



# Japanese Island Life

An expat's guide to living on Shodoshima



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# Introduction

Thank you for picking up this brochure. Shodoshima is the second largest island in the Seto Inland Sea. It is a small island but full of history, nature and many undiscovered gems. Our hope is to share what Shodoshima has to offer and hopefully you will come and visit us one day and maybe even consider living here.

## Settling in Japan? How about Shodoshima?

### Deep Japan, Deep Shodoshima

How does living on a small island appeal to you? Japan may be a small country, but it consists of thousands of islands. Shodoshima is one small island filled with beauty. Your life will be filled with happiness and excitement if you choose this island as your destination.

Shodoshima is famous as the “island of olives” but do not underestimate what it has to offer - olives alone are not enough to describe what Shodoshima is all about. The island has “deep” and traditional cultures that are still alive today. The farming and fishing industries, which in ancient times occupied the main part of people’s lives, the shrines and temples that met their spiritual needs, and the food culture such as soy sauce and somen noodles, now considered part of ancient history in many parts of Japan, still play an important role in local people’s lives, and you will get to experience them if you live here.



### A much sought-after destination as a place to settle

Among the Japanese, Shodoshima is a popular place to move to for people who are looking for a more relaxed and laid-back lifestyle. Interesting statistics show that approximately 300 people give up city life and move to the island each year. They move here for various reasons - in search of a new challenge or a healthy work-life balance or a better environment for raising children, to name a few. A small but steadily growing number of non-Japanese are also choosing to move here. This is having an invigorating and positive impact on an island whose population is rapidly decreasing.



### Only 5 minutes to beautiful beaches and mountains. Which do you fancy today?

Shodoshima is blessed with abundant nature. A short drive will take you to one of its many beautiful beaches. The calm Seto Inland Sea with its many small islands may not be suitable for surfing, but rest assured, there are many other activities you can enjoy: sailing, kayaking, standup paddleboarding (SUP) and, of course, swimming. The island offers the ideal surroundings for water sport activities.

For those who are keen on hiking, there is no end of trails to choose from. Attractive trekking routes are found throughout the island. One of the most popular hikes is to the summit of Mt. Hoshigajo (816m), the highest peak in the entire Seto Inland Sea. The views of Honshu and Shikoku in the distance are breathtaking.

## All Conveniences on Hand



### Easy access to the island

Located almost in the center of the Seto Inland Sea, Shodoshima is easily accessible with five ports connecting it to different parts of Japan and as many as 150 daily ferry connections. Fancy a mini getaway from the island? You can easily access Takamatsu, Okayama, Kobe and Himeji for a one-day or two-day trip.



### All the conveniences of modern life

Though Shodoshima is a remote island in Kagawa Prefecture, all the conveniences of modern life are within reach. Supermarkets, drugstores and convenience stores are located around the island and you can get most of your daily needs without having to leave the island. Along with internet shopping, you will find life here as comfortable and convenient as living in a big town.

## “Omotenashi” Generous Hospitality Culturally Passed Down For Over 1200 Years



### Pilgrimage culture

Shodoshima has a 1200-year-old pilgrimage culture. This culture was supposedly established along with the local ancient animism fused with Buddhism. Throughout the island you will find Buddhist temples and caves of significant religious importance where the old traditions are still carried on, and many pilgrims, known as Ohenro-san, come from all over the world every year.



### Welcoming culture

Shodoshima became a major tourist destination after World War II. To this day, it welcomes approximately 1.1 million visitors every year. As a popular holiday destination, Shodoshima prides itself on its open-mindedness and welcoming attitude towards visitors from outside the island.

We hope that you will try communicating with the locals during your stay; “Konnichiwa” is always a good start! The islanders might surprise you by offering “omotenashi” which could be an invitation to tea or a gift of local fresh fruit.



