

AMAKUSA MAP

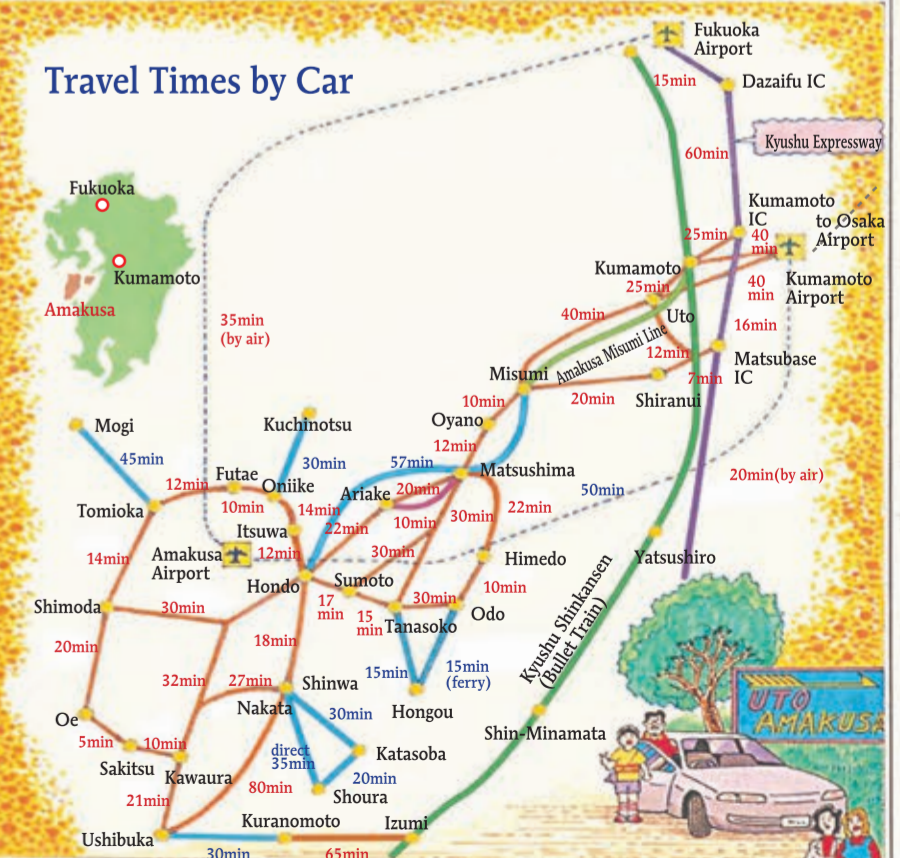
According to oral tradition, the Amakusa-Shimabara Rebellion (1637-1638) was said to be an uprising of Christians, but actually it was a peasant riot not directly motivated by religious causes. It happened because the local peasants were burdened with unreasonably heavy taxes under the Tokugawa Shogunate. Even after the rebellion was crushed, Shigenari Suzuki, an official in charge of the Amakusa Islands, is said to have asked the shogun to ease the tax burden on his people, explaining that the requisite amount of rice could not be grown in Amakusa's infertile soils.



Uto City was founded by Yukinaga Konishi, an autonomous warrior baron. The main tower of Uto Castle, originally called *Tsuruno-Shiro* (Crane Tower), presently stands as *Uto-Yagura* (Uto Tower) at the Kumamoto Castle.

In medieval times, Amakusa used to be divided into five areas: Amakusa, Oyano, Shiki, Kotsuura, and Sumoto, and governed by powerful clans collectively called the 'Amakusa Goninshu'. It is said that some members of these clans traveled overseas and introduced foreign culture to Amakusa. In 1591, a theological school called the Amakusa Colegio was founded by visiting Portuguese missionaries.

The Amakusa Five Bridges (Amakusa Goko)



The easiest way to approach Amakusa is via the Five Bridges that link Amakusa to Uto Peninsula and mainland Kyushu. To arrive at the first bridge, most travelers use National Highway 57, which winds along the north coast of the peninsula. National Highway 266, which follows the peninsula's south coast and connects to the Kyushu Expressway at Matsubase Interchange, is an alternative approach route. Ferries connect Amakusa to Nagasaki Prefecture in the north; Kagoshima Prefecture in the south can be reached via another convenient ferry departing from the town of Ushibuka. Amakusa can also be reached expeditiously via a short and scenic flight from either Kumamoto or Fukuoka.

Beautiful wine-colored sunsets can be seen on the west coast

Dolphin Watching
About 200 dolphins are said to live offshore Itsuwa Town. Guided by local fishermen, dolphin watching tours offer you an amazing opportunity to see dolphins swimming and jumping up close.
Amakusa Dolphin Information Hotline: 0969-26-4500