

## "Best Historic Locations in Okinawa"

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📍 6 Locations Bookmarked



📷 by Binh Giang ©

### Katsuren-jo

#### "Lord Awamari's Castle in Uruma"

Built around the 12th Century, the ruins of Katsuren-jo (Katsuren Castle) sit atop a hill in Uruma, east of Okinawa City. It is an example of a gusuku, or traditional Okinawan castle. Because it lies on a peninsula bounded by the Pacific Ocean, it is also called the "Ocean Gusuku." Lord Awamari was wise, promoting trade and introducing overseas techniques and cultures to increase the prosperity of his domain. However, he was overthrown by the kings of Shuri in 1458 for plotting to usurp the throne. Many fine pieces of tile and Chinese porcelain have been excavated from the building, and it is now a World Heritage Site. The park is closed every Monday and from December 29-January 3.



📞 +81 98 978 7373

✉️ [katsuren-jo@woody.ocn.ne.jp](mailto:katsuren-jo@woody.ocn.ne.jp)

📍 Uruma, Uruma



📷 by Almighty Franklstein ©

### Zakimi-jo

#### "Zakimi Castle Ruins"

This historical World Heritage site has been at the top of a hill surveying the west coast of Okinawa since the 15th Century. The castle was built by a venerated chieftain of the area, Gosamaru, who tore down his old castle and reused the stones to build Zakimi-jo. Next to the site is an informational museum on the castle's history and about other historical Okinawan artifacts.



📞 +81 98 958 3141

💻 [www.vill.yomitan.okinawa.jp/facilities/post-14.html](http://www.vill.yomitan.okinawa.jp/facilities/post-14.html)

📍 708-6 Zakimi, Nakagami District, Yomitan



📷 by ken2754@Yokohama ©

### Shurijo Castle Park

#### "Palace of the Ryukyu Kings"

As the Ryuku nation's palace, Shurijo Castle was the economic, religious and administrative epicenter of the chain of islands now known as Okinawa. Once bound to pay tribute to China and Japan while also doing trade with Southeast Asia, the influences of all these cultures can be seen in the architecture, decor, and most of all the blazingly red walls of the castle. Since being built in the 1400s, Shurijo has served as a royal residence, a Japanese military base, and as a school. It is the only Okinawan castle to be completely restored to its 18th Century state after being bombed during World War II, and is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site easily accessed by monorail or bus. Traditional Ryukyuan dances are performed in the main courtyard three times daily. See the website for more details.



📞 +81 98 886 2020

💻 [oki-park.jp/shurijo-park/english/](http://oki-park.jp/shurijo-park/english/)

📍 1-2 Kinjo-cho, Shuri, Naha



by 663highland

## Shikina-En Garden

"Home of the Chinese Envoys"

Near Shurijo, Shikina-En Garden served as a second home to the Shuri kings as well as the reception area for Chinese envoys. This idyllic pond-garden was first completed in 1799, before it was sadly destroyed in the Battle of Okinawa. An expensive reconstruction was carried out from 1975, and it took all of 20 years to restore the garden back to its original glory. Today, the gardens feature traditional Chinese bridges that connect small ponds, with beautiful seasonal trees such as plum, wisteria and bellflowers surrounding them. The confluence of Japanese and Chinese landscaping has led the gardens to become a part of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites.



+81 98 855 5936

421-7 Maaji, Naha



by Hyougushi

## Sefa Utaki

"Okinawa's Most Sacred Site"

Designated a World Heritage Site, this is the first site a Ryukyu King visited after ascending to the throne, and also where Ryukyu's supreme priestesses were ordained and performed rituals. In legend, the ritual site was created by Amamikiyo, the goddess who created the Ryukyu Islands. Prayers are made facing Kudaka Island, the place where Amamikiyo first descended from the heavens. Two giant stones form the entrance to the prayer area.



+81 98 949 1899

Sayahabaru, Kudaken, Nanjo



by ChiefHira

## Gokoku Temple

"Oldest Temple in Naha"

Built in 1368, the Gokoku Temple grounds also contain the Bettelheim Monument, the Kozakura Monument, and the Naminoue Shrine. Originally built to propagate Shingonshu Buddhism, it was used for foreign reception by the Tokugawa Shogunate, and also as a residence of the British missionary, Bettelheim. The Kozakura Monument honors the 700 children who died when an evacuation ship was bombed during World War II.



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1-25-11 Wakasa, Naha City

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