

## Discover the Hidden Gems of Oita, Kyushu | Fukuoka Now

Newsletter - Join! CLOSE Famed for its geothermal activity, cultural festivals, and stunning landscapes, Oita Prefecture is a vast and beautiful region. Each component district is home to a variety of towns with unique histories and wonderful local people eager to share their unique culture and history with visitors. A short trip from central Fukuoka, this region is a wonderful place for a weekend getaway or short mid-week trip, but knowing which sites to cover can be a tricky task when faced with the overwhelming list of important and stunning tourist attractions offered here. So to begin to tackle these sights, Fukuoka Now took a three day journey to tick off some of the must-sees. We hope the following guide outlining our adventures will be an informative and interesting introduction to some of the main sights. We had a great time and look forward to returning, so hope you are equally inspired to go and explore Oita! Getting there

?Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Shinkansen?. Oita prefecture is very accessible from Fukuoka, making it the perfect destination for a getaway. Just an hour and a half from Hakata Station by JR and Shinkansen, or two hours by JR rail only, a one way JR fare to Oita City costs ¥5,570. Not only is traveling by train a great opportunity to enjoy the breath-taking landscape of Northern Kyushu, the option to ride the Shinkansen for the first leg of the journey to Kokura is a great way to tick this world famous train off the bucket list. Ao No Domon and Rakanji

Having jumped off the train half an hour before it reached Oita City, our first stop of some of the region?s highlights was Ao No Domon cave in Yakabei gorge near Nakatsu City. Dug by hand in the Edo period, the 342m long tunnel was conceived by a monk by the name of Zenkai in response to the hundred or so deaths of local residents traversing a steep cliff road to Rakanji temple. With a captivating story of compassion and hard graft over thirty years, buoyed by the popular retelling by Kikuchi Kan, this site is a perfect spot for reflection and awe at the power of one man?s vision. The surrounding hills are also popular for walking, particularly in the stunning autumn colors and fresh greens and blossom of spring. Hours: Always open

Fee: N/A

Tel: 0979-52-2211

Address: Ao no domon, Nakatsu, Oita Prefecture, 871-0202

Website A short drive south takes visitors to a small temple containing the tools used by Zenkai to drive through the dense rock, and from here Rakanji temple can also be reached on foot or by chair lift. Set into the side of Mt. Rakan, the 1969-installed chairlift costs ¥700 each way but provides easy access and a fun carnival feel to this beautiful landscape. On ascension, the area around the temple itself becomes a no-photography zone in an effort to encourage oneness with nature and to respect this sacred space. Indeed, there is an incredible atmosphere on the cloud-shrouded mountainside as you traverse the rock face enclosed by forest and the 650 year old temple rises majestically out of the mist. Another attraction of the site besides its natural beauty is the tradition of leaving a rice spoon at one of the many satellite sites in a cry for supernatural aid. The relative similarity of the Japanese cry for help tasukete to supoon has catalysed this movement, and all requests are welcome. Up on the tree line, this site is also a wonderful spot to appreciate seasonal changes, and visiting in time to experience the autumn colors is highly recommended. Hours: 9.00~17.00 every day

Fee: ¥300 entry to main hall and gardens, ¥700 one way chairlift

Tel: 0979-52-2538

Address: 1560 Gayama Gorge Town, Nakatsu-shi, Oita Prefecture

Website Within the Yakabei valley there also lies the Maple Yaba cycling road, which has been constructed relatively recently to offer a scenic 35 km route right alongside the Yamakuni River. Two cycle terminals lie at intervals along the route and provide cycle hire, with the Yakabei terminal also offering accommodation. For just ¥370, bicycles can be hired for 3 hours, with an ¥108 payment for an extra hour, or for ¥800 if you would prefer to drop the bike at another terminal along the road. Hours: Closed Tues.

