

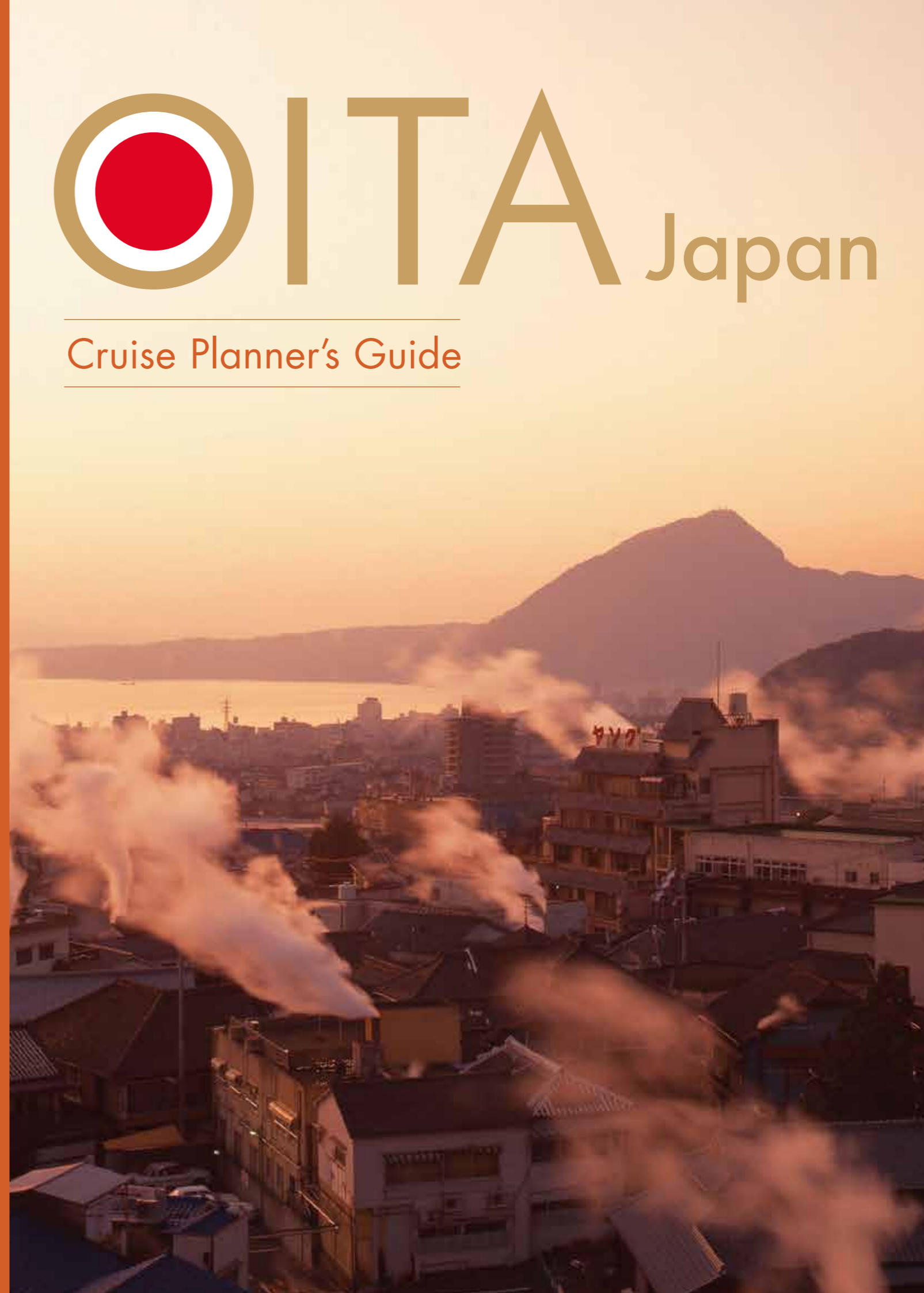
OITA Japan

Cruise Planner's Guide

TOURISM OITA

(Oita Prefectural Tourism Association)

OASIS-hiroba21 3F, 2-50
Takasago-machi Oita-shi, Oita-pref. 870-0029 Japan
Phone: +81-97-536-6250 Fax: +81-97-536-6251
E-mail: tourism@we-love-oita.or.jp
HP: www.discover-oita.com



If, as tourism pioneer Thomas Cook wrote, "...the Seto Inland Sea is more fabulous than any [other sea]. It is so beautiful, a conglomeration of all the best things about all the others.", then Oita Prefecture is its perfect complement. Nestled into the western end of the Seto Inland Sea on Kyushu, Oita is a delightful conglomeration of many of the best qualities of Japan; a feast for all the senses, but a gem of a place that is still little explored even by the Japanese themselves.

Oita has a beautiful, richly-varied and lush countryside that ranges from intricately eroded coastlines dotted with islands, peninsulas and inlets to the wide, sweeping Beppu Bay; from coastal plains through elegant valleys to high plateaus and onto soaring mountain ranges and active volcanoes. Throughout Oita, myriad crystal-clear streams tumble over waterfalls, ripple through sunlight-dappled forests and deep rock gorges, to farmlands of rice paddies and wheat fields before finally flowing to the sea. The friendly, relaxed locals provide a warm welcome to their charming fishing towns and farming villages, which are redolent of a more traditional, quieter life. In any neighbourhood, carefully tended Shinto shrines and intricate Buddhist temples are reminders of the ancient spirituality that still pervades daily life, which each year reaches its zenith during the colourful, sometimes unique, festivals that punctuate the seasons.

A year-round, mild climate combines with Oita's topography to afford a source of fresh food that is not only one of the most varied but also the best quality in all Japan. Here any meal is a veritable banquet of seasonal dishes with ingredients sourced from the seas, rivers, fields, forests and mountains satiating the most discerning palate.

A fine preprandial to any evening feast is a soak in onsen hot spring baths fed by thermal waters derived from deep below the earth's surface. Oita boasts the largest concentration of hot springs, which together with the greatest volume of hot spring waters, make it the onsen capital of Japan, if not the world. It is a mecca for lovers of hot springs with the added elegant twist of the distinctive Japanese culture associated with bathing. Onsen are found throughout Oita from the laidback, seaside resort at Beppu, where steam from onsen billows over the city; to chic Yufuin; through homely Nagayu; to remote mountainside hot spring pools, which are only accessible to the earnest trekker.

Oita has been at the heart of Japan's ancient culture from the earliest days and at Usa is found one of the country's most important shrines, a shimmering vermilion structure set in a primeval woodland to venerate Hachiman, a Shinto god and the divine protector of the nation. The same shrine was also the source of the esoteric Shinto-Buddhism that imbued Japan for over one thousand years and can still be found in the 1,300-year-old Rokugo-manzan culture of the Kunisaki Peninsula. The rise of the samurai led to the eclipse of the once-powerful religious institutions and the monumental ramparts of Oka-jo Castle atop a hill is an imposing reminder of this warrior class. These same samurai welcomed the Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier to Oita in the mid-16th Century and, in 1600, off the coast also saved the shipwrecked Englishman William Adams. Adams subsequently became a samurai and confidant of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the most powerful shogun and arguably most significant figure in Japanese history.

There is no record that Thomas Cook ever visited Oita, but if he had done so surely he would agree that it is the impeccable complement to his fabulous Seto Inland Sea, for Oita is a beautiful conglomeration of all the best things about Japan.



Paul

Paul, a graduate of London University, first arrived in Japan as a student in 1987. After a career in Japanese TV news and documentaries, in 1997 he began working for Walk Japan, which pioneered walking tours for the inbound Japanese travel market. He became Walk Japan's CEO in 2002, since when the company has built a high reputation for its own tours and the others it provides for major travel organisations. Paul made his home in Oita Prefecture in 2002.



The Charms of Oita

-by Paul Christie

Perhaps because modern life has been led at a much less breakneck pace than in many other regions of Japan, Oita Prefecture's lush green landscape of traditional farming and fishing villages still retains a strong sense of its past. Stories telling of a time stretching back to the earliest days of Japan are to be found in Oita's ancient *kofun* burial mounds and *tateishi* standing stones, the venerable Usa Hachiman Shrine and ethereal Fuki-ji temple, and in a plethora of Buddhist statues and *magaibutsu* relief sculptures. While in any neighbourhood, shrines have been tended by the locals and been the scene of prayer and festivals for millennia.

The stronghold of Otomo Sorin, the first samurai to subjugate much of Kyushu and who also became a convert to Christianity under the influence of Francis Xavier, was in Funai, now Oita City. His ruling, warrior class, which dominated Japan for centuries until 1868, left castles throughout the prefecture. Today, ramparts are all that usually remains but even so their grand scale in Nakatsu, Oita City and especially at Oka-jo in Taketa, attest to their supremacy. However, expression of power may not have always been the sole reason for their construction. One of Japan's smallest castles at Kitsuki lies atop a cliff overlooking the sea and seems to have been built more with an eye to beauty than suppression. In the same quiet town a rare example of an original, thatched samurai house lies a stone's throw away, while Taketa and Hita are still strongly reminiscent of the generally peaceful, ordinary life of both samurai and townspeople. Hita also retains the site of the important Kangien school, which in its day was, in a nation then strictly regulated by social standing from birth, an enlightened institution for the education of anyone regardless of class.

In more recent times, Oita's stone culture originally centred around religion developed into a highly skilled if more profane, functional art epitomised by the elegant stone bridges still found spanning rivers and gorges throughout Oita. In Beppu, skills have also been perfected in bamboo, which is dexterously woven into the most intricate designs, some practical and some abstract, that are sought by Japanese and overseas art collectors. Hita is famed for its Onta-yaki pottery with its signature, folk-art design.

A small, delightful gallery in Bungo-Ono honours Fumio Asakura, a local son and Japan's most celebrated sculptor. He left for and found fame in Tokyo in the early 20th Century. These days, however, Beppu, Taketa, Yufuin and Kunisaki have been attracting artists and artisans from around Japan helping them grow into vibrant centres of arts and crafts. Oita City's latest celebration of modern art is embodied in the OPAM art museum designed by Shigeru Ban, winner of the Pritzker Architecture Prize. A short walk away is the modernist Oita Prefectural Library, the first noted work of locally-born Arata Isozaki. Isozaki pioneered Japanese architecture internationally and, coincidentally, employed Ban in his earliest days as an architect.

Festivals seemingly occur somewhere in Japan throughout the year. Oita has its fair share from the grand spectacles of Nakatsu Gion, Oita Tanabata and Tsukumi Minato festivals; though the historical re-enactments of Usuki Takeyoi and Hita Tenryo; to the charming Himeshima Bon-odori and Kunisaki Peninsula's Shujo-onie. World-renowned pianist Martha Argerich's Meeting Point in Beppu is a recent addition to the roster of festivals. On the theme of music, Toshiko Akiyoshi, a pianist, composer and bandleader who has been inducted into the American Jazz Hall of Fame, spent her formative years in Beppu; and the Tao Drummers, the internationally acclaimed and flamboyantly energetic group, has made its home in Taketa.

Unless they find their livelihood in the fishing or shipping industry, locals rarely mention the sea even though their prefecture has a coastline stretching for 759km. But, given that Oita has such a richly varied landscape with over a quarter of its land area designated as national parks perhaps this oversight is understandable.

Mountains both literally and figuratively top Oita's landscape with Kuju-san, Sobo-san, Tsurumi-dake and Yufu-dake just some of the mountains that provide glorious backdrops to vistas from afar or, for the energetically inclined, panoramas of all around from their peaks. Picturesque highlands and valleys add further to a scenery that is mostly verdant with forests, orchards and arable land. With so much choice it is hard to single out any single view but Yabakei has long been known locally for its glorious valley scenery, while Bungo-Ono has been recognised as a Geo Park for its richly diverse geology, including spectacular gorges and waterfalls.

