One of the pair of peninsulas in the southern part of Nagasaki Prefecture is the Shimabara Peninsula, and its center is the Unzen active volcano area. As shown in the map, the peninsula is 40 km wide, 150 km long, and has an area of about 470 km², all of which are the region of “Umi-Yama” Scenic Byway in Shimabara Peninsula. Surrounded by the Ariake Sea, Shimabara Bay and Tachibana Bay, it consists of three municipalities: Unzen City, Shimabara City and Minami-Shimabara City.

(Access). The main access points from overseas are Nagasaki, Fukuoka and Kumamoto Airport, and two ports of Nagasaki and Hakata. Based on them, there are four main access routes to the peninsula. One of them is the peninsula route ①. From Nagasaki Airport or Fukuoka Airport, you arrive at the Isahaya IC on the Nagasaki Expressway or the Isahaya Station on the JR Nagasaki Main Line. From there, going south along National Route 57, you reach Aino Point ① in Unzen City. (See the map).

Points of ② and ③ on the west coast of the peninsula are in the case that you access Fukuoka Airport or Kumamoto Airport and use a boat from Miike Port, Nagasu Port or Kumamoto Port. In addition, the ferry between Oniike Port on Amakusa Shimoshiama and Kuchinotsu Port on the peninsula is the Point ④. (Main Route in Road Network and Public Transport).

The main routes of the scenic area are National Routes No.57, 251 and 389, which circulate or cross the peninsula. Besides, wide-area roads for farming, disaster prevention road and prefectural roads complement this road network.

As a public transport, the Shimabara railway runs between JR Isahaya Station and Shimabara Port Station, and a bus route
network is established along National Routes and main prefectural roads on the peninsula.

**Main Scenic Resources.**

Two main scenic resources on the Shimabara Peninsula are the active volcanoes, and the history of sufferings of Christians.

Until millions of years ago, several small islands floated in the sea throughout the Shimabara area. Volcanic eruptions began at 1.5 to 1 million years ago, and an outer ring was born surrounding the Chijita caldera (now Tachibana Bay). And, in 500,000 years ago, the northern coastal islands joined together to form a peninsula.

In addition, an earthquake occurred and a graben extending from the east to the west was formed in the center of the peninsula by north and south faults. Later, volcanic activity in the mountains and the collapse of the mountainous areas were repeated, forming the current topography of peninsula. Of these volcanic activities, two major eruptions, 1792 and 1989-1995, are well known.

In the former case, after the volcanic eruption from Fugen-dake, Mt. Mayu-yama collapsed due to the earthquake. It is said that there were 15,000 dead and missing persons, because the collapsed deposits flowed into Shimabara Bay and a large tsunami occurred. (See the Photo (2)).

The latter is an eruption of Heisei-shinzan Mt., and a lava dome formed around the crater. The pyroclastic flow that collapsed with growth detoured Mount Mayu-yama and fell to the east slope of the peninsula. As a result, many victims and damage occurred, again.

As volcanic activity will be still seemed to occur in the future, the topography of the peninsula may change further. However, at present, the mountainous area is located in the center of the peninsula and is composed more than 20 mountains, such as Heisei-shinzan, three mountains, and five peaks. And it has a steep slope towards Tachibana Bay. Other parts are past small volcanic mountains, pyroclastic plateaus, and debris flow deposits.

Shimabara Peninsula with these contents is a part of Unzen Amakusa National Park, and was certified as a Japan Geopark in 2008 and a World Geopark in 2009 mainly on Unzen Volcano.

Another scenery is a revolt by farmers in Amakusa Island and Shimabara peninsula, and the ruins are a world culture heritage. In 1637-38, farmers in the region could not withstand excessive taxes, famine, and severe repression of Christians. For this reason, under the leadership of 16-year-old Shiro Amakusa, the peasants caused the greatest revolt in our country.

On the Shimabara Peninsula, Arima villagers first killed Daikan (local governor). Peasants then fought in Fukae village and attacked Shimabara Castle. On the other hand, in Amakusa, rebels fought at Hondo Castle and further, attacked Tamioka Castle.

However, neither castle could be occupied. For this reason, the farmers gathered in the abandoned Hara Castle together and built a base camp there. The scale is said to be 37,000 persons (including non-combatants such as women and children). In contrast, the Shogunate army was 130,000 soldiers.
The Shogunate army attacked the castle several times with overwhelming military power, but all failed. Therefore, the shogunate army is said to have attacked the rebels while cutting off food supplies, eventually rebels were killed or went into suicide. This was a tragic incident that we had never experienced before.

Our life on the peninsula is to utilize various blessings from the volcano. In other words, there is a magma pool at the bottom of Tachibana Bay, where heat is transmitted to Unzen Peninsula, and the entire peninsula is a recreation area with hot springs. The main ones are Obama, Unzen, and Shimabara Onsen, each of which has a different quality. Obama Onsen is a hot water with a maximum temperature of over100 degrees, and naturally springs out. The Unzen Onsen is a hell that blows away 30 fountains and hot steam, and hot water is said to cure wounds. The Shimabara Onsen is a hot spring of about 40 degrees that is good for your skin.

Referring to the above two landscape resources and considering their placement, the scenic spots in this route are arranged into six zones (1) to (6) as shown in the map.

**1 Isahaya Bay Area in Unzen City**

Tracing the history of Isahaya Bay Reclamation Project from the Middle Ages to the present, which began at the back of the Bay, you arrive at the Aino district along National Route 57 at the base of peninsula. From there, when heading east on National Route 251, near the Azuma Station of Shimabara Railway you can reach the embankment road built by the latest landfill project.