Fee: ¥370 (3 hours, with return to same station), ¥108 (hour extension), ¥800 (drop off at another station)

Tel: 0979-54-2700

Address: Yamakuni ? Nakatsu, Nakatsu City, Oita Prefecture

Website Gin Sushi

This Hita/Nakatsu area is also notable for its strong cuisine tradition, and there is a particular sushi specialty in this area that is well worth a taste test. Japan can be a difficult place for vegetarians, but several restaurants in this region have for a long time made zasushi rolls, which do not contain any meat or fish products. A whole cuisine of vegetarian sushi has now developed out of this local diet staple and a set of beautifully presented and filling sushi pieces is available from at least four restaurants in the region. Gin Sushi is one such establishment, with lunch and dinner sets available for a reasonable price depending on the size. Hours: 11.00~21.00 every day

Fee: ¥1,500~¥2,160 depending on the set size

Tel: 0973-22-3333

Address: Sanbon-matsu 1-12-40, Hita City, Oita Prefecture

Website Hita Gion Yamaboko Hall

People from this region are particularly proud of their heritage as this land historically belonged to the early Shoguns from the Tokugawa clan. Thus a sense of special pride and festivities developed because no intermediary daimyo or governors were placed over this highly revered area. This Hita heritage thus facilitated the creation of the annual Gion festival 400 years ago in which the various districts of Hita City competed to illustrate their prosperity through luxuriously decorated floats. Leading them in an ordered procession through the streets in the first weekend after July 20th, these floats are pulled by young men from around the country, often with some connection to this region. The floats weigh approximately four tons each, are covered in life-size models depicting famous legends and histories, and are judged against each other as illustrations of their represented district's wealth. For the rest of the year after the festival, some of these floats are on display at the Gion Festival Museum in Hita. Currently housing six of these bright, bold creations, as well as festival-related paraphernalia illustrating its history, the museum costs ¥310 and is open every day except Wednesday from 9am to 5pm. Now a UNESCO Cultural Heritage event, this festival is definitely worth the experience in July, but, if you're unable to attend, the floats are a sight available

to behold at the museum. Hours: 9.00~17.00, closed Wed.

Fee: ¥310

Tel: 0973-24-6453

Address: 2-7-10 Kuma, Hita City, Oita Prefecture

Website Onda village

Moving away from Hita's historical district of Mameda into the countryside, a small gem of a village called Onda contains further treasures to appreciate. This hillside community of artisan families is the home of the famous Onda yaki no sato pottery, noted for its superb quality and creation using exclusively traditional methods. Techniques like chiselled patterns called tobikana have been passed down for around 400 years from Korean potters who settled here historically, and still survive today in the wonderful, earthy pieces. There is a small museum at the top of the settlement exhibiting some special pieces and containing educational materials on the production of the pottery, providing a good foundation from which to appreciate the rest of the village. You can then take a fascinating stroll down the main street through the houses, passing river-powered clay-pulverising hammers (karausa), long kiln huts, and stalls by the various artists' houses. With pieces ranging from a few hundred to a few thousand yen, these stands are the perfect place to pick up a unique souvenir of this very special cultural site. Onda really is a truly striking location, epitomised in its humble production methods and functional, unique pottery produce; this is a must-see for art enthusiasts. Hours: Always open

Fee: N/A

Tel: 0973-29-2449

Address: Motoemachi, Sarayama, Hita City, Oita Prefecture

Website Taio Gold Mine

An hour or so drive west from Onda brought us to the old Taio Gold Mine near the Kumamoto border. Covering 17 levels of tunnels extending into the mountainside, all the seams of gold and other metals here have been fully exhausted since first tapped by the Englishman Hans Hunter in 1898, and the last mining operations here ended in the 1970s. Part of the top level of tunnels is now

available for the public to explore and contains an interesting mix of modern and historic machinery and mining technique models. The former abundance of gold here also bore a legend of golden sea bream originating near the mine, so the 800m walking track also contains a small shrine to these lucky fish. The entry fee of ¥1,030 also includes admission to an interesting gallery of bronze sculptures and a small museum about the Cameroon national football team. Placed in Nakatsu for their 2002 World Cup training camp, the team were welcomed warmly by villagers and received a national following, with local people still supporting this African nation in football tournaments. There is also an extensive selection of gold themed omiyage available to buy in the gift shop, including delicious lemon-gold leaf tea, gold cookies and sake! Hours: 9.00~17.00, closed New Year's Day and first weekday of Feb.

