

Yanagasaki Lakeside Park  
**BIWAKO OTSUKAN**



Shiga "lake region" guesthouse on Lake Biwa

# History

## Outline of Biwako Otsukan

The building of Biwako Otsukan was established in 1934 as the first international tourist hotel (former Biwako Hotel) in Shiga Prefecture, with the purpose of attracting tourists from overseas. At that time, hotels were constructed around famous tourist spots throughout the country as a national project to promote international tourism. Only a few of these remain standing today, however. This reinforced concrete building with three floors above ground and one basement floor features the architectural style of the Momoyama period (latter half of the 16th century) with a combination of Japanese-style exterior and Western-style interior, and is in perfect harmony with the scenery of Lake Biwa and the culture of the old capital, Otsu. It was designed by the office of Shinichiro Okada, which was famous for having designed the Kabukiza Theatre and Meiji Seimei Kan building in Tokyo, among others. As the guesthouse for the Shiga "lake region," the hotel welcomed Emperor Showa and other members of the Imperial family, as well as prominent figures from various fields, including Helen Keller, John Wayne, and Yasunari Kawabata. For a certain period during and after World War II, the hotel was seized by U.S. military forces, yet it continued to operate as the premier hotel in Shiga, in both name and reality.

In 1998, Biwako Hotel was relocated to Hamaotsu. In response to a public outcry from people of Shiga against the demolition of the building, Otsu City acquired the land and building and implemented a large-scale reinforcement and restoration project. In September 2000, it was designated a Tangible Cultural Property by Otsu City, and was reopened in April 2002 as Biwako Otsukan, a multi-purpose cultural facility. The venue now has a restaurant, café, souvenir shop, rental hall and conference rooms, and a community gallery. Along with the English Garden next to the building, Biwako Otsukan offers the people of Shiga a place for relaxation and leisure.

### Former Biwako Hotel loved by VIPs both from Japan and around the globe

Memories of the glorious old days



In the small restaurant (around 1950)



The band "Silver Sisters" (around 1950)



Christmas party (around 1950)



Weekly "sukiyaki party" on Saturdays (around 1950)



Bus with English displays (1957)



View of the hotel from Lake Biwa (1962)



Exterior of the former Biwako Hotel (around 1960)

Designated as a Tangible Cultural Property by Otsu City (2000)

Designated as part of the Heritage Constellations of Industrial Modernization by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (2007)

## Floor Map & Highlights

**Wooden fittings**

Some windows on the 1st floor still have the original wooden frames. Wooden fittings in "Momoyama" hall with the common foliage scroll pattern were used for exterior windows until 1948.

**Masterly techniques: foliage scroll**

When the building was completed, the wooden window frames had openwork corners in foliage patterns, but most of these had disappeared by the time restoration work started. Working from the only remaining patterns, those in "Momoyama" hall, the foliage scroll pattern was restored to the exterior fittings.

**Crimson carpet**

The crimson carpet with marine blue trim in the 1st floor lobby is a replica created based on photos taken at the time of the hotel's completion and interviews with former employees. The beautiful contrasting colors add further brightness to the hall.

**Handrails with the color of cypress bark**

Handrails surrounding the building, called koran, were thought to have been a bright cinnabar color. However, during the work to restore them to their original state, it was discovered that they had been the color of cypress bark, which makes a perfect harmony with the reddish color of the copper plates.

**Verdigris roof**

While the koran have a newly restored color, the copper roofs (both the large one and the small ones, with a total area of 2,000 m<sup>2</sup>) were chemically treated so that the familiar old rusted-copper green can be seen.

**Tiles**

Another discovery at the time of restoration, along with the color of the koran, was the use of tiles. This was a valuable discovery proving that the tiles had surrounded the 1st floor as an exterior corridor like a cloister. The tiles have been restored in the northern cloister of the 1st floor.

**Secret small room in "Momoyama"**

On entering the multi-purpose hall, you will notice a small room with a railing. According to one theory, this room was used for playing music, but it is not known definitively what its purpose was.

**Lighting equipment**

Lighting equipment installed at the time of construction is still used in "Momoyama," although some components were replaced and repair work was conducted at the time of restoration. The fittings still cast a warm light on visitors.

**Elevator**

The elevator in front of the 1st floor lobby was installed in 1957. The nostalgia-inspiring floor indication board and other parts have been restored and are still used today.

**Onigawara (decorative clay tile)**

The eye-catching onigawara over the front gate was newly produced by a local clay tile maker in Otsu, since the original one had been cracked. Otsu was once known for its clay tile manufacturing.

**Futaku (bronze wind bells)**

When the building was used as a hotel, futaku provided lighting under the eaves, but only two of the original pieces remain today. Twenty-five reproduction futaku were made and hung under the large roof.

**Door at the gate**

The decorative brass fittings around the door had faded over time. However, after all the pieces were removed and put through a restoration process called arai, they regained their former brightness.