Then, proceeding toward Taira Port on National Route 251, you find Kunimi Town History and Culture Park.

This is a town named “Koujiro-Kuji”, which is registered as an important traditional building group preservation area. In the Edo period, it is not the domain of Shimabara Clan, but Saga’s territory (Nabeshima). If you visit, you can see the town at that time. Many relics such as waterways, hedges, and stone walls are arranged in an orderly manner. The Nabeshima House and its garden are important cultural assets of the country.

**2-1 Shimabara Castle and its Town (Shimabara City)**

If going about 12 km south from Taira Port, you will reach the central urban area (2) of Shimabara City. Next to Shimabara Station, there is Shimabara Castle and a town of samurai residence. In 1616 of the Edo Period, Shigemasa Matsukura became the new Daimyo instead of the Sengoku Daimyo Arima. He is Fudai-Daimyo who served the Tokugawa family since before Sekigahara.

Originally living in Hinoe Castle, a new castle was built in 1624 and moved in the Shimabara area due to its small size. However, after the Shimabara rebellion, Matsukura Clan changed, and several another Fudai-Daimyos inherited the castle. Later, in the Meiji period, Shimabara Castle was demolished. The current castle building was restored in the 1960s and 80s as a history museum.

The southern part of the castle town is a city that uses spring water, and has the clean waterways, gardens with spring water, and a communal laundry. In addition, Shimabara Onsen and Shimabara Port are next door.

**2-2 Lava Flow Zone in the Mizunashi River Basin.**

The area from Shimabara Port to Mizunashi River was directly damaged by the collapse of Mountain of Mayuyama in the Edo period and the lava flow from Heisei-Shinzan from 1990 to 1996. Needless to say, this area is the core site on World Geopark. As shown in the aerial photograph, the east side of Mt. Mayuyama forms a cliff, followed by small hills. In addition, there are many small islands in the Ariake Sea. These were formed by the debris flow of the mountain collapse.

On the other hand, the lava of Heisei Shinzan flowed down at a speed of 100 km/h and spread over the area around Mizunashi river at the boundary between Shimabara City and Minami-Shimabara City. The buildings of elementary school and some houses damaged by the pyroclastic flow are left as disaster monuments. See Photo (2).

In addition, a facility to display volcano-related materials and disaster-related materials has been built and is open to the public (Unzendake Disaster Memorial Museum, and Gamadasu Dome). At the same time, dikes were built to control the flow of lava fragments.

**3 Heritages of hidden Christian**
(5) Source of Hot Water in Obama Onsen (spa town)

(6) Unzen Jigoku (Spout of Hot Water or Steam)

(4) Dolphin Watching in Shimabara Bay

In the center of Minami-shimabara City, ruins of the medieval Hinoe Castle and heritage related on hidden Christians during the Edo period can be seen.

The biggest attraction is the ruins of Hara Castle (World Cultural Heritage), the last battlefield of Shimabara Amakusa’s revolt. Farmers who participated in the revolt struggled to collect and eat seaweed from the bottom of the cliff, but all were killed or committed suicide except one spy. Then, under more severe repression, Christians secretly kept their faith. These hidden Christian artifacts and materials are preserved and exhibited at the Arima Christian Heritage Memorial Hall.

(3) & (4) Geosites in Minami-Shimabara City

You can visit prehistoric geosites at the southern end of the Shimabara Peninsula, which is registered with the UNESCO Global Geopark. In other words, you can see the oldest layer of 4.3 million years ago (Hayasashi Peninsula), the andesite (Futako-iwa) that erupted 500,000 years ago, and the first layer of Unzen Volcano (Ryuishi Coast). (See Photo (3) and (4)).

(5) Region of Obama Spa Town and Tachibana Bay

This scenic area is the lift zone facing Tachibana Bay, the northern boundary of which is the Chijiiwa fault, and the southern part is the Kanemama fault. In particular, the Chijiiwa fault extends long in the east-west direction, the difference in the drop is 150-200m, and the bottom of the south slope is still sinking at a rate of 1-1.5mm/year.

Obama Onsen, one of the 3 major hot springs on the Shimabara Peninsula, is located at the foot of Unzendake. The temperature of hot water is 105 °C, and the amount of heat released (water volume × temperature of hot water) is the largest in Japan. The footbath “HOT FOOT 105” installed on the beach is the name associated with it. The sunset over Tachibana Bay seen from there is amazing.

(6) Region in Unzen Volcano and Unzen Spa

If you take National Route 57 towards the mountain in the middle of the peninsula, you can climb Unzendake Mountains from either Obama Onsen or Shimabara City. The main scenic spots are Unzen Onsen, Unzen Jigoku Tour, and Unzen Active Volcano. Unzendake is a collective term for active volcanoes such as Heisei Shinzan (1483m), Fugen-dake (1359m), and Myoken-dake (1333m). If you want to visit only the central part of the volcano, you can use a bus or taxi from Unzen Onsen to Nita Pass. If you use them and ropeway, you can take a day trip from Unzen Onsen.

Each of seas surrounding the peninsula has its own characteristics. The Ariake Sea in the east side has a big tidal range, and a lagoon where crabs, rockfish, puffers, kuruma prawns, and kelp gather is developed. Tachibana Bay on the west side is Calidea Bay, and there are many steep cliffs on the coast. In addition, about 300 Japanese dolphins settle at the southern end of the Shimabara peninsula, and you can enjoy the powerful show.

In short, this route area is a region of attractive scenic byways that ties the surrounding sea (Umi in Japanese) to the central volcano (Yama). In this sense, “Umi-Yama” has been added to the course name.