

Practical Travel Guide - 502

LAKE BIWA, OTSU and HIKONE



日本政府観光局 (JNTO)
Japan National Tourism Organization

JNTO Website : <http://www.jnto.go.jp>



Lake Biwa (琵琶湖): The largest lake in Japan, occupies 1/6 of Shiga Pref. Lying 85.6 m above sea level, the lake has a circumference of 235.2 km, an area of 670.5 sq.km and a depth of 103.6 m at its deepest point. There are many attractive tourist spots and resort areas in the region surrounding Lake Biwa such as Otsu City, Hikone City, Biwako Valley, Mt. Hiei, Mt. Ibuki and Omi Maiko.

Otsu (大津): The capital of Shiga Pref. with a population of 343,000. Once Otsu was the capital of Japan for 5 years in the 7th century, and later became an important station of the Tokaido road famous as by the wood-block prints of Hiroshige Ando. It has since prospered having a key position in Japan's transportation networks.

Hikone (彦根): The largest town of the eastern shores of Lake Biwa with a population of 113,000. It is a castletown with one of the most beautiful castles in Japan.

Access:

To	From	By	Time	One-way fare
Otsu	Tokyo	Tokaido Shinkansen "Nozomi" or "Hikari" to Kyoto, then 10 min. by JR Tokaido Line	2 hrs. 20 min.	¥12,900
	Osaka	JR Tokaido Line	40 min.	¥950
	Kyoto		10 min.	¥190
Hikone	Tokyo	Tokaido Shinkansen some "Hikari" or "Kodama" to Maibara, then 5 min. by JR Tokaido Line	2 hrs. 30 min. – 3 hrs. 30 min.	¥11,550
	Osaka	JR Tokaido Line	1 hr. 20 min.	¥1,890
	Kyoto		50 min.	¥1,110

Places of Interest in Otsu:

① **Mii-dera / Onjo-ji Temple** (三井寺/園城寺): 10-min. walk from Miidera Sta. on Keihan Line. It was founded in 686 in memory of Emperor Kobun who is elder son of Emperor Tenji. The Evening Bell of Mii-dera Temple is one of the well-known Omi Hakkei (Best Eight scenic spots of Omi, Shiga Pref.). It is main temple of Tendaishu sect. Open: 8:00–17:00 Admission: ¥500

Tomb of Ernest Francisco Fenollosa (1853–1908): An American art critic who contributed very much to preservation and restoration of Japanese traditional art. The tomb is in the cemetery of the **Homyo-in Temple Garden** (法明院庭園) (20-min. walk from Mii-dera Temple and 15-min. walk from Bessho Sta. on the Keihan Line) which is a very quiet temple with a superb view of Lake Biwa. The garden is open daily from dawn till dusk. Admission: free

② **Omi Jingu Shrine** (近江神宮): 10-min. walk from Omi Jingu-mae Sta. on Keihan Line. Omi Jingu Shrine was established in 1940 to enshrine Emperor Tenji. Rokoku-sai, a Water Clock Festival held in honor of the first water clock in Japan, was established by Emperor Tenji. **Clock Museum** Open: 9:30–16:30 Closed: Mon. Admission: ¥300

③ **Nagisa (Lakeside) Park** (なぎさ公園): It is located just beside Lake Biwa in the center of Otsu. The length of the park is about 5 km, 10-min. walk from JR Otsu Sta.

④ **Biwako Hana Funsui (fountain)** (びわこ花噴水): The gateway to sightseeing on Lake Biwa, this fountain (having a length of 440 m) is one of the longest fountains in the world. At night its shape and color changes regularly as it is controlled by a com-

puter. White, orange, and green lights show the spray of the water beautifully. 3-min. walk from Keihan Hama Otsu Sta. 2nd and 4th Wed. is not operated.