Fee: ¥1,030

Tel: 0973-56-5316

Address: 3750 Nakatsuemura Gose, Hita city, Oita Prefecture

Website Nagayu Onsen ? Kawasemi no sho

Moving east again, the area surrounding Aso Kuju National Park is famed for its onsen, and a stay at one of the luxury hotel and onsen facilities near Nagayu is a wonderful way to experience the mineral waters of the region. Kawasemi no sho is set in serene forest over the hill from the national park and has ten suites of rooms, many with private bath facilities. We were fortunate to stay in some of the most luxury suites, with two bathrooms, a dining and a tea ceremony room, indoor and outdoor baths, and a double bedroom each. Not only are the rooms beautifully decorated and comfortable, the food on offer at the hotel restaurant is exquisite. Dinner was a beautiful affair comprising 16 courses including beautifully tender enoha fish, also known as 'gems of the mountain river', and breakfast was equally delicious. The onsen facilities outside the various suites are also exquisite, with a private onsen and separate men's and women's baths available to all guests 24 hours a day. Walking through the trees in a yukata in the early morning light to soak in the hot, cloudy mineral waters is a once in a lifetime experience. Room rates are ¥32,000 per night per guest at the highest level, but the incredible comfort and quality of this hotel makes the price well-justified.

Day visits to the onsen of three, six or nine hours, and lunch meals, are also available. Hours:

Reception open 8.00~22.00

Fee: Rooms start from ¥15,120 per night per guest

Tel: 0974-75-2300

Address: Nagayu Onsen, Taketa, Oita Prefecture, 878-0402

Website Asokujyu National Park

A short drive around the ridge from Nagayu onsen takes you to the heart of the Asokujyu national park, a region covering almost 750 km<sup>2</sup> noted for its beautiful peaks and sweeping pastureland. The park is very popular with walkers, and offers fantastic treks from March to October including the stunning pink haze of the azaleas in May and early June. There is also a fantastic view on clear days across the Hando-Kujyu plains to the five peaks of Mt. Aso, which appear to form a giant Buddha sleeping on its back. A series of good intermediate and advanced hikes around Mt. Mimatayama can be commenced from the car park by the Chojabaru visitor center over the Makinoto Pass. This facility is open from 9am to 5pm from May to October and 9am to 4pm the remainder of the year, and contains some excellent information for hiking and education about the wildlife and plants in the area. March is a particularly interesting time to visit, as local residents set light to the grasslands around the mountains to contain forest growth and maintain the ground for livestock grazing. The visitor center contains a very informative and interesting ten minute film about this process and is available with English, Korean and Mandarin subtitles. From here several pleasant, short beginner walks are available on the boardwalks over neighboring Tadewara Marsh, where visitors can enjoy the spring sunshine and the stunning snow-capped hills whilst looking out for growth in the charred fields. As the park also encompasses many popular driving and cycling routes, there are various restaurants, toilets and omiyage facilities available throughout the area. It is worth noting, however, that this route is not easily traversable without snow chains between November and March. Buses also run to the Chojabaru visitor center from the Kokonoe interchange and JR Kyudai line on a regular basis, and local buses connect the Makinoto Pass to the Kujyu trailhead and Chojabaru visitor center every ten minutes from March to November. This area is

well-credited as one of the best walking locations in Japan due to its natural beauty and the lower population of the region, and we can attest to its stunning landscape; it's definitely worth a visit!

Hours: 9.00~17.00 May~Oct., 9.00~16.00 Nov.-Apr., closed Dec. 29th~Jan. 3rd

Fee: N/A

Tel: 0973-79-2154

Address: Tano, Kokonoe, Kusa, Oita Prefecture

Website Kokonoe Suspension Bridge

This region also has a great attraction for those with an engineering interest, as a 30 minute drive takes visitors to the incredible Kokonoe Suspension Bridge. Innovative local government officers proposed this construction over a decade ago to bolster regional tourism numbers, and its success has been phenomenal with almost a million visitors every year. Formerly the longest suspension bridge in Japan, it is still the highest in the country, standing above the valley floor at 173m and 777m above sea level. The cost of crossing this remarkable foot bridge is ¥500 and is most popular in October as people flock to see the stunning autumnal display of colors. Whilst the height may put some visitors off, those unsure of its structural stability need not fear; the bridge has a huge maximum capacity of 800 people and has been built to withstand an earthquake of up to a seven level strength. If, however, you are still not keen to cross, there is a viewing platform to the east of the bridge entrance with a fantastic view across to this engineering marvel. A completely unimpeded view is available for just ¥100 entry to the second level of this viewing area which also neighbors a small shrine. Hours: 8.30~18.00 Jul. to Oct., 8.30~17.00 Nov. to Jun.

