

Day 5 Yunomine → Ukegawa → Koguchi

Distance and elevation

"Ohayo Gozaimasu!" Good Morning!

Total walking distance:

14.5km / 9.0 miles

(*or 19.5km/12 miles if skipping the morning bus transfer and walking via Dainchigoe Pass to the trailhead)

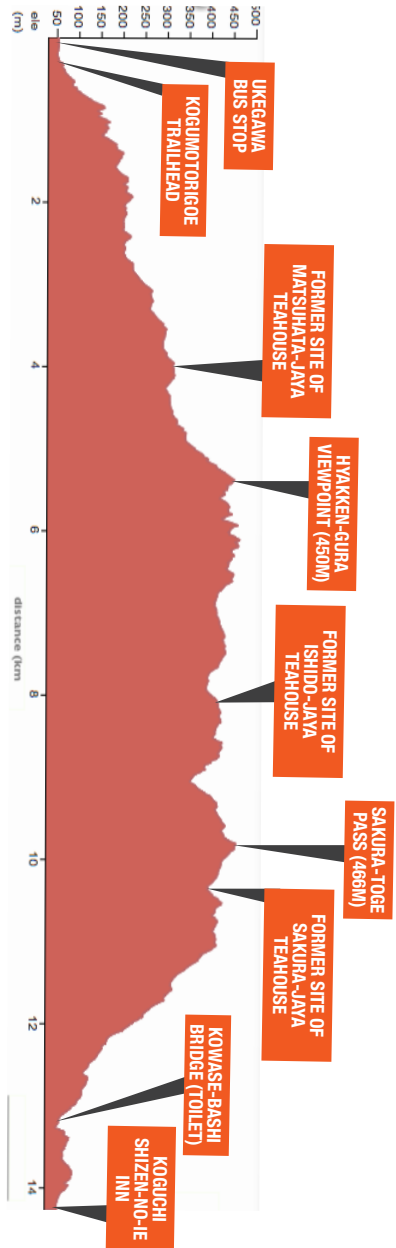
Today's walk: Ukegawa Bus Stop 請川バス停 → Koguchi Shizen-no-ie Inn 小口自然の家
via Kogumotorigoe Pass 小雲取越

Walking distance: 14.3km/8.9 miles

Elevation: +602 / -597 m

Max Grade: 24%

Avg. Grade: -0.0%



Overview Course walking options

RECOMMENDED COURSE:

The recommended course today is approximately 14km along primarily forest trail. Begin your day with an early breakfast and departure by bus to the trailhead at UKEGAWA. Before leaving your inn, please confirm that main luggage is being sent by same-day courier service to tonight's accommodation.

An early start, leave the inn with enough time to make it to the “Yunomine Onsen” bus stop and catch a bus to UKEGAWA (Typically an 8:31 departure, please confirm the bus departure times with inn staff). After alighting the bus, buy your picnic bento lunch at the convenience store in Ukegawa before proceeding to the Kogumotorigoe trailhead. (*Convenience store closed on Wednesdays). You may also shop for bento lunches and snacks at the small shop across the road from the convenience store (*Please be careful of traffic when crossing!) Begin your walk progressively up to Hyakken-gura, which offers some of the most stupendous mountain views of the tour. Continue to your highest point at Sakura-toge Pass (466m), before a steep down to your endpoint at Koguchi. Relax in the quiet simplicity of this small village, which serves as a rest point before your big day tomorrow up and over the Ogomotorigoe pass to Nachi Taisha. If weather/seasons permit, you may enjoy a swim in the river here. Your lodging tonight is a former middle school, renovated for a basic but comfortable stay. Your hosts are, as ever, friendly and serve hearty, local food.

A MORE CHALLENGING DAY:

Though the above recommended course is a suitable challenge for most pilgrims (as well as a good day to prepare for the even more challenging Ogomotorigoe trail you will encounter the next day), for those who feel that they need to stretch their legs a bit more, you may forego the morning bus and walk approximately 5km to Ukegawa and the Kogumotorigoe trailhead. This would require an early start (departure by 8am recommended) and entail a climb over the Dainichigoe Pass, which in itself is no small feat. To do this course, follow yesterday's notes, in reverse, back over the Dainichigoe Pass to Hongu. From there, follow the “Alternative 1” map and notes on the following pages to Ukegawa and the start of the Kogumotorigoe trailhead.