# All About Shodoshima

## Map and How to Get Here



## Annual Events

### Events

Spring	Hishio-no-Sato Soy Sauce Village Festival Daishi-ichi Market Shodoshima Olive Marathon Hitoyama Farmers Kabuki Performance	Autumn	Start of somen noodle-making season Autumn Festival Nakayama Farmers Kabuki Performance Olive harvesting season Autumn foliage season in Kankakei Gorge
Summer	Mushi Okuri, a traditional event to drive away crop-eating insects with pine torches Official Beach Opening Day Shodoshima Summer Festival	Winter	Daishi-ichi Market Shodoshima Ekiden Marathon Tondo New Year Bonfire Festival Reijo-Biraki, start of spring pilgrimage season Setonaikai Turtle Full-Marathon

### Spring



Cherry blossoms



Shodoshima Olive Marathon

### Summer



Beach



Mushi Okuri

A traditional event to drive away crop-eating insects with pine torches





## Autumn



Autumn Festival



Nakayama Farmers Kabuki Performance

## Winter



Snow in Nakayama



Reijo-Biraki  
Start of spring pilgrimage season

# Life in Shodoshima

## Basic Information



### Job opportunities

Work is a key part of our lives and you may want to find a job locally. While the choices are limited compared to big cities, Shodoshima does offer a number of job opportunities. As tourism and food manufacturing are two major industries here, these sectors might be a good place to start. The options include hospitality positions at hotels and tourism facilities, employment in soy sauce and somen noodle factories and shops, and the olive industry.



### Housing

Shodoshima is a popular destination for people who are looking for a lifestyle change. This has resulted in limited availability of housing that is in relatively good condition. So we suggest that you start looking for property as soon as you consider settling on the island.



### Cost of living

The cost of living varies depending on how luxurious or simple a life you want to lead on the island. Whatever your lifestyle, however, the cost of living is much lower than in the big cities. If you are single, for example, you can live on as little as ¥150,000 per month.



## Transportation



Shodoshima is big enough to require some form of transport. While public buses and taxis are available, a car or motorbike is essential for everyday use.

## Medical Facilities



### Shodoshima Chuo Byoin (Shodoshima Central Hospital)

The island's largest general hospital, which opened in 2016, plays a core role in local healthcare services, covering internal medicine, pediatrics, surgery, orthopedics, neurosurgery, dermatology, urology, obstetrics and gynecology, ophthalmology, otolaryngology, rehabilitation, radiology and dialysis.

There are numerous clinics and dentists on the island. For emergencies or complicated medical cases, an air ambulance helicopter is available to transport patients to medical facilities outside the island.



# Meet Non-Japanese Residents

Shodoshima-cho has approximately 150 non-Japanese residents. Of all the places they could choose from, why did they end up coming to Shodoshima? We interviewed a few of these Shodoshima fans, asking what brought them here and what they find attractive about the island.

We hope that the interviews will help you get to know the island better and possibly join us here in the future.



## Yi Chun Shen

### 《 Profile 》

Born and raised in Taiwan. Came to Shodoshima on an exchange program. Fell in love with the island lifestyle and decided to look for a way to stay longer. Currently works for an olive company on the island.

### Your experiences in Shodoshima

One of the projects I am proud to be part of to this day is making a bench for local seniors who often play Japanese croquet in the morning. One day my friend and I noticed that there was no bench for them to sit down, so we made one and gave it to them as a gift. This was a turning point for me to get to know the local people.

As I got to know the locals better and we became friends, they started to look after me like a family. One day when we had very stormy weather, one of them came to my house to make sure I was safe. It was a really heartwarming experience.

### What brought you to Shodoshima?

I first came to Shodoshima as part of the “Koushi” Project, where a team of people from Taiwan and Hong Kong merge into local life and come up with support projects for locals. After that, I had a chance to work as part of the Setouchi Triennale art festival, and now I have a job at a local olive company.

### What reasons would you give for moving to Shodoshima?

The nature, the kindheartedness of the local people, and the simple lifestyle. Life is simple - that was a lesson I have learned from the islanders.





## Matthew Iannarone

### 《 Profile 》

From Texas, USA. Studied anthropology with a focus on religion. Walked the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrimage route before coming to Japan.

### Your experiences in Shodoshima

My interests include outdoor hiking and religion. When I encountered “Ohenro” culture, it dovetailed spot-on with these two interests. After completing the Shikoku Pilgrimage and the Shodoshima version, I realized that there was no comprehensive Shodoshima Ohenro guide or map for English speakers. So I helped create a map and a guide booklet for the Shodoshima Pilgrimage and worshipping at the temples. Another passion I share with my wife is to have guests from overseas at our guest house, Sen Guesthouse. It is a hub for overseas tourists and especially Ohenro walkers.