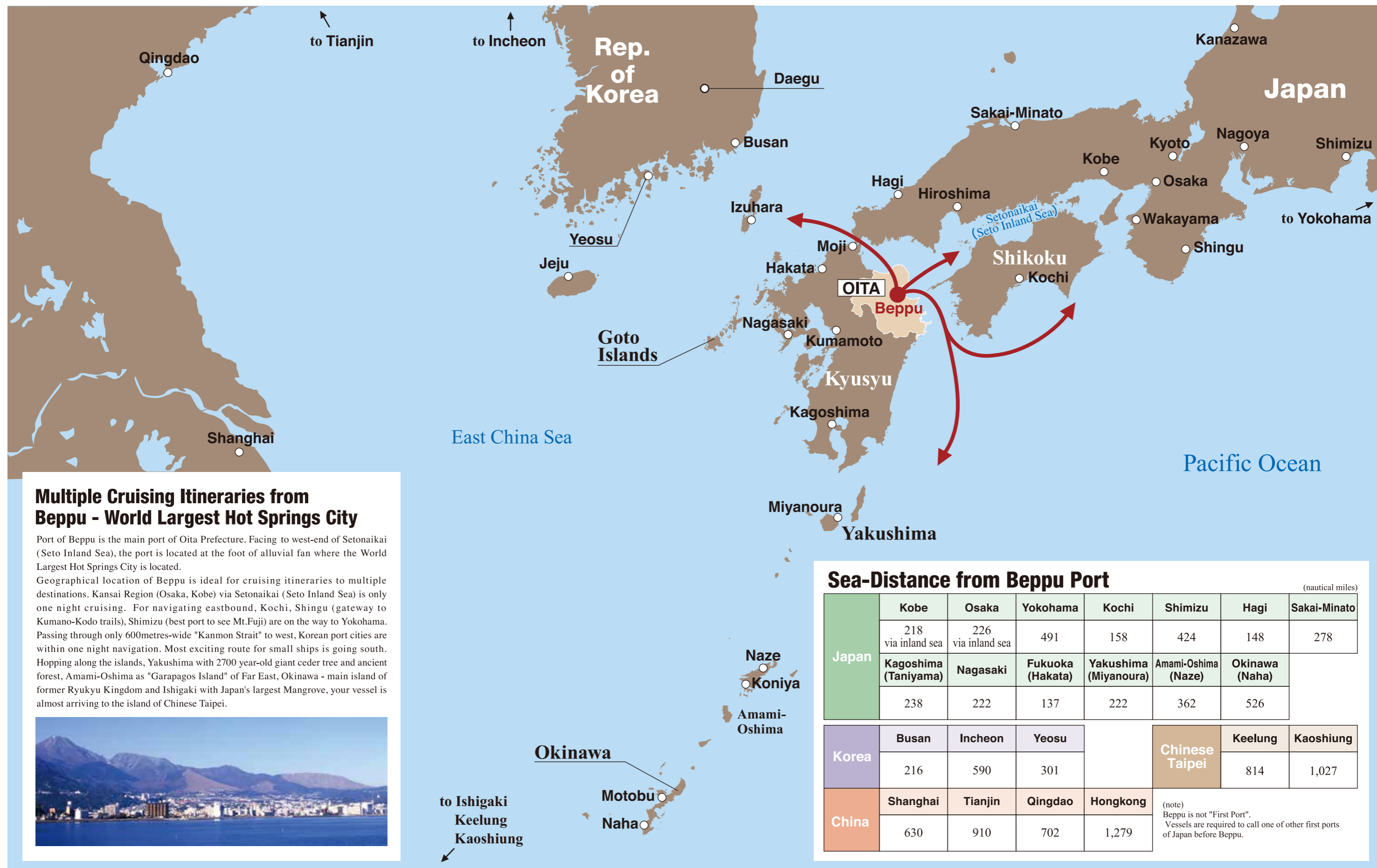
Oita is famous amongst the Japanese for its *onsen* hot springs, which are found throughout much of the prefecture but Beppu takes the top spot for the sheer number of its hot springs. Here copious clouds of water vapour pouring skywards from onsen provide a unique spectacle and this popular resort with its classic, trademark view out over the city to the sea.

The sea may not be the first thing the locals think of when it comes to their home prefecture but they certainly enjoy the bounties it brings. Shallows and slow currents to the north and fast flowing seas to the south contribute an abundance of different, fresh fish to the Oita diet. Small fishing harbours abound along the coast and catches brought ashore include red snapper, scabbard fish, yellow tail, garfish, sardines, octopus, giant prawns, conger eels, oysters, mackerel, flounder and much, much more. Not surprisingly fish is a major feature in the local diet but especially so in Saiki, which boasts a great concentration of sushi restaurants.

Inland, crystal clear rivers, springing from the mountainous interior, not only provide delicious *ayu* sweetfish, *enoha* trout and eels but also supply copious amounts of water to irrigate the market gardens, which are a year-round source of a wide range of fresh seasonal salads and vegetables, and rice paddies. The mild climate and diverse countryside is a boon for fruit, which include mandarin and satsuma oranges, kabosu and yuzu citrus, *nashi* pears, figs, grapes, cherries, strawberries, chestnuts, kiwi, water melon, persimmon and blueberries. Forests are a source of shiitake mushrooms, *sansai* wild vegetables and very occasionally free-roaming beef cattle, although these days most herds are now reared in paddocks and sheds.

Combined with Oita's distinctive *mugi-jochu*, a refined wheat spirit, and some delicious family-owned, boutique sake breweries Oita's boasts one of the most replete pantries in Japan, a veritable gourmet's paradise.

Geographical Location -gateway to multiple destinations



Tourism Resources



Port Facilities

Port	Beppu		Nakatsu		Saeki	
	Berth n.4	Berth n.3	East Berth	Chuo Berth	Mejima East	Mejima East
Nautical Data						
Berth Length	280m	275m	200m/260m/240m*	240m	280m**	370m**
Berth Width	20m	20m	20m	20m	20m	20m
Draught	-10m	-12m	-8m/-11m/-12m	-5.5m	-14m	-14m
Terminal	Yes +CIQ	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Remarks	Voyager of the Seas (140,000t)		Asuaka II (50,142t) *240m berth is under construction		Asuaka II (50,142t) **Construction is planned to adjoin two berths to L650m.	



Beppu Port (Berth n.4, n.3, from right)



Nakatsu Port (East Berth1/2/3 and Chuo Berth, from left)



Saiki Port (Mejima East Berth and West Berth, from left)



Usuki Port



Kunisaki Port



Kumage Port

Port	Usuki	Kunisaki	Kumage
Berth Length	130m		
Berth Width	20m	20m	20m
Draught	-5.5m	-5.5m	-5.5m
Terminal	Ferry Terminal	N/A	N/A
Remarks			

Rokugo-Manzan

The picturesque and verdant Kunisaki Peninsula is a haven of rural life that today belies its history as one of the greatest centres of Buddhism in Japan. The powerful religious institutions that once dominated the region have long since faded away. However, their spiritual legacy is still to be found in the charming, peaceful temples and wayside shrines, which today seem to have been part of this bucolic landscape since time immemorial; and, also in the innumerable stone carvings of deities, seemingly found wherever one visits, that have cast their benign, protecting gazes for centuries across the tranquil mountains, valleys, fields and villages of Kunisaki. This legacy is also to be found in the Rokugo-manzan, an ancient, esoteric religious group that is an intriguing fusion of Shinto, Buddhist, Taoist and folk rituals, that has become a fundamental part of life in Kunisaki to this day.

At Kunisaki's centre is Mt. Futago-san, a dormant volcano and the highest point on the peninsula. From here, mountainous ridges interspersed with tranquil valleys fan out, as if rays from the sun, in all directions – a delightful, physical metaphor for this spiritual land. Together with the line of mountains on Kunisaki's western edge blocking easy entry from the rest of Kyushu, the ridges further dissuaded many from delving into the peninsula's interior.

However, the remoteness created by this inaccessibility was a significant attraction for monks of old looking for seclusion, a retreat to meditate and practice their ascetics. Legend has it that in the early 8th Century Ninmon, a monk from the grand shrine at Usa, realised the spiritual potential of Kunisaki and set the foundations for what became over time the Rokugo-manzan. Ninmon, who is regarded as a Buddhist reincarnation of Hachiman the Shinto divine protector of Japan, entered Kunisaki and established its first temples. The monks that succeeded him created the grand Buddhist institutions and also established the ascetic practice of mineiri, the walking of mountain paths in prayer, meditation and recitation of sutras. While those powerful temples have long since disappeared, mineiri has proved to be a resilient, if ten-yearly intermittent, symbol of Kunisaki's spiritual heritage embodied in Rokugo-manzan and embraced by monks and locals alike.

2018 marks the 1,300th anniversary of Rokugo-manzan and a mineiri will be undertaken in celebration of Ninmon's first devotional steps into Kunisaki, still a truly heavenly place on earth. (Paul Christie)





USA

Usa Jingu Shrine

Ajimu Winery

African Safari



USA Usa Jingu Shrine

Usa Jingu retains an atmospheric grandeur befitting its status as the principal shrine of Hachiman, the Shinto protector god of Japan. The recipient of imperial patronage since the 7th Century and with an affiliation of over 40,000 subsidiary shrines found throughout the length and breadth of Japan, Usa Jingu's importance throughout much of the nation's history cannot be understated.

Surprisingly, however, today Usa Jingu seems to have largely disappeared from the consciousness of most Japanese and its extensive precincts of opulent, vermilion buildings shimmering against ancient forests are most often bereft of many visitors. Yet perhaps because of this, here a gentle stroll through these well-kept and peaceful surroundings, seemingly little changed for over 1,300 years, is a serene experience that can lead the visitor to a sense of the Japanese's identity with nature, which has long been the embodiment of Shinto.

The shrine's central building is composed of three adjacent, connected halls, each dedicated to one of the shrine's three deities; the mythical emperor Ojin, his mother empress Jingu, and his consort, Hime O-kami, each of which in turn were identified with Hachiman.

There are over 40,000 branch Hachiman shrines throughout Japan including Tsurugaoka Hachiman-gu in Kamakura, near Tokyo. However, Tsurugaoka is far better known than Usa and, apparently, attracts far more visitors than any other shrine anywhere in Japan.

Hachiman has been regarded as the protector deity of Japan since 720 when it was believed that his intervention secured victory in war with the Hayato people of south Kyushu. Hachiman was also taken from Usa to Todai-ji temple in Nara in 749, one of the great temples of Japan, which was then under construction. Todai-ji, which is famous to this day for its Daibutsu-den Great Buddha Hall housing the world's largest bronze statue of Dainichi Nyorai, was a state project and Hachiman's presence attests to the deity's importance to the nation. A mikoshi, an elaborate palanquin used to parade Shinto deities, is believed to have been first used to transport Hachiman to Todai-ji, spawning a now very familiar symbol of Shinto festivals.

Around the time that Hachiman became the first Shinto figure to be subsumed into the Buddhist pantheon of deities, heralding the melding of both religions, Buddhist temples began to be constructed in the precincts of, or adjacent to, many major shrines. Construction began on Myroku-ji temple in 741 at Usa Jingu. With imperial and state patronage, Usa Jingu and Miryoku-ji amassed both wealth and power with estates centred on Kunisaki and north-east Kyushu but also control over land as far as southern Kyushu. Such was its influence only Dazaifu Tenmangu shrine, near Fukuoka, came close to rivalling it in Kyushu.

Such a wealthy and powerful institution, though, became a target for the samurai, who first rose to prominence during the Kamakura Period (1185-1333). Along with many imperial and state institutions, both Usa Jingu and Miryoku-ji were vulnerable and forced to relinquish much of their wealth and, consequently, power to the military. Miryoku-ji was finally destroyed after a Meiji Period (1868 - 1911) government decree forcing the separation of Shinto and Buddhism. Large foundations stones in an often overlooked grassy corner of the Usa Jingu's precincts are all that is left of Miryoku-ji and the shrine's once long relationship with Buddhism. However, the shrine is where Kunisaki's history as a centre of Buddhism has its origins. Here, however, a synthesis of Buddhism and Shintoism remains to this day embodied in the Rokugo-Manzan.



