

WELCOM to ITO SPA

# ITO CITY GUIDE MAP

## Affiliated Cities

**Sister City: Suwa, Nagano Prefecture** Date of affiliation: May 20, 1965

Suwa City is located in the center of the island of Honshu, standing against the backdrop of Lake Suwa. It is another popular tourist destination centered around the old castle town of the Takashima Domain (Suwa Clan). Ito City's involvement with Suwa City started in May 1957. A group from the Kami-Suwa Ryokan Association visited Ito for a friendly baseball game, organized because both cities are tourist destinations close to the sea and the mountains and similar in size. In 1965, the two cities established an official sister-city affiliation. Since then, citizen groups and individuals have conducted various cultural and sports exchanges during commemorative years.

**Friendship City: Hirono machi, Futaba gun, Fukushima Prefecture** Date of affiliation: May 24, 2017

Hirono is located in the central part of Hamadori, Fukushima. It is the northernmost town in Japan where mandarin oranges can properly bear fruit due to its mild climate with little temperature variation throughout the year. After an audience in Hirono saw a presentation by the Ito Youth Chorus in 1992, there were calls for an exchange between them and the Hirono Elementary School Instrumental Music Club, which led to the exchange starting the following year. Since 2007, Hirono has consistently participated in the annual Ito Onsen Mechakucha-Ichi market by setting up a booth. Hirono was affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011, and as the town worked toward reconstruction and rebuilding, it concluded the Agreement on Mutual Support between Ito and Hirono in the Event of Natural Disasters on July 28, 2011. Ito has since dispatched numerous employees to Hirono to provide aid. Seeking to promote further exchanges across many fields, Ito and Hirono entered into an official affiliation as friendship cities on May 24, 2017.

**Friendship City: Medway, UK** Date of affiliation: August 10, 1982 (formerly Gillingham)

Medway (formerly Gillingham) is the birthplace of William Adams (Miura Anjin), the Englishman who built the first Western-style vessels for the Japanese in Ito in 1605. Exchange with Ito began in 1964 when citizens from Ito visited (then) Gillingham and presented paintings and calligraphy created by Japanese elementary school students. This led to the start of the Japan-England Children's Art Exchange Exhibition, which was held during the Anjin Festival in 1973. It was in February 1982 that the mayor of Gillingham made an offer to the mayor of Ito to establish an affiliation as friendship cities, which was quickly completed in August of the same year.

**Friendship City: Rieti, Italy** Date of affiliation: July 21, 1985

Rieti is famous for its own barrel-riding race, an event along the Velino River running through the city's center, where racers ride in wine barrels cut in half. Due to the striking similarities with the Matsukawa tub-riding race held as a tourist spectacle during the summer in Ito, the exchange between the two cities initially started at the level of private citizens. In July 1981, a sisterhood relationship was established between the Ito Tourist Association and the Festival of the Sun Committee, which sponsors the barrel-riding race in Rieti. In July 1984, the mayor of Rieti visited Ito and proposed a friendship city affiliation to the mayor of Ito, which was then officially established in July 1985.