*Note: The observation terrace with a panoramic view of Lake Biwa is on the 2nd floor.*

*Notes: The special exhibition room filled with memories of the former Biwako Hotel is on the 3rd floor. Please feel free to take a look. (Admission is free) Residents of Otsu can use the community gallery for exhibitions of up to one week. Please contact the Biwako Otsukan if you would like to use the gallery.*



## Map & Access

- ◆ Take a Kojak bus from JR Otsu Sta. or Keihan Hamaotsu Sta., and get off at Yanagasaki bus stop. Approx. 3-min. walk from the bus stop.
- ◆ Approx. 15 min. walk from Keihan Omi-jingu-mae Sta.
- ◆ Approx. 15 min. walk from JR Otsukyo Sta.
- ◆ Approx. 10 min. drive from Meishin Expressway Otsu IC



Approx. 10 min. from Kyoto Station to Otsukyo Station on the JR line.

Yanagasaki Lakeside Park  
**BIWAKO OTSUKAN**  
Designated administrator: Keihan & Biwako Kisen Group

5-35 Yanagasaki, Otsu, Shiga 520-0022  
Phone: 077-511-4187 Fax: 077-511-3228  
(9:00-19:30)

<http://www.biwako-otsukan.jp/>



# ENGLISH GARDEN

Spend hours in a paradise colored by seasonal flowers and the lake

In the English Garden next to Biwako Otsukan, visitors can enjoy roses and other seasonal flowers extending over an area of approx. 5,900m<sup>2</sup>. Take an exhilarating garden walk amid the refreshing lake breeze and sweet aroma of flowers.



Spring



Summer



Autumn



Winter

(Winter only) Night illumination

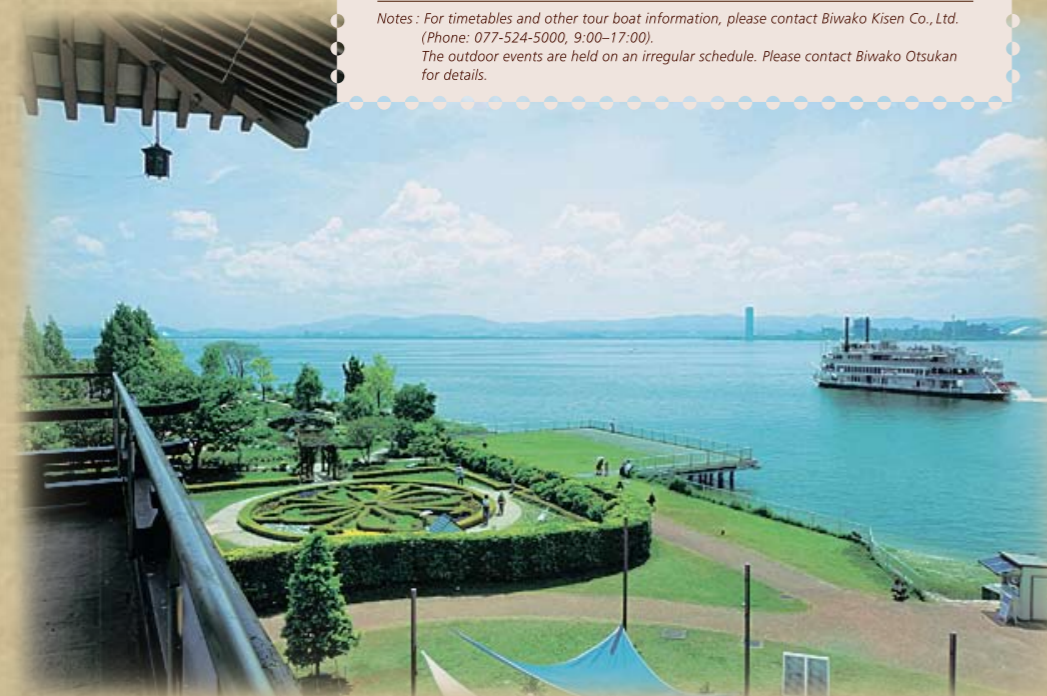


## To Lake Biwa

The path to Lake Biwa is now open. Joyful, bustling and greenery-rich road to the lake.

Biwako Otsukan is located by the lake. You can take a boat tour from the Yanagasaki Port. To make the most of the fantastic location, we also host outdoor events such as lakeside yoga and trial canoe classes.

*Notes: For timetables and other tour boat information, please contact Biwako Kisen Co., Ltd. (Phone: 077-524-5000, 9:00-17:00). The outdoor events are held on an irregular schedule. Please contact Biwako Otsukan for details.*



# RESTAURANT



Set course menu



Homemade waffle

Belgian beer



View of Lake Biwa from the restaurant



Lake Biwa Fireworks Display in summer



## Lake Biwa's scenery makes food taste better

The French restaurant is themed on a port town in Belgium. Please enjoy our original and organic French cuisine flavored with chemical-free herbs while taking in the ever-changing scenery at this bright restaurant commanding a panoramic view of Lake Biwa.

