

BIWAICHI Plus

I want to see more of Shiga!

Discover the Sites and Attractions Found Only by Circling Lake Biwa

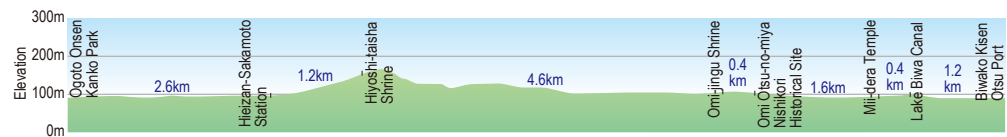
Short easy-biking course to local legacies

Touring the Historical Legacies of Otsu

This course guides you to many of the historical legacies in the central part of Otsu City. It covers a total distance of 12 km, so even beginners can give it a shot. The journey starts from Ogoto Onsen Kanko Park at Ogoto Onsen Hot spring, which made its mark in history as the closest hot springs to Mt. Hiei, then joins the Nishiomiji Byway. The longest uphill climb in this course is just Hieiizan-Sakamoto Station. At the top of the climb is Hiyoishi-taisha Shrine. From there, you pedal alongside Keihan Electric Railway's Ishiyama-Sakamoto Line with views of Lake Biwa to the east. The traffic picks up from Hiyoishitaisha Shrine to Omi-jingu-mae Station and, since there is basically little if any shoulder, you have to be careful in this segment. At around Mii-dera Temple, the course allows a slower pace along the Lake Biwa Canal, which is known for its cherry blossoms, until reaching the end at the Biwako Kisen Otsu Port.



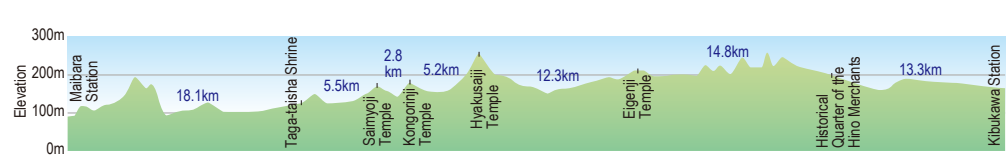
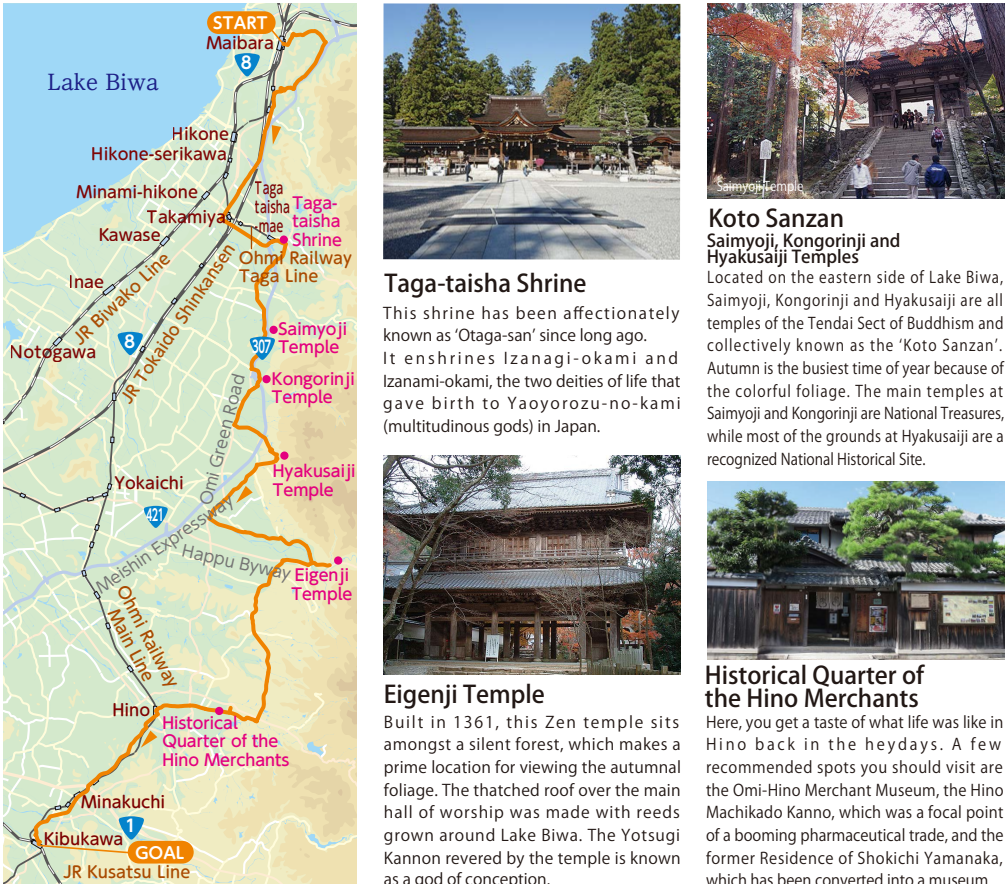
Lake Biwa Canal
This multipurpose waterway stretches 11 km from its intake gate in Hama-otsu to the Kamo River in Kyoto. It was built in 1885 as a means of transport to Kyoto, hydroelectric power source and drinking water source.