⑤ **Gichu-ji Temple** (義仲寺): 5-min. walk from Zeze Sta. on JR and Keihan Line. A small temple founded in the 12th century and dedicated to Kiso Yoshinaka, a general of the Minamoto clan who was killed in battle near here. The tomb of Matsuo Basho, the great haiku poet is in this temple. Basho's haiku poetry is carved on many of the monuments on the temple grounds. Open: 9:00–17:00 (–16:00 Nov.–Feb.) Closed: Mon. (except national holidays) Admission: ¥300

⑥ **Hiyoshi Taisha Shrine** (日吉大社): 10-min. walk from Sakamoto Sta. on Keihan Line. Hiyoshi Taisha Shrine enshrines the deities believed to protect Mt. Hiei. The vermilion-painted main edifices (National Treasure) which stand out against the foliage of the grounds, were built in 1586. Sannosai Festival is the main event of this shrine in which Mikoshi (portable shrine) fighting is held on Apr. 13 and Mikoshi procession by boat on Apr. 14. Open: 9:00–16:30 Admission: ¥300

⑦ **Enryaku-ji Temple** (延暦寺): 10-min. walk from Enryakuji Sta. of Sakamoto Cablecar Line (20 min. from Sakamoto Sta. of the JR line, which is again a 10-min. walk from Sakamoto Sta. of the Keihan Line) or 1 hr. 10 min. by Keihan Bus and Kyoto Bus from JR Kyoto Sta. Located near the summit of Mt. Hiei, Enryaku-ji Temple was founded in 788 by the Buddhist Priest Saicho (Dengyo Daishi, the founder of Tendai Sect, 767–822) Kompon-Chudo (Central Hall, National Treasure), Kaidan-In (Ordination Hall) and the Mausoleum of Dengyo Daishi are the main places to see in the Toto area of the temple. Open: 9:00–

16:00 (Dec.), -16:30 (Jan.-Feb.), 8:30-16:30 (Mar.-Nov.)
 Admission: ¥700 **Treasure House** (国宝殿) Admission: ¥500

⑧ **Ishiyama-dera Temple** (石山寺): 10-min. walk from Ishiyamadera Sta. on Keihan Line. This Shingon Sect temple was founded in the 8th century by the priest Roben. The main sights of the temple are the Sanmon Gate, the Tahoto Pagoda, the Belfry, the Hondo (Main Hall) and the adjoining Room of Genji, where Murasaki Shikibu created the plot of the Tale of Genji, a famous court novel of the Heian Period. Open: 8:00-16:30 Admission: ¥500

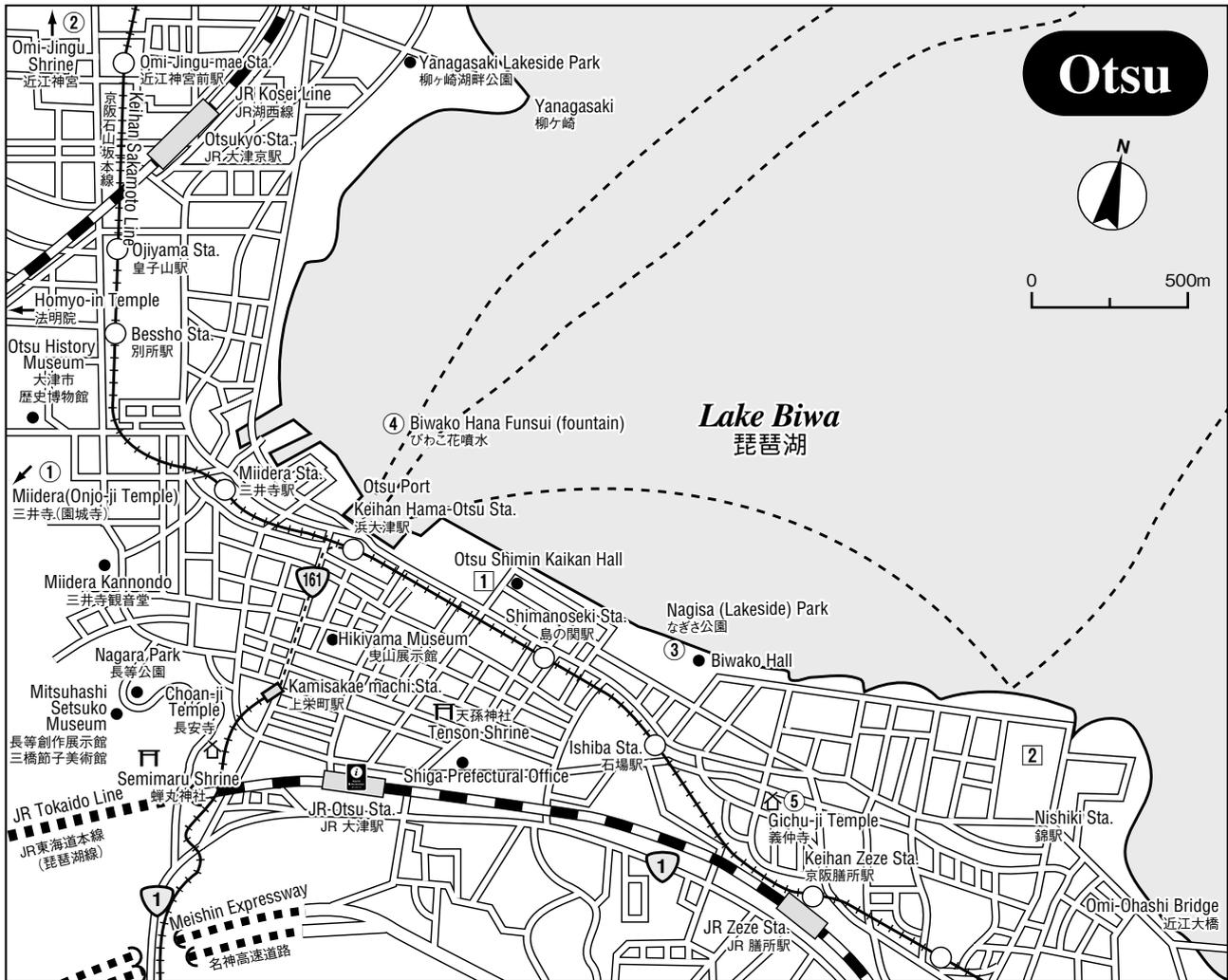
Cruise on Lake Biwa:

