

Matsuyama City Center

You can use the Botchan train to conveniently travel around Matsuyama.

The train used to clatter around the city with Shiki, Soseki and many other people on board. The Botchan train was a favorite sight on the Matsuyama Plain from the old Meiji period to the middle of the Showa era. It has just been brought back to life in this 21st-century castle town.



Present-day Dogo Onsen Station



The Botchan train crossing the Ishitegawa railroad bridge on the Yokogawara Line around 1953.



Where to take good photographs of the Botchan train
 You can see the train make an unusual turn at Matsuyama-shi Station. Also at Ohtemachi Station, the intra-city streetcar railroad crosses the suburban railroad, which is quite rare in Japan!



【 Botchan train and Soseki Natsume 】

The name "Botchan train" comes from a popular novel called "Botchan" written by Soseki Natsume. It is thought that this novel is based on his actual experiences when he took up his post as English teacher at Matsuyama Middle School. In the novel, there is a scene in which Botchan, the leading character, rides on "a small, matchbox-like train" to the middle school at which he was working. This is the train that we now call the "Botchan train."



9 Shiki-do

About 5 minutes on foot from Iyotetsu Matsuyamashi Station or about 6 km from Matsuyama IC. Shiki-do, located within the premises of Shoshuji Temple in Suehiromachi, was built from the former residence of Shiki Masaoka. Inside the Shiki-do, a great number of his writings and personal effects are exhibited. There is also a stone monument closely associated with Kyoshi Takahama, a haiku poet. Matsuyama is well known for its haiku poems/poets. There are also graves of many generations of the Masaoka family.



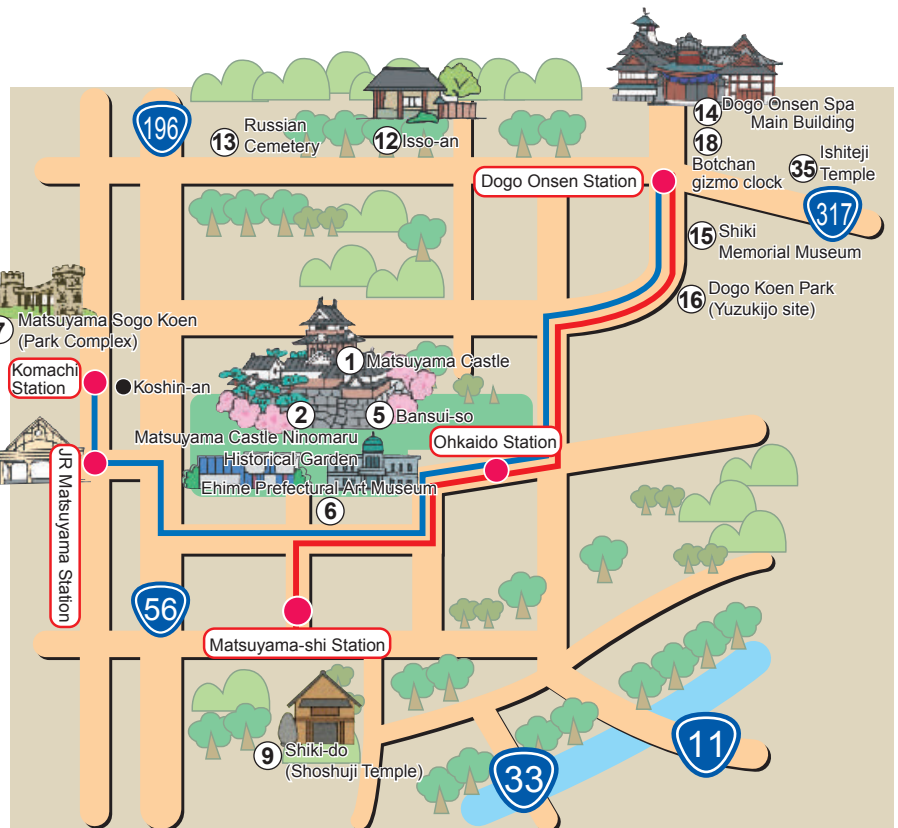
Shiki Masaoka haiku stone monument (JR Matsuyama Ekimae [Station Plaza])

This is a haiku poem he wrote when he returned to Matsuyama, his hometown. His feelings toward his hometown are well expressed in the relaxed and leisurely flow of the words.



10 Big Ferris Wheel: "Kururin"

Very near Iyotetsu Matsuyamashi Station or about 6 km from Matsuyama IC. "Kururin" is a big Ferris wheel built on top of Iyotetsu Shimaya Department Store. During the daytime it commands a panoramic view of Matsuyama, and at night the city lights are truly beautiful. It has become a modern symbol of Matsuyama.



11 Ohkaido, Gintengai

This is one of the largest shopping avenues in western Japan, stretching from Matsuyama-shi Station to the Matsuyama Castle ropeway station.



12 Isso-an

About 8 km from Matsuyama IC. This is where Santoka Taneda, a wandering poet who wrote free rhythm haiku, ended his life. He loved the hot spring and sake at Dogo Onsen Spa.



13 Russian Cemetery

About 15 minutes on foot from Iyotetsu Kiyamachi Station or about 8 km from Matsuyama IC. Many Russian prisoners of war were kept in Matsuyama City after the Japanese-Russo War. They were warmly taken care of not only by the military personnel stationed at the detention center, but also by private citizens.