Open hours: **10:00-21:00**

Lunch 11:00-14:00 / café 10:00-17:00 / dinner 17:00-21:00 (Last order 19:30)  
Note: For dinner, reservations must be made at least one day in advance.

Phone: **077-511-4180** (direct)



Garden wedding

Chapel wedding in the English Garden, followed by a wedding reception at "Momoyama" multi-purpose hall. Make the most of the lovely ambience of the former Biwako Hotel at Biwako Otsukan. Create your special memories at a place where the remembrances of three generations intersect.

Open hours: **10:00-18:00**

For specific plans, please consult with our wedding staff.

Phone: **077-521-7299** (direct)

(closed on Wednesdays)

# WEDDING



Reception venue

# SOUVENIER SHOP



## Shiga no Hana

## Shiga specialties & stylish items themed on roses

In addition to Shiga's local craft products and sweets, which make a wonderful gift or souvenir, we offer a wide variety of beautiful rose-motif items as keepsakes of the English Garden.

Open hours: **10:00-18:00**



# RENTAL CONFERENCE ROOM & HALL



"Momoyama" in banquet style

## Available at reasonable prices

The "Momoyama" multi-purpose hall, along with 14 small conference rooms, is available for hire as a venue for events, banquets and seminars.



Small conference room



"Momoyama" in seminar style

Note: Reservations are accepted four months in advance. For details, please contact Biwako Otsukan.

# Information

## Biwako Otsukan

Classification	Fee	Available hours	Remarks	
"Momoyama" multi-purpose hall	Residents of Otsu City	9:00-22:00	Maximum capacity Party style: 100 persons Seminar style: 150 persons School style: 100 persons <i>Note: Additional fees are required for tables, chairs and other equipment. Please contact Biwako Otsukan for details.</i>	
	Residents of Shiga Pref.			¥2,430 / hour
	Others			¥3,640 / hour
Conference room	Residents of Otsu City	9:00-21:00	Capacity 8 persons (12 rooms) 20 persons (2 rooms)	
	Residents of Shiga Pref.			¥320 / hour
	Others			¥480 / hour
Community gallery	Exhibition is free	Up to one week	Additional fees are required for equipment rental	
Permanent exhibition room	Admission is free	9:00-17:00		
Bel van Brugge restaurant		10:00-21:00	Open terrace seats available	
"Shiga no Hana" souvenir shop		10:00-18:00		
Wedding salon		10:00-18:00	Closed on Wednesdays	

## English Garden

Classification	Fee	Available hours
Adults (high school age or older)	¥320/entry	Apr. - Sep. 9:00-18:00
Elementary school students, junior high school students, senior concession (65 or over), disability concession, etc.	¥160/entry	
Pre-school children	Free	Mar., Oct., Nov. 9:00-17:00
Group (15 persons or over)	¥250/entry	
Adults	¥120/entry	Dec. 11:00-16:00 (Free admission)
Elementary school students, junior high school students, senior concession (65 or over), disability concession, etc.	¥120/entry	
Ticket book (11 tickets)	Adults ¥3,240 Elementary school students, junior high school students, senior concession (65 or over), disability concession, etc. ¥1,620	Last entry: 30 minutes prior to closing
Annual passport (available for a year)	Adults ¥1,620 Elementary school students, junior high school students, senior concession (65 or over), disability concession, etc. ¥810 Family passport: 3 adults & 2 children, or 4 adults ¥5,830	

## Parking in the Yanagasaki Lakeside Park

Classification	Fee	Available hours	Remarks
Standard car	¥210 / hour	Available 24 hours	Maximum fees per day (Weekdays) ¥860 (Sat., Sun., public holidays) ¥1,080
	¥320 / 2hour		
	¥430 / 3hour		
Minibus	¥1,510 / day		170 spaces for standard cars 9 spaces for large buses
Large bus	¥2,160 / day		

*Notes: Reservations for "Momoyama" multi-purpose hall, conference rooms and the community gallery are accepted up to four months in advance, with exceptions available for special circumstances. (For the community gallery, reservations are accepted on the 1st day of the month which is four months in advance of the proposed exhibition date. If there are more applications than can be accommodated, a lottery is held.) The above fees for "Momoyama" multi-purpose hall and conference rooms apply in cases where the user performs all operations from preparation to cleanup. Biwako Otsukan can also provide such services for an additional fee. Additional fees are required if the user is collecting admission fees for events held in the multi-purpose hall and conference rooms, or if the rooms are used for commercial purposes. For details, please contact Biwako Otsukan.*

- Please consult us regarding banquets, receptions or wedding parties.
- Catering services by the restaurant for events held in "Momoyama" multi-purpose hall and the conference rooms are available. (Fees required)
- Copying and fax services and equipment rental services (CD players, projector screens, etc.) are available. (Fees required)

All photos are for illustrative purposes only.