"Ryukyu Dynasty Parade," which replicates the procession leading Chinese envoys to Shuri Castle during the Ryukyu Dynasty.

"Pentu" festival in Miyako Island, in which "visiting gods" with a mask ward off evil spirits with mud.

"Ungami" (Sea God Festival) in Ogimii Village to pray for a rich harvest and good health.

Lion dance performed to the sounds of Taiko drums and Sanshin.
Preserve the image of the once flourishing Ryukyu Kingdom

The Ryukyu Kingdom was once centered in Shurijo Castle. The Gusuku Sites and Related Properties of the Kingdom of Ryukyu were registered as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2000. The cultural heritage sites offer glimpses of the culture, prosperity and religious beliefs of the people of the Ryukyu Kingdom that developed independently. Such sites include Gusuku (castles), and secondary residences of kings and local leaders, the king’s tombs, Uaki (holy places), and more. The highlights of the sites are the colors and decorations that are different from those of Japanese buildings, such as the beautiful curves of castle walls, buildings towering on elevated spots, sophisticated masonry, shades of vermilion, and dragon sculptures.
Five Gusuku sites and four related properties dotted around Okinawa

02 Nakijin Castle Remains
Residence of the Hakujo-King during the Period of the Three Kingdoms. The castle was the second largest next to Shuri Castle and the walls feature beautiful curves.

03 Ruins of Zakimi Castle
Built by General Gosamaru in the early 15th century. The castle is characterized by the sophisticated masonry technique used for the oldest stone arch gate in Okinawa.

04 Katsuren-Jo Site
The castle consists of four terraced buildings. Remains of the site indicate the prosperity of the time.

05 Nakagusuku-Jo Site
The castle was built by Gosamaru, who also built Zakimi Castle. It was built on the hill along Nakagusuku Bay and overlooks the sea.

06 Sonohyan-Utaki Stone Gate
This Ryukyu limestone gate was used as the place for the royal family’s prayers during the Ryukyu Dynasty. The safe journey of the King was prayed for when he left the castle.

07 Tamaudun
The mausoleum entombs kings of the Second Shio Dynasty. It consists of three compartments (eastern, central and western compartments) where bones were kept.

08 Shikina-en Garden
The Ryukyu royal family’s secondary residence featuring a blend of Japanese, Chinese and Okinawan gardening techniques. It was used for the reception of envoys from China.

09 Sefa-Utaki
One of the seven Utakis created by Amami-ko, the Goddess of Ryukyu Kiyouboku. A sacred place still visited by the most religious people today.

Kyoda I.C.
Naha I.C.
Okinawa Expressway
Naha Airport

(2) Nakijin Castle Remains
(3) Ruins of Zakimi Castle
(4) Katsuren-Jo Site
(5) Nakagusuku-Jo Site
(6) Sonohyan Utaki Stone Gate
(7) Tamaudun
(8) Shikina-en Garden
(9) Sefa-Utaki
Okinawan spirits and skills handed down for generations

Okinawa offers unique performing arts and crafts. Representative performing arts include Ryukyu buyo, Kumi Odori, Ryukyuan classical music, Okinawan folk songs, folk performing arts, and Okinawan theatre. These performing arts are known for their attractive features such as gorgeous costumes, Sanshin that makes beautiful sounds and scripts that depict the life of ordinary people. Kumi Odori was registered on the UNESCO intangible cultural heritage list in 2010 and has been highly esteemed both in Japan and abroad.

During the Ryukyu Kingdom era, Okinawan traditional crafts developed with the strong influences of China, Japan and Southeast Asian countries through trading. Okinawan crafts are represented by textiles such as Bashofu and Ryukyu Kasuri, Bingata dyeing, Ryukyu lacquerware, pottery and Ryukyu glass. In recent years, a modern touch is added to these crafts to allow them to be incorporated in daily life more easily.