USA Ajimu Winery

Top grade grapes for the table are grown widely in Kyushu and are a staple fruit during the summer months. Grapes for viticulture, the production of wine, are, however, much rarer in the region. Nevertheless, at the Ajimu Budoshu Koubou boutique winery, deep in the Usa countryside, the wines have been perfected since the fruit was first harvested here in the 1960s. The climate here is ideal for growing a variety of grapes, which are the basis of the 22 different types of wines bottled here including Chardonnay, Sauvignon and Merlot.

Surrounded by vineyards, the winery, its cellars, tasting bar, shop and café are set in an attractive and lush woodland garden. All its wines plus grappa, brandy and port, are available for tasting and sale including the Ajimu Sparkling Wine, which goes through a second fermentation in the bottle. Made by hand over an extended period of time, it has won the highest award in its division of the Japan Wine Competition several times. Herb tea and grape juice is available for those who do not drink or are driving. Other delicacies including local meat products, foreign cheeses and brandy frozen yoghurt are available along with the wines for purchase. For those still with the legs, a path in the grounds leads to a hilltop from where views open up over the surrounding vineyards and the countryside of Ajimu beyond.



USA African Safari

At the largest wildlife park in west Japan an exotic and exciting experience is provided for children through to adults alike in the heart of Oita. Visitors come into close – literally eye-to-eye - but safe proximity of a range of the world's animals including lions, tigers, elephants, giraffes, cheetahs, hyenas and rhinoceros. Opportunities to feed some of these great beasts can be combined with petting some much smaller and less ferocious ones such as lorises, squirrel monkeys and hedgehogs. Most recently, a rare white tiger born at the park, has grown into a young adult and begun to make appearances.

Drive through the wildlife enclosures either in your own car, or ride one of the distinctive and fun Jungle Buses, coaches that have seemingly metamorphosed into giant motorised versions of some of the Park's residents. In the Jungle Buses the tables are turned; humans are carefully caged in while the animals free to roam their wide domain.

Shore Excursions from Nakatsu and Kunisaki Port

1.Shore Excursion from Nakatsu Port

1-1. Pre-Buddhism Religion of Japan and Rokugo Manzan Culture (duration: 8 hours)

Nakatsu Port - Oita Prefectural History Museum - Usa Jingu Shrine (upper shrine/lower shrine/treasure museum) - Futago-ji Temple - lunch at local restaurant - Fuki-ji Temple - Makiodo - Kumano Stone Buddhas - Nakatsu Port

1-2. Nature of Yabakei and Early Stage of Japanese Buddhism (duration: 6 hours)

Nakatsu Port - Rakan-ji Temple - Furu-Rakan - Shin-Yabakei - lunch - Ao-no-Domon / Kyoshuho - Nakatsu Port

2.Shore Excursion from Kuniaski Port

2-1. Experience Insight of Rokugo Manzan Culture (duration: 7 hours)

Kunisaki Port - Monjusen-ji Temple (meditation/Sutra copying) - Futago-ji Temple - lunch - Fuki-ji Temple - Makiodo - Tashibu-no-sho - Kumano Stone Buddhas - Kunisaki Port

2-2. Nature and Culture of Volcanic Island "Himeshima" (duration: 5 hours)

Kunisaki Port - Imi Port - (ferry) - Himeshima Island (Kannonzaki Cape/Tiger Butterfly/Himeshima Lighthouse/ Tiger Shrimp Farm/Shoya Furusho House) - (ferry) - Imi Port - Kunisaki Port



3.Outdoor / Cultural Activities in Yabakei / Kunisaki

Port	Activity	Duration	Programme details
Nakatsu	Cycling in Yabakei	2.5 hours (22km)	Yabakei - Hiratashukuba - 2nd Yamakunigawa-kyo - Shimogo Shukuba - Yamakuni
	Trekking in Yabakei	1.5-2 hours	Yabakei - Ao-no-Domon - Rankan-ji - Furu-Rakan
Kunisaki	Zen Experience	3-5 hours	Meditation/Sutra copying/Gomataki (burning wood stick)/Lenten fare (Zen food)
	Minemichi to Mt.Fudo	4 hours	Sento-ji - Saigyo-gaeshi - Former Sento-ji Ruins - Oku-no-in - Itsutsujifudo - Sento-ji
	Minemichi to Mt.Futago	4 hours	Futago-ji Sanmon Gate - Shikatsume-Ishi - Peak (721m) - Seven Wonders - Futago-ji
	Cycling East Coast	3 hours (40km)	Sumiyoshihama - Kurosaki Beach - Hata Beach - Shirahama Beach - Narahara Beach



NAKATSU

Yabakei

Rakan-ji

Ao-no-Domon



NAKATSU Yabakei

Yabakei, is an extensive, scenic area centred on a valley carved over 2.5 million years by the Yamakuni River. Riven by forested valleys and interspersed with numerous cliffs and rock formations, the Yabakei area is renowned nationally for its beautiful spring foliage and autumn leaves. 66 scenic spots are spread over the area which is divided up into Hon-Yabakei, Shin-Yabakei, Ura-Yabakei, Oku-Yabakei, Shii-Yabakei and Tsutami-Yabakei.

Hon-Yabakei, located on the south-west side of Mt. Hachimen-zan, is considered the entrance to Yabakei. Here the Yamakuni River is spanned by the elegant Yabakei-bashi, which, at 116 metres, is the longest, arched stone bridge in Japan. Nearby is Ao-no-Domon, a tunnel carved by hand through cliffs and the spectacular Rakan-ji temple, which is reached by chair lift. Further south is some of the most spectacular scenery, including Hitome-hakkei, a spot where famously eight scenic views can be enjoyed from the one spot, and the less well-known but no less delightful Sarutobi Keikoku, a small but very scenic canyon found in bucolic surroundings.

In the valley in front of and beneath the towering Yabakei Dam is Keiseki-en Garden, a park created when the dam was constructed. Located on the dam's reservoir is Yabakei Aqua Park, a popular spot amongst water skiers and wake boarders. Nearby is the Yabakei Cycling Terminal, where bicycles can be rented to explore the Maple Yaba Cycling Road. This 22km, gently-inclined cycleway follows the route of a long disused, single-track railway, which once wound its way through Yabakei.

NAKATSU Rakan-ji

Rakan-ji, a temple said to have been established by Hodo, an Indian monk, in 645A.D., is sited spectacularly within a complex of caves high up on the side of Mt. Rakan. Over 3,700 stone Buddhas along with wooden shamoji rice spatulas, engraved with the prayers and wishes of the faithful, decorate the precincts.

The only access is via a steep climb on foot over steps hewn out of the rock or, most unusually for a temple, a chairlift. Not surprisingly, nearly all visitors pay the small fee to be whisked effortlessly to the temple's entrance. Views from here across the valley below are only beaten by taking a second chairlift to the mountain top. From here the scenery of the surrounding peaks and valleys below is wonderful any time of the year but especially so when the autumn leaves are in their full glory.



NAKATSU Ao-no-Domon

In the 18th Century, Zenkai, a monk at Rakan-ji, witnessed a person falling into the waters of the Yamakuni River from the dangerous, cliff-hugging path it was necessary to negotiate to reach his temple. Perhaps in atonement for his criminal years as a youth, Zenkai laboured single-handedly for the next 30 years chiselling away rock creating a 342m-long tunnel for safe passage. A fee was levied to pass through the tunnel making the Ao-no-Domon Japan's first toll road. In later times the tunnel was widened to take modern traffic.





KUNISAKI

Futago-ji

Kyu-Sento-ji

Itsutsuji Fudo

Monjusen-ji

Kunisaki Long Trail



KUNISAKI Futago-ji

Like many of Kunisaki's temples, Futago-ji traces its founding back to Rokugo-Manzan's founding monk Ninmon. Futago-ji became Kunisaki's lead temple in the Warring States Period (1467-1603) and reached the peak of its power in the Edo Period (1603-1868) after receiving the backing of the daimyo samurai lord of the local Matsudaira Clan in Kitsuki. The gate for the exclusive use of the daimyo remains and, always closed, it may never have been opened since the last one past through some 140 or more years ago.

The temple's extensive grounds and complex of buildings spread over the lower slopes of Mt. Futago-san, the mountain at the centre of the Kunisaki Peninsula. Towering Nio guardian statues at either side of the entrance to Futago-ji are the largest and some of the most impressive on Kunisaki. Local legend has that non-believers crossing the classic, arched stone bridge sitting in front of these two muscle-bound characters, are suddenly turned into fervent Buddhists, but if a cow or horse passes over it will collapse.

For many centuries the temple has been a destination for the devout and especially for childless couples to receive blessings in order to conceive. Today, many others also visit to enjoy Futago-ji's abundance of graceful momiji maple trees, lushly green from spring through summer the leaves turn into a riot of reds and yellows in the autumn.

KUNISAKI Kyu-Sento-ji

The 'Kyu' of Kyu-Sento-ji means 'former' and only the extensive grounds of what once was one of the greatest of Kunisaki's temples remain. Today, a quiet lane leads to a forest footpath, which winds first under a torii shrine gate, before passing a group of stone Buddhas and stupas. Beyond here the path turns to flag stone and begins to rise steeply aside towering stone retaining walls that indicate the nexus of the old temple and hint at the power of the old institution.

Two impressive Nio deities are the sole remaining residents; guardians of the long-gone temple buildings that once regularly resonated to the sound of monks chanting to the rhythmical beat of a drum as the smell of incense curled through the air. Each year in late spring and early summer, a profusion of white irises blankets the grounds, a beautiful memento of the lives once led here.

The flag stone path continues and steepens into steps, at the top of which is one of only two remaining temple sub-structure remaining. In 1968, the surrounding forests were swept by fire, destroying the final vestiges of the original buildings and Sento-ji, was rebuilt, albeit on a far more modest scale, on its current site in the valley below. Occasionally the sole resident monk at the nez temple can be found holding pray at Kyu-Sento-ji to Nimon, who left this mortal coil here. His grave is found under the forest canopy amongst the serried ranks of hundreds of carved stones, graves of the monks who also ended their lives here. A further and longer climb leads to the 'fortress rock' peak of Mt. Fudo, which houses in its shadow the second structure, Itsutsuji.



KUNISAKI Itsutsuji Fudo

Itsutsuji Fudo marks the furthest and highest extent of Kyu-Sento-ji's grounds. A small shrine clings to the sheer rock face, from which panoramic views across Kunisaki over the Seto Inland Sea beyond to Honshu are a fitting reward for making the climb. On the way up, the sharp eyed will have noticed a figure standing proud and stock still gazing out over the scenery. A life-sized cast iron effigy, it was placed here in recent years by Anthony Gormley, the famed British artist, as his tribute to the serenity of this area.

KUNISAKI Monjusen-ji

For anyone fortunate enough to be at Monjusen-ji at dawn, the deep, resounding sound of bell echoing across its tranquil setting, a remote valley deep in the heart of Kunisaki, heralds the start of the temple's day. The bell also presages goma-taki, one of Kunisaki's most arcane and atmospheric ceremonies. In the temple's inner sanctum, the temple priest presides over an intimate spectacle, burning wooden votive plaques to mystical incantations and the ringing of bells.

Monjusen-ji, perched high on the side of a cliff, is reached by a long flight of steps that leads as if to another, higher world. Perhaps it is not surprising then that Monjusen-ji, which was one of the first temples established in Kunisaki in 648 A.D., has a different pedigree to Kunisaki's other temples. A cult once flourished here during the Heian Period (794-1185) based on beliefs related to Monju Bosatsu, which the temple venerates and takes its name from, from Yamabushi ascetic monks, Mikkyo esoteric Buddhism and folk beliefs.

In a dimly lit cave behind the inner sanctum, a natural spring gently wells up with chie-no-mizu, waters that are believed to confer wisdom on anyone one who imbibes them. Not surprisingly, just before the exam season many a student makes the long trip to the temple in the hope of improving their chances.

In front of the main temple structure is a Kunisaki-to, a style of stupa distinctive to and found throughout the peninsula. Monjusen-ji's is the largest to be found on Kunisaki and legend has it that it was carved by a man in penance for his murderous past.

