

•Tour Planning Guide•

Discover the Legacy of Craft & Modern Creativity in Shiga

Shaped by natural resources and close ties with Kyoto, Shigaraki pottery and other traditional crafts thrive, made with clay from the ancient basin of Lake Biwa. Explore these crafts as part of a vibrant culture where nature, history, and creativity come together to create timeless beauty.



INTRODUCTION

Discover the Legacy of Craft and Modern Creativity in Shiga

Shigaraki, one of Japan's Six Ancient Kilns, is known for its centuries-old pottery tradition. Located between Kyoto and Nara, it fostered cultural and artistic growth. As the tea ceremony was born in Kyoto, the close proximity influenced Shigaraki's tea wares. With rich clay from ancient Lake Biwa, the area has long attracted ceramic artisans. Visitors can explore historic kilns, experience the local tradition, and discover the Art Brut movement.

KEY DESTINATIONS



The Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park

Premium Experience 1

A park dedicated to ceramic art in Shigaraki, featuring artist-in-residence studios, galleries, and a museum. It serves as a hub for culture and art, showcasing ceramic works across its verdant grounds.



Ogama (Meizan)

Premium Experience 2

Owned by the ceramic manufacturer Meizan, Ogama is a facility with a pottery workshop and gallery showcasing a restored historic climbing kiln. It also offers pottery classes, a lodging facility.



Atelier YAMANAMI

Premium Experience 3

A welfare facility where individuals with disabilities create distinctive art pieces, widely recognized domestically and internationally as a pioneer of Art Brut in Japan, showcasing the region's creative spirit.



Shiga Museum of Art

Premium Experience 4

Located in a lush park, it fosters connections with society through its collections and educational programs. The collection includes modern, contemporary, and Art Brut works.

3- Day Sample Course

Day 1: Introduction to Shigaraki Ware

- Guided explanation and kiln tour at the Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park (see Page 2)
- Hands-on crafting experience at Ogama (see Page 3)
- Tea time featuring Omi Tea grown in Asamiya, Shigaraki

Day 2: Dive Deeper into Shigaraki Ware

- Visit the Artist-in-Residence at the Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park (see Page 2)
- Order a custom piece at Meizan factory (see Page 3)
- Explore and shop for Shigaraki Ware

Day 3: Discover Art Brut

- Visit Atelier YAMANAMI, a hub for unique outsider art (see Page 4)
- Attend the "Night Museum" at the Shiga Museum of Art (see Page 5)

Note: The course can be tailored to a single day according to your preferences.

SHIGA SPECIALITIES

Uosen - Culinary Delights in Shigaraki's Ancient Pottery Town

A long-established Japanese restaurant in Shigaraki, Uosen serves seasonal Shiga specialties, including Omi beef, Lake Biwa fish, and local vegetables, artfully presented on Shigaraki ware. Vegan and vegetarian options available.

Omi Tea - Elegance Brewed in the Ancient Home of Japanese Tea

Shiga (Omi) is regarded as the birthplace of Japanese tea, first cultivated over 1,300 years ago. Celebrated for its rich flavor and exceptional quality, Omi tea remains a proud symbol of Shiga's tea heritage.



Facility Name	The Shiga Ceramic Cultural Park (2188-7 Chokushi, Shigaraki-cho, Koka, Shiga)		
Activity Details	<p>Plan A. Hands-on Pottery Workshop: Experience the Charm of Shigaraki Ware</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pottery Workshop (Adults): Hands-on pottery-making experience (90 mins) ● “Tsuchikko” Workshop (Children): Fun and creative pottery activities (90 mins). Includes an optional plate design experience using transfer sheets, with no firing necessary. <p>Plan B. Art-in-Residence Tour</p> <p>A guided tour where visitors will meet artists from around the world working on their creations. Visitors can also explore Shigaraki’s traditional kilns, such as <i>anagama</i> and climbing kilns, with detailed explanations by staff (30–60 mins)</p> <p>Plan C. Guided Exhibition Tour with a Curator</p> <p>Join a curator for an in-depth tour of the exhibition at the museum. Upon request, the participants can enjoy an up close look at rare antique Shigaraki ware typically displayed behind glass. Additional admission fees are required (30–60 mins).</p>		
Tour Operating Time / Duration	Between 10:00 am to 4:00 pm / Duration: 1–4 hours (varies depending on the activity)		
Minimum No. of Guests	6 (but flexible upon consultation)	Maximum No. of Guests	Plan A: 40 / Plan B: 15 / Plan C: 30
Language	Japanese / English or Korean (advance coordination required) / some written English guidance		
Important Note	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Closed: Mondays (or the following day if Monday is a public holiday) ● Plan A&B: Available year-round ● Plan C: During the winter season from mid-December to mid-March, no tour available due to the Ceramics Museum (exhibition) is closed ● Meals: No meals are provided during activities. A restaurant is available on-site. ● Accessibility: Wheelchair-friendly spaces are available on-site. 		