NOT FEELING WELL AND/OR RAIN DAY:

If not feeling in the best shape this morning, or if thunderstorms are imminent, we do not recommend attempting today's walking course. The down at the end of the trail can be especially treacherous in the rain. In this case, relax in Yunomine or take the bus to Hongu and spend some time there, before transferring by bus to Koguchi (via Kanmaru bus stop). NOTE WELL! : Koguchi village and accommodation are fairly isolated, and so buses are few and far between. Please refer to the “Alternative 2” bus schedule options provided on the following pages. If not feeling well and you would rather negotiate a taxi from the inn, please let our offices know so that we may contact your next accommodation regarding an earlier arrival.

Day 5 Recommended Course Schedule Itinerary Summary

★ BEFORE LEAVING YUNOMINE ACCOMMODATION, BE SURE TO CONFIRM YOUR MAIN LUGGAGE DESTINATION AND PAY FOR ANY DRINKS FROM THE NIGHT BEFORE, AS WELL AS RETURN YOUR ROOM KEY!

- 7:00am Breakfast (or earlier if possible)
- 7:50 ★Confirm luggage being sent to tonight's accommodation:
Koguchi Shizen-no-ie 小口自然の家
- 8:00 (or before) Check-out / Leave accommodation

8:31 **BUS departing “Yunomine Onsen” bus stop**
(★Please confirm this bus time with inn staff as it is subject to change.)

Approximately fourteen minutes after embarking, alight the bus at **UKEGAWA**
(JPY340 *Please have small change or 1000 yen bill)

*Buy your picnic LUNCH at the nearby Yamazaki convenience store (★closed Wednesdays) or the small shop across the street.

- 9:00 Walk to the Kogumotorigoe trailhead
(★last chance to use nearby toilets)
- 9:05-9:15 Start your walk from the trailhead
- 10:30-11:00 Break at former site of Matsuhata Teahouse
- 11:15-11:40 Arrive Hyakkengura viewpoint
- 12:00 Picnic LUNCH at former Ishido Teahouse site
(forest shelter)
- 13:00 Finish lunch
- 13:30 Arrive at the top of Sakura-toge Pass (466m)
- 14:30 Finish steep down to Koguchi village
(Kowase-bashi Bridge ★Toilets available)
- 15:00 Arrive accommodation: Koguchi Shizen-no-ie
- 18:00 Dinner



LUGGAGE: Yunomine→Koguchi (Shizen-no-le) 小口自然の家

On check-out, please be sure to confirm your luggage is being sent by “takkyubin” 宅急便 courier to to tonight’s accommodation: **Koguchi Shizen-no-le**.

★The cost of sending one piece of luggage per person is included in your tour.

Koguchi-Shizen-no-le 小口自然の家

〒647-1201 和歌山県新宮市熊野川町上長井398

(Wakayama-ken, Shingu-shi, Kumanogawa-cho, Kaminagai 398

zip 647-1201) TEL: 0735-45-2434



BUS (Recommended course): 8:31 am (★Please confirm with staff)

The recommended course bus leaves “Yunomine Onsen” main bus stop at 8:31 am, if you would first like to walk back there, or 8:32 from the stop at the foot the inn’s hill (**★Be warned** the bus will likely be crowded if you do not ride from the main stop!). The main bus stop is in town, next to Toko-ji temple and across the road from Azumaya Inn (*see map on previous pages). Innkeepers, when available, may be able to give you a lift, or walk (approximately 10-15 minutes at a brisk pace) back to town.



From YUNOMINE ONSEN, the bus ride to UKEGAWA 請川 costs **JPY340** per person. **★Please have small change ready.** (Though you may usually change 1000yen bills on the bus, you will likely not be able to use anything larger).

The ride to Ukegawa takes approximately **15 minutes**. After crossing a bridge over

the river, be ready to press one of the many buttons on the bus when you hear your stop: **UKEGAWA** (“oo-keh-gah-wah”). Exit and pay the bus driver at the front. **★As it can often be crowded, we recommend trying to find a seat near the front if possible.** *See next page for alternative/rain course bus schedules.



