Eiheiji Town, a Zen Village Where Tradition and Innovation Coexist

ZENTABI

Mini Book



Eiheiji Town Travel Guide

Symbols of the Town



Eibo-Kun

Named by combining "Ei(永)" from Eiheiji Town and "Bo (坊)" from the Japanese word for Buddhist monk. As the town's mascot, Eibo-Kun tries his best every day while carrying the hopes of the townspeople.



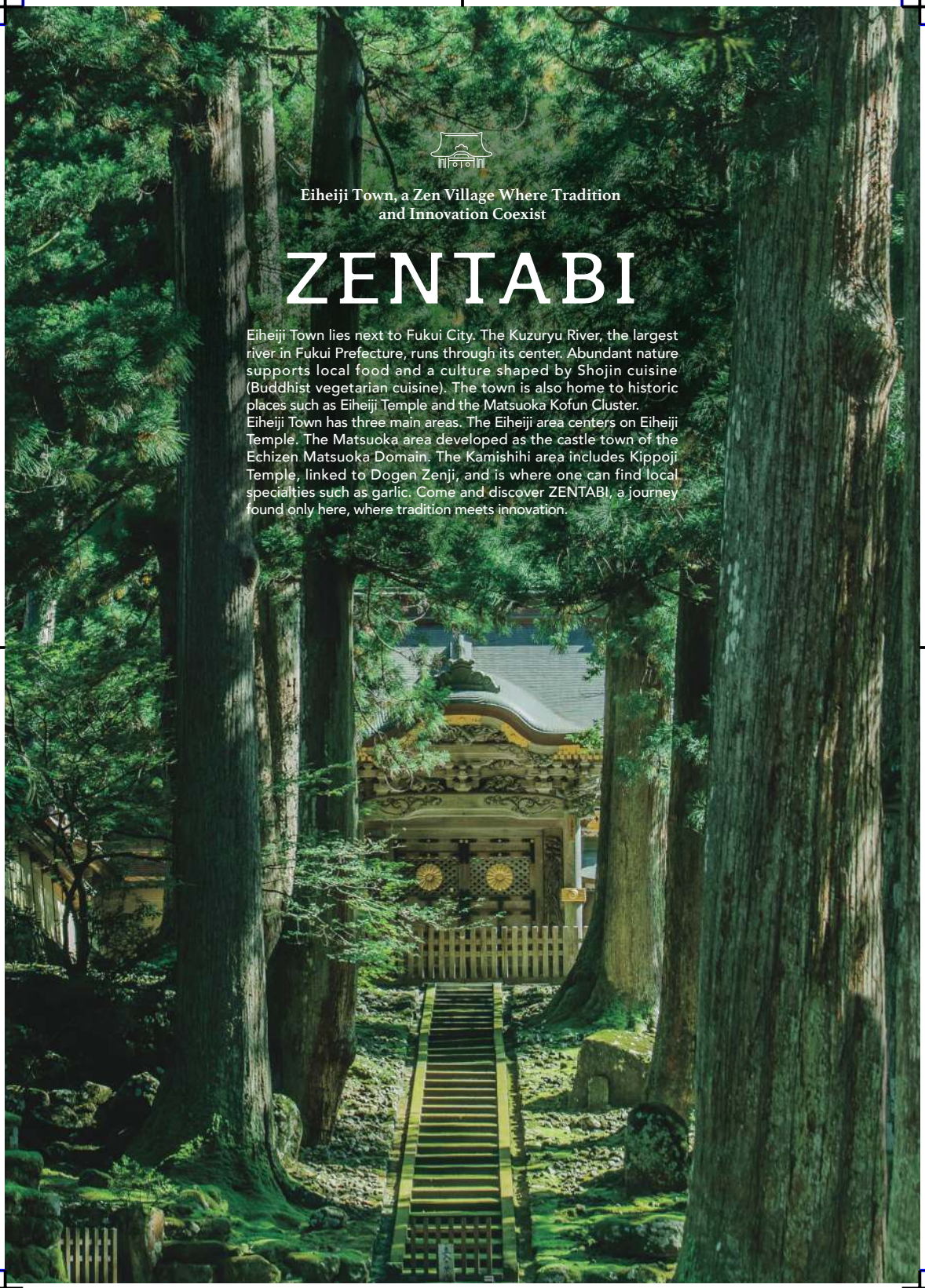
Plum Blossom

As the official flower of the town, the plum endures the winter cold and blooms first in spring, symbolizing the "pioneer spirit." Moreover, it was cherished by Dogen Zenji.



Japanese Tung Oil Tree

A tradition exists in Eiheiji Town of making sushi with trout wrapped in Japanese tung oil tree leaves during festivals and the Obon season. Designated as the official tree of the town, the beloved tung tree is known as the "sushi tree."



Eiheiji Town, a Zen Village Where Tradition and Innovation Coexist

ZENTABI

Eiheiji Town lies next to Fukui City. The Kuzuryu River, the largest river in Fukui Prefecture, runs through its center. Abundant nature supports local food and a culture shaped by Shojin cuisine (Buddhist vegetarian cuisine). The town is also home to historic places such as Eiheiji Temple and the Matsuoka Kofun Cluster.
Eiheiji Town has three main areas. The Eiheiji area centers on Eiheiji Temple. The Matsuoka area developed as the castle town of the Echizen Matsuoka Domain. The Kamishihi area includes Kippoji Temple, linked to Dogen Zenji, and is where one can find local specialties such as garlic. Come and discover ZENTABI, a journey found only here, where tradition meets innovation.



EIHEIJI TOWN

PHOTO COLLECTION

Eiheiji Through Four Seasons Seasonal Views & Events in Photos

Eiheiji town is a beautiful place where you can immerse yourself in nature and the changing seasons. Festivals and events are held throughout the year, and unique local sights make every visit a delight.