Lake cruise by the Michigan and the Bianca

The Michigan, an American Mississippi River paddle wheel boat running with the cooperation of the Univ. of Michigan. 90 min. boat trips leave Otsu Port. 60 min. and night cruise are also available. For information and reservations: Biwako Kisen Tel. (077)524-5000

Sightseeing Boat

A few sightseeing boat tours departing from Otsu Port and visiting lakeshore places of interest are available.



① - ② correspond to those in the Accommodations list on page 3/5
 ① - ⑤ correspond to those on page 1/5

Places of Interest in Hikone:

⑨ **Hikone Castle** (彦根城): 10-min. walk from Hikone Sta. on JR Line. Naokatsu Ii began construction of this castle in 1603 completing it in 1622. Standing upon Konkizan hill and surrounded by forest, Hikone Castle is considered, together with Himeji, to be one of the most beautiful castles in Japan. There is also a splendid view of Lake Biwa from the 3rd story of the donjon of this castle. Incidentally, Naosuke Ii, a descendant of Naokatsu, was an important minister of the Tokugawa Shogunate and played an important role in opening Japan at the end of the Edo Period. Open: 8:30-17:00 Admission: ¥600 including the admission for **Genkyuen Garden** (玄宮園)

⑩ **Hikone Castle Museum** (彦根城博物館): Located by the main gate of the castle, the museum exhibits treasures from the