★ LUNCH:

Please buy your picnic lunch for today at the Ukegawa convenience store (*closed on Wednesdays) or the small shop (bentos, etc. available) across from it.

(*You may also want to buy extra, non-perishable snacks for the following big walking day, as the provided lunch tomorrow can be a bit light for some. Though there is a small snack shop in Koguchi village, the convenience store in Ukegawa has more variety.)

★ **ALTERNATIVE 1: MORE CHALLENGING COURSE** (SKIPPING THE INITIAL BUS TO UKEGAWA/THE KOGUMOTORIGOE TRAILHEAD AND, INSTEAD, WALKING AN EXTRA 5KM THERE OVER THE DAINICHIGOE PASS)

IF YOU WOULD RATHER NOT TAKE THE BUS, YOUR ALTERNATIVE COURSE IS TO WALK BACK TO YUNOMINE ONSEN AND OVER THE DAINICHIGOE TRAILHEAD TO HONGU, FOLLOWED BY APPROXIMATELY ANOTHER 3KM ON ASPHALT TO UKEGAWA AND THE KOGUMOTORIGOE TRAILHEAD. THIS SIGNIFIES ANOTHER 5KM TOTAL OF WALKING, LIKELY TAKING AN EXTRA 2-3HOURS AT A MODERATE PACE.

WALKING DIRECTIONS:

- Leave Yunomine early (by 8am recommended), and follow yesterday's notes (in reverse) back over the Dainichigoe pass.

2.5km

- At the end of the rock stairs, continue straight to Hongu's main road. Turn RIGHT on to it, passing the Eneos petrol station and heading away from town.

50m



★ You will be following this road 2.5km to Ukegawa :



- Stay along the road the entire way. Where the sidewalk narrows, please be aware of traffic!

As the sidewalk crosses a river (a tributary to the larger Kumano River), continue until you reach a curved guardrail stop. Follow the sidewalk right to cross the Ukegawa town road and continue left to the Yamazaki Convenience Store ahead.

2.5km



★ From here, please follow the recommended course (Kogumotorigoe trail to Koguchi) detailed on the following pages.



ALTERNATIVE 2: CHOOSING NOT TO WALK (SKIPPING TODAY'S WALK DUE TO RAIN OR NOT FEELING WELL):

IF HEAVY RAIN, OR YOU DO NOT FEEL UP FOR A WALK, YOUR ALTERNATIVE COURSE IS TO FOREGO TODAY'S WALK AND EITHER SPEND SOME TIME IN YUNOMINE, OR TAKE A BUS BACK TO HONGU, PERUSE THE AREA AND HAVE LUNCH BEFORE CONTINUING BY BUS TO YOUR ACCOMMODATION IN KOGUCHI (VIA TRANSFER AT "KANMARU" BUS STOP). KOGUCHI ACCOMMODATION CHECK-IN IS FROM 3PM, AND THERE ARE LIMITED THINGS TO SEE/DO IN YUNOMINE AND KOGUCHI, SO WE RECOMMEND MORE TIME SPENT IN HONGU. YOU MAY RE-VISIT THE SHRINE AND OYUNOHARA, SPEND SOME TIME INDOORS AT THE HERITAGE CENTER, OR JUST REST AT A LOCAL CAFE. ★ THERE ARE LIMITED BUSES, SO PLEASE NOTE WELL BELOW:

★YUNOMINE → HONGU→KANMARU→KOGUCHI: IF FIRST GOING FROM YUNOMINE BACK TO TO HONGU IN THE MORNING, TAKE THE BUS FROM "YUNOMINE ONSEN" AND GET OFF AT "HONGU TAISHA MAE" (I.E. THE HERITAGE CENTER). PLEASE ASK INNKEEPERS REGARDING AVAILABLE BUS TIMES. THE BUS TAKES ROUGHLY 15 MINUTES AND COSTS JPY310 PER PERSON. FROM HERE, TRANSFER BUSES USING THE SCHEDULE BELOW AND HEAD ON TO KOGUCHI (VIA KANMARU),THE BUS FROM HONGU TO KANMARU TAKES ROUGHLY 30 MINUTES AND COSTS JPY870 PER PERSON. THE BUS FROM KANMARU TO KOGUCHI TAKES ROUGLY 15 MINUTES AND COSTS JPY100 PER PERSON.