Pedal and Ride the Ohmi Railway

Getting Around on the Cycle Train

This course tours the most representative tourism spots along Ohmi Railway. You start by renting a bicycle from the rental bicycle shop at Maibara Station. The first stop is at Taga-taisha Shrine, one of the biggest tourist attractions in Shiga Prefecture. You then Pedal around the three main temples on the eastern side of Lake Biwa, which are beautifully tinged in autumnal foliage in November and December. You pay a visit to Eigenji Temple that was built in a valley and absorb the historical quarter of Hino. There are several ups and downs with the steepest climb imparting from the base of Hyakusaiji Temple, but the magnanimous view from the top is well worth the effort. If you are pooped out, you can catch the Cycle Train, bike and all, back to Maibara.



Idyllic Fields of Asamiya Tea (Ride through Tea Groves and Stop for a Cup)

Around Shigaraki from Seta-no-karahashi Bridge

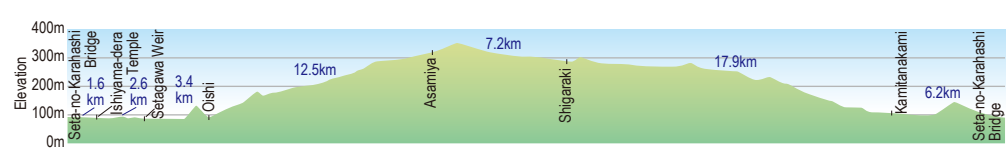
This course runs along the Seta and Shigaraki Rivers from Seta-no-karahashi Bridge. Though the initial climb Sekinotsu is steep, it is short and the course is free from big ups and downs. There also is little traffic, lots of nature all around and villages with traditional homes. The halfway point is Asamiya, known for growing Japanese tea. There are many tea shops where you can quench your thirst. As you enter the Town of Shigaraki, the ceramic raccoon dogs will catch your attention; Shigaraki is the home to one of Japan's most representative ceramic industries. The latter half of the course has many downhill where it is easy to pick up speed. There are also numerous blind spots, so watch your speed and stay alert.



Ishiyama-dera Temple
This Buddhist sanctuary was built in the 8th century. There are several recognized cultural properties such as the main temple that was built on top of a mammoth boulder of wollastonite, which itself is a Natural Monument. The temple is associated with the 11th century female novelist Shikibu Murasaki.

Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park
This park is all about ceramics. There is a museum that introduces ceramics from around the world and has a gift shop where you can buy Shigarakiyaki, the local ceramic art. The park also has an Artist in Residence program that welcomes artists from around the world to come and pursue their work. Large works are displayed outdoors at the Hoshi-no-hiroba.