Fee: ¥500

Tel: 0973-73-3800

Address: 1208 Tano, Oaza, Kokonoemachi, Kusu, Oita Prefecture

Website Bebenko

With the area's long history of livestock grazing, it's no surprise that some excellent beef restaurants have sprung up across the plains. Bebenko, meaning 'baby cow' in the local dialect, is a particularly popular lunch spot with beautiful views from their terrace across the national park. The

restaurant is owned by a farmer whose own rice, vegetables, and beef are on the menu. Dishes start from around ¥710 yen up to the excellent ¥3,980 steak set, which is complimented with rice, salad, miso soup, and tsukemono. The Japanese saying "betsu barra", or "separate stomach [for dessert]" is very useful here, as the beautifully tender beef can be chased down with homemade soft serve ice cream. A cone costs just ¥380 and vanilla and blueberry flavors, the latter made from local blueberries, are available and bursting with fresh fruity taste. Hours: 11.00~22.00

Fee: Dishes from ¥710 to ¥3,980

Tel: 0973-79-3110

Address: Nami, Kokonoemachi, Osamu, Oita Prefecture 879-4800

Website Fuko-ji Temple

The neighboring region of Bungo-Ono city is also well worth a visit for its interesting history and natural beauty. One particularly notable site is Fuko-ji Temple by the Ono River, which is famous for its large Buddha carved into the cliff side by the local daimyo around 800 years ago. This lord, Sabura Ogata, completed the Buddha as an emblem for the protection of his community, and also carved out two caves full of smaller jira disciple figures. Locals feel his quest was successful, as the area has enjoyed peace for most of its history since, and suffered very minimal damage in more recent natural disasters in Kyushu. A small temple on the site is open for visitors, and is also accompanied by a nade botoke, or "rubbing Buddha" figure, whose head and legs are well polished by people rubbing the areas of the body which they wish to heal or improve. Access to the site is downhill via a paved road or a short forest trail and toilets and parking are available. Hours: N/A

Fee: N/A

Tel: 0974-35-3601

Address: 1225 Asajimachi, Kamiotsuka, Bungo-Ono, Oita Prefecture

Website Takakiya Sake Brewery

The purity of the Bungo-Ono area's water running down from the surrounding mountains has created excellent quality rice yields, ultimately allowing the production of quality sake in this region. One notable business is the Takakiya Brewery, which has been family operated here for over 130



years. Now owned and run by the 5th generation, they use their own rice variety, Wakamizu, to produce sake of the highest quality. Although international appetite for sake has increased in recent times, the brewery is committed to serving the Japanese market at the present time and so is making efforts to engage customers at sake conferences such as those held in Tokyo and Fukuoka. The shop contains a small café area as well as a fully stocked store with a range of sake starting from around ¥1,000 a bottle, and also sells osake kasu, a bi-product useful in cooking, and amazake. Hours: 10.00~16.00, closed on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day

Fee: Bottles sold starting at around ¥1,000

Tel: 0974-42-2216

Address: 381 Shimotsuji, Ogatamachi, Bungo-Ono, Oita Prefecture

Website Rigaku no sato Museum

A short drive from Takakiya is a beautiful building covered in white lattice work. A former sake brewery which narrowly escaped demolition, the building is now a museum for an important collection of over a hundred clay figures made by the late local resident, Kimu Gotto. She began a project, the fruits of which are these handmade models, in her mid-70s to educate others on the traditional Japanese lifestyle she enjoyed as a child. These delightful figures were created over ten years to depict various scenes of farming, schooling, motherhood, and local festivities, and can be viewed for just ¥330. The museum also includes some well-presented theater and annual sakura festival costumes, as well as a striking portable Buddhist shrine. A theater and concert space on the first floor is the site of regular performances, and the nearby Veggie café and pottery workshop offer visitors a wonderful chance to enjoy local produce and get creative at a regular classes. Hours: 9.00~17.00, closed Tues.