*For pricing, please inquire.


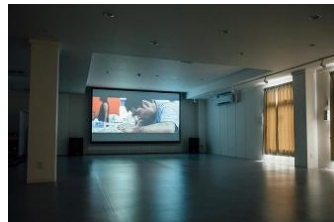

*Reservations must be made at least one month in advance.

Facility Name	Meizan Ceramics Industry CO.,LTD (MEIZAN) (1055-1 Nagano Shigaraki-cho, Koka, Shiga)		
Activity Details	<p>Plan A: Discover the Charm of Shigaraki Ware and Meet Artisans (3 hours) Time Schedule:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1:00 PM: Arrival and introduction. ● 1:15 PM–2:30 PM: Guided walking tour of Shigaraki's craft scene with a local guide, visiting workshops and a factory with artisan guidance. ● 2:30 PM–4:00 PM: Custom pottery-making experience with an artisan. <i>*Choose from 3 shapes, 100 glazes, and custom patterns to create your unique piece.</i> <i>*Finished pieces are delivered to your hotel in Japan within three weeks. (International shipping is available for an additional fee.)</i> <p>Plan B: Discover the Charm of Shigaraki Ware and Meet Artisans (2 Days) DAY 1: The schedule for Day 1 is the same as the half-day course above. Accommodation: Stay at the on-site lodging facility *Please see Page 8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stay in a renovated traditional house featuring an on-site heritage climbing kiln. ● Cooking for yourself using the equipped kitchen with local ingredients, or opt for recommended local restaurants (not included in price). <p>DAY 2: AM – Enjoy a relaxed morning until check-out time (10:00 am). [Optional Services]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Private pottery-making session (additional fees apply) ● Shuttle service available between Shigaraki Station and the town center ● Luggage storage service available. 		
Start Time / Duration	Inquire to be consulted / Duration : Plan A 3hours, Plan B 2days		
Minimum No. of Guests	2	Maximum No. of Guests	Plan A: 12 / Plan B: 6
Language	Japanese / English / German (*artisans speak Japanese only)		
Important Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Transportation: The following train schedule to Shigaraki Station (Shigaraki Kogen Railway) is recommended for participants joining the program: Arrival: 12:48 PM / Departure: 5:06 PM ● Pottery Experience: Create pottery using techniques such as wheel throwing, slab building, or painting tanuki figures, guided by skilled artisans. ● Attire: Comfortable, easy-to-move-in clothing ● Photography Policy: As the workshop produces Studio Ghibli merchandise, photography is restricted inside the facility. Observing the production process only. ● Important note for Agents: Promotional materials for the tour must not mention any involvement in the production of Ghibli merchandise or use related terms. 		






*For pricing, please inquire.

*Reservations must be made at least one month in advance.