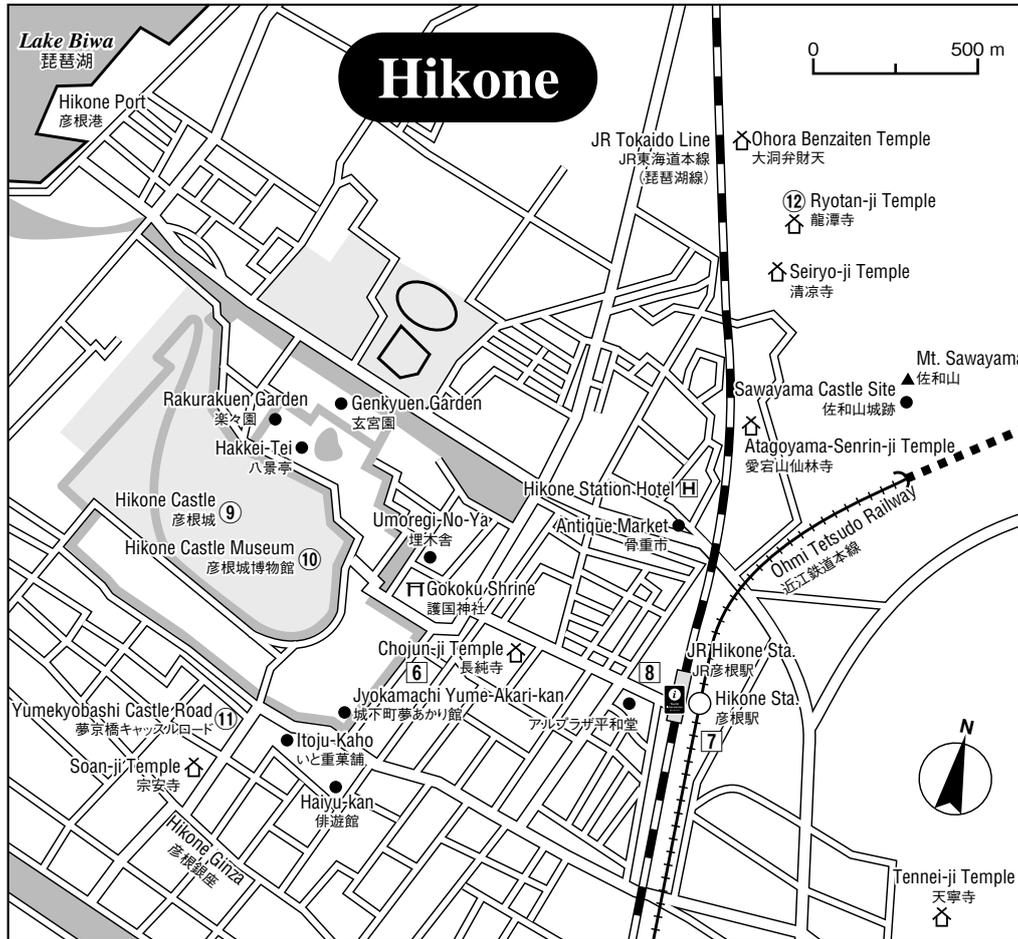
Ii family collection such as armor, swords, calligraphy, Noh costumes and pottery. This museum also includes an exhibit of the Hikone Byobu (folding screens) which were painted by a member of the Kano school. Open: 8:30-17:00 Closed: Dec. 25-31 Admission: ¥500

⑪ **Yumekyobashi Castle Road** (夢京橋キャッスルロード): From Kyobashi Bridge built across the outer moat of the Castle, the City's 350 meter long main street stretches southward-this is the area called Yumekyobashi Castle Road. Arts and crafts shops, tea houses, restaurants, and boutiques, as well as private houses, are refurbished in a unified color of white, black, brown, and gray, together creating the atmosphere of merchants' houses of the Edo Period. Visitors are entertained by unique presentations at each shop as they walk along the road, and are

reminded of past times. With the old merchant town beautifully arranged in a modern style, Yumekyobashi Castle Road has become another tourist favorite of Hikone City.

⑫ **Ryotan-ji Temple** (龍潭寺): 25-min. walk from Hikone Sta. on JR Line. Ryotan-ji Temple is a Rinsai Sect Zen Temple founded in 1617 by Naotaka Ii. This temple contains a dry landscape garden of white sand and 48 stones. Open: 9:00–16:00 Admission: ¥400

⑬ **Chikubu-shima Island** (竹生島): Circumference 2 km and area 0.14 km². Chikubushima Shrine and Hogon-ji Temple are the main attractions of this island. Hogon-ji Temple features the Chikubu-shima Kannon and is famous as the 30th temple of the Kannon Temple Pilgrimage. Ohmi Marine operates boat from Hikone Port, which leaves from mid Mar.–Nov. 30, takes 40 min. and costs ¥3,400 for round trip. A boat for Chikubu-shima Island also leaves from Omi-Imazu and Nagahama. Admission to the island: ¥400



⑥ – ⑧ corresponds to those in the Accommodations list on page 3/5
 ⑨ – ⑫ correspond to those on page 2/5 & 3/5

Accommodations:

Numbers ① – ⑧ correspond to those on the map page 2/5, 3/5 & 4/5

Name of facilities	Tel.	Fax	Room rate (¥)	Name of facilities	Tel.	Fax	Room rate (¥)
Otsu				Hikone			
① Biwako Hotel (H)	(077)524-7111	(077)524-2254	¥¥¥	⑥ Hikone castle Hotel (H)	(0749)21-2001	(0749)21-2200	¥¥¥
② Otsu Prince Hotel (H)	(077)521-1111	(077)521-1110	¥¥¥	⑦ Comfort Hotel Hikone (H)	(0749)27-8211	(0744)27-8212	¥¥
③ Yumotokan (R)	(077)579-1111	(077)578-1082	¥¥¥	⑧ Hotel Sunroute Hikone (H)	(0749)26-0123	(0749)26-0686	¥¥
④ Ryokan Tsukinoya (R)	(077)537-1058	(077)533-3551	¥¥				
⑤ View Lodge Biwa (PL)	(077)572-1317	(077)572-3370	¥				

Accommodation rates are due to change by season or days. Please check the correct rates before you visit.

Remarks:

Standard rates are quoted.

- H = Hotel
- R = Ryokan
- PL = People's Lodge (Kokumin Shukusha)

- Rate for a twin room
- Rate per person
- Rate per person

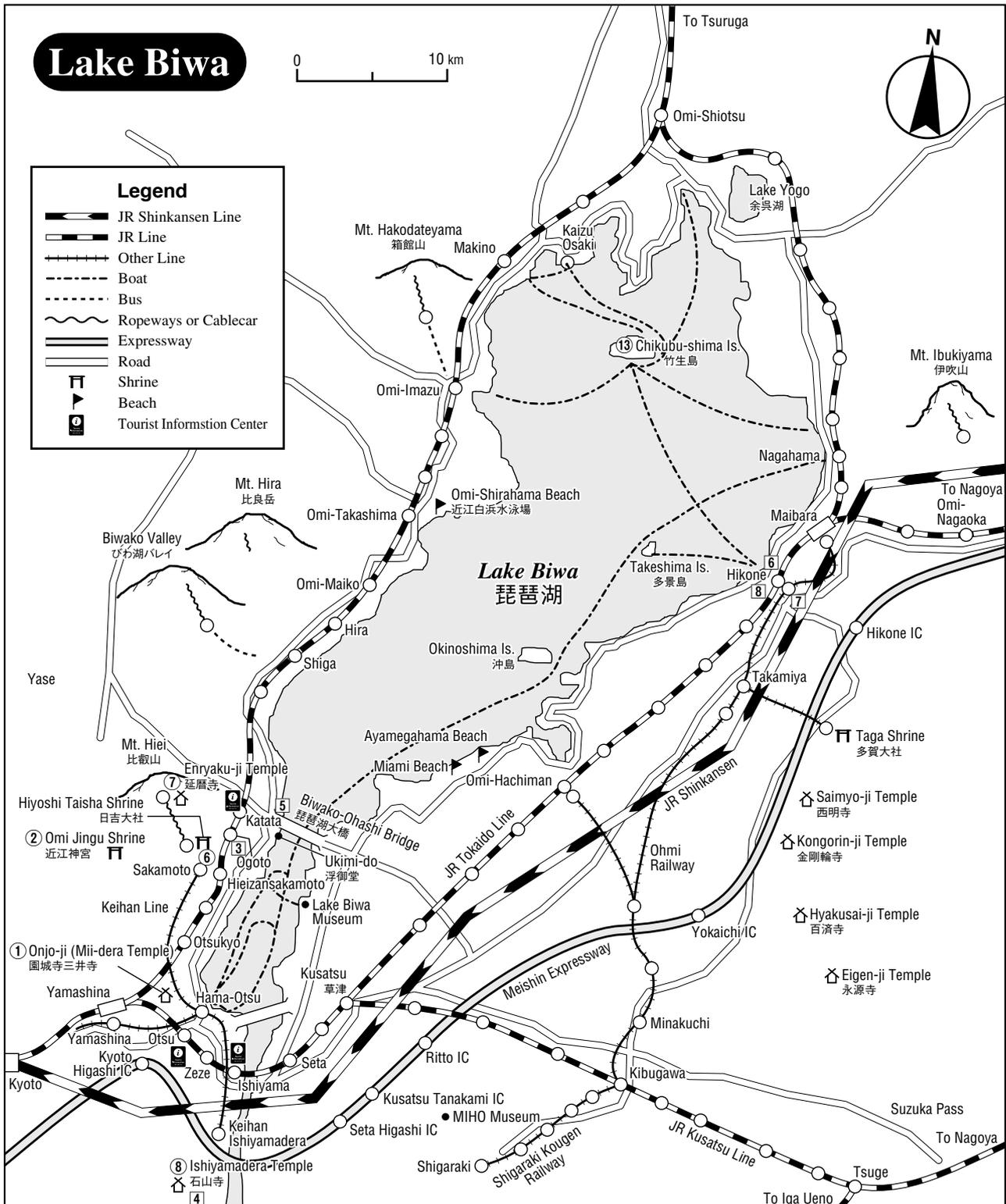
- ¥¥¥ = more than 15,000 yen
- ¥¥ = 8,001 yen – 15,000 yen
- ¥ = 8,000 yen or less

