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Station (Eki) without a train

by Noriko Ehara

Since September this year was warmer than usual, the leaves are changing color later than last year, and you can still enjoy autumn leaves (kouyo) in November.

How about stopping at a “station without a train” when you’re next driving to see the autumn leaves?

In Japan there are many rest areas along country roads with names that include the kanji “駅” (Eki), meaning station. Here you can meet local people selling local specialties like vegetables, fish, folk crafts and homemade food. It is a great place to see their local culture and a fun place to shop and chat.

Michi no Eki 道の駅

“Michi (road) no Eki” is the most popular kind of “station without a train.” There are 15 Michi no Ekis in Okayama prefecture. “Michi no Eki, Daigo no Sato” in Maniwa City is named after their famous 1000 year old cherry tree, “Daigo zakura.”

Locally grown vegetables and homemade bread baked with wild yeast are their specialties. In the restaurant Sakura, you can eat Kurobuta Ramen (Chinese noodles with roast black pork).

Open everyday 10:00-18:00 (Restaurant Sakura 8:00-18:00).
TEL. 0867-52-8040

Yama no Eki 山の駅

“Yama (mountain) no Eki, Ajiwai no Yado Shinjo” in Shinjo village provides accommodations for 7,875 yen pp twin share. Meals are served by the irori fireplace and you can eat fresh fish from the river, wild mountain plants, local beef and free-range chicken. You can purchase wood work and bamboo crafts or go hiking in the beech wood forest or fishing in a mountain stream.



There are 2 Japanese-style rooms and 6 rooms with beds. Reservation necessary.
TEL. 0867-56-3233

Ki no Eki 木の駅

“Ki (tree) no Eki, Katsuyama Mokuzaï Fureai Kaikan” in Katsuyama cho is a place to feel the warmth of timber. They sell wooden building materials, virgin wood, wood crafts and hundreds of wood products. There is also a cafe where you can drink coffee from a wooden cup or have handmade soba (buckwheat noodles) next door.

Open 9:30-17:00.
Closed on Tuesdays.
TEL. 0867-44-4400

Umi no Eki 海の駅

Hinase in Bizen City is famous for oysters. “Umi (sea) no Eki, Shioji” is a market selling fresh seafood, dried fish, seaweed, Hinase orange jam, vegetables, etc.

There is a fish market, “Gomi no Ichi” across the street. You can buy fresh fish and shellfish from the wives of the fishermen that caught them. In “Umi no Eki”, you can barbecue the seafood you buy. Rental of a barbecue table costs 600 yen. The best season for oysters in Hinase is January but they are in season from November to March.

Market: open everyday 9.00-17.00. Closed during the Bon and New Year holidays.

TEL.0869-72-2201

Diner: open 6.00-17.00. Closed on Thursdays and at New Years.

TEL.0869-72-2202

Gomi no Ichi: open 9.00-17.00. Closed on Tuesdays.

TEL. 0869-72-3655

Courtesy of Living Okayama.