Facility Name	Atelier YAMANAMI (Yamanami Kobo) (872 Kazuraki Konan-cho, Koka, Shiga)		
Activity Details	<p>Plan A: Atelier Tour with Lunch (120 mins) A guided tour of the atelier where individuals with disabilities create expressive and unique artworks. Explore the gallery showcasing these acclaimed pieces, with lunch at the on-site café (optional without lunch).</p> <p>Plan B: Lecture on Atelier YAMANAMI's Initiatives and Involvement in the Arts by the Disabled in Japan (30–60 mins) with Atelier Tour Gain insight into the wide range of artistic contribution, including exhibitions, films, fashion, and merchandise, as well as the broader art initiatives by individuals with disabilities across Japan. After the lecture, take a guided tour of the atelier and gallery.</p> <p>Plan C: Documentary Screening and Tour (or Lecture) Watch a 60-minute documentary created in 2018 that delves into the daily lives and creative inspirations of Atelier YAMANAMI's artists. Following the screening, visit the atelier and gallery or participate in a lecture.</p> <p>Plan D: Collaborative Art Experience with An Artist (30–60 mins) <i>Optional add-on to Plan A to C</i> After learning about Atelier YAMANAMI's initiatives, join an artist in a hands-on creative session. <i>*Details regarding fees, the project, and the participating artist can be customized upon request.</i></p>		
			
			
			
Tour Operating Time / Duration	Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays (Saturdays by arrangement) 10:30 AM–12:00 PM / 1:00 PM–2:30 PM Duration : 30-120 mins (depending on the plan)		
Minimum No. of Guests	1	Maximum No. of Guests	Plan A, B & C: 30 / Plan D: 5
Language	Japanese only (interpretation must be arranged independently).		
Important Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Held every Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. Saturdays are available only once a month (please inquire for specific dates). Closed on public holidays, during Obon week in mid-August, and at the end and beginning of the year. 		

*For pricing, please inquire.

*Reservations must be made at least one month in advance.

Facility Name	Shiga Museum of Art (1740-1 Seta-Minamiogaya-Cho, Otsu, Shiga)		
Activity Details	<p>Night Tour of the Museum (From 30 mins / customizable) Experience an exclusive, fully private museum tour after closing hours, led by the director and expert art staff. Delve into both special and permanent exhibitions and enjoy rare, exclusive access to behind-the-scenes areas, including the museum's storage facilities. This fully private after-hours tour offers intimate exploration of the museum's world-renowned collection of Art Brut, along with masterpieces by Yuki Ogura (1895–2000), a celebrated Japanese painter whose work has been showcased in solo exhibitions at Japan's National Museums. Engage deeply with these exceptional collections through expert insights.</p> <p>Participants also explore the museum's storage facilities, designed with unique features like high-humidity-regulating wood, offering a fascinating contrast to European counterparts.</p> <p><i>*Daytime tours are also available upon request.</i></p>		
	  		
Tour Operating Time / Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The tour is private and available exclusively during designated after-hours time slots (5:00 PM–8:00 PM on open days). ● Tours on museum-closed days can be arranged upon request. ● Standard tours can still be conducted during the museum's regular operating hours. 		
Minimum No. of Guests	1	Maximum No. of Guests	10
Language	Japanese / English (Advance consultation required)		
Important Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tour content may change or be canceled due to unforeseen circumstances. ● If guests have specific works they wish to view, please consult us in advance. ● Public transport: 10-minute bus ride from JR Seta Station and 5-minute walk. For evening visits, a taxi is recommended for direct drop-off at the museum entrance. 		

*For pricing, please inquire.

*Reservations must be made at least one month in advance.

Recommended 3-Day Comprehensive Itinerary

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All transportation is by private vehicle
Estimated cost: 320,000 yen per person

Day 1

Shigaraki - Ancient Pottery Town

- 9:00 AM Depart from Kyoto Station (1 hour)
- 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM Kiln and Art-in-Residence Tour at The Shiga Ceramic Cultural Park (Premium Experience 1)
- 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM Lunch at Uosen: Enjoy Japanese cuisine served on Shigaraki pottery
- 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM Ogama (Meizan): Guided walking tour, artisan-led factory visit, and custom pottery-making experience (Premium Experience 2)
- 4:10 PM Check in at Ogawatei, a traditional inn in Shigaraki, and enjoy premium Omi beef paired with local sake

