

Your next Destination

KITAYAMA VILLAGE

THE ENCLAVE VILLAGE, WAKAYAMA JAPAN



北山村

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STORY

KITAYAMA VILLAGE



Nestled between rich forest resources and the swiftly flowing Kitayama River which winds through the mountains is Kitayama Village in Wakayama Prefecture. This village is known as Japan's only enclave village. Its designation comes from its unique location, as it is surrounded by Nara and Mie Prefectures, without any direct borders with municipalities in Wakayama. Kitayama Village is enveloped by forests, which constitute 97% of its area. The smallest village has a width of 20km from east to west and 8km from north to south, with a modest population of fewer than 400 inhabitants (as of 2023). Kitayama thrives on its primary industries of "IKADA-KUDARI" tourism log rafting" and the "JABARA" citrus fruit.

From the excavation of Jomon Period (pre-historic Japanese) archaeological sites, it is evident that people have been living in these deep mountainous regions since ancient times. Life in the mountainous areas has been sustained through forestry, and one such practice is log rafting. The tradition of rafting is still preserved today, notably in the form of tourist rafting, showcasing the enduring legacy of this classic technique.

IKADA-KUDARI

UNFORGETTABLE & UNPARALLELED JOURNEY AHEAD!

The Kitayama Gorge stretches along the Kitayama River in Wakayama Prefecture, offering a spectacular sight of 30-meter-long tourist log rafts called "ikada-kudari" navigating the river. These rafts are skillfully maneuvered to follow the flow, creating movements reminiscent of a dragon, accompanied by cheers echoing through the gorge.

This *ikada-kudari* experience is carefully preserved by Kitayama Village and takes place annually from May to September. The history of the *ikada-kudari* dates back over 600 years, with "Ikadashi" raftsmen playing a crucial role alongside forestry, garnering attention even from historical figures.

This is designated as an important intangible folk cultural property of Wakayama prefecture and is designated as a Forestry Heritage by the Japanese Forest Society (JFS).

"Japan's adrenaline-filled adventure"

"BBC TRAVEL"

<https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20231029-japans-adrenaline-fuelled-adventure>



ADVENTURE BASE

A journey for challenge seekers

In this small village among the beautiful valleys of the *Yoshino Kumano* National Park, You will never tire of adventurous experiences.

Kitayama River offers an exciting rafting experience with due to increased water flow during the summer.

The connected Kitayama gorge, formed by the downstream erosion of the Kitayama River is also designated as a geosite in the *Nanki Kumano* Geopark. Paddling down the rapid streams created by the V-shaped deep canyon with a height difference of 600 meters is a thrilling experience!

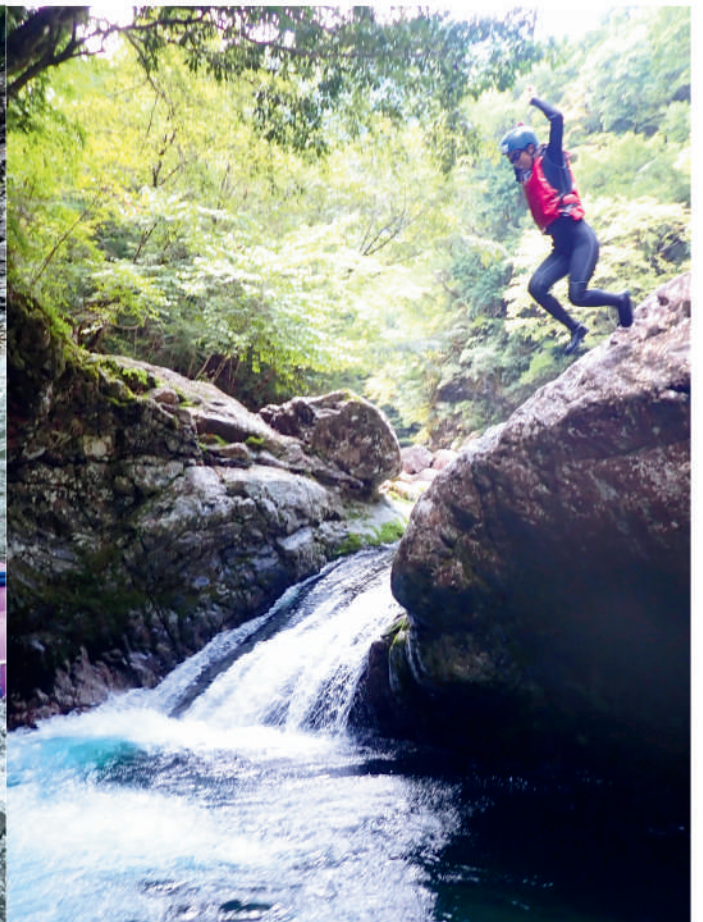
Experienced guides skillfully wield their expertise to ensure safety and maximize guests' enjoyment.