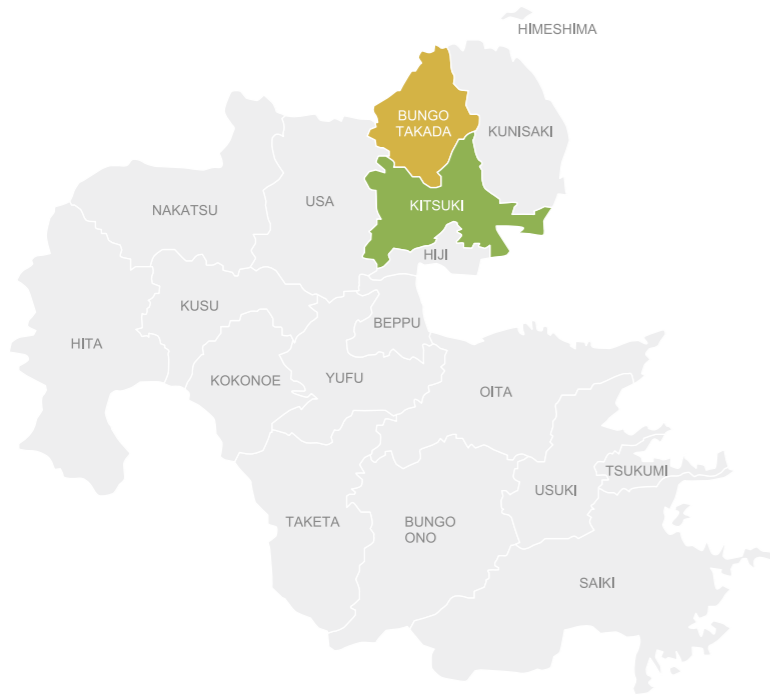


KUNISAKI Kunisaki Long Trail

The Kunisaki Hantou Minemichi Long Trail, to give its full name, is a meandering, 134km-long hiking route that weaves through the Kunisaki Peninsula following in the footsteps of the Rokugo-Manzan monks, who first came here for their ascetic practices 1,300 years ago. The route links many temples and other sacred sites including the Kumano Magaibutsu, Makiodo, Fuki-ji, Tennen-ji, Inomure-yama, Nakayama-Senkyo, Kyu-Sento-ji, Itsutsu-ji Fudo, Iwato-ji, Monjusen-ji, Ruriko-ji and Futago-ji.

The trail passes by paddy fields and quiet hamlets via quiet country lanes, through forests along old mountain paths, and up to and along the many ridges that fan out like the rays of the sun across the peninsula. With the exception of the steeply sided, 721m-high Mt. Futago-san, climbs are rarely very long but do include some giddy heights, such as cliff faces and precipitous paths that should only be negotiated by competent hikers or in the company of an experienced guide.

Kunisaki is a special area and a hike along the Kunisaki Long Trail, in its entirety or just some of its constituent parts, is a journey not just into the peninsula's geographical heart, but also its society, culture and history.



BUNGO TAKADA

- Fuki-ji*
- Kumano Magaibutsu*
- Nakayama-senkyo*
- Makiodo*
- Tashibu-no-sho*
- Tennen-ji & Kawanaka Fudo*

KITSUKI

Kitsuki

BUNGO TAKADA Fuki-ji

Fuki-ji temple's main hall is perhaps the simplest and most elegant Buddhist structure found anywhere in Japan. Built in the 12th Century, it is also the oldest wooden structure in Kyushu. Fuki-ji is beautiful to see throughout the year but especially so when the surrounding trees are in their vibrant autumn foliage see it at its best.

Recognised as a National Treasure, Fuki-ji is listed with the Phoenix Hall at Byodoin in Uji near Kyoto and the Golden Hall at Chuson-ji in Hiraizumi. All three are dedicated to the Amida Buddha yet unlike its richly decorated and celebrated peers, Fuki-ji today has an air of time-worn, tranquil beauty. The approach to it through bucolic countryside gives little inkling of its presence found on a slight rise overlooking a tiny hamlet. A short flight of worn, ancient stone steps, flanked by two fearsome-looking Nio guardian deities, leads to the temple's main hall, an intimate and serene building that demurely blends into its surroundings.

Fuki-ji, however, was once highly decorated and faint vestiges of this can still be seen on the walls of its interior. These remaining phantom-like depictions, however, only add to the beautiful sense of delicacy and repose generated by the figure of Amida Buddha seated at the hall's centre.

Legend has it that the statue of Amida at Fuki-ji was carved from one giant kaya, Japanese nutmeg tree. The remainder of the tree was used to create the main hall and also the statue of Daiitoku-Myo-o at Makiodo (see upper right).



BUNGO TAKADA Kumano Magaibutsu

Kunisaki is a treasure trove of Buddhist artefacts and the twin Kumano Magaibutsu Buddhist relief carvings, depictions of Dainichi Nyorai and Fudo Myo-o, are the largest amongst these. Thought to date from the earliest days of Buddhism on Kunisaki, they can only be reached by climbing a flight of uneven, rocky steps, which legend relates was built by a devil over one night. They are certainly devilish to negotiate, which may be why the Kumano Magaibutsu remains relatively unknown and little visited. Yet standing at the base of these towering figures make the effort all the more worthwhile.

It is thought that the Dainichi Nyorai was carved around the end of the Heian period (794~1185). Just visible around the head of Dainichi Nyorai are also three carved mandala. Dainichi Nyorai at 6.8m high left is Fudo-Myo, which was carved in the Kamakura period (1185~1333). These are the largest magai-butsu in Japan at respectively 6.6 and 8 metres high.

BUNGO TAKADA Nakayama-senkyo

A wonderful, hike along a spectacular ridge but only suitable for the experienced and those with a head for heights. Nakayama-senkyo is an old pilgrimage and its route, which follows forests trail before reaching rocky outcrops, is lined with deities. It has also been incorporated into the Kunisaki Long Trail. Many climbs are negotiated with the use of fixed chains and some of the paths atop the ridge are narrow with sheer drops on either side.



BUNGO TAKADA Makiodo

Makiodo is a repository for Buddhist statues, which are all that remain from a grand temple, Makisan Denjo-ji, that once dominated the surrounding area. It burnt to the ground in the early Muromachi Period (1333 - 1573) but not before the locals saved nine Buddha statues, the largest of which is a 2.17m high Amida Buddha. All nine are listed as National Treasures and their magnificence attests to the one time importance of Denjo-ji. Of particular note is a statue of Daiitoku-Myo-o riding a white water buffalo, which is considered the best example of its type found in Japan.

The locals also collected Buddhist stone artifacts from the surrounding fields placing them in the grounds of Makiodo for safe keeping. These include carvings of deities and a Kunisaki-to, an example of the local rendition of a stupa. Carvings in stone are found throughout Kunisaki but are uncommon anywhere beyond the peninsula, particularly the Kunisaki-to.

Taking its cue from Daiitoku-Myo-o, the annual festival at Makiodo is for the health and welfare of domesticated animals including cattle and horses. A livestock market was once also held at the same time, but as the local population has dwindled so too has the livestock and the market is sadly no longer held.

BUNGO TAKADA Tashibu-no-Sho

Tashibu-no-sho, a charming district with some of the most picturesque countryside found anywhere in Japan, was once under the direct control of Usa Jingu. Although the shrine's dominance waned more than 800 years ago as the samurai began their rise to prominence, the patchwork of unevenly shaped paddy fields found still found here has remained the same in part since these early days. Here and there small clusters of farmhouses, often centred on a small temple, dot the landscape, which is surrounded by the distinctive, rugged cliffs of Kunisaki.

Trails lead up through bamboo groves and forests to the top of these precipices. Here, protected from the elements in shallow depressions in the rock face, statues of Asahi and Yuhi, literally sunrise and sunset, Kannon Bodhisattvas cast their protective gaze east and west across the scenery below. Beautiful at any time of the year, the vista is spectacular in early summer when the paddies are flooded and reflecting the setting sun.



BUNGO TAKADA Tennen-ji & Kawanaka Fudo

Like so much to be found in Kunisaki, nothing fully prepares one for Tennen-ji temple, a beautifully rustic and understated thatched structure protruding from a cave at the base of a monumental cliff. On its own it would be sufficient, but together with Kawanaka Fudo, a giant rock carved with Buddhist deities set in the adjacent river, and also Mumyo-bashi, a tiny bridge spanning two precipices on the ridge high above, the scene is magnificently poised in its serenity. Nevertheless, one night at the lunar year, this peace is shattered by the raucous Shujo-Onie, Kunisaki Peninsula greatest festival, when rumbustious devils, bearing flaming torches, run amok to the delight of the locals and curious visitors alike.

Reputedly to have been founded by Ninmon in 718 A.D. much of the temple was washed away by a deluge in 1941. No resident monks has been here ever since but the deities found including Kannon Bosatsu, Yakushi Nyorai, Shaka Nyorai, Senju Kannon, Fudo-Myo-o, Gakko Bosatsu and Nikko Bosatsu and cared for by the locals.



KITSUKI Kitsuki

Kitsuki is a compact, quiet and genteel town that still retains the atmosphere it once had as samurai stronghold. The kitadai samurai quarter is reached via a flight of old flagstone, steps starting from aside a traditional shop selling miso paste. At the top of the steps is Ohara-tei, a marvellously well-preserved, thatched building with a traditional garden that was home to the family of a senior retainer to the local daimyo warlord. A peak inside provides a wonderful opportunity to appreciate life in the Edo Period (1603-1868) when the samurai were at their apogee.

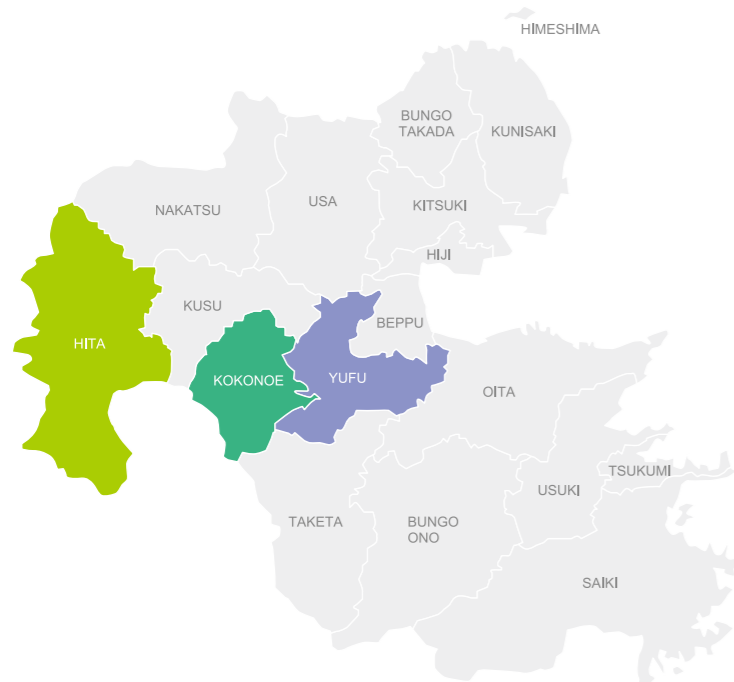
From here a path, lined with traditional mud walls, leads past other period buildings towards the castle. Set on a cliff overlooking the mouth of a river flowing into the Inland Sea it was reputedly the smallest in Japan but must have been one of the prettiest. Although this is a concrete reconstruction, like so many castle in Japan, it does not detract from its location.

Kimono are available for rental and many a visitor to the town can be seen strolling the lanes and paths. At many cafes and shops discounts are available for anyone clad in traditional garb and Retro-kan, near the castle, is a lovely place to relax over a coffee surrounded by the owner's fabulous collection of 20th Century Japanese bric-a-brac. Also, dressed in a kimono is the stylish way to enjoy a performance of Japanese theatre at Shurakukan in the centre of town. Across the road, the Tomaya tea emporium, is little changed from the days when it was built in 1875. Loose leaf and macha powdered tea along with accoutrements for the tea ceremony line the interior of this picturesque shop. Shopkeeper seems a most inappropriate term for the mistress of Tomoya who, often dressed in kimono, brings an elegance and refinement that would not be out of place in the most traditional Kyoto establishment.