Accommodation: Ogawatei

Day 2

Atelier YAMANAMI & Shiga Museum of Art

- 10:00 AM–11:30 AM Shopping for pottery and Asamiya tea in Shigaraki
- 11:30 AM–1:00 PM Head to Atelier YAMANAMI and enjoy a lunch surrounded by art at Café Debesso
- 1:00 PM–2:30 PM Tour the atelier and workshop at Atelier YAMANAMI (Premium Experience 3)
- 2:30 PM–3:15 PM Head to Biwako Hotel in Otsu City (45 mins) to check-in. Then, proceed to the Shiga Museum of Art (30 mins).
- 5:00 PM–6:30 PM Experience the Night Tour of the Museum (Premium Experience 4)
- 7:00 PM–8:30 PM Return to the hotel (30 mins) and enjoy freshly fried tempura at Tempura Ohmi in the hotel

Accommodation: Biwako Hotel

Day 3

Hotel Check-out

- 9:00 AM Check out of the hotel and transfer to Kyoto (30 min) or Maibara (70 min)

*Please consider incorporating other itinerary plans and activities into your schedule.

Access from Major Cities to Otsu / Maibara

Travel from:	Arrive in:	Travel Time by JR Train / Shinkansen	Distance / Route
Kyoto	Otsu, Shiga	10 mins to JR Otsu Sta. (Biwako Line Special Rapid)	14.2 km (JR Kyoto Sta. – JR Otsu Sta.)
Osaka	Otsu, Shiga	40 mins to JR Otsu Sta. (Biwako Line Special Rapid)	40.3 km (From Meishin Expressway Suita IC)
Maibara	Otsu, Shiga	45 mins to JR Otsu Sta. (Biwako Line Special Rapid)	71.3 km (via Meishin Expressway)
Nagoya	Maibara, Shiga	28 mins to JR Maibara Sta. (Tokaido Shinkansen Kodama / Hikari)	58.7 km (From Meishin Expressway Komaki IC)
Tokyo	Maibara, Shiga	134 mins to JR Maibara Sta. (Tokaido Shinkansen Kodama / Hikari)	402.4 km (via Tomei and Meishin Expressway)
Kanazawa	Maibara, Shiga	113 mins to JR Maibara Sta. (Hokuriku Shinkansen Tsuruga & Local JR Express)	182.7 km (via Hokuriku Expressway)

Biwako Hotel



A Lakeside Escape with Breathtaking Views of Lake Biwa

With the concept of "Resort & Relax," this lakeside resort in Otsu offers outstanding views of Lake Biwa. Every room is designed with a bright, open atmosphere inspired by the theme of "radiance," featuring sweeping vistas of the majestic Lake Biwa and Mount Hiei.

[Address] 2-40 Hama-cho, Otsu, Shiga

[Access] 5 mins from Meishin Expressway Otsu IC / 10 mins by vehicle from JR Otsu Station

Satoyumukashibanashi Yuzanso



A Hillside Onsen Retreat with Stunning Views of Lake Biwa

Situated on a hillside overlooking Lake Biwa, this inn offers breathtaking views of the lake's ever-changing seasonal beauty from every room. Unwind in the open-air cypress bath while gazing at a star-filled sky.

[Address] 1-9-28 Ogoto, Otsu, Shiga

[Access] 5 mins by complimentary shuttle bus from Ogoto Onsen Station (operates until 9 PM)

Ogawatei



Onsen Ryokan in the Heart of a Pottery Town

Situated in the Nagano district, home to a high concentration of pottery kilns, this traditional inn highlights Shigaraki ware, from contemporary creations to antiques. Don't miss the private outdoor hot spring baths featuring charming Shigaraki tanuki motifs.

[Address] 876 Nagano, Shigaraki-cho, Koka, Shiga

[Access] 10-min walk from Shigaraki Station (Shigaraki Kogen Railway) / 8 minutes by vehicle from Shin-Meishin Expressway Shigaraki IC

Ogama



Stay at a Unique Inn within a Shigaraki Pottery Facility

Immerse yourself in the charm of Shigaraki at this inn, where local history and atmosphere come alive. Operated by Meizan, a Shigaraki pottery kiln house with over 400 years of tradition, it offers a stay deeply connected to the area's cultural legacy.

[Address] 947 Nagano, Shigaraki-cho, Koka, Shiga

[Access] 10 mins by vehicle from Shin-Meishin Expressway Shigaraki IC