The only rafting experience in Wakayama Prefecture is only available from May to the end of September.

Embrace the imposing rock faces, the refreshing splashes, and the unique adventure of paddling down the Kitayama River, all against the backdrop of the stunning scenery of the beautiful valley.

Dive into nature

Since ancient times, people in the Kumano region of the Kii Peninsula have revered and cherished primitive elements of nature such as mountains, waterfalls, rivers, and rocks. In this land surrounded by pristine wilderness, various adventures await you, from kayaking down rivers and canyoning with dives into waterfall basins to trekking along mountain trails.





MIRACULOUS FRUIT, JABARA

JABARA



VILLAGE'S TREASURE

Jabara citrus, a seedless hybrid of *yuzu* and *kunenbo*, was discovered in Kitayama village, and registered as a new fruit variety in 1979.

Initially restricted by agricultural regulations, only this region could produce the highly localized specialty.

Its name, "*JABARA*" signifies the removal of evil spirits. In 1977, cultivation aimed to make Jabara Kitayama's specialty began. Despite market challenges due to the area's topography, increased sales through internet shopping and reported anti-allergic properties led to rapid growth. Jabara, with a tart orange-lemon flavor and antihistamine properties, is processed into various products.

***A gift from
the wild nature***



HARVEST

BLESSINGS OF THE MOUNTAINS

In the present day, *Jabara* production is the village's main industry. Utilizing the hometown tax system and supporting finances, Kitayama Village aims to preserve local employment. A savior for the small village, *Jabara* has become a unique product both in name and reality. Every November, the entire village comes together to harvest. However, due to the limited farmland in this small village, only about 100 tons are harvested each year. Therefore, these fruits have become precious.

We cultivate *Jabara* meticulously, as it is a variety born in the unique climate of Kitayama Village. Even if *Jabara* is grown elsewhere, it might differ slightly from the original variety native to this region. Considering this, in a small mountain village that has experienced depopulation without significant industries since the modern era, *Jabara* can be considered a treasure bestowed upon us by the local deity.

Nowadays, every autumn, the village holds a Harvest Festival, the largest festival of the year. The festival serves as an event to express gratitude for the bounty of *Jabara* harvest and has become a communal gathering for people to relax and interact.