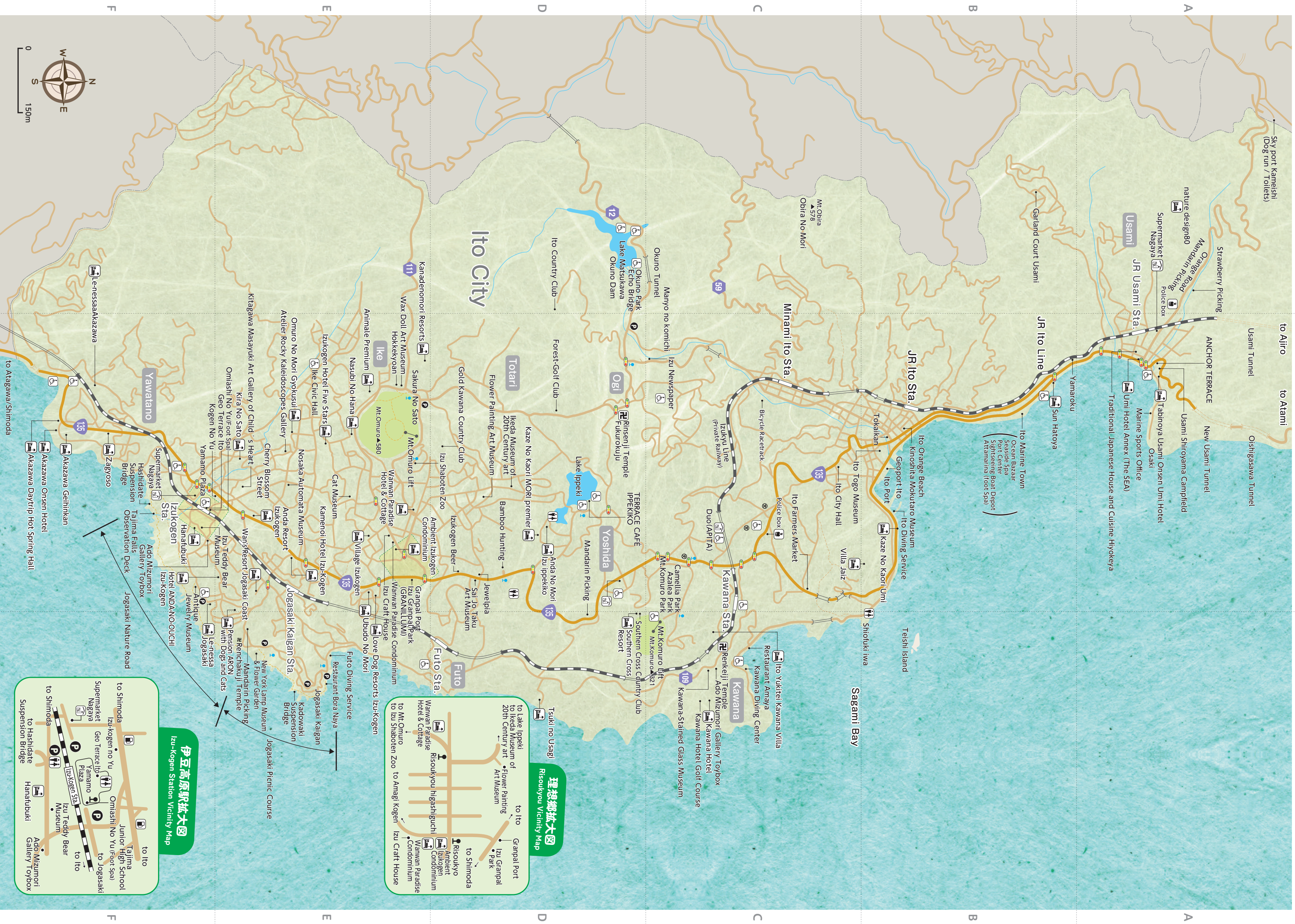
**Friendship City: Ismayilli Province, Azerbaijan** Date of affiliation: November 22, 2013

Located approximately 180 kilometers west-northwest from the capital city of Baku and southeast of the Caucasus Mountains, Ismayilli is a tourist destination blessed with incredible vistas and natural beauty. In 2009, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, who had been impressed by a Japanese garden he visited in the Ismayilli Province, reached out to Ito—a similar tourist destination rich in natural assets—with the hopes of establishing friendly relations as the province was already considering starting exchanges with cities in Japan. In response, the mayor of Ito visited Ismayilli in October 2012 to exchange ideas and gather further information. In November 2013, this led to the two cities entering into a partnership as friendship and exchange cities to deepen understanding and recognition of each other's culture and way of life.



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理想郷城大図  
Risoukyou Vicinity Map

伊豆高原駅城大図  
Izu-Kogen Station Vicinity Map