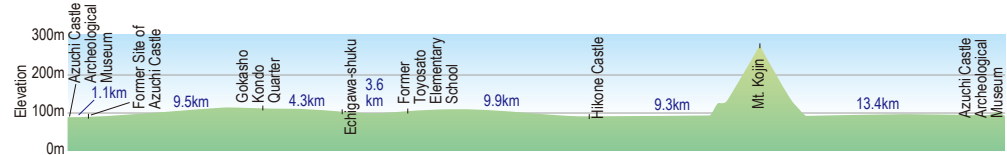
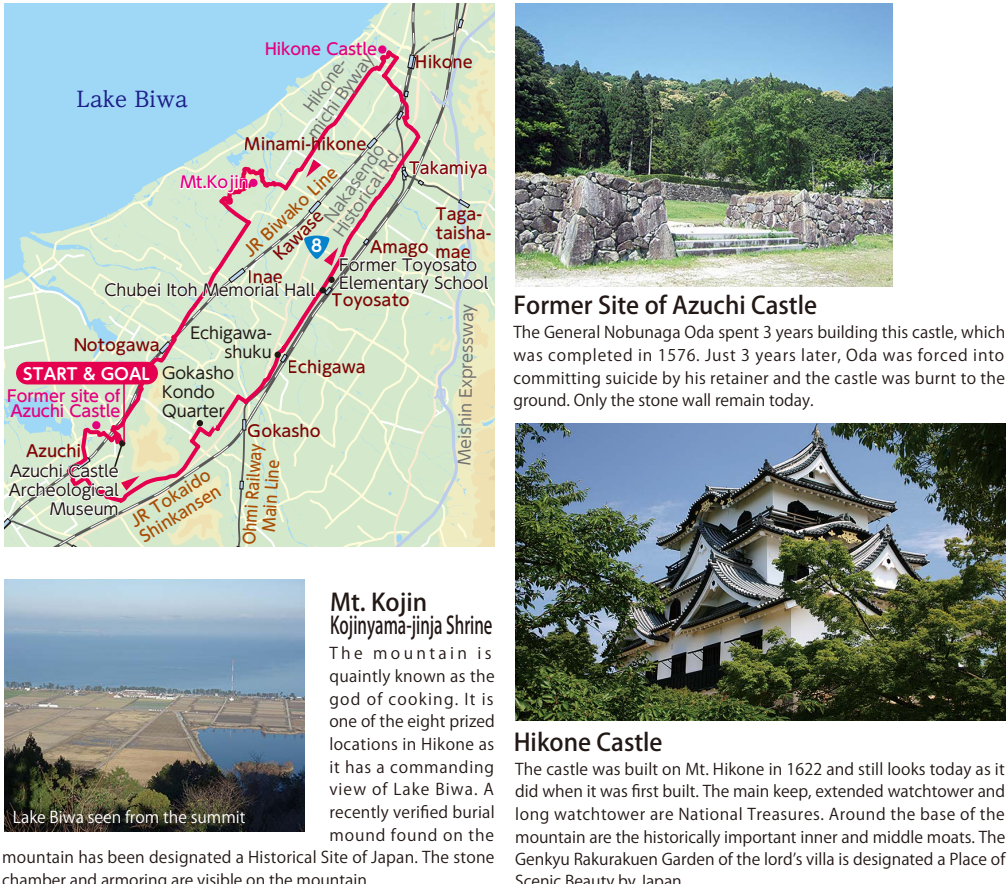
Setagawa Weir
This weir works as a water source for 14 million people in the Kinki Area and to protect floods downstream. You can learn about the weir at Aqua Biwa Museum. The original weir was built in 1905. 'Araizeki Retro Cafe' opens once a month at the old weir.



Legacy Road

Azuchi Castle, Hikone Castle and Other Historically Important Sites

This course starts at the Shiga Prefectural Azuchi Castle Archeological Museum where you find artifacts and information about Azuchi Castle and Nobunaga Oda, one of the 16th century generals who helped end decades of civil war in Japan. You then visit the site where Azuchi Castle stood. Next is the Nakasendo and plenty of interesting places to visit like the Gokasho Kondo Quarter where the homes are 200-plus years old, and the former Toyosato Elementary School that is known for its architectural importance and the setting of the anime 'K-ON!'. After that, you go from Hikone Castle to the road travelled by Korean traders (Hikone-michi Byway). There is a steep but short climb to make, but it takes you to the final destination on Mt. Kojin (about 150 m in elevation) where you have a spectacular view of Lake Biwa.