Spring

Spring in Eiheiji Town

Eiheiji Town Hana Matsuri EVENT

This festival celebrates the birth of Buddha. A highlight is the children's parade, which pulls a white elephant float up the main road to the temple. /Eiheiji Temple grounds and the approach to the temple (Monzen Sando)





Cherry Blossoms Along the Kuzuryu River SPOT

Cherry blossom spots dot the area, and when in full bloom, the trees near Gosho Bridge along the Kuzuryu River line the road like a tunnel. /Matsuoka, Eiheiji Town (Upstream left bank of the Kuzuryu River near Gosho Bridge)

Summer

Summer in Eiheiji Town

Fireflies of Arakawa

(Early June) SPOT

The Yoshino district of Matsuoka is known as the "Firefly Village." Each year, countless Genji fireflies flit along the Arakawa River. /Matsuoka Yoshino, Eiheiji Town



Kuzuryu River Ayu Sweetfish Fishing

(Mid June- November)

Cherry Trout Fishing

(February- Late May)

SPOT

The mighty Kuzuryu River attracts anglers from all over Japan as a mecca for sweetfish and cherry trout fishing. Sweetfish from the Kuzuryu River are famous for being large, firm, and fragrant, and can be enjoyed in various ways in stores and restaurants throughout Eiheiji Town. /Kuzuryu River





Lantern floating in Eiheiji Town,Fukui

(Late August)

EVENT

A famous summer festival in Eiheiji Town. After the monks recite sutras, about 7,000 lanterns are floated down the Kuzuryu River. The event culminates with colorful fireworks. /Kuzuryu River and Eiheiji Riverside Park

Lantern floating in Eiheiji Town,Fukui Homepage



Discover Eiheiji Town

"Tradition" & "Innovation"

Inherited in the Town

Explore the unique culture, customs, and efforts of Eiheiji Town. Here is what you should know to better enjoy "ZENTABI".