★If choosing this course, we recommend confirming below bus schedule and transfer times with the inn before departure, as they may change with the season. You may also decide to take a taxi from Hongu Taisha to Koguchi for roughly JPY8,000. Please arrange with innkeepers or call our offices in this case.



WEEKDAYS (MON-FRI) BUS SCHEDULE:
HONGU TAISHA MAE (HERITAGE CENTER)→ KANMARU → KOGUCHI

OPTION 1.) DEPART 14:45 HONGU TAISHA MAE → ARRIVE 15:10 KANMARU (JPY870)
WAIT AT KANMARU BUS STOP FOR TRANSFER BUS TO ARRIVE
DEPART 15:45 KANMARU →ARRIVE 15:57 KOGUCHI (JPY100)

OPTION 2.) DEPART 16:15 HONGU TAISHA MAE - ARRIVE 16:40 KANMARU (JPY870)
WAIT AT KANMARU BUS STOP FOR TRANSFER BUS TO ARRIVE
DEPART 16:44 KANMARU -- ARRIVE 16:46 KOGUCHI (JPY100)

Day 5 Arrival in Ukegawa

(i) AFTER BEING DROPPED OFF AT UKUGAWA BUS STOP, PROCEED STRAIGHT IN THE SAME DIRECTION AS THE BUS. APPROXIMATELY 100M ON IS THE YAMAZAKI CONVENIENCE STORE. ★BUY LUNCH FOR TODAY (AND/OR SNACKS TO SUPPLEMENT TOMORROW'S LUNCH), AS WELL AS EXTRA WATER, IF NEEDED. (★-1-1.5 LITERS PER PERSON RECOMMENDED. THIS WILL BE YOUR LAST CHANCE FOR WATER FOR THE ENTIRETY OF THE 13KM WALK OVER THE PASS)



Walking Directions

Continue straight (or if exiting the Yamazaki convenience store, turn right). Continue over a bridge and soon reach a Kumano Kodo sign and Shimojibashi bus stop.

210m

★The concrete steps going up right here are the Kogumotorigoe trailhead.



*TOILET: WE RECOMMEND USING THE FACILITIES BEFORE YOU BEGIN AS THERE ARE ONLY ONE OPTION ALONG TODAY'S ROUTE (SAVE "SHOOTING THE PHEASANT" OR "PICKING THE FLOWERS", AS THEY SAY IN JAPANESE). YOU MAY GO 150M STRAIGHT ON THE ROAD (PAST THE TRAILHEAD STEPS) AND USE THE WESTERN-STYLE TOILET ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROAD.



150m

•Go up the trailhead concrete steps. *From here, it is 13km to your destination of Koguchi 小口. Follow the curve of the steps left. (i.e. DO NOT mistakenly enter the diverging right path into the bamboo forest).

•Continue past the homes. Head right and up as it turns to asphalt lane. Follow this asphalt straight up past the homes to reach another set of stone steps leading up right.

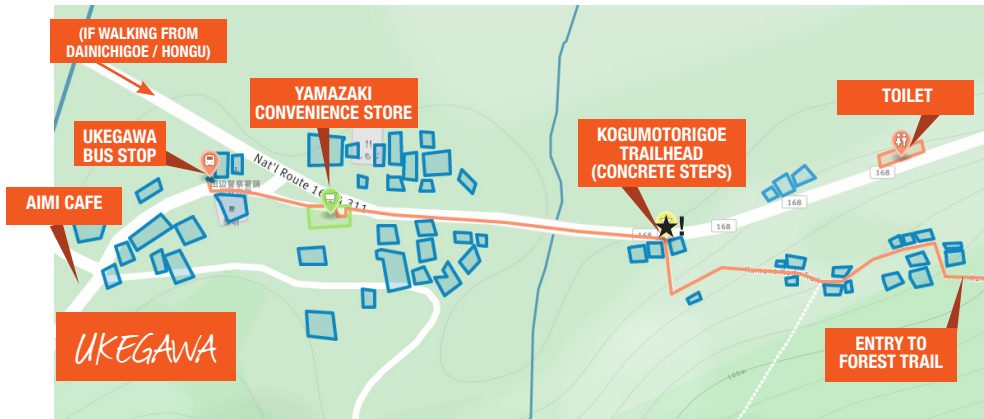


33m

210m

· A sign points to Koguchi 小口. Follow up the stone steps and grassy path to reach the forest trail entry.