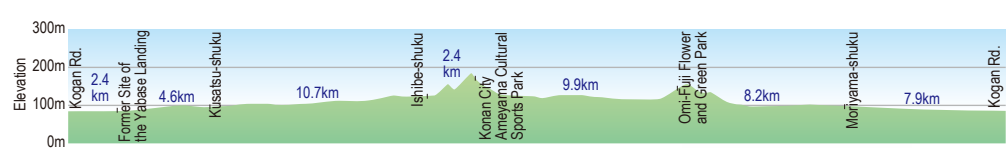
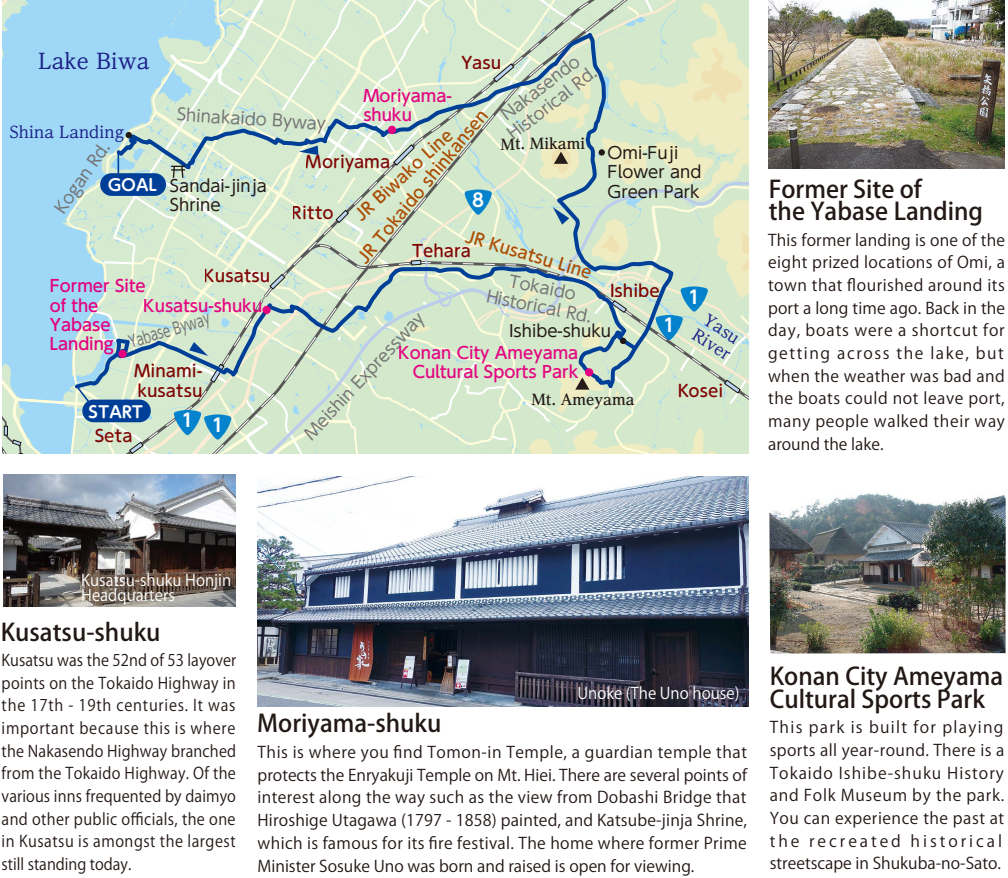