The Zen Village *Tradition*

Eiheiji Town has flourished as the hometown of Eiheiji Temple, and is rooted in Zen culture. In some local schools, you can see distinctive scenes unique to this "Zen Village," such as students bowing at the entrance and engaging in silent cleaning.



Food *Tradition*

Shojin cuisine, which features vegetables, beans, and grains skilfully cooked, is a culinary culture influenced by the spirit of Zen. Products such as soy sauce, miso, and pickles, along with foods like Soba noodles and Goma-dofu, which are associated with Shojin cuisine, are produced and sold.





Autumn Leaves at Eiheiji Temple
(Early November)

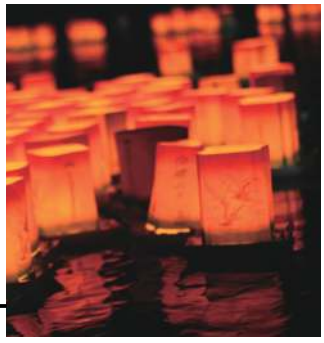
SPOT

Eiheiji Temple is renowned for its beautiful autumn leaves. Nokyoto and Shidoden near the entrance and the innermost Hatto area are must-see locations. /Shihi, Eiheiji Town

Autumn

Autumn in Eiheiji Town







Winter

Winter in Eiheiji Town

Winter at Eiheiji Temple

SPOT

In winter, Eiheiji Temple is covered with pure white snow, and its crisp beauty captivates countless visitors. /Shihi, Eiheiji Town

New Year's Eve Bell at Eiheiji Temple (12/31- 1/1)

EVENT

From New Year's Eve to New Year's Day, Eiheiji Temple opens the Karamon gate to the public for worship. Visitors can also ring the bell at Jakkoen. /Shihi, Eiheiji Town

History *Tradition*

Numerous historical sites exist here, including the "Daihonzan Eiheiji Temple," founded by Dogen Zenji in 1244, and the "Matsuoka Kofun Cluster," comprising around 50 ancient burial mounds believed to have been constructed between the 3rd and 7th centuries.

Experiences *Tradition*

Through zazen meditation, sutra copying, and shojin cuisine, you can connect with the teachings of Zen. Centered around Eiheiji Temple, the town offers moments of stillness and the tranquility of discipline, along with outdoor experiences like Ayu sweetfish fishing in pristine waters. Restore both mind and body with an experience only found in Eiheiji Town.

SHOJIN *Innovation*

SHOJIN = Devoting oneself to a task and continuing to make efforts. SHOJIN is the brand concept of Eiheiji Town, inspired by Zen teachings. Local products that reflect the town's unique identity and creativity are certified as "SHOJIN" items.

ZENTABI

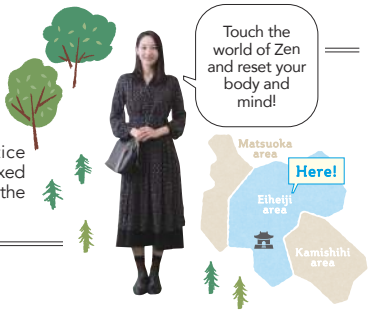
PLAN_1

Eiheiji Area



Refresh Mind and Body in the Zen Village

Learn the spirit of Zen through a practice experience at Eiheiji Temple, and take a relaxed stroll through the Monzen town in front of the temple to restore both mind and body.



Entertainment
If you find the 5 special works, your wish may come true!?



A practice experience at Daihonzan Eiheiji, one of the two head temples of the Soto Zen school, with a history of over 780 years.

Eiheiji is a zazen dojo founded in 1244 by Dogen Zenji. Located deep in the mountains, the temple grounds contain more than 70 halls and buildings. Among them are seven main buildings (Hatto, Butsuden, Sodo, Kuin, Sanmon, Tosu, Yokushitsu) known as the "Shichido Garan," which serve as essential places for monk's daily practice. In 2019, a group of Eiheiji's wooden buildings, including the Hatto and the Buddha hall, was designated as Important Cultural Properties of Japan.
Even today, around 100 monks continue their rigorous daily practice at Eiheiji, and visitors can observe and witness this living tradition.
Through experiences such as Zazen, visitors are invited to learn about and feel the spirit of Zen taught by Dogen Zenji.