40m



The Kogumotorigoe Pass 小雲取越

The Kogumotorigoe, or “small cloud grasping” pass (as opposed to tomorrow’s Ogumotorigoe “large cloud grasping” pass), is the lighter of the two-day courses that pilgrims would have undertaken to reach Nachi Taisha grand shrine from Hongu by foot. Another alternative, for those with the means, would have been to travel by boat along the Kumano River from Hongu Taisha to Shingu’s Hayatama Taisha grand shrine, and then walk to Nachi from there. Due to the

damming of the river to prevent floods, this is no longer a viable option. For the return route home (or if starting from the opposite direction, for example along the route from Ise Grand Shrine to Hongu Taisha), these passes would have been the only viable option for pilgrims, as travelling upriver by boat would not become possible until the introduction of fuel engines.

The scenery along the cloud passes is spectacular and the terrain, geologically unique from walks you have done thus far, lends itself to a feeling of some truly prehistoric storyline: One can imagine Emperor Jimmu being led along the misty paths by a Yatagarasu three-legged crow here. The Kogumotorigoe, in particular, was well-known for its Hyakken-gura “3600 mountain peak” viewpoint, as well as the many tea houses that once lined the way, complete with stories of wily innkeepers tricking guests into staying or “forgetting” their things along the way. The stone foundations of old mountain settlements and rice paddy fields, now replaced by cedar and cypress forest, are marked by large, poem-inscribed stones that pay tribute to the past.



Walking Directions: Kogumotorigoe trail to Koguchi



THIS TRAIL IS KNOWN TO HARBOR *MAMUSHI* PIT VIPERS WHICH, THOUGH SMALL AND HARMLESS-LOOKING, ARE IN FACT VENEMOUS AND CAN JUMP UP TO ONE METER. WATCH YOUR STEP AND PLEASE DON'T TOUCH ANY SNAKES!



★ YOU MAY NOW NOTICE THAT THE 500M DISTANCE MARKER POSTS, INSTEAD OF COUNTING UP, ARE NOW COUNTING DOWN FROM #54. UPON REACHING NACHI TAISHA TOMORROW, YOU WILL MAKE IT TO ZERO, HAVING WALKED APPROXIMATELY 27KM (16.8 MILES) OVER THE KOGUMOTORIGOE AND OGUMOTORIGOE “CLOUD” PASSES.

• Entering the forest, you will be heading progressively up 390m in elevation to the Hyakkengura viewpoint. This is not your highest point of the day, but it is your most scenic.



5-1 /More
on Matsuhata
tea house

• Always staying on the main trail path, continue 3.8km (2.4 miles) until you reach the remains of the Matsuhata tea house and settlement. It takes approximately 1.5 hours to get here, and we recommend a break for snacks and water before continuing your climb to the viewpoint.



3.8 km

★ Take care to stay on the trail as this area is known for its vipers!



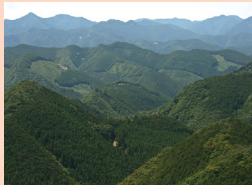
• Continue straight up the main path and DO NOT follow the turnoff to Banze Toge Pass (a part of the Ise-ji route leading to Ise Shrine).

300m

☆ From here it is 8.9 km to Koguchi.

• Take care on wet footbridges over mountain streams and reach the Hyakkengura viewpoint.

1.4 km



Hyakkengura 百間くら (Elevation: 450m)

The Hyakkengura viewpoint, with its protective Jizo statue, overlooks the supposed “3,600 peaks of Kumano”. But it is more than just a viewpoint. On a clear day, you may notice the riverbed to the northwest. This is the Kumano River from whence you came. For those pilgrims and practitioners of Shugendo (mountain ascetic Buddhism) arriving from Ise or other north-eastern destinations, this would

be their first glimpse of the holy Hongu valley. Pilgrims would leave their tea house/inn early to see the sunrise here, and even today, Shugendo monks are known to blow their conch shells to celebrate a safe arrival. The reverberations echo across the valley floor, and you may try the same with a Japanese-style “Ya-ho-!”.