Traveling Japan's Historical Roads

Yabase and Shinakaido Byway

Pedaling Around an Old Port Town on Lake Biwa

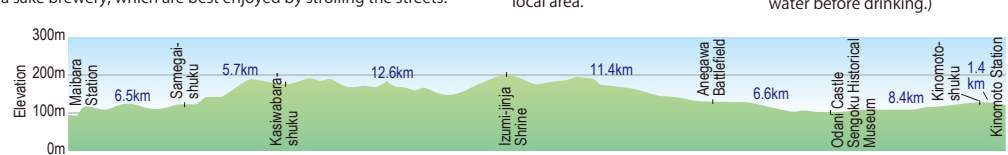
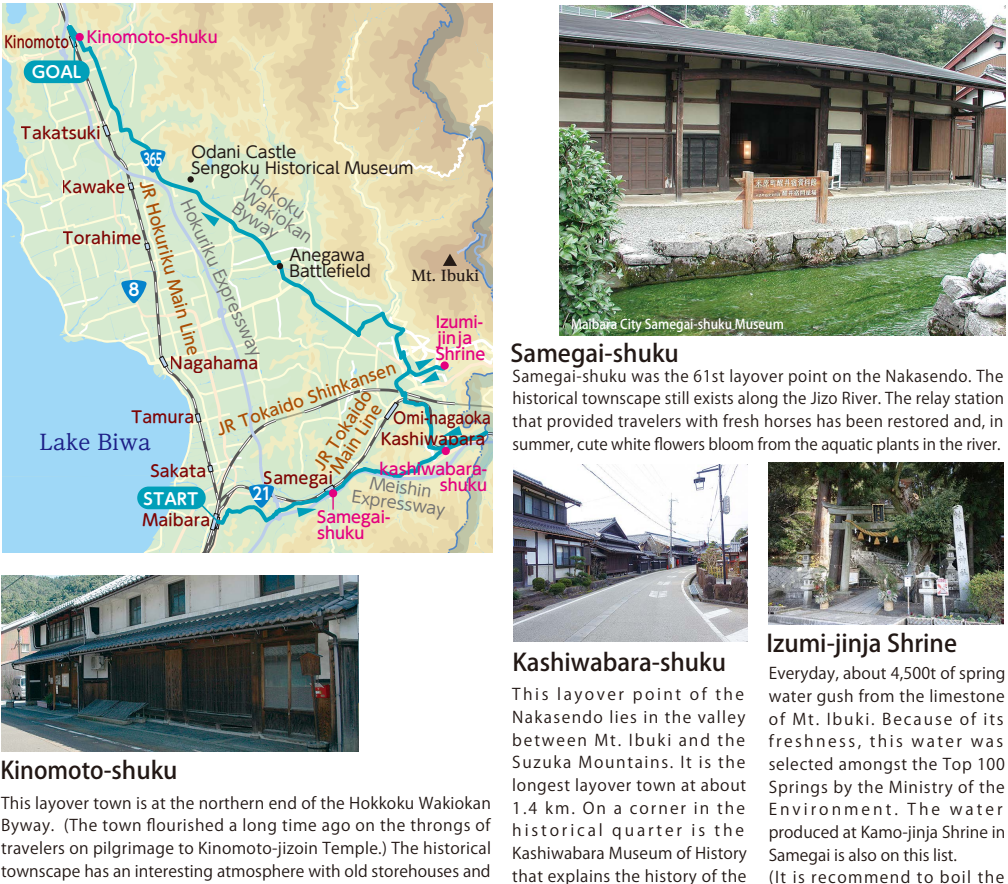
This course departs from the former site of the Yabase Landing on Lake Biwa and merges with the Tokaido Highway that served as a principal road in the 17th century, in Kusatsu. After taking in the historical streetscape of Kusatsu, the course heads to Ishibe. This is where you cross the Yasu River and get your first sight of the beautifully contoured Mt. Mikami, which looks very much like Mt. Fuji. The route that takes you on the eastern side of the mountain is great for riding because of the lush natural landscape and manageable ups and downs. Beyond that, the course merges with yet another historical thoroughfare, the Nakasendo Highway that takes you to Moriyama. From here, you head towards to the final destination, Shina Landing. Along the way, a tasty thing to try is kushidango, a local sweet of mochi balls on a stick.



Traveling Japan's Historical Roads

Nakasendo and Hokkoku Wakiokan

This course follows a section of the Nakasendo Highway that was built in the 17th century as a primary road between Kyoto and Edo (now Tokyo), and a shortcut from there to the Hokkoku Byway, known as the Hokkoku Wakiokan Byway. You start at Maibara Station and visit the Samegai-shuku that operated as a layover point on the Nakasendo. Then, from Kashiwabara-shuku on the border with Gifu Prefecture, you first ride to Izumi-jinja Shrine where you wet your thirst on the famously touted water, then pass Mt. Ibuki over its southern foot until finding the Hokkoku Wakiokan that will take you to Kinomoto. Along the way, you will encounter a series of historical locations to note the 16th century Anegawa Battlefield and the former site of Odani Castle. Without any major ups and downs, the 53.2 km are easy to ride, so the various attractions along the way can be enjoyed.