Sanmon (The Main Gate)

The oldest architecture at Eiheiji Temple. Containing statues of the Four Heavenly Kings, the guardian of monastery, on either side. Monks are permitted to pass through this gate only when entering the monastery and when descending the mountain.





Sanshokaku

On the second floor is the "Etenjo-no-Ma"(Painted Ceiling Hall), a 160-tatami-mat room with 230 vividly colored ceiling paintings created by 144 renowned Japanese painters from the early Showa period.



The paintings depict traditional themes of nature, such as flowers, birds, and landscapes. 5 special works are hidden among them, featuring a carp, a Karajishi (Chinese lion), and a squirrel.





Butsuden (The Buddha Hall)

Located at the center of Shichido Garan, it enshrines the Buddha, the principal figure of Soto Zen. During daytime and evening services, prayers are offered for world peace and the well-being of all people.



Daihonzan Eiheiji Temple
5-15 Shihi, Eiheiji Town Tel.0776-63-3102(main office)
Visiting Hours/8:30- 16:30 Open All Year Round



Tradition
Experience the solemn sutras recitation of the monks.

1 Choka (Morning Recitation)

After completing their morning zazen, the monks move to the Hatto (Dharma Hall) for Choka, the morning recitation service. Voices of monks reciting sutras in perfect unison echo through Eiheiji Temple, creating a powerful atmosphere!



2 Zazen

Zazen is considered to be fundamental to Buddhist practice. The key is to adjust your body, breathing, and mind. Sit with proper posture, settle your breathing, and let go of distracting thoughts as the mind naturally becomes calm.

Tradition
Just keep sitting, letting go of distracting thoughts.





Straightening the back, correct posture, and maintaining calm breathing is considered to be emulating the posture of the Buddha himself.

Tradition
To match the slope of the building, the glass shoji screens are designed as parallelograms!





Corridor

The temple's stairs and corridors are polished daily by the monks, keeping them spotless all the time. This practice is often described as a form of "active Zen."

Stop by after visiting the temple!



Jakkoen

The garden features the "Statue of the Young Dogen," the "Nyojo Pagoda" built to repay the kindness of his master Nyojo, and the graves of successive abbots of Eiheiji Temple. Within the grounds, the "Bell of Tranquil Radiance" is freely available for visitors to ring, helping them to reflect on the virtues of Dogen Zenji.

For information on one-day zazen meditation and sermons, etc., please visit the Eiheiji homepage.



ZENTABI

Eiheiji Area

Eiheiji Monzen Map
Check pages 16 and 17!

Tradition Renewed with a Modern Twist
A Reimagined Temple Townscape

Along the Eiheiji River in front of Eiheiji Temple, the townscape on the former approach to the temple underwent a major restoration in 2019. With the opening of the "Hakujukan," the Eiheiji River landscape was enhanced and a new tourist information center was established. Based on a 17th-century historical map, the approach to the temple was carefully restored. With landscaping, stone paving, and the removal of utility poles, it now offers a richly atmospheric streetscape. With natural stone embankments and rebuilt bridges, the Eiheiji River now creates a tranquil, nature-rich setting embodying the serenity of Zen.





Eiheiji Town Tourist Information Center

Luggage lockers are available, and travel brochures for Fukui Prefecture and neighboring cities and towns are also provided.

27-21-1 Shihi, Eiheiji Town
Tel.0776-63-3727
Visiting Hours/9:00-17:00
Open All Year Round
(temporary closures possible)

Monzen-dori Street

Approaching Eiheiji Temple, Monzen-dori Street is filled with souvenir shops, restaurants, and tourists. In addition to Eiheiji specialties and good luck charms, each store and restaurant has unique and distinguishing items and menus.