Kitsuki is a haven for oyster lovers, which are served up in huts overlooking the sea. Other local delicacies include Ureshino sea bream with rice and green tea dish, and the hearty and filling Chicken Nanban Sandwich.

Fans of beach life and sea enjoy the facilities at Sumiyoshi-hama, a large, forested sand spar that has been turned into an attractive centre for waterboarding and stand up paddling (SUP). It also encompasses the usual attractions of beaches including swimming and beach volleyball.





H I T A

Onta & Onta-yaki Pottery

KOKONOE

Kuju-Renzan Massif

Y U F U

Yufuin

Mt. Yufu-dake



KOKONOE Kuju-Renzan Massif

Kuju-san is a 13km-long massif consisting of more than ten volcanic peaks including Mt. Naka-dake, which at 1,791m is the highest mountain in Kyushu. Each peak is dormant except Mt. Hoshho-zan (1,762m), which suddenly erupted in 1995, 333 years since the last eruption in the massif. It has remained active ever since.

A popular destination for hikers, trailheads are easily accessed at Chojabaru and Makinoto-toge, which are both on the Yamanami Highway. There are several trails but spending one or more night at the Hokke-in Onsen at Bogatsuru, either camping or in the lodge, is recommended to fully explore the massif. Highlights include Amaga-ike marsh plateau, the onsen hot spring baths at Hokke-in which are only accessible by hiking to, and reaching the peaks of Naka-dake and Kuju-san (1,787m).

With the correct equipment hiking is possible throughout the year. However, walkers throng here particularly in late May and early June when the mountainsides are ablaze with the pink blooms of miyama-kirishima azaleas, and also in November when the leaves of the forests change to their vibrant autumn colours.

YUFU Yufuin

Yufuin, is a refined, up-market, onsen hot spring town in wonderful rural setting towered over by Mt. Yufu-dake, an extinct volcano. The town boast a wealth of cafes, restaurants, shops selling high-quality locally-made handicrafts, boutiques, art galleries and small museums. A compact town it is ideal to stroll around. The main street throngs with visitors browsing, shopping and just generally enjoying the atmosphere. The back streets, however, are much lesser visited and time taken to explore out as far as the surrounding paddy fields is well-worth the effort for the bucolic views. The Tsuji Basha horse and carriage, which gently clip-clops around Yufuin from the railway station, is a very pleasant and leisurely way to venture away from the busier centre.

Yufuin developed as a resort town and has a plethora of charming ryokan inns with onsen hot spring baths, including some of the finest - and most expensive - found anywhere in Japan. Must-sees include Kinrinko, a small lake that is fed by onsen waters. Early morning on a cooler day water vapour rising from the pond's surface creates an ethereal scene. For the adventurous, Shitanyu, a quaint, thatched-roof public bath house aside Kinrinko, offers mixed bathing.

Yufuin also has some wonderful architecture from traditional farmhouses, through elegant houses, ryokan inns and restaurants to the railway station designed by Arata Isozaki, where the waiting room doubles up as an art gallery. Also look out for buildings produced by some of Japan's top architects including Kengo Kuma's timeless Comico Art Museum and Shigeru Ban's spectacular Tourist Information Centre, which is beside the station.

For a special treat off-the-beaten-track, visit Tan's Bar at the Sansou-Murata. This beautiful inn on the edge of town is probably beyond the pocket of most people to stay at. Its bar, however, is a lovely place to luxuriate in while enjoying a coffee or something a little stronger and listening to music piped from a giant cinema speaker. The inn complex also includes Artegio, an lovely, modern art, music and dining space, and Theomurata chocolatier. In the evening head to the calm Nichol's Bar at Tamanoyu, an equally gorgeous inn set in a fine woodland garden, for a leisurely pre-prandial cocktail or whisky.



YUFU Mt. Yufu-dake

The twin-peaked Mt. Yufu-dake soars to 1,583 metres dominating its surroundings. It is also a popular and relatively easy mountain to climb, taking about 2~2.5 hours from the main start point, on the road running between Yufuin and Beppu, at 700 metres. On the lower slopes the trail to the top zig zags up through lovely deciduous tree forests. Higher up the trees fade away and the glorious views open up across Yufuin. Nearer the top the path steepens but reaching the mountain's peak is rewarded with a grand 360-degree panorama across Kyushu to Beppu Bay and Kunisaki. Bring a picnic with you to enjoy a wondrous backdrop to lunch.

More energetic and adventurous climbers may like to journey to the top of neighbouring Mt. Tsurumi-dake on the Beppu Ropeway to join the trail that leads down to the foothills before taking the more arduous secondary route to Yufu-dake's peak.

HITA Onta & Onta-yaki Pottery

Verdant mountains close in on both sides as the road from Hita reaches Onta, a beautiful and peaceful hamlet beside the Oura-gawa river. Tucked into the furthest reaches of a narrow valley, Onta's charm and the pottery, which it gives its name to, are well-worth making the journey.

The hamlet comprises of 14 households, ten of which make their living from pottery in a way that has little changed since Onta-yaki began to be produced here by Yanase Sanemon, from neighbouring Chikusen, along with the local Kuroki and Sakamoto families in 1705. Each step in the pottery-making process is still carried out by hand including firing the large, wood-fuelled climbing kilns. Most intriguingly, the river flowing through the centre of Onta has been harnessed to drive karasuu wooden hammers that pulverise kaolin rock into clay powder. The slow, rhythmical beat of these large beam hammers striking the kaolin together with the splashing of water, as the beams tip up to full height, is entrancing. Once heard it is not surprising to learn that this unending, repetitive orchestration has been selected as one of the '100 soundscapes of Japan'.

Onta-yaki, a practical ware made for daily use, began to find wide popularity after Yanagi Soetsu (1889-1961), the founder of Japan's mingei arts and populariser of anonymous craftsmanship, recognised it in 1931 for its practicality and simple, yet beautiful motif design. Bernard Leach (1887-1979), the renowned British potter who retained strong ties with Japan throughout his life, worked in residence here in 1955 and 1965 helping to bring Onta-yaki to a wider, international audience.

Onta is a tight-knit, collective community, where everyone works by consensus for the greater good of their society. Here the pottery, with its distinctive slipware designs, holds sway over individual potters, whose names never appear on a finished item. And, in order to ensure future mutual prosperity, each family, all of which go back generations, may train only one successor while their potteries are restricted to a maximum of two wheels for throwing pottery.

The life of Onta firmly revolves around pottery production and rarely stops for visitors, who are largely free to explore as they wish. It is a delightful place to stroll around, soak up the atmosphere, savour the fragrant smell of wood firing the kilns, and loose one's thoughts in the rhythmical sound of the karasuu. Each family has a shop, where their classic plates, bowls, vases and pitchers are available to browse and purchase at reasonable prices. Pressing a bell summons a member of the family from their work to attend the otherwise unmanned space.

Onta is not the last settlement at the head of the valley. Several hundred metres beyond, up and along a narrow road, is a Motoe-machi, a clutch of farmhouses dotted around paddy field terraces. A very different scenery that beautifully complements the village of potters.





BEPPU

Beppu

Jigoku Hell Onsen

Jigoku-mushi

Takezaiku Bamboo Weaving

Beppu Traditonal Bamboo Crafts Center

Beppu Ropeway



BEPPU Beppu

With more onsen hot springs than anywhere else in Japan, Beppu takes the crown as the nation's top onsen hot spring destination. So much hot water wells up from beneath the ground here that plumes of water vapour venting into the skies across the city make it look like an industrial complex. The reality, however, is pleasantly very different as Beppu has been a seaside resort destination for centuries. In the city centre, the narrow streets, market stalls under the railway tracks, and shopping arcades make for a pleasant, strolling exploration. Hidden in the back streets nearby is Takegawara Onsen, famed for its volcanic sand baths. The period exterior is matched by the aged-patina tiled and wood interior. The ladies in attendance chatter away as they cheerfully shovel away burying their customers in the therapeutic sands. Extend the stroll to the nearby seafront with its yacht harbour, park and Beppu Tower, a 100 metre high structure wonderfully evocative of 1950s Japan.

Another pleasant neighbourhood to stroll around is Kannawa, an old quarter perched high up on a hill behind the city centre. It has so many onsen that steam emanates continually from grills in the streets and, above, from towering vents. Locals are to be seen throughout the day to-ing and fro-ing with towels in hand to the many public baths in the neighbourhood. Venture a little further afield from Kannawa to Myoban Onsen for the picturesque thatched huts where, within, sulphuric 'flowers' are produced. Look hard here for some wonderful onsen otherwise known only to the locals. The rotenburo open-air baths are a special treat.

Beppu has two types of hot spring; onsen for bathing in and Jigoku Hell Onsen. The latter are literally hells and definitely only for looking at.

B-CON – Beautiful, Big and Beppu Convention – Plaza, is Beppu's principal contribution to Japan's body of modern architecture. Designed by local son, Arata Isozaki, B-CON Plaza is a multi-use convention and concert hall facility. The observation deck at the top of the Plaza's Global Tower provides grandstand views across Beppu and the Seto Inland Sea. Close by is the Rakutenchi amusement park. Founded in 1929, it harks back to a life of simpler entertainments and is ideal for families with younger children.

Beppu has a vibrant and thriving cuisine, arts, crafts and music scene. Beppu Onpaku is an acclaimed festival of local, experiential tours, that has been instrumental in the rejuvenation of the city. Meeting Point Music Festival, featuring the acclaimed classic pianist Martha Argerich, is a long running, annual extravaganza and highlight of the cultural year. The international feel this event has brought to Beppu has been reinforced by Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, which opened its doors in 2000. Its 5,000-strong student body is made up in equal numbers from students from across the nation and overseas with classes taught in both Japanese and English.

Evening entertainment is largely concentrated in the area between Beppu Railway Station and the sea. Here are found many bars, especially traditional Japanese sunakus but also one or two catering to a younger, multicultural crowd. Hit Parade Club, a rock 'n' roll live music venue, is a popular stalwart on the local scene.



BEPPU Jigoku Hell Onsen

Jigoku Onsen, or Hells, are scaldingly hot and most definitely not for bathing in. However, they are a fascinating attraction. Mostly found in the Kannawa area, there are seven Hells each with their own natural qualities including blood red waters, cobalt blue waters, geysers, and belching mud-pools. The vigour and power that the Hells spew forth steam from underground is perhaps the most potent symbol of Beppu's right to take the crown as the onsen capital of the world.

BEPPU Jigoku-mushi

In Beppu's Kannawa district steam derived from volcanic activity deep below the earth seems to rise up from every crevice in the ground. Onsen baths are plentiful here but a lesser known attraction is jigoku-mushi steamed cooking. Locals use public facilities that harness the plentiful steam to prepare their food to perfection. At Yanagi-ya, a delightful ryokan traditional inn with some modern flourishes, jigoku-mushi is available to visitors.



BEPPU Takezaiku Bamboo Weaving

Takezaiku is the ages-old craft of weaving bamboo, an innately flexible and robust material, into every day, functional objects for the home and at work. It has also long been used to create utensils for the tea ceremony. Oita is known in Japan for the quality and quantity of the bamboo harvested from groves found throughout the prefecture, and Beppu has grown to be Japan's pre-eminent centre for takezaiku.

Early in the 19th Century, advanced takezaiku techniques were brought from Osaka and Tokyo, which were then the nation's major centres of production, to Beppu. With these the local craftsmen began to produce items, such as baskets and flower vases, with a heightened sense of artistry; objects for display rather than just functionality. In the years since takezaiku has grown from being much more than a craft. Its leading exponents are artists producing work of earthy ruggedness, which celebrate the nature of the raw material, through to intricately and finely woven objets d'art that would not look out of place in the finest modern museum of art. Most recently, Beppu's takezaiku artists have fully turned the circle and been developing new avenues for their work in interior design; elegant objects of modern practicality and decoration.

BEPPU Beppu Traditonal Bamboo Crafts Center

This small, exhibition centre has lovely displays on the development of takeziaku bamboo crafts, and its growth into an art form and the artist instrumental in this. It also an broad collection of their works on display. In an adjacent shop, bamboo items at a range of prices are on sale and in its small café overlooks a delightful bamboo grove.