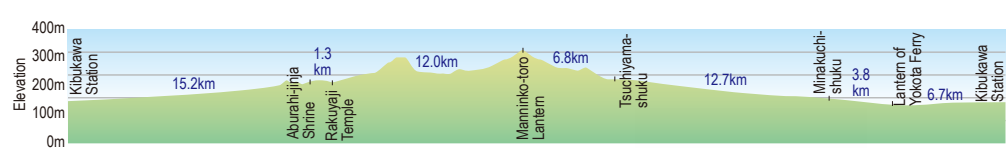
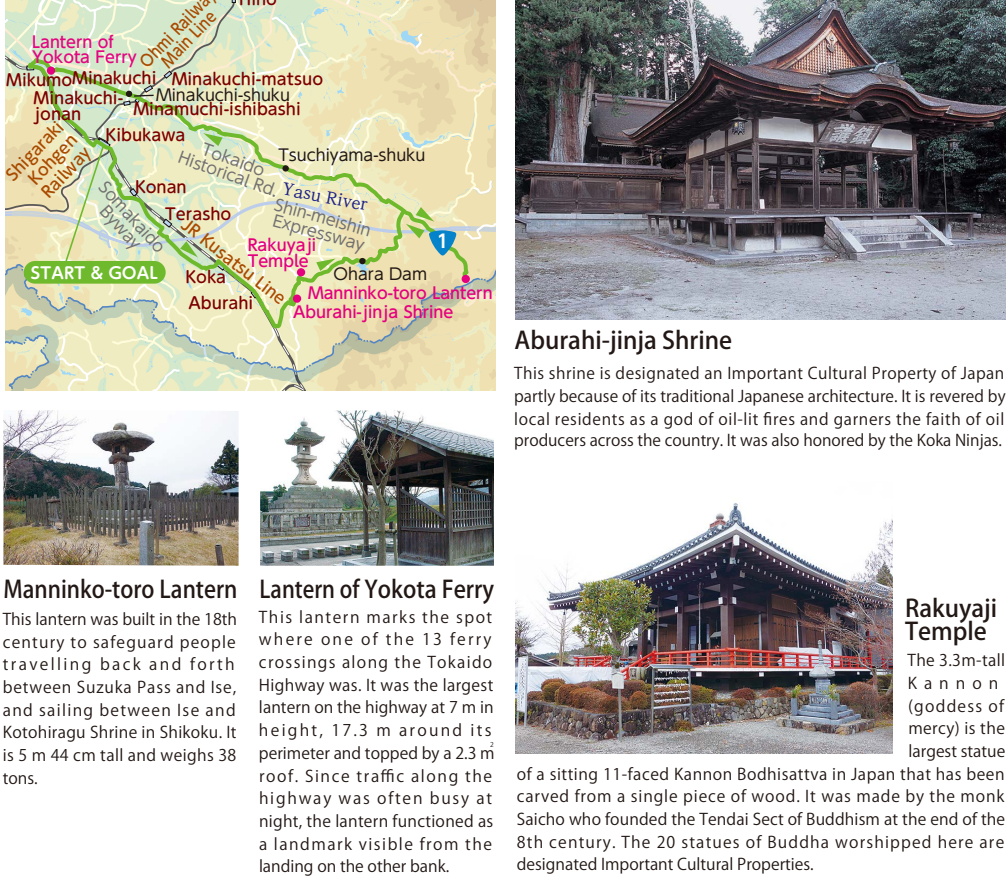


Traveling Japan's Historical Roads

Touring Koka on the Somakaido and Tokaido

The Somakaido and Tokaido are historical roads built in the 17th century

A convenient way to get to Kibukawa Station is to Pedal along JR's Kusatsu Line. In the initial segment, you can see the trains as you follow the Somakaido. Once off the Somakaido, it is uphill to the Ohara Dam. You merge with the Tokaido and climb to the Suzuka Pass. There, you can pray for a safe journey at the Manninkotoro Lantern (elevation: 357 m) that is always lit. From there, it is downhill to Mikumo, first over a quick-paced gradient and then an almost flat stretch. The transformation from the idyllic countryside landscape to the castle town streetscape of Minakuchi is worth seeing. After that, you cross the Yasu River and follow the Somakaido again from Mikumo Station until reaching the final destination.



Cultural Exploration on the Nature-Rich West side of Lake Biwa

Dawn Redwoods and Worship

This roughly 68.6 km course runs through valleys and over a mixture of ups and downs. After spinning past the rows of dawn redwoods lining the road from Makino Station, you cross the foot of Mt. Hakodate from Imazu and head for Kutsuki Village where the Ado River originates. You will gradually get a feel for how important the river was to livelihoods long ago, from the numerous shrines that safeguarded the local rafters who floated timber downstream in days gone by. The course eventually joins the Saba-kaido Byway and crosses Hanaore Pass. After that, it's across the Biwako-obashi Bridge with its over-the-water views of a seemingly endless Lake Biwa. Once off the bridge, you turn left at the Biwako-obashi-higashizume Intersection onto Kogan Rd. and follow the lakeshore until you reach the end at the Hotel Laforet Biwako Resort.

