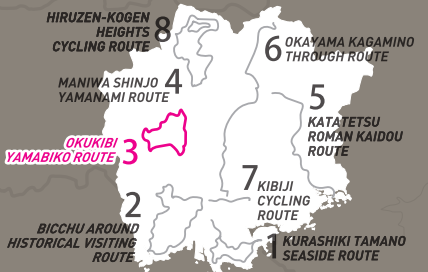


# Okukibi Yamabiko Route



This route offers the spectacle of limestone caves and fields of seasonal flowers in the Hokubo area. The section from the Takahashi River to Fukiya is actually used in the Hill Climb Challenge Series, an annual cycling race, and involves steep inclines and declines making it only suitable for advanced cyclists.



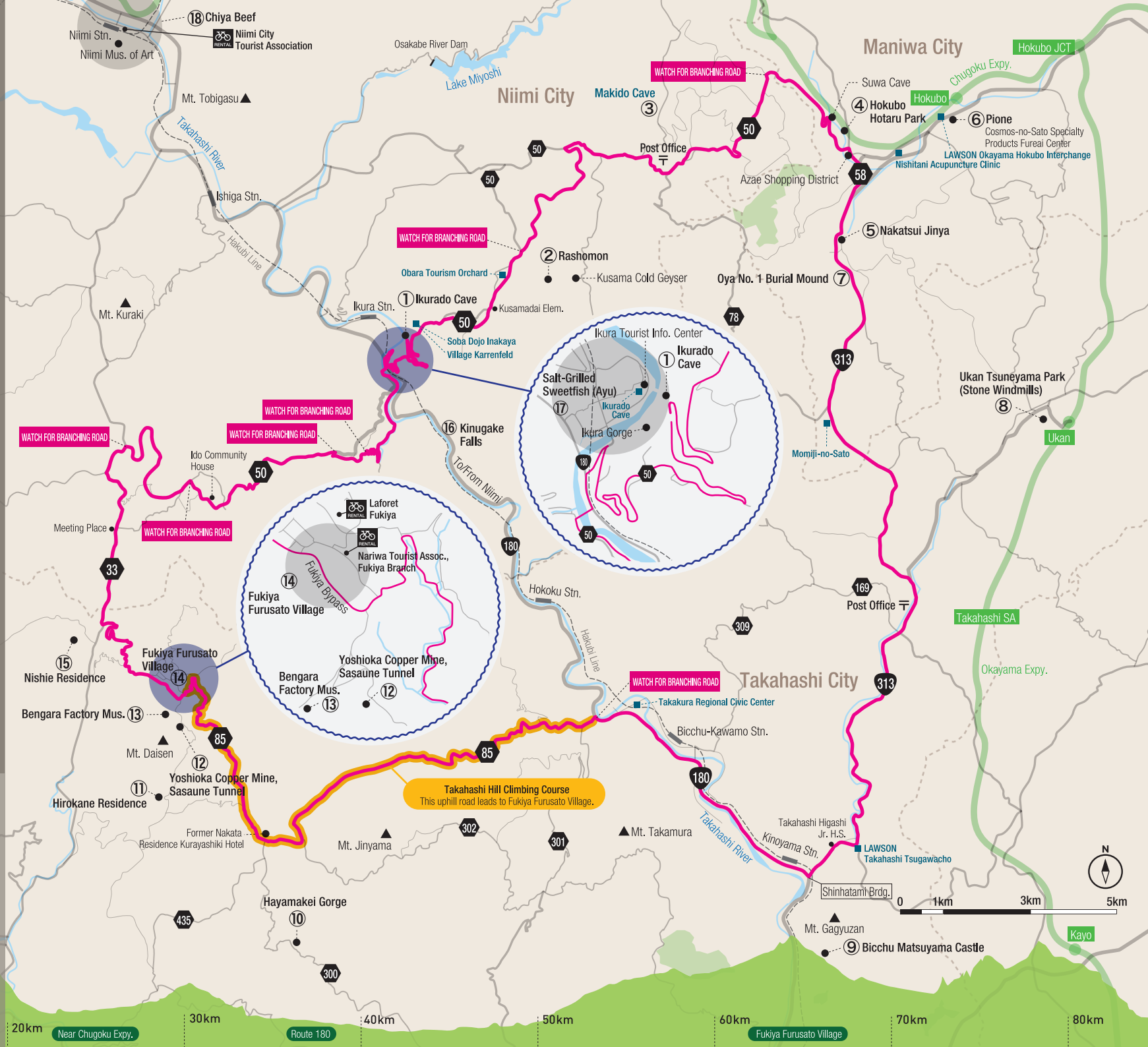
Created December 2020

Level of Difficulty  
★★★★ Advanced

Route Length  
**83km**  
Difference of Elevation(Max)  
**451m**

- Participating Stores
- Bicycle Rental
- Road Station

Check here for the latest info.