THE ENCLAVE VILLAGE

The beautiful rural
village in Kii peninsula



UNIQUE LOCATION

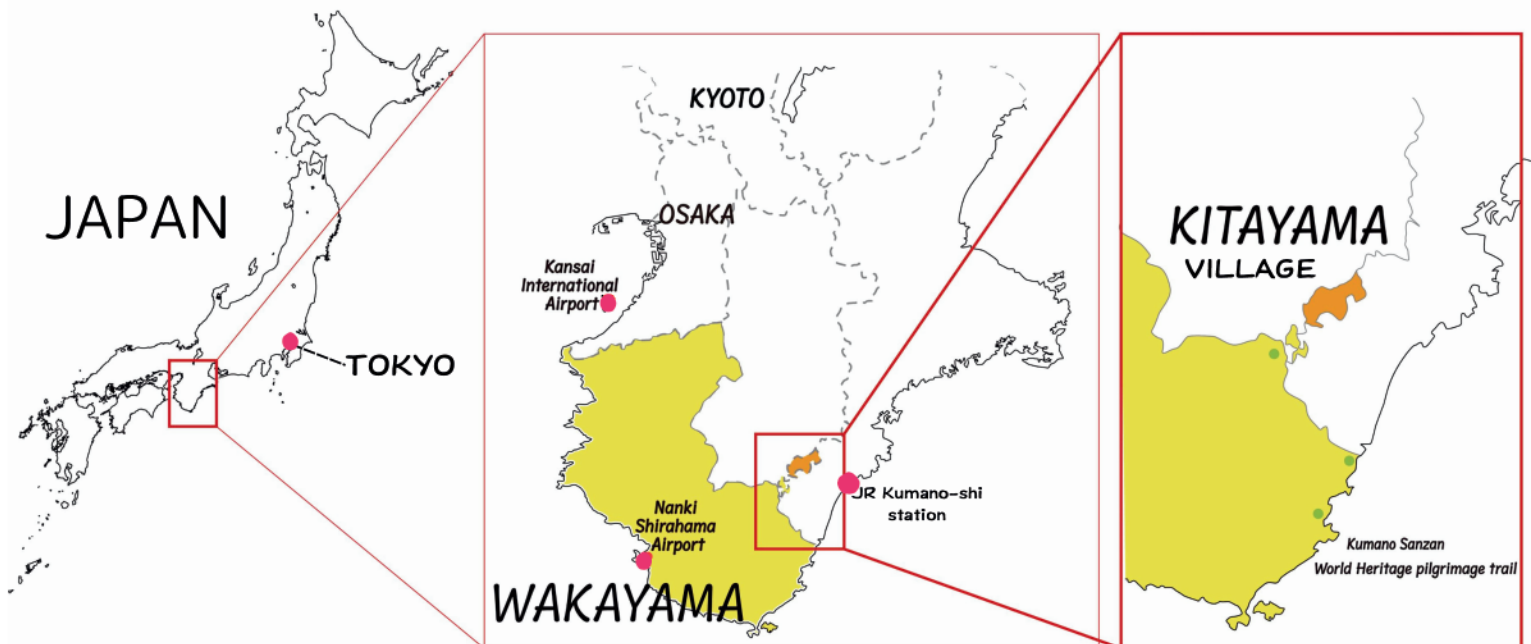
THE ENCLAVE VILLAGE KITAYAMA

Although Kitayama Village is located in Wakayama Prefecture, all the towns and villages adjacent to it belong to Mie and Nara Prefectures. It is a curious reality where Kitayama Village does not share borders with any municipality within Wakayama Prefecture. This unique feature distinguishes Kitayama Village, earning it the “enclave” title in Japan. The village is the only place with such a geographical anomaly, a phenomenon exclusive to this region in Japan.

Since ancient times, Kitayama Village has thrived in the forestry industry, having been blessed with high-quality cedar. The timber harvested was transported using rafts on the river, reaching the timber storages in Shingu.

During that era, the majority of Kitayama Village's population comprised of raftsmen. The relationship between Shingu's timber merchants and the raftsmen was one of coexistence and mutual prosperity, forming an inseparable bond.

In the 4th year of the Meiji era, with the abolition of the han system, Shingu was incorporated into Wakayama Prefecture. Geographically, Kitayama was considered part of Nara Prefecture, but upon hearing the opinion of the villagers— 'If Shingu is joining Wakayama, then we'd like to join too'—Kitayama Village was incorporated into Wakayama Prefecture.



Kitayama Village is located in the Kumano region, representing the "Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range," a UNESCO World Heritage site. Kumano is the ancient name for the southern region of the Kii peninsula - a sacred site steeped in mystery and legend. Kumano's rich natural landscape is believed to be the otherworldly abode of the gods, and has been the focus of pilgrimage and spiritual training for centuries.

#The_enclave_village_kitayama



Okutoro onsen Yamano yado

Onsen hot spring & Accomodation

Relax in the natural hot springs while taking in the forest surroundings at 'Okutoro Onsen.' The smooth and gently fragrant sulfur-infused water is a testament to the good quality of this onsen. During the day, you can admire the beautiful scenery of the Kitayama River, and in the evening, both locals and visitors soak themselves under a sky filled with countless stars. ☎ +81-735-49-2575

The path of Ikada-shi

The trekking route of 'Ikada-shi' the Raftman's way.

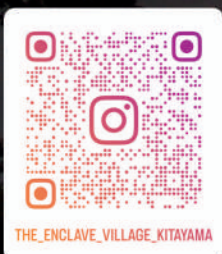
In an era without roads or vehicles, raftsmen navigated the rivers on log rafts, carrying their oars and walking over the deep mountains to return to the village. Even now, remnants of that time, such as village ruins and traces of their paths, remain. This path, which has become a natural hiking trail, has gained popularity in recent years as a beautiful trekking route where one can learn about both the history of the raftsmen and the natural surroundings.



Okutoro Park & Michi no eki

Road side station with park & camping ground

Roadside Station Okutoro serves as a tourism hub with hot springs, accommodation facilities, restaurants, shops, a tourist information center, a base for rafting activities, and ikada-kudari reception. Along the Kitayama River, it features a promenade that boasts a beautiful park as well as camping facilities. In spring, visitors can also enjoy the breathtaking view of cherry blossoms in full bloom.



@the_enclave_village_kitayama



春
spring



夏
summer



秋
Autumn

BBC Travel Show
<https://youtu.be/FuXHQZOU-DI?si=4Ry6-5NRN5V5ddOU>



National parks of Japan Ikada-kudari VR Video
360°VR VIDEO TOUR

<https://www.japan.travel/national-parks/360-vr-video/outdoor-and-adventure/log-rafting-on-the-kitayama-river/>



Booking for
IKADA-KUDARI



<https://www.kumano-travel.com/en/tours-activities/log-rafting-in-dorokyo-gorge-ikada-kudari>



More information of Wakayama prefecture.
Vist Wakayama

<https://visitwakayama.jp/en/>



ACCESSE

Tokyo	Haneda International airport	Japan airline	Nanki Shirahama airport	Car	Kitayama vil.	3h30min		
Nagoya	JR Nagoya station	JR Kiseihonsen line Limited express Nanki	JR Kumanoshi station	Bus			4h	
Osaka	JR Osaka station	JR Kinokuni line Limited express Kuroshio	JR Kii-Tanabe station	Car				

■ Kitayama village Tourist information center ✉ ikada@kitayamamura.net