

Kurahashi

“A place where the ocean plays like stars and the islands drift among the clouds – a true hidden treasure”

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What is Here?

- ✓ First Western-Style Harbour
- ✓ Picturesque Beach
- ✓ Kurahashi Museum
 - ✓ Shinto Shrine
 - ✓ Onsen
- ✓ Mataharu Cafe

Kurahashi: Where in the World?

The beauty of travelling in Japan is that you’ll always come across new places in unfamiliar ways. It was something magical as we turned the hairpin bend headed toward our destination, you could see it all: the glimmer on the ocean surface and the mountainous archipelago stretches into an ocean of clouds. We were drawn in by the beauty of what was Kurahashi Town, just as our tour guide Yanai-san had been awe-struck so many years before...





The sleepy town of Kurahashi rests in one of the most romantic and historically rich areas of Japan. Located only a short 30 min drive from Kure City train station, in this place, there is more than meets the eye.

enlightening experience for nature enthusiasts. Additionally, this beach is overseen by the iconic gate of the ??? Shrine, giving the beach a sense of purpose, a doorway to Hiroshima Prefecture from surrounding islands and spiritual worlds.



Once a town that thrived from fishing and port trade, Kurahashi was renowned for its advances in nautical engineering. In fact, Kurahashi harbor is the oldest western-style harbor in all of Japan – an extraordinary accomplishment for a small town. Today, the once busy port has since been laid to rest, protected by the overgrowth of the pines. This is where our tour began, a time leap to the past, of which ancient maps paint an even clearer picture of how the harbor was perceived to the local people.

After a brisk walk along the beach you are greeted by the museum. At first glance, the museum appears small and fruitless but its contents have value much greater than expected. The large, traditional sailing boat catches your eye from the entrance. It is well maintained and a great example of Japanese nautical architecture. Moreover, the relics were well displayed and the English translations were accurate, creating a memorable experience as a foreigner with limited Japanese ability. And if you feel up to it, you can dress up in traditional costumes! The staff were very friendly and helpful with a wealth of knowledge which is reassuring as any questions can be answered (in Japanese of course).



Much to my surprise, this little port was nestled behind one of the most beautiful and scenic beaches in Japan. The white sands were welcoming and the views of the mountains were truly breathtaking, stretching as far as the eye could see. Watching the sunset is a peaceful and



Returning to the drop-off point, we visited and prayed to the gods at the shrine. The prayer method is very traditional, but requires little effort to memorize, and foreigners can find playing out the steps an enjoyable experience. This shrine is special as the “The House of Gods” can be visited by the caretaker; which is not a general practice in most shrines throughout the country, whereby these rooms are for gods only, and completely sealed off to people.

The final destination of our tour was the Onsen and Folk museum. The small museum held many original scripts and priceless paintings that allowed you to further understand how the people of Kurahashi lived all those years ago. The onsen was just as pleasurable, boasting eight buildings for guests, with gym, pool facilities and a bus stop all within walking distance.

Though simple in its existence, Kurahashi is a little piece of hidden treasure. All tourist locations are in one central location and within walking distance. The little town is a great day-trip, weekend, or long-term must-see destination for any traveller through Japan. From what I witnessed on my tour, I see great potential for Kurahashi to thrive and metamorphose into a more global city.



“Café MATAHARI”

This funky Hawaiian Themed restaurant rocks stellar interior design and is open for lunch and dinner: providing both café and bar facilities. Located a short walk from the beach, it's a prime spot for a fine meal with friends and family.