

17 Matsumoto-toge Pass



This section was repaved about 300 years ago by skilled masons. You can really appreciate their skill if you look at their work from the side. It looks like a stone wall. No mortar or cement are used in the traditional Japanese masonry.



There is a viewpoint with a gazebo about a ten minute walk south from the pass. Shichiri Mihama Beach stretches 25km to Shingu, where Hayatama Grand Shrine is located. The view of the beach and the mountains is breathtaking.



Once you reach the pass, a large guardian statue is there to welcome you. Long ago, a hunter set out early in the morning just before dawn. On returning at dusk, he saw it in the waning light and mistook it for a phantom. He shot, and even today you can see the hole where the bullet hit the very day the statue was erected.



In 1868, the fishermen in this area were arrested after getting into a fight over fishing territories. Their punishment was to repave sections of the path in need of repair as community service. It took them two years to finish.

■ **Distance** / Approx. 4.1Km from Odomari Station to Kumano-shi Station

■ **Walking time** / 1hr. and 45mins.

■ **Level** / ★

■ **The Course** / The stone path is still intact for most of this route. The life-size guardian statue welcomes you at the pass, surrounded by bamboo. Beyond the pass, you can see Beach Route to Shingu, no more passes to go over. Pilgrims must have been excited with their goal in sight, the first of the Three Grand Shrines of Kumano, Shingu Hayatama Taisha. For a shorter (but scenic) course, you can continue on past the gazebo, down through the cherry trees to make your way back to Onigajo and back to Odomari station.