BEPPU Beppu Ropeway

For panoramic views over Beppu and Beppu Bay to the east and Mt. Yufu-dake to the west ride the Beppu Ropeway, which whisks passengers up almost 800 metres to the summit of Mt. Tsurumi-dake. For the energetic hiker, a forest trail leads down from here before make a steep rise to the summit of Mt. Yufu-dake.

Shore Excursions from Beppu Port

1. Landscape of World No.1 Hot Springs City Beppu and Gastronomic Town Ajimu (duration: 6 hours)

Beppu Port - Jumonjibaru Observation - Ajimu Winery (winery visit/wine tasting) - lunch at Asagiri-no-sho (Bungo Beef/Ajimu wine) - Softshell Turtle Farm - Kotee Street (plaster reliefs at traditional merchant houses) - Beppu Port

2. Beppu's Hot Springs Culture and Traditional Craft Works (duration: 8 hours)

Beppu Port - Beppu Hell Tour "Jigoku Meguri" (Blood Pond Hell/Tornado Hell/White Pond Hell) - Myoban Onsen Hot Springs (Yunohana-goya; Sinter deposit making facility) - lunch - Beppu City Traditional Bamboo Craft Centre (master pieces of National Treasure "Master Shono Shounsai" / Interpretation of bamboo craft work) - Takegawara Hot Springs (area walk) - Shoningahama Sand Bath (option - walkable to cruise ship) - Beppu Port



3. Castle Town Kitsuki, Nikaido Art Museum and Fine Japanese Dishes at Ryotei (duration: 5 hours)

Beppu Port - Kitsuki (change to Kimono/Samurai houses/museum) - lunch at Ryotei Tekizanso (fine Japanese course menu including Shiroshita Karei; high quality flounder) - Nikaido Museum of Art (traditional Japanese drawings Yokoyama Taikan etc.) - Beppu Port



4. Luxurious Holiday at Japanese Ryokan (duration: 5 hours, with private car & guide)

Beppu Port - 4 ~ 5 star Ryokan in Beppu or Yufuin (course lunch/hot springs/SPA treatment) - Beppu Port

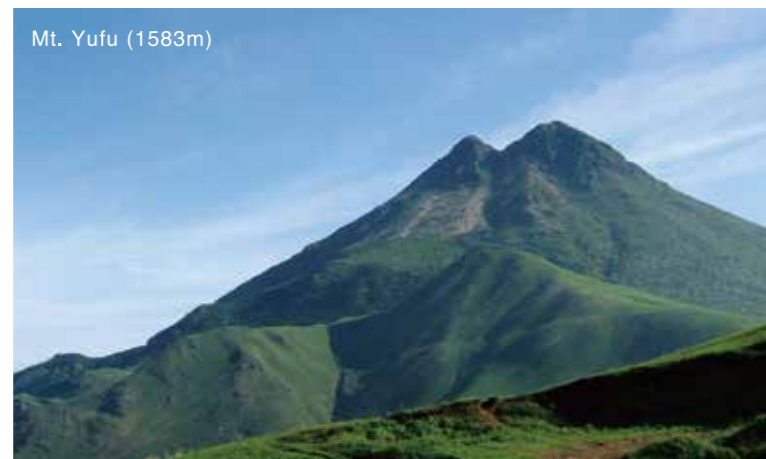
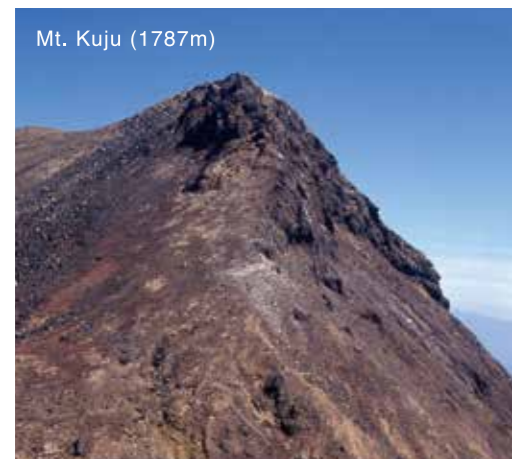
5. Beppu Bamboo Craft Work Experience (duration: 3 hours)

Beppu Port - Beppu City Traditional Bamboo Craft Centre (watch master pieces of National Treasure "Master Shono Shounsai" / Interpretation of Beppu Bamboo Craft Work/craft making experience) - Beppu Port



6. Outdoor Activities at Oku-Beppu and Kuju Mountain Area

Destination	Duration	Programme details
Mt. Yufu (1583m)	6 hours	Beppu port - (30min) - Yufudake Trailhead (780m) - Gonogoe (1020m) - Matae (1494m) - East Peak - West Peak (1583m) - Gonogoe - trailend - Beppuport 【walking time: 4.5 hours】
Mt. Kuju (1787m) Mt. Nakadake (1791m)	9 hours	Beppu Port- (70min) - Makinoto Pass (trailhead; 1333m) - Nisisenri-hama - Kuju - wakare - Mt. Kuju (1787m) - Mt. Nakadake (1791m highest peak in Kyushu Island) - Kitasenri-hama - Sugamori Pass - Chojabaru (trailend; 1030m) - Beppu Port 【walking time 5.5 hours】



TAKETA

Taketa

Oka-jo Castle

Drum Tao



TAKETA Taketa

Taketa developed at the foot of Oka-jo, to serve the castle and its samurai inhabitants and the charm of an older time is apparent in the townscape. However, Taketa, led by its charismatic and indomitable mayor, has worked hard to attract a younger generation of artists, craftspeople and entrepreneurs who are helping to turn the town into a low-key, yet wonderful destination.

Pleasant cafés, interesting boutique shops selling locally made Japanese-made crafts, clothing and household goods are found dotted throughout the compact town centre. A vibrant art scene is the basis of regular art exhibitions. In recent years, some of the towns older, disused buildings have been reborn into fashionable and discreet accommodation for visitors. The newly opened municipal library is an intriguing, comfortable environment and practical symbol of how the local municipality is investing in its community. For a taste of an older age, visit Tajimaya Roho, Oita Prefecture's oldest wagashi Japanese traditional sweet shop. Founded in 1804, Tajimaya's hand-made sweets melt deliciously in the mouth.

In April, the old days of the town are recalled by locals dressed as samurai warriors, who parade in procession through the streets and march on the castle. During the Chikuraku festival, held over three nights every November, 20,000 bamboo lanterns adorn Taketa illuminating its streetscape in a warm, flickering light.

TAKETA Oka-jo Castle

Only the ramparts of Oka-jo remain, but their scale and impressiveness allude to the power that this hill-top citadel once held over the surrounding region. There is a fee to enter the castle grounds but it is worth it for the ticket alone, which is a small scroll illustrated with a map that makes a delightful souvenir. No longer populated with buildings the grounds have been turned into a park and planted with cherry and maple trees, which provide a riot of colour in the spring and autumn.

Rentaro Taki, a composer in the late 19th Century, used his experience as a boy playing in the castle grounds to write *Kojo-no-Tsuki*, or *Moon over Ruined Castle*. Legendary amongst the Japanese, this folk song has been covered by the great jazz musician Thelonius Monk and, more surprisingly, also by German rock band the Scorpions.

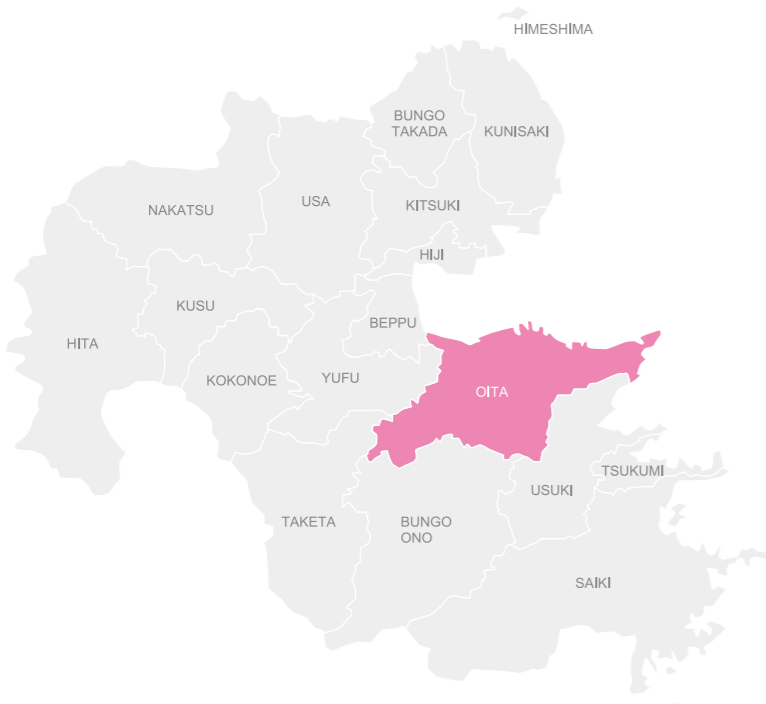


TAKETA Drum Tao

Taiko drumming is a traditional and popular art throughout Japan. One of the leading and most prolific exponents is DRUM TAO, a drum and dance troupe of 30 members who have been applauded overseas as 'Supernaturally fit and superbly trained... Stunning... Fully deserving of the standing ovation that the company receives.'

The members of DRUM TAO have made their home in the Kuju Highlands west of Taketa. Here they practice at their own centre, Grandioso, from 5am to 10pm to attune themselves to the strenuous physical demands their artistry demands. Their startlingly energetic, original performances combine Japanese traditions with Korean, Maori and Indonesian influences and include mostly modern compositions created by TAO performers. Taiko drums, great and small, give name to the troupe but their work also includes the shinobue Japanese bamboo flute, marimba, gongs, and koto harp.

In 2004, TAO was the hit of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, the world's largest arts event. Since then, they have regularly been touring internationally and have performed at venues around the world including the Vancouver Olympics in 2010 and on Broadway.



O I T A

Oita City

Oita Marine Palace Umitamago

Takasakiyama Natural Zoological Garden



OITA Oita City

The seat of the Oita's Prefectural Government and its economic powerhouse. Oita is the birth place of Arata Isozaki, one of Japan's top architects. The Oita Prefectural Library, an early work of his, has been refashioned as an art gallery. This monolithic, modernist formed-concrete building contrasts with nearby the Oita Prefectural Museum of Art, more affectionately known as OPAM, which is a light, airy structure encased in a façade that resembles bamboo woven in a typical Japanese pattern. This was designed by one of the nation's current top architects, Shigeru Ban. Besides the exhibitions held in each of them, both are well-worth a visit for their architecture alone. Oita Bank Dome, a venue for the 2019 Rugby World Cup, looks remarkably like a spaceship, which has landed in the city's suburbs from an alien planet, making it one of Oita's more extraordinary structures.

Oita's extensive, covered shopping arcades are pleasant to stroll through regardless of the weather. On display here is a model of a 16th Century galleon, which celebrates Oita's trading history with Portugal under the Christian daimyo warlord, Otomo Sorin. Nearby Funai-machi, found behind the lovely, brick Oita Bank building, is a chic quarter with a variety of boutique shops and an art cinema specialising in Japanese film. When strolling around here lookout for two statues, one near the Oita Prefectural Building and the other at the Compal Hall, by Japan's famed sculptor Asakura Fumio, who was born in Bungo-Ono. Old bank building has recently been turned into an elegant outlet for Oita Made branded products.

Tokiwa, Oita's upmarket department store, here has a food emporium in its basement with a cornucopia of Japanese and western foods that is a feast for the eyes and palate. Venture a little further to the seafront esplanade by the ferry port where the old warehouses have been found new uses as cafes and a live music venue. Neon-lit Miyako-machi is Oita principal night spot. The myriad restaurants, bars and nightclubs, squeezed into a couple of city blocks throng with locals and visitors alike into the early hours of the morning.



OITA Oita Marine Palace Umitamago

Commonly known to the locals as Umitamago, which has the literal meaning of 'sea egg', this well-designed and popular aquarium is an immediate neighbour of the Takasakiyama Natural Zoological Garden. Here river fish, salt-water fish and other sea creatures from Japan and around the world are presented in educational and entertaining ways. Highlights among the numerous fish tanks include an enormous one providing a panoramic scene of 1,500 fish, including sharks, rays and the occasional scuba diver; another recreates the coral habitats found in the coastal waters of south Oita; and others display mesmeric, colourful art of creatures from the deep.