## SPOTS OF OKUKIBI YAMABIKO ROUTE

### NIIMI / HOKUBO START - 20km

#### ① Ikurado Cave

Carved out by the Takahashi River, this underground world unfolds beneath the stunningly beautiful and dynamic scenery of the Ikura Gorge.

#### ③ Makido Cave

This limestone cave was one of the first in the group of limestone caves to develop in Niimi City and runs for a total length of about 450 m with an underground lake covering the rear of the cavern.

#### ⑤ Nakatsui Jinya

This rural accommodation facility is the recreation of an old "jinya" or regional government office. It is famed for its Jinya Kaiseki cuisine, which features special local products such as carp and hand-made tofu.

#### ② Rashomon

One of the great rock arches of East Asia, this was once part of a great limestone cave that collapsed millennia ago, leaving only the arch.

#### ④ Hokubo Hotaru Park

This park on the banks of the Bichu River is home to three species of fireflies, the Japanese firefly, the Heike-botaru firefly, and the Hime-botaru firefly.

#### ⑥ Pione Grapes

Okayama Prefecture boasts the largest area under cultivation in Japan of these delicious firm textured, large, seedless and sweet grapes.

### TAKAHASHI 25km - 60km

#### ⑦ Oya No.1 Burial Mound

This late 7th-century burial mound is unique in Japan for its five-step construction. It is presumed to be the burial site of a high-ranking official in the Yamato administration.

#### ⑨ Bicchu Matsuyama Castle

This is the last remaining mountain castle in Japan that has the main keep preserved in its original condition and is one of only 12 castles in Japan that still have their original wooden keep. On these days, the castle truly appears to be a castle in the sky when viewed from the Bicchu Matsuyama Castle viewing platform.

#### ⑪ Hirokane Residence

This impressive residence was the home of the Hirokane family, who served as the head of the village of Onoro, and amassed a vast fortune from the Koizumi copper mine and production of iron sulfate in the mid-Edo period.

#### ⑧ Ukan Tsuneyama Park

The main attraction at this park is the giant stone windmills. The large lawn area around the windmills blends in and harmonizes with Mt. Ohira and Mt. Gongen in the background which enhances the view of these impressive works of art.

#### ⑩ Hayamakei Gorge

This limestone gorge runs for a total distance of about 2 km. The rocky scenery is further enhanced in spring by fresh new greenery, and in autumn by the burnished colors of the changing leaves.

#### ⑫ Sasaune Tunnel, Yoshioka Copper Mine

This mine operated from the Edo period until the early 20th century. Venture inside the mysterious mine tunnel, which is a constant 15 degrees throughout the year.

### FUKIYA / NIIMI 65km - GOAL

#### ⑬ Bengara Factory Museum

Bengara is a red ochre pigment first developed in Fukiya in 1707, which became a huge industry that helped the community prosper.

#### ⑮ Nishie Residence

Members of the Nishie family served as village headmen for the shogunate during the Edo period. In addition to being the family's residence, it was also used as the local administrator's offices. Many of the buildings are still preserved in their original state including storehouses, stables, a school room, a magistrate's room, and houses used for government officials.

#### ⑰ Salt-Grilled Sweetfish (Ayu)

Fishing for ayu is permitted from early summer. The ayu of the Takahashi River are particularly delicious, thanks to the large concentrations of calcium from the surrounding karst formations that dissolve in the river water.

#### ⑭ Fukiya Furusato Village

This village is a magnificent sight known for the uniform, vivid, red bengara color of its houses and the red copper color of its sekishukawara roof tiles.

#### ⑯ Kinugake Falls

This waterfall is so-named because it is said to resemble a beautiful white silk cloth draped over the rock surface. This spot is particularly stunning in early summer and in the autumn.

#### ⑱ Chiya Beef

Tsuru-ushi cattle are the source of Chiya beef and are said to be the cattle with the oldest pedigree in Japan. The meat is famed for its beautiful marbling and tender red meat.