Eiheiji Temple Guides

Officially certified "Eiheiji Temple Guides" will clearly explain the main temple buildings, including the Shichido Garan, and the history of Eiheiji Temple. Guide services are also available in English and Chinese.

Tel.0776-63-3456
(Kibo Co., Ltd., [at the Daihonzan Eiheiji Temple])



Innovation
The beauty of the four seasons and the unique cuisine of Eiheiji Town make your journey even more enjoyable.

There is more to come!

Highlights of the Eiheiji Area



ZEN drive

Eiheiji-Mai Road & ZEN Drive

The around 6-kilometer walking trail along the former Keifuku Eiheiji Line railway is named the "Eiheiji-Mai Road," and walking events are also held there. In addition, the automated driving vehicle service "ZEN Drive," which was the first in Japan to begin Level 4 (highly automated driving) operations, is available and can be used for transportation to Eiheiji Temple.
Fare/Adults ¥100, Junior High school students and younger ¥50
Operating Schedule/Please check the official website

Eiheiji-certified inn where you can casually experience the world of Zen

At "Hakujukan," an experience-based inn, you can immerse yourself in Zen and heal your mind. Here, among Ryokan-style facilities and services, you will enjoy the world of Zen through temple lodging activities like zazen meditation and Shojin cuisine. Meals feature luxurious Shojin cuisine inspired by the spirit of Zen and supervised by Tenzo (Zen cook), perfectly paired with Echizen's renowned Sake. And, in the evening, relax in the open air bath. Step away from daily life and enjoy a moment of comfort.

Shojin Cuisine

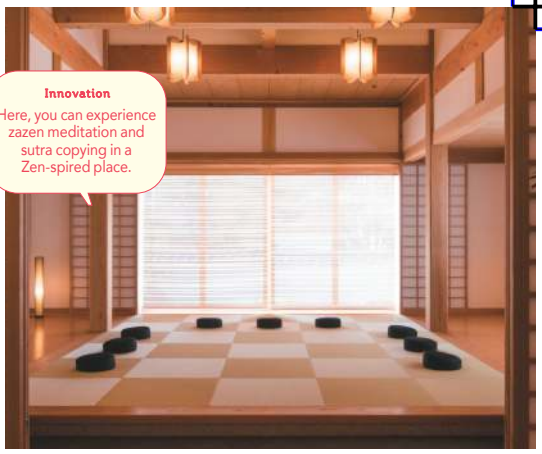
You can enjoy Shojin cuisine prepared by trained chefs who embody the spirit of Zen in a traditional Japanese-style meal, all under the guidance of Eiheiji Temple. Also, you can select from Japanese set meals featuring local ingredients based on Shojin cuisine - in season, even Echizen crab may be available.





※Photo for illustrative purposes only





Kaiya Room (Tea Room)

The tatami-floored room following the entrance hall is a Shinzen (intimate with Zen) space that symbolizes Hakujukan. Why not take some time to sit and clear your mind before and after meals or before you go to bed?





Hakujukan, the Hotel Close to Zen

Located near the entrance to the approach of Eiheiji Temple, this is a welcoming place that bridges the feel of a ryokan and a temple lodging. With comfortable facilities and service, you can easily step into the world of Zen.
Syakyo is a form of Buddhist practice. Originally practiced for prayers, memorial services, and as an expression of faith, many now find it a source of inner peace. Hand copying sutras with proper posture and a state of Mushin (no-mind) brings virtue.

6-1 Shihi, Eiheiji Town Tel.0776-63-1188
Tel.050-3504-9914(for reservations)
Check-in/14:00, Checkout/10:00



Nosaku Eiheiji Store

Set along the approach to Eiheiji temple, this is the official store of the metal-casting maker "Nosaku." It offers a wide range of crafts, from softly gleaming tin sakeware to brass bells and interior pieces. You will also find exclusive pieces inspired by Eiheiji's "Koga Rindo crest" and ceiling paintings, perfect as souvenirs. In the calm air of Monzen town, experience crafts that suit both everyday life and moments of hospitality.