·Descending from the viewpoint, walk an undulating 2km (1.2 miles) approximately another 30-40 minutes to your sheltered lunch spot at **Ishido-chaya**.

5-2 / More on landslides

★Take care not to loiter at the area marked “Falling rocks”. This is the remnants of a landslide that occurred in March 2015 and it is still a potentially hazardous area.



·Reach an intersecting forestry road, but continue straight on the trail.

900m



A SIGN HERE POINTS RIGHT, 150M TO A SOLAR-POWERED COMPOST TOILET (THE FIRST TO BE INSTALLED IN 2004 UPON THE AREA'S WORLD HERITAGE RECOGNITION). PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE IS NO POTTABLE WATER AVAILABLE HERE.

★ **YOUR NEXT AVAILABLE TOILET WILL BE 5.6KM ON AT THE END OF THE TRAIL.**

5-3 / More on Jizo and Sai-no-kawara

·Heading down, reach the Sai-no-kawara Jizo statue, covered in stones. A Jizo to protect lost children in the afterlife, you may also help them build karma by placing a rock on the pile.



800m



·Reach the former site of of Ishido-Chaya Tea House and your picnic **LUNCH** shelter. Spend some time here to rest and regain some energy.

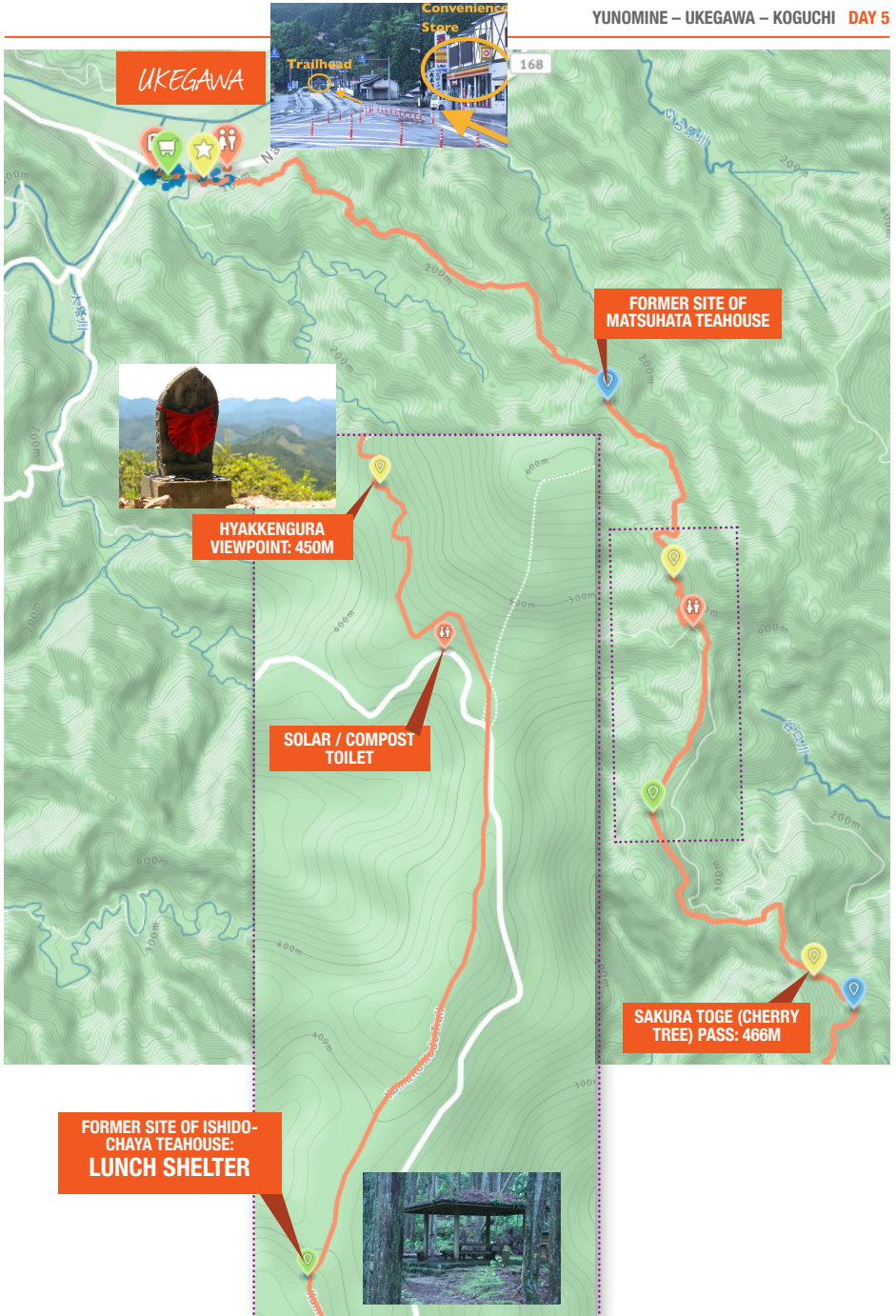
400m

·After lunch, continue on the undulating and mostly ascending path to the top of the Sakura Toge (i.e. “Cherry Tree Pass”), the highest point of the day at 466m.

1.6 km



VEGETATION NOTE: Though there may not be many left at the top of “Cherry Tree Pass”, you have been passing wild varieties of this tree all day. Known less for their fruit than their astounding blossoms in April, mountain cherry trees are often hardier than hybrid counterparts.





DAY 5 Yunomine → Ukegawa → Koguchi

5-1/ More on former site of Matsuhata Teahouse



The Matsuhata Teahouse site was one of many small settlements along the Kogumotorigoe and Ogumotorigoe routes that catered to travelling pilgrims.

Though you will stop to spend the night mid-way at Koguchi, pilgrims once walked the entire length from Hongu to Nachi Taisha in a day. As you will see, this is quite a feat (...and likely why travellers are cautioned to watch out for the ghosts of those who did not make it due to hunger and exhaustion).

In 1723, the Matsuhata Teahouse settlement constituted four or five houses. Villagers lived here until 1960, before moving into the more convenient (though flood-prone) valley below. As you walk through the forest today, take care to note the numerous flat plots of land on either side of the path. Often with stone foundation intact, these were once hamlet homes and their rice fields.

5-2/ More on landslides