Outside on Umitamago's terraces, which overlook Beppu Bay and the Seto Inland Sea, are pools containing walruses, seals, dolphins, penguins and sea otters. Walrus and dolphin shows provide thrilling entertainment for everyone, while children take an especial delight in exploring shallow pool and man-made beach areas to pet fish and dolphins. The Backyard Tours, which take visitors behind the scenes, provide an intriguing and wonderful look at the work that goes on keeping the resident fish and sea animals in good health and the aquarium in proper working order.



OITA

Takasakiyama Natural Zoological Garden

Famous throughout Japan, Takasakiyama for is a reserve for wild Japanese macaques. The dominant monkey's personalities and the dynamics of the troops they lead make national news. So, not surprisingly, it is one of Oita's most popular destinations that is especially busy during holidays and on the weekend. Any visit here can be made in tandem with its neighbour, the Oita Marine Palace Umitamago.

In order to resolve the problem of conflict with local farmers and residents, and also create a tourist attraction, Takasakiyama was established in 1952 as a safe haven for the macaques. Since then they have been fed regularly by the park's wardens in order to keep them from roaming far and wide into neighbouring fields and residential districts in Oita City and Beppu.

The Park, which is close to the base of Mt. Takasaki-yama and across the road from its twin attraction, the Umitamago Aquarium, is home to over 1,500 macaques. They are divided into two separate troops of approximately 700 to 800 individuals each, that roam freely around its steep, forested slopes. The troops take turns, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, to come down the mountain to the Park, where they scramble for the food left by the wardens, or otherwise spend their time playing and resting. Please note, however, that although the macaques appear mostly oblivious to their human visitors and tame, they are wild and should never be touched nor fed, and eye contact is to be avoided.





USUKI

Usuki

William Adams

Usuki Sekibutsu Stone Buddhas

Usuki Fugu



USUKI Usuki

Usuki's grand temples hints at the power it once held and wealth it accumulated in the samurai Edo Period. Today, it is a compact and quiet town of stone-paved streets, lined by a number of traditional buildings, that are pleasant to stroll around. Of particular note is the traditional Inaba Family samurai house, which has a delightful Japanese garden, and the pagoda at Ryugen-ji temple. An old store house, which has been refurbished with a frieze of Portuguese tiles, alludes to the local samurai warlord Otomo Sorin and his welcoming of the Jesuits to his domain in the 16th Century. In 1578, under their influence Otomo Sorin was christened in Usuki taking the name Dom Francisco.

One of Japan's most famed female novelist, Nogami Yaeko, was born and raised in Usuki. A museum to her memory is housed in the old buildings of a sake brewery her family once owned. Nearby, is the elegant and traditional buildings and gardens of the Inaba Shimo-yashiki mansion. The Mansion was the local residence of the Inaba family after the end of feudal rule in 1868. The Inaba's ruled their domain from Usuki Castle, which had been built in 1556 by Otomo Sorin on a low hill dominating the town. No original structures now exist but the old castle grounds are now a park offering pleasant surroundings and views across the harbour, which was once an important trading point for the Portuguese in the 16th Century, and out to sea.

Located aside the Inaba mansion is the Conce Shimo-yashiki, which sells local artisanal goods. Close by, on the main street in the middle of town, is the Noumin Farmer's Café, which serves delicious vegetarian meals made from locally-grown, organic produce. In the same area are a number of speciality restaurants, which serve Fugu blow fish.

Aside the main street is a small quarter that seems to be in repose during the day with little in the way of life or passersby. However, come evening all changes as, like flowers blossoming at night, lights come on in the many restaurants and bars found here and customers, locals and visitors alike, descend on the area strolling from establishment to establishment lining the area's narrow streets.

Usuki is known for miso fermented bean paste and shoyu soy sauce. The products are common in Japanese cuisine but not usually found in ice cream, which is available in a number of shops in the town centre.

The city's festivals include Cherry Blossom in the Castle Park in early April, the Gion Festival in mid-July, and Takeyoi, when 20,000 bamboo lanterns adorn the city's historic centre on the first weekend in November.

USUKI William Adams

Kuroshima with a population of six people is an assuming island off the coast of Usuki. Most visitors make the short boat journey in summer months to enjoy Kuroshima's sandy beaches and to fish. However, here in 1600 the Dutch galleon De Leifde washed ashore with its crew either dead or in a parlous state. De Liefde was the sole survivor of a fleet of five Dutch East India Company ships, which were on an expedition to find passage to the East Indies via the Straits of Magellan at the southern tip of South America. Amongst the crew of 23 sick and dying men was the English pilot William Adams, who subsequently became a trusted confidant of Japan's greatest samurai warlord Ieyasu Tokugawa. Adams was rewarded for his service by being given the status of samurai, one of only a handful of westerners ever to reach the rank, and also a Red Seal, which conferred the right to trade.

A memorial on Kuroshima celebrates Adams, who to this day is known as Miura Anjin in Japan. Adams, who died in 1620, never returned to England but his story of adventure on the high seas and in Japan gave James Clavell the inspiration to write his famed novel Shogun, which was adapted as a TV mini-series of the same name.



USUKI Usuki Sekibutsu Stone Buddhas

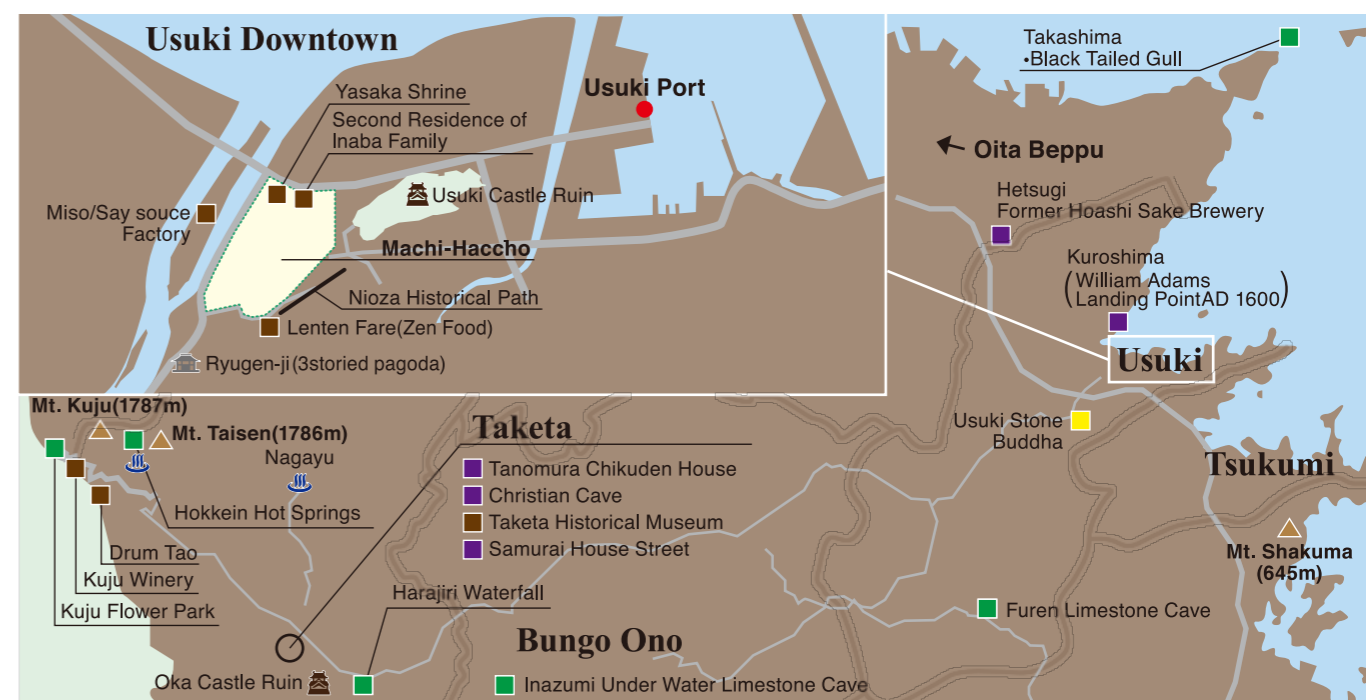
Although Kunisaki, in the north of Oita Prefecture, has by far the greatest number of stone buddhas found anywhere in Japan, Usuki also has its fair share including an image of Dainichi Nyorai, which is considered to be the finest example of its type in Japan. Thought to date back 1,000 years, each of Usuki's Buddhas were finely carved and residues of painting that once coloured the stone can still be seen. Today, 61 of the 61 found here are registered as National Treasures.

Usuki's Buddhas are about six kilometres outside of Usuki's town centre, on a rise overlooking a wide flat valley, dotted with ponds. Each summer, lotus leaves shroud the waters and, in July, the plant's delicate pinkish-white flowers rise from the murky depths. Lotus flowers are revered in Buddhism for their ability to rise from the dirt to bloom unblemished and beautiful; a process symbolising the attainment of enlightenment. Usuki's Stone Buddhas are delightfully serene at any time of year but especially so in the muggy, heat of summer.



USUKI Usuki Fugu

Fugu blowfish is a peculiarly Japanese delicacy known as much for its delicious taste as its potential deadly side effects if prepared by the unqualified chef. Usuki, with nearly 20 speciality restaurants, ranks as a major destination for lovers of fugu. One, Yamadaya, has a branch in Tokyo that has garnered three Michelin Stars.



Shore Excursions from Usuki Port

1. Usuki Historical Castle town walk and National Treasure "Usuki Stone Buddhas"

The tour visits the national treasure "Usuki Stone Buddhas", one of the most important heritages of Kyushu region, and picturesque and historical downtown of Usuki developed by Christian feudal lord Otomo Sorin (1530-1587) and Inaba family in Edo epoch (1603-1868) of his thoughts and connection to others of his day are on display.

[Programme] duration - 5.5 hours

Usuki Port - (coach 15 min.) - walking tour at Usuki Stone Buddhas (60 min.) - (coach 10 min.) - walking tour in historical downtown area Ryugen-ji Temple (3 stories pagoda) / Nioza Historical Path / Usuki Castle Ruin / Machi-Hacho / Second Resident of Inama Family (120 min.) - lunch at Japanese ryotei (traditional course menu) - free time at Honmachi Street - (coach 5 min.) - Usuki Port



2. Oka Castle Ruin, castle town Taketa and the Harajiri Waterfalls in Bungo-Ono

Tour highlight is the epic scaled Oka Castle Ruins since 12th century where breath taking view of Kyushu Island's highest Kuju Mountains are expected. Walking historical castle downtown and visit Harajiri Waterfalls formed by volcanic action (pyroclastic flow) of Aso Volcanoes about 90,000 years ago.

