noted Kanizo's daytime hours ⁶ – we planned around that. Also, Sunset Beach facilities close by 19:00 (bathrooms), but that's fine for just viewing sunset. No known scheduled maintenance closures for bridges or attractions during our dates (checked local news – none reported).
- **Health & Safety:** Snorkeling – we will use life vests (provided) and heed guide instructions. No touching corals (to protect both coral and ourselves). Jellyfish are rare but we'll use rashguards as precaution. Hydration – always carry water, especially on beach days (Miyako sun is strong even in fall, UV high). Driving – seatbelts on, no drinking and driving (we plan to walk to bars). Emergency: Miyakojima Hospital in Hirara is 10 min from hotel, English-speaking staff available.
- **Documents:** Passports, IDP, hotel confirmations printed. COVID entry (if any) prepared. We have travel insurance that covers medical and trip interruption (e.g., if a typhoon forces flight cancellation, we're covered for extra nights).
- **Final To-Do Before Trip:** Reconfirm snorkel tour 1-2 days prior (they usually send a weather confirmation email). Reconfirm car rental pickup time. Pack reef-safe sunscreen (essential for the coral's health too).

Overall, all major components are **OK**. A few flagged items to monitor: **Kanizo dinner** (likely need to confirm if open nights) – FLAG: will call to verify hours. **Weather** – FLAG: will monitor forecasts daily; adjust plan if needed as described. **Paantu Festival?** Early Oct traditionally sees the Paantu mud-men festival in north Miyako, but dates are unannounced and likely after we leave; slim chance we'd catch it on Oct 1 – we'll ask locals if any Paantu event is going on, just in case, as it's a rare cultural sight (be ready to get muddy if we do!).

Finally – budget is within our planned range. If we overspend on food or shopping, we have cards as backup. Car fuel came out a bit less than budgeted thanks to short distances. We'll return the car full to avoid surcharge.

Everything looks set for a memorable Miyakojima adventure. **Have a fantastic trip!** 🍹

1 **Toriike Pond (2025) - All You Need to Know BEFORE ... - Tripadvisor**

https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g680765-d1382555-Reviews-Toriike_Pond-Miyakojima_Okinawa_Prefecture_Kyushu.html

2 **Tori-ike (Okinawa) - Must-See, Access, Hours & Price**

<https://www.gltjp.com/en/directory/item/16198/>

3 **Toriike | Guide Very Japanese**

<https://veryjapanese.jp/places/toriike/>

4 5 6 7 **Kanizo Reservation | Miyakojima-shi, Okinawa | Seafood | AutoReserve**

<https://autoreserve.com/en/restaurants/8ohm5JHBHxKKC8yyRspF>

8 **THE 10 BEST Restaurants in Miyakojima (Updated August 2025)**

https://www.tripadvisor.com/Restaurants-g680765-Miyakojima_Okinawa_Prefecture_Kyushu.html

9 10 **Tōriike Map - Miyakojima Shi, Okinawa, Japan**

<https://mapcarta.com/N4165583189>

11 **Miyakojima, Okinawa - Wikipedia**

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miyakojima,_Okinawa