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01/ Magnificent rocks and beautiful views dot the coastal road. Try and find the blow holes at Senjojiki Kaigan. 02/ Homey looking but cute - a poster of the incredibly popular Akita-dog "Wasao" awaits you outside Ajigasawa Station. 03/ The best part about riding along the west coast is the sunset ride. The bright orange sun sinks into the Sea of Japan. 04/ Enjoying a pleasant ride north along the Omagoe Kaido on National Highway 101, with little traffic and views across the Sea of Japan. 05/ Along the Ajigasawa coastal road, freshly caught squid are hung out like curtains. 06/ The aroma of open-grilled squid was too good to pass up. Waiting for some charcoal-grilled squid while taking a short break.

Course 4 NISHIKAIGAN

Sunset & Sea Squids Ride

Taking in the setting sun over the Sea of Japan along the west coast

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Distance: 48 km Duration: 3 hours

- A** Fukaura Road Station
Kamisanakogawa144-1, Kasose, Fukaura-machi
TEL.0173-76-3660
- B** Senjojiki Beach
Sakakibara, Kitakanegasawa, Fukaura-mach
- C** Umi-no-eki Wando
246-4, Honcho, Ajigasawa-machi
TEL.0173-72-6661



Almost the entire course follows the coastal road running alongside the Sea of Japan. This course presents the rider with incredible views of the ocean. If you are lucky you will get to ride alongside one of the trains passing by on the JR Gono Line or the Resort Shirakami Express. If you are too tired to complete the course you can always pack your bike in a cycle bag and hop on the Gono Line.

Not far from Henashi Station we pass the Koganezaki Furofushi Hot Springs, with views out over the Sea of Japan, and Senjojiki Kaigan, appearing like a giant washboard, scenes you could

only encounter on the west coast. When we reached the Natural Ocean Water Swimming Pool - which was nothing more than an area fenced off in the sea - the cycling clothes came off without hesitation and we dived in for a swim!

And of course this area is rich in seafood. After passing a curtain of dried squid, we stopped in for some grilled squid while taking a rest. The highlight of the course was the view of the setting sun visible from anywhere along the coastal road.