[Programme] duration - 7.0 hours

Usuki Port - (coach 65 min.) - Harajiri Waterfall (30 min.) - (coach 15 min.) - walking tour at Oka Castle Ruins (60 min.) - (coach 5 min.) - lunch at local restaurant in Taketa downtown - walking tour in historical downtown area of Taketa / Taketa Historical Museum / Samurai House Street (60 min.) - free time - (coach 65 min.) - Usuki Port





SAIKI

Saiki

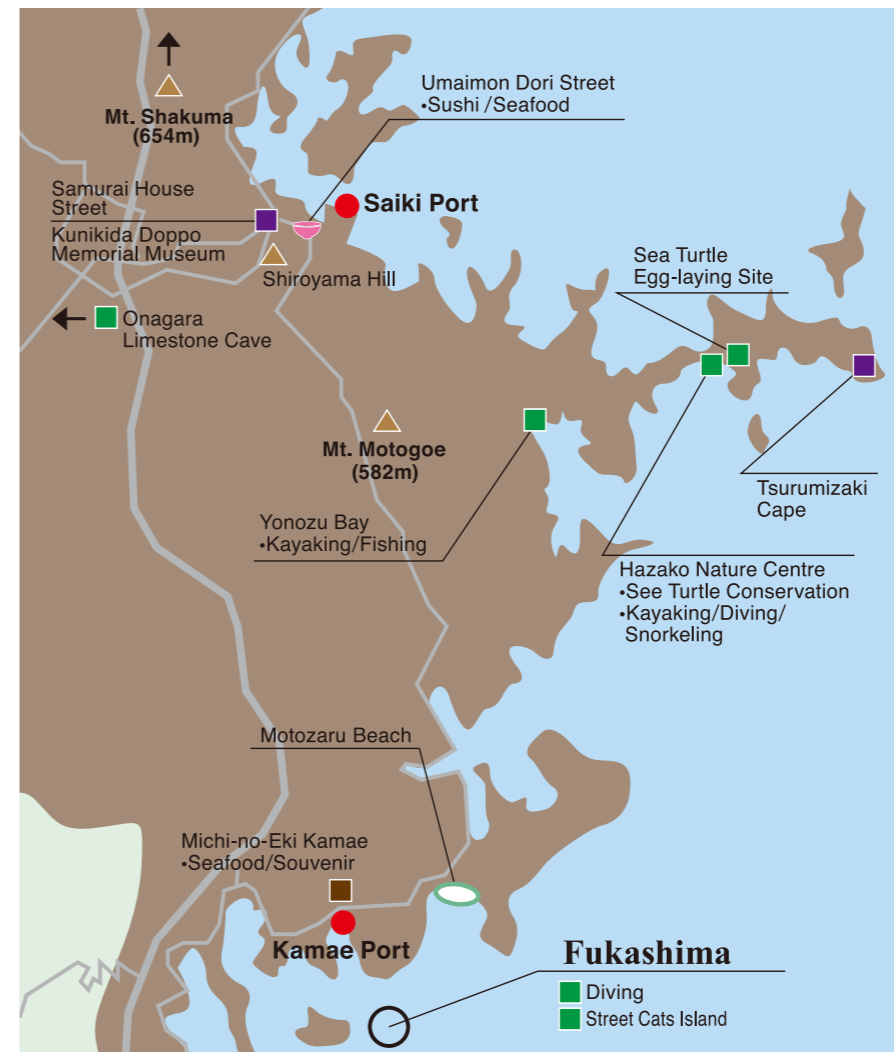


SAIKI Saiki

Any gourmet passionate about fish has to make the journey to Saiki, which boasts the widest range of fresh fish found anywhere in Japan. Lying off the intricate coast of Saiki is the Bungo Channel, a nutrient-rich body of water, where waters ebbing and flowing between the placid Seto Inland Sea and the surging Pacific Ocean combine with fresh water flowing from the Banjo River, which rises in Oita's verdant, mountainous hinterland. The Channel's fast currents together with the eddies created along Saiki's long and intricate coastline, provide a rich habit for a plethora of fish. Over 50 varieties are counted at Saiki's fish markets each year including kabosu buri yellowtail, a cultivated delicacy raised on another Oita speciality, the kabosu citrus fruit.

Some of the first to be served at Saiki's fish markets are the local master chefs, who with the freshest and choicest fish and honed skills, have made the area renowned for its sushi. Fuku Sushi and Narumi rate amongst the best restaurants in town.

Any visit to Saiki should be combine with a visit to its elegant samurai quarter. Its well-preserved state seems to be as much to do with its historical importance as the fact that many of the properties are still occupied, probably by descendants of the original warrior residents.



Shore Excursions from Saiki Port

1. Samurai Town "Saiki" and Seafood Paradise "Kamae"

Yamagiwa-dori is a street where the Samurai residents are concentrated. After enjoying Tea ceremony at Kyushintei Tea Room, clime the Shiroyama Hill castle ruins. Saiki's pride Sushi for lunch.

[Programme] duration - 5.5 hours

Saiki Port - (coach 15 min.) - Yamagiwa Dori (Samurai Residents Street) / Kyushintei Tea Ceremony Room / Shiroyama Hill
 Castle Ruins (120 min.) - lunch at Sushi restaurants - (coach 30 min.) - Michi-no-Eki "Kamae" (30 min.) - (coach 40 min.) - Saiki Port

2. Outdoor Activities in Saiki / Kamae Area

Bays of Kamae, Yonozu and Hazako are convenient location from Saiki Port for enjoying marine sports.

Also Mt. Shakuma and Mt.Motogoe are the ideal observations of beautiful Rias-type coast landscape of Nippo Coast.



Facility	from Saiki Port	Activities
Hazako Nature Centre	50 min.	Fishing, diving, snorkeling, SUP, kayaking, lecture and site visit of sea turtle conservation etc.
Destination	Duration	Programme details
Mt. Shakuma	4 hours	90-100 minuts walk up and down to Mt. Shakuma (641m) , the Shrine and observation
Mt. Motogoe	6 hours	3.5 hours trail up and down to Mt. Motogoe with 360°view of beautiful Nippo Coast

Others

Onsen Hot Springs/Dango-jiru & Yaseuma/Toriten & Karaage Chicken/
Reimen & Onmen/Sake/Shochu/Yamanami Highway



Others Onsen Hot Springs

Onsen are a feature found throughout the length and breadth of Japan. Oita, however, boasts the largest concentration of hot springs and they in turn are fed by the greatest volume of hot spring water. Here they come in many different guises; some are clear and others murky, some pungent while others fizzy. Undoubtedly, Oita is the onsen capital of Japan, if not the world. The prefecture is a mecca for anyone who likes to indulge in the soothing and relaxing waters hot springs and also enjoy the distinctive and gracious Japanese culture associated with bathing.

Others Dango-jiru & Yaseuma

Dango-jiru is one of Oita's signature dishes. Kneaded, thick wheat noodles cooked with sliced shiitake mushrooms, onions and carrots in a miso soup make this a simple, yet delicious and filling dish.

The same noodles used in Dango-jiru are the substance in Yaseuma. Covered in sweetened kinako flour – finely ground roasted soya beans – it is eaten as a simple snack or for dessert. Ideal with coffee or green tea, apparently it has been a local favourite since the Heian Period (794-1185).



Others Toriten & Karaage Chicken

The people of Oita Prefecture are reputed to eat more chicken meat than of any other prefecture in Japan. Two particularly popular chicken dishes are Toriten and Karaage. The former, an Oita original, is of bite-sized chunks of chicken seasoned with sake, garlic powder and ginger, rolled in flour and then deep fried in a tempura style. Served with a salad, a garnish of kabosu citrus fruit, mustard and ponzu, a citrus and soya-based dipping sauce, it has a soft bite and makes an inexpensive and filling meal.

The Toyoken restaurant in Beppu is reputedly where this delicacy was first created in the 1920s. However, it is widely available throughout Oita and often listed on menus together with its near cousin karaage, which has popular appeal around Japan. The karaage cooking process differs by coating the chicken chunks in seasoned flour before deep frying leaving a crisp bite.



Others Reimen & Onmen

A moreish noodle dish, available either as cold reimen or hot onmen, heralding from Beppu. The noodles, which are made from soba buckwheat flour, have an al dente bite and are served in a clear broth topped with slices of well-seasoned beef, half a boiled egg, kimchi Korean-style sour and spicy cabbage, and sesame seed. Found only in a few specialist restaurants in the city, at Kirin-tei near the seafont the noodles are extruded in front of you straight into the cooking pot.



Others Sake

Commonly known in Japan as nihonshu, sake, which is fermented from rice, is widely recognised around the world as a distinctly Japanese drink. Although the cooler more northerly climes of Japan are well-known for their sake, Oita has a number of smaller, boutique breweries that produce high quality sakes that should not be missed. In contrast to the generally sweeter varieties found Japan's north, Oita's sake provides a cleaner, drier taste.

Breweries open to the public include:

- Takakiya (Bungo-Ono)
- Chiebijin (Kitsuki)
- Nishi-no-seki (Kunisaki City)
- Senbazuru (Taketa)
- Kuncho (Hita)
- Yatsushika (Kokonoe)

Many breweries also distil shochu, the drink Kyushu as a whole is famed for.

Others Shochu

Although lesser known overseas, shochu, a refined vodka-like beverage that is made from a variety of sources including sweet potato, molasses and rice, is as widely drunk in Japan as sake. Oita is renowned for its wheat variety and has a number of large and many small, boutique distillers of which Kanehachi is one of the most prized. Shochu, which is potent at either 20 or 25% proof, is best enjoyed the local way on the rocks with a squeeze of kabosu citrus fruit or diluted with hot water.

Distilleries open to the public include:

- Kanehachi
- Toppai
- Ichiko - Distilleries in both Usa and Hita
- Nikaido
- Yababijin

Others Yamanami Highway

The journey along the Yamanami Highway from Beppu to Aso, in neighbouring Kumamoto Prefecture is one of Japan's greatest scenic drives. This winding, country road winds makes its way south through an ever changing landscape of forests and farms, across the Handa Kogen plateau to Chojobaru marshes, before climbing up to and over the Maki-no-To Pass in the Kuju mountains before descending to Aso over hilly grasslands. Here the road reaches a dramatic finalé at the rim of a huge and spectacular caldera in the middle of which Mt. Aso-san, an active volcano, sends plumes of vapour into the skies.



Traditional Festivals / Events

Festival / Event	Venue	Period	Details
Horan Enya	Bungotakada	Mid January	Fishermen's festival praying for safety and productive fishery seasons. Young men's dive to frigid river is the highlight.
Hina Doll Festival	Usuki, Hiji, Kitsuki, Taketa, Nakatsu	February to March (depend on place)	Castle towns as like Usuki, Hiji, Kitsuki, Taketa and Nakatsu celebrate traditional girls festival with display of beautiful Hina Dolls.
Shujo Onie	Bungotakada Kunisaki	Mid February	Unique festival welcomes ancestral spirit in the Oni (monster) and invokes a bountiful harvest.
Beppu Hatto Hot Springs Festival	Beppu	Early April	Spring festival of Japan's largest hot springs Beppu. Bruning off the Ogiyama foothill in the night is quite spectacular.
Oka Castle Cherry Blossom Festival	Taketa	Early April	Spring festival at country's symbolic cherry blossom "Sakura" season. Historical procession of Samurais is the highlight of the event.
Kitsuki Castle Festival	Kitsuki	Early May	Castle town Kitsuki's spring festival. Not only the Samurai but the Procession of Oiran (Japanese traditional courtesan) is fantastic event in the evening time.
Usuki Stone Buddha Fire Festival	Usuki	24 Jul by Luna Calendar	Summer fire festival dedicated to the National Treasure "Usuki Stone Buddha" celebrating with 1,000 of torches.
Nakatsu Gion	Nakatsu	Late July	Summer festival dedicated to Gion (transformation of pre-Buddism god Susanoo-no-mikoto). Seven floats runs around the downtown in brave.
Himeshima Bon Dance	Himeshima Island	Mid-August	Quite unique Bon Odori dance festival. Children's humorous "Fox Dance" is the most cute and attractive.
Tsukumi Traditional Fan Dance	Tsukumi	Late August	Festival founded by Christian feudal lord Otomo Sorin (AD16c) for victims in the battles. Ladies in Komino dance with Japanese fan spinning so beautifully.
Kitsuki Moon Viewing Festival	Kitsuki	Early October	Festival celebrate Full Moon. Castle town is decorated with bamboo lanterns and traditional Takigi-noh (night time noh with torch lighting) is held.
Usuki Takeyoi	Usuki	Early November	Festival dedicated to princess Hannyo based on the folklore of "Manano-Choja". Thousands of bamboo lanterns show Hannyo's way back to her parents.
Taketa Bamboo Lantern Festival "Chikuraku"	Taketa	Mid November	One of the largest bamboo lantern festivals in Kyushu region. 20,000 lanterns decorates historical district and music concert is dedicated to Taki Rentaro (1879-1903), a western music pioneer composer.
Beppu Christmas Fireworks Fantasia	Beppu	Late December	Fireworks are typically held in summer festival, but not in Beppu. World No.1 hot springs city celebrates Christmas with fireworks for two nights.



Usuki Stone Buddha Fire Festival



Syujo Onie

