

# Sharing Shimane's best through live streaming: Online tours during the pandemic

Shimane Prefecture



## Background and Reason for the Project

In order to attract foreign tourists, Shimane Prefecture uses its website and SNS to share tourism information with the aim of raising awareness of the prefecture. Shimane planned online live streaming aimed at an overseas audience interested in Japan and Shimane to allow them to get a real feel for Shimane directly, during the period where travel was restricted due to COVID-19.

Live streaming can share a large amount of specific information to a large number of viewers and can share programs to suit the various tastes and preferences of the viewers. Furthermore, Shimane hoped that foreigners living in Shimane (Coordinators for International Relations, etc.) would communicate directly with their followers so that they could feel closer to Shimane Prefecture.

## Project Aims

1. To provide online simulation of visiting and enjoying Shimane Prefecture (two-way interaction with followers, etc.)
2. To attract visitors during trying times of COVID-19 and even after COVID-19 has calmed down by sharing detailed information that cannot be conveyed through regular social media posts
3. To acquire new followers by advertising online tours.

## Project Outline

The live stream (Facebook Live) was shared on Shimane Prefecture's official Facebook account

'@Discover.Shimane'. There were three live streams, each on the themes of gourmet, traditional culture, and nature respectively. These are themes that are particularly popular overseas, and advertisements were targeted to countries that enjoyed these parts of Japan in order to spread awareness.

A specialised company was used for the live streaming and monitoring, but planning, gathering information, and script writing was carried out by the local government.

- Gourmet (shared on January 29, 2022)

Matsue City is known as one of Japan's three major wagashi (Japanese sweets) and matcha (green tea) producing areas, so they chose wagashi and matcha to be promoted to the participants. Starting with an explanation of tea culture in Matsue, a workshop for making wagashi with the viewers (a free trial experience for people who applied for it in advance) was held. Recommended gourmet destinations were introduced via making wagashi together, and thanks to this live experience viewers' opinions could be heard directly (including those who did not take part in the workshop). New designs used, such as cute bears were also highly popular and changed the perception of traditional wagashi.

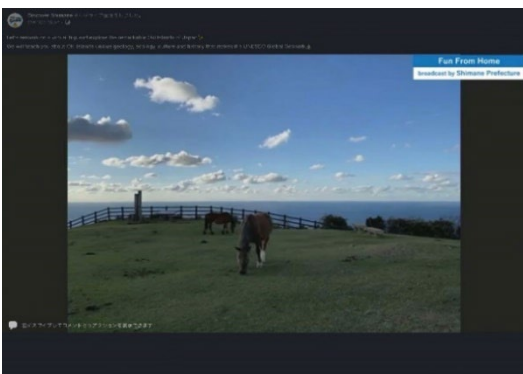
- Traditional Culture (shared on March 19, 2022)

Kagura performances that are performed regularly in various parts of Shimane were featured, explaining the stories played out in Kagura that are based on myths because they are difficult for foreigners to understand. Kagura's history in Shimane Prefecture, and the regional characteristics of Kagura within Shimane were also featured. A quiz was held involving viewer participation (a free trial experience for people who applied for it in advance). In addition, foreigners who joined Kagura groups were interviewed about the charm of performing Kagura to make Kagura feel more accessible to others who are not exposed to it.

The fun of Kagura, which is conveyed by deepening understanding of it, was live streamed, and detailed information were conveyed to those who were interested. By using many videos, Shimane enticed many, with many gaining an interest in seeing Kagura in person. At the end, they held a giveaway with Kagura related gifts.

- Nature (shared on October 19, 2022)

Nature has always been a popular tourism theme, so in order to enhance its appeal, a live stream from the Oki Islands was held. With live streams from the three islands, views from Oki could be shared in the moment, along with the latest tourist spots, and recommended experiences from each location. The live streamers tried to create an experience as if the viewers were actually in Oki. In addition, in order to attract the interest of viewers, the remote island hotel Ento, which has become popular of late, was



introduced. By having foreigners working in the Oki tourism industry appear as reporters and moderators, Shimane was able to provide more detailed and easy-to-understand information.

This resulted in very specific questions about getting to Oki and costs for an experience and visit to Oki in the comments.

### Features and Innovations

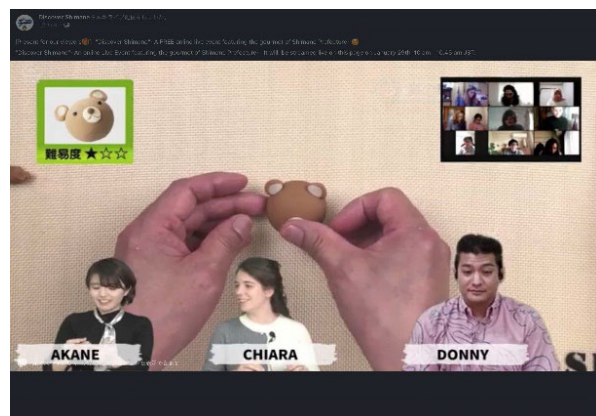
While it is not possible to travel abroad due to the pandemic, social media can be utilised to share tourism information in real time from a local level, and to directly convey the here and now of that destination.

### Results of the Project

By broadcasting live from the site, it is possible to send more specific and detailed content than regular social media posts, and it is also possible to feature the locals who have not been featured previously. By being able to see what kind of people are there, it is easier to get people interested in going there and more likely to lead to actual trips there.

### Issues, Problems and Responses

It takes a considerable amount of time to prepare for interviews and filming, as well as to check and rehearse before live streaming. Since all of it is live, it is necessary to avoid any issues while streaming, as well as considering beforehand what to do if a problem were to occur.



### **Future Developments (expected effects and project vision and issues)**

- Live streaming of more personalised, niche content in order to share Shimane's features that cannot be found in other prefectures (such as ways to get silky smooth skin, experiencing the Kami-ari-zuki [month when all the Shinto gods return to Shimane], gain luck and fortune for relationships, etc.) on a deeper level, trial experiences of participants are gathered in advance to get better content for the live streams, and via the live streaming there will also be a chance for information exchange. By increasing the number of themes under which live streams are held, Shimane aims to increase the number of viewers and gain more viewers overall.
- Focusing on sharing content that did well in live streaming

Sharing content on a similar theme two or three times to deepen awareness in special livestreams. Gain visitors through deep understanding of particular topics.

### **Reference URLs**

<https://www.facebook.com/discover.shimane>

(Official Facebook Account)

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