Due to the high amount of rainfall in the Kumano area (the highest in Japan at between 3-4000mm annually), as well as the dependence on monocultured cedar and cypress timber farming, landslides are particularly prevalent in this part of Japan. As water flows underneath the root systems of these trees, it creates a "runoff river" that can quickly shave off a mountain face. Some municipal efforts have been put in place to plant hardwoods and other biologically diverse plants near mountain peaks to hold them in place, but in general, national policy has yet to award these efforts with matching funds.

As such, please be aware of your surroundings on particularly rainy days. A good indication of an impending landslide is very muddy waters in a mountain stream, so you will likely not want to spend too much time taking photos in these areas. As you pass the site of a former landslide just beyond the Hyakkengura viewpoint, do take care of potential falling rocks, as this is still a weak zone. Though cleared up very well by Tanabe City, the aftermath of the March 2015 landslide is below:



5-3/ More on Jizo and Sai-no-Kawara



Jizo-san was one of eight bodhisattvas who achieved Nirvana, but returned to the world to help others achieve salvation too. The origin of Jizo's story likely derives from that of a peasant woman in India who helped lost children's spirits find their way home. This character then became a monk as Buddhism moved through China, before finally arriving in Japan sometime in the 6th Century.

Jizo-san performs a double duty as protector of travellers and of the spirits of children. Thus, their statues are often found near more difficult passes, but also in the villages where they protect the spirits of deceased children. Jizo is often depicted with a long cloak, carrying a staff and a jewel. He is the only bodhisattva who is said to be able to open the various levels of hell with his staff, lighting the way with his magical jewel. He finds "lost" (i.e. often miscarried or prematurely deceased) children who are trapped in a Buddhist "limbo" or "purgatory" state on the shores of Sai-no-Kawara River. Every day these children must stack up rocks to build up collective karma, so that they may be reborn. Unfortunately, every night, the demons come to knock down these rock piles. To avoid this, Jizo hides the children within his cloak so that the demons cannot find them. He is also able to carry them across the Sai-no-Kawara River in his angelic monk's sleeves. Because Jizo is also a protector of travellers, we can help the children by stacking up rocks along the way.

SELF-GUIDED

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