### What brought you to Shodoshima?

My wife Noriko and I had to find a place to move to from Ehime, where we had a guesthouse. As Noriko is originally from Kagawa, Shodoshima fell within the scope of our choice of destination. When I visited the island, I immediately fell in love with its abundant nature, rich history and traditional cultures. I now call Shodoshima my “final destination”.

### What reasons would you give for moving to Shodoshima?

Shodoshima is a great place to settle for several reasons.

1. Great community - it is easy to make friends with local old-timers as well as people who have moved here looking for a more relaxed, laid-back lifestyle. Shodoshima has always had people coming and going throughout its history, so perhaps it is used to welcoming newcomers.
2. Great potential for starting a business - it has approximately 30,000 people, good infrastructure, various event schedules and wide-ranging entertainment, and it is a lively and fun place to live.





## Javier Camara

### 《 Profile 》

From Barcelona, Spain. Worked as a film restorer in Spain. Enjoys Shodoshima's community and nature. Currently works as a travel consultant.

### What brought you to Shodoshima?

I came here with my family (my wife Ayano and 8-year-old son Saigon) to find a new lifestyle, especially for our son.

### You experiences in Shodoshima

Of the various places we have lived, Barcelona was our main base. Coming to Shodoshima was a life-changing experience. Every day is a new adventure. My days are filled with something that I never had a chance to try when I lived in Barcelona. For example, I now enjoy fishing, kayaking, gardening, and so many other experiences. Surrounded by nature and animals, life here is good. Also, this is a place to experience "real Japan". Traditional soy sauce factories, stone quarrying history, ohenro pilgrimage... All here within reach and I think things are more "exotic" in the countryside like Shodoshima. The downside, if any, is missing out on cultural exposure such as concerts and shopping. But for shopping, we are OK as long as we have the internet.

### What reasons would you give for moving to Shodoshima?

Shodoshima is perfect for people who live in the city and need nature, and perhaps families with small children. Remote working is a plus. It is also a great place to learn the Japanese language as you find more people to talk to.





# Supporting Team and Resources

## What is Shodoshima Global Community Team?

As of June 2020, there were over 2.8 million foreigners living in Japan (source: Immigration and Residence Administration Office). The number of immigrants is increasing and will continue to do so.

This is true for Shodoshima as well. Every year the island welcomes new non-Japanese residents. It is our mission to establish a multicultural, accepting and friendly society for all people from different backgrounds. Founded in May 2020, Shodoshima Global Community Team is small, but we aim to develop a big global community. We look forward to you joining us and to supporting you when you need a hand.

## Active Members



Nobu Hojiro

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Active member and founder of Shodoshima Global Community Team since May 2020. After completing an M.A. in international politics at the University of Bristol in the U.K., Nobu worked as a government official in Tokyo and was involved in numerous international conferences. With his wife and two preschool-age children, he moved to Shodoshima in 2019 in search of a major lifestyle change. The family now lives happily in a small community by the sea.



Mitsi Morikawa

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Co-founder and team member. Lived overseas (mostly in the U.S.A. and New Zealand) for 22 years and sailed across the Pacific Ocean on a yacht. With M.A.s and overseas experience in business and non-profit organizations, Mitsi has been working as Shodoshima's International/Global Community Advisor since 2016. Now based in Takamatsu with two teenage children, she loves the ferry commute to Shodoshima.

## Prefectural Organizations (Takamatsu City, Kagawa Prefecture)



### IPAL Kagawa, Kagawa International Exchange Association

is a prefectural organization which supports non-Japanese residents living in Kagawa with the aim of creating melting-pot towns/cities of people from various backgrounds and cultures. The association plays a core role in creating global communities while offering various services including interpreting, Japanese language lessons and multicultural events, to name a few.



### The Kagawa Foreigner Counseling Support Center

offers consulting services along with various language assistance. It is a great place to go if you have any questions, including legal matters, while living in Shodoshima. Global Community Shodoshima will be happy to put you in touch with the center.

<http://www.i-pal.or.jp> (in 19 languages)

Tel : 087-837-0411

Email : soudan@i-pal.or.jp

## Shodoshima Japanese Language Class



In Japan, Japanese is the main language and Shodoshima is no exception. Speaking and understanding basic Japanese is a must if you plan to live in this country and we are here to help you learn the basic language.

We offer Japanese language classes to non-Japanese residents in Shodoshima with the support of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. We hope you will join us to learn the language and understand the local culture. Information about our activities can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/GlobalCommunityShodoshima>





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