Fee: ¥330 museum entry

Tel: 0974-42-4822

Address: 388-1 Baba, Ogatamachi, Bungo-Ono, Oita Prefecture

Website Harajiki no taki Falls

Visitors to the Bungo-Ono area also have a fantastic opportunity to visit what some call 'the Niagara

Falls of Kyushu? at Harajiki. Here water running down from Mt. Sobo flows forcefully over the 120m wide edge of the rock face and crashes down to continue on its course 20m below. A truly spectacular natural phenomenon, and a welcome cool down on hot summer days, the river also plays an important part in the local tradition. The annual autumn festival sees half-naked local men carry a float from the ?mother shrine? on the west hillside through the freezing waters under a tori gate at the top of the falls. They then reunite the ?family? upon delivering the float to the ?father? and ?child? shrines at Ninomiya Hachiman Shinto Shrine on the opposite hill face. Braced against the cold by sake shots, the spectacle can be observed from the footbridge opposite the falls constructed in 1992 or from the terrace of the service station about 100m away. Hours: N/A

Fee: N/A

Tel: N/A

Address: 817 Ogatamachi, Bungo-Ono, Oita Prefecture

Website Takeda City

Twenty minutes to the west is Taketa City, also known as Lotus Root City for its proliferation of tunnels connecting the surrounding farmland to the ancient castle town. Unlike many other Japanese historic towns that have removed old style architecture in favour of 20th century block building, most of the wooden samurai era structures still stand here. The city hall, with its striking castle-like form, is particularly enjoyable to observe from the road, and visitors can also walk around the ruins of the local mountain-top castle, Okajyo, made famous by the melancholic ballad about this fortress in the moonlight. This town?s samurai history is also annually celebrated by a parade of historic reenactors in military regalia marching through the sakura-lined streets. Local Christian communities of the Tokugawa period are represented across the city and surrounding hills by their worship sites hidden within Inari shrines. Look out for crosses marked on the tori gates or nearby rocks and steps left there by these persecuted groups. Visitors looking for an authentic Japanese onsen experience can also join locals here at Hanamizuki Onsen located next to the river in the center of town. At ¥500 entry, the complex combines naturally heated and boiler tempered water with various jets, a cold plunge pool, and a sauna, and is a great chance to mingle with chatty

locals. For an even more extensive experience of Japanese country town life, homestay accommodation is available through the Oita Prefecture Tourism Association website. We were fortunate enough to stay at Unchuzaka house with Hadano san and his wife, a retired railroad engineer and shiitake mushroom farmer. A wonderful couple, they drove us up the valley to their family farm to pick shiitake mushrooms and freshly sprung fukinoto buds which we then ate for dinner as tempura delights. Sitting cross legged in their tatami dining room, we spent a delightful evening eating wonderful home cooked Japanese food and listening to tales of the cunning gang of wild boar who reside in the nearby forest, plotting their latest attack on the mushroom crop. Similarly refreshing experiences of Japanese country life are available through the Oita and Taketa tourism offices for around ¥4,000 a night including dinner and breakfast. Homestays: Website Hodojima island

The coast of Oita prefecture is another wonderful area to explore and experience another side of Japanese culture outside of the big cities. Several of the islands are very accessible to visit, and we decided to take a quick trip to one of the smaller ones, Hodojima, to see what this fishing community was like. Six passenger ferries run each day from Tsukumi port, costing ¥860 one way for the 25 minute trip to the little island with a four kilometre circumference. The place has the feel of a small fishing village in South coast of England, but with more modern architecture, as you step off the ferry and head into a labyrinth of alleys up the hill. There are 800 registered residents here and in reality only 500 permanent inhabitants, but the population is bolstered in the summer by tourists walking or cycling around the scenic island overlooking the Pacific. The great attraction of this place, however, is the exquisite cuisine born of the Hodojima's long fishing history. Although in decline in recent years, men from Hodojima have fished for tuna around the Japanese coast for hundreds of years and would often be away from home for up to a year. Feeding themselves from the catch and reluctant to waste anything, the fishermen consumed all parts of the tuna including its head and internal organs. This rich food is served up by local families such as the Okawas, owners of Hodojima Okawa restaurant and former fishermen themselves, for lunch and dinner every day. From a beautiful tatami-matted room overlooking the harbour, patrons can enjoy their absolutely delicious

maguro, sesame and miso donburi. This is the cheapest item on their menu, but a full set of helm fin soup, fish head miso, yaki heart, and beautiful fatty sashimi are available with a reservation the day before for ¥3,500. A wonderfully kind and interesting couple, the passion of Okawa Yoshinobu and his wife for their local history was delightful, and the interconnected culture of the fishing islands around Kyushu was fascinating to hear about. Such an opportunity to eat cuisine most Japanese haven't tasted, experience this important Japanese subculture, and meet such kind local people is a chance not to be missed on Hodojima! Hours: 11.00~14.00, 18.00~21.00 every day