Echizen Railway Eiheiji-guchi Station

The station building has a Western-style design with white as its base color, absorbing the aura of the former station building, which is a nationally registered cultural heritage building. It was developed alongside the former Kyoto Electric Light Furuichi Substation (Brick Building) near the station, and both are popular photo spots.





Zen no Sato Mirai

A traditional Japanese wooden single-story house converted into an exclusive, one-group-per-day private rental inn.
4-11 Suwama, Eiheiji Town
Tel.0776-63-3001

ZENTABI

PLAN_2

Matsuoka Area



Matsuoka's History and a Contemporary Zen Experience

Once a thriving castle town of the Matsuoka Domain, the area offers spots where echoes of history can still be felt. And, visitors can also meet Zen in a new way through digital art installations.



Access

Each site is about 15 minutes by car from Eiheiji Temple, and within a 10-minute walk from Matsuoka Station on the Echizen Railway.

A Blend of Historic Charm and New Attractions Strolling to Experience Both Sides

Matsuoka area is home to many historic landmarks, including the "Matsuoka Kofun Cluster" where large ancient burial mounds are concentrated, and "Tenryuji Temple," associated with the haiku poet Matsuo Basho. Once a thriving castle town of the Matsuoka Domain, the area still preserves an Edo period street layout known as "Kagi-no-te," where main roads bend at right angles again and again. Machiya style buildings and old temples add to the scene, making visitors feel steeped in history. Also, at "Eibo-kan," located along the street, you can experience a fresh take on Zen through digital art. Enjoy strolling the town and discovering both history and its modern rejuvenation.

Tradition
The Tomb of a Powerful Chieftain—The "King of Koshi"



Matsuoka Kofun Cluster

About 50 burial mounds from the 3rd to 7th centuries are scattered across hills overlooking the Fukui Plain. Among them, four keyhole-shaped kofun (Tegurigajoyama, Ishifuneyama, Torigoeyama, and Nihonmatsuyama) are designated National Historic Sites.



Matsuoka Park

Set on a gentle hill with views over the streets of Matsuoka and the scenery around the Kuzry river. It also overlooks the "Twelve Bends of Matsuoka", a distinctive feature of the castle town's layout. Within the park stands the Kasugayama Kofun, a circular burial mound dating to the late 6th century, open to visitors.

Matsuoka Muro, Eiheiji Town



Eibo-kan (Eiheiji Town Cultural Exchange Center)

Eibo-kan is a facility promoting the charm of Eiheiji Town. In the digital art installation "Zen Culture Experience Zone" created by teamLab, flocks of illuminated birds fly freely and unhindered through the space, creating a mysterious atmosphere. The retail corner offers specialties and local sake.

3-107 Matsuoka Shinmei, Eiheiji Town
Tel.0776-61-0888 Visiting Hours/9:00-18:00
Lunch Hours/11:30-14:00, on Wed, Thu, Fri (Limited Availability)
Cafe Hours/11:30-14:00, on open days



Innovation
A Beautiful Mystical Sight Inspired by Zen

The Only Place in Japan!



World Renowned Harp Making Center

Home to the "Aoyama Harp," Japan's sole specialist harp maker. With only a limited number of harp-making facilities worldwide, Aoyama's technology and quality are highly regarded both in Japan and abroad.

Innovation
A Masterpiece Loved by World Class Artists



Tradition
Reset your mind with Saturday's Zazen experience.

Tenryuji Temple

Subtemple of Eiheiji temple, founded in the Edo period by order of Matsudaira Masakatsu, the first lord of the domain. Also known for a visit by Matsuo Basho, who composed a verse here during his Oku no Hosomichi journey.