Annual Events:

Otsu Festival (大津祭): A big festival is held on 2nd Sat. and Sun. on Oct. in the city's old streets. It began about 350 years ago and is similar to a procession of floats used in the Gion Festival in Kyoto. On festival eve, many floats are decorated with red lanterns. And the next day, thirteen floats decorated with gorgeous Gobelin tapestries are pulled around town. The floats are designated as Important Cultural Properties. Don't miss seeing the unique mechanical marionettes on the floats. 5-min. walk from JR Otsu Sta. (Parade takes place from 9:30-17:30 on the second day.)

Lake Biwa Fireworks Festival (びわ湖大花火大会): One of the largest fireworks shows in the Kansai region, held on Aug. 6 or 7 or 8, starts at 19:30. The fireworks can be seen best from Hama-Otsu.

Hikone Shiro-Matsuri (小江戸彦根の城まつりパレード): Procession of children dressed in the traditional costume of feudal lords on Nov. 3.



Number ③ - ⑧ correspond to those in the Accommodations list on page 3/5
 Number ① - ②, ⑥ - ⑧, ⑬ correspond to those on page 1/5 - 3/5

Tourist Information Center (TIC)

TIC of Japan National Tourism Organization is your helping hand while in Japan. Its main services are providing travel information and free literature on Japan such as tourist spots, transportation, and suggesting tour itineraries, etc.

1st Fl., Shin Tokyo Bldg., 3-3-1, Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0005 Tel. 03-3201-3331
Open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Closed: Jan. 1st)
<http://www.jnto.go.jp/eng/arrange/travel/guide/tic.html>



Goodwill Guide Groups offer tourists from overseas local tours guided in English or other languages. The guides are registered with JNTO and display the badge shown. As they are volunteers, there is no charge for their service. You are only expected to pay for their transportation, admission to tourist facilities if you visit any and their meals if you eat with them.

JNTO Website

www.jnto.go.jp/eng/arrange/travel/guide/guideservice.html



TOURIST INFORMATION (Visit Japan Information Network)

Otsu City Tourist Information Office (Otsu Sta.):

1-3 Kasuga-cho, Otsu City, Shiga Tel. (077) 522-3830

Open: 8:40-17:25 Closed: Dec.29 – Jan.3

Otsu City Tourist Information Office (Katata Sta.):

1-1-76 Mano, Otsu City, Shiga Tel. (077) 573-1000

Open: 8:40-17:25 Closed: Dec.29 – Jan.3

Otsu City Tourist Information Office (Ishiyama Sta.):

2-28 Awazu-cho, Otsu City, Shiga Tel. (077) 534-0706

Open: 8:40-17:25 Closed: Dec.29 – Jan.3

Hikone Tourist Information Office:

JR Hikone Station, 40-7 Furusawa-cho, Hikone City, Shiga

Open: 9:00-17:00 Closed: Dec.29 – 31 Tel. (0749) 22-2954

Note: Transportation expenses, admission fees and other charges may change due to the increase in the consumption tax rate to 8% from April 2014.

All information, including transportation schedules, fares, prices and accommodation charges, which is contained in this leaflet is based on data as of November 2013, and is subject to change without notice. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of all information, regrettably errors do occasionally occur. Therefore, you should check with organizations concerned for updated and accurate information on your chosen destination. JNTO shall not be liable for any loss or damage of whatever nature that may arise as a result, directly or indirectly, from the use of any of the information or material contained in this leaflet.