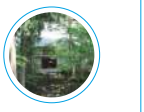
1-64 Matsuoka Kasuga, Eiheiji Town
Tel.0776-61-0471



ZENTABI

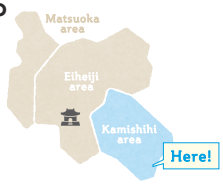
PLAN_3

Kamishihi Area



Recharge Energy at the Sites Connected to Dogen Zenji

Visit "Kippoji Temple," where Dogen Zenji trained before founding Eiheiji Temple, and enjoy local specialties and delicious food to recharge your energy.





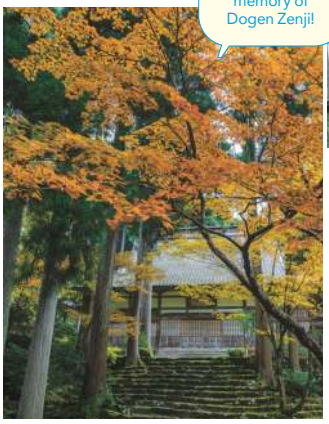


The place where Dogen Zenji trained before founding Eiheiji Temple!

Access

From Eiheiji Temple, it takes about 20 min by car to "Michi-no-Eki Zen no Sato," about 23 min to "Benzaiten Hakuryuo Daigongen," and about 30 min to "Kippoji Temple."

Tradition
Many notable spots to honor the memory of Dogen Zenji!





Kippoji Temple

The temple where Dogen Zenji trained after moving from Kyoto to Echizen. The grounds include "Tetsu-tsu Slope," the path once used by the Head Cook Tetsudo Osho to deliver rice porridge, and "Founder's Zazen Stone," where Dogen Zenji is said to have practiced Zazen. From these, we can get a glimpse into the life of that era.

35-2 Kippo, Eiheiji Town
Tel.0776-64-2536

Nature, Zen Temples, and Local Specialities—All in One Place! A Power Spot for Both Mind and Body

The Kamishihi area is located in the middle reaches of the Kuzuryu River and is rich in nature. Nestled in the mountains, "Kippoji Temple" was the first training monastery where Dogen Zenji practiced after arriving in Echizen. A solemn atmosphere fills the area, leaving visitors with a sense of calm and purity. Further popular spots are "Benzaiten Hakuryuo Daigongen," where visitors can pray for business success, and "Michi-no-Eki Zen no Sato," a roadside station packed with local gourmet foods and souvenirs. Travel around the area and enjoy the local flavors—you are sure to leave feeling recharged.

Eiheiji Onsen Zen no Sato

A day-trip natural hot spring located right next to Michi no Eki Roadside Station Zen no Sato. With its high-quality hot spring water rich in minerals, along with open-air baths, a sauna, and a large lounge area, it is the perfect place to recover from travel fatigue. A free foot bath is also available beside the entrance.



2-16-1 Shimizu, Eiheiji Town Tel.0776-64-3510
Visiting Hours/10:00-21:00 Closed/ 2nd Wednesday of each month



Benzaiten Hakuryuo Daigongen

Honouring Benzaiten, the goddess of commerce, this sacred site draws visitors from across Japan to pray for prosperity. It is said that a white snake, the deity of the shrine, dwells on the premises. The shrine has also been a hot topic since it appeared in a popular anime!

31-9 Takehara, Eiheiji Town Tel.0776-64-2566

Michi no Eki Zen no Sato

A wide variety of original products made with local specialties from Eiheiji Town are only available here. Fresh farm produce, processed goods, and souvenirs from both inside and outside the town are well-stocked. At the attached restaurant, you can taste local cuisine made with regional ingredients.



2-21-1 Shimizu, Eiheiji Town Tel.0776-64-3377
Visiting Hours/9:00-18:00
Closed/3rd Wednesday of each month,
and during the end of year and New Year holidays

Innovation
Perfect for souvenir shopping in Eiheiji Town!





(Left) A hugely popular Western-style Daifuku made with Eiheiji Town's specialty, super-sweet Picnic corn. (Right) Rice crackers made with local Kamishihi garlic and Koshihikari rice, grown in Eiheiji Town.