Fee: Tuna set ¥3,500

Tel: 0972-87-2024

Address: 1120 Hodojima, Tsukumi, Oita Prefecture

Website Kojiya Honten

More wonderfully kind and passionate local business owners can be found in the village of Saiki 50 minutes to the south of Hodojima. One such individual is Asari Myoho, a descendant of the koji cultivators who opened Kojiya Honten store over 300 years ago. Their bacteria-based product is something of a wonder-food; a salty seasoning which reacts with glucose and lipids to further develop flavor in various foods and benefit the gut. The business had been in a steady decline until nine years ago when Asari began to broadcast the health benefits of koji and published cook books and lead classes on site incorporating the product. With an infectious bubbly personality, she has spoken enthusiastically around the world about the value of koji in its various forms. In the original store here in Saiki they stock miso, pepper mixes, and sake products containing this seasoning, and their wares are now also available in food halls throughout Kyushu. Koji's most popular use is in home cooking in its basic powder form, and bags of basic koji are sold from ¥850 for 500g or ¥1,500 for 1kg. Very tasty and beneficial to general health, the conviction of this wonderful business woman has saved koji and this family business, which is definitely worth a visit from anyone passing through the region. Hours: 9.00~17.00 Sun.~Fri., 10.00~13.00 Sat.

Fee: Cooking classes from ¥1,500, koji seasoning from ¥850 for 500g

Tel: 0120-166-355

Address: 14-29 Sendomachi, Saiki, Oita Prefecture

Website Haccho Oji shopping street

In central Usuki, the historic shopping area of Haccho Oji contains more old family businesses perfect for exploring and buying quality local produce. Kanishyoyu, a family run soy sauce producer, has been in operation since 1600, making it the oldest soy and miso shop in Kyushu. The strong smell greets you upon entering the store and visitors can look through the window at the manufacturing process and purchase a bottle of the popular seasoning sauce for as little as ¥500. Another family-run business further down the road is the kimono tailors, Kimono no Akouya, who have been creating textile masterpieces for 363 years and are now operated by the 16th generation. Kimonos are available to hire for a full day for just ¥4,000 including all the associated accessories, providing a wonderful chance to wander the historic streets of samurai housing and nearby ruins of Usuki castle in style. Reservation at least the day before is required. Kimono no Akouya:

Hours: 9.00~18.00 Mon.~Sat., 10.00~17.00 Sun., closed New Year's Eve

Fee: ¥4,000 for a day rental

Tel: 0972-62-2324

Address: Haccho Oji, Usuki, Oita Prefecture, 875-0041

Website Kirakuan

To top off an extensive and highly enjoyable tour of Oita prefecture, our final meal was at Kirakuan, a beautiful fugu restaurant, Kirakuan in Usuki. Located at the base of the ruin-topped hill, guests here are treated to tasty sashimi, hot pot, and karaage cuts of the famously toxic fugu blowfish which is a delicacy of this region. We were served in a private room by women in a stunning kimono and enjoyed stories of the historic connection of Usuki to the Netherlands harking back to the Tokugawa exclusion of foreigners when local residents harboured shipwrecked Dutchmen. This relationship actually facilitated a recent meeting of the crown princes of Japan and the Netherlands at Kirakuan. With a set menu of five delicious courses and dessert for ¥9,000, the restaurant is one of the top establishments in the area and offers a unique luxury experience of this famous fish.

Hours: 11.00~15.00, 17.00~20.00

Fee: Fugu set menu from ¥11,000 per person

Tel: 0972-63-8855

Address: 2-107-92 Usuki, Oita Prefecture

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# Discover Oita: A Hidden Gem In Japan

## ? Loyaltrips

Nestled on the eastern coast of Kyushu, Oita is a captivating city that offers a unique blend of natural beauty, rich culture, and rejuvenating hot springs. Whether you are a solo traveler seeking tranquility or a family looking for adventure, Oita has something for everyone. This article will guide you through the key attractions, activities, and practical information to make your visit unforgettable.

Beppu, a city within Oita Prefecture, is renowned for its numerous hot springs. With over 2,000 hot spring sources, it is one of Japan's most famous onsen towns. Visitors can enjoy various types of baths, including mud baths, sand baths, and steam baths. The "Hells of Beppu" (Jigoku) are a must-see, featuring unique geothermal phenomena that showcase the area's volcanic activity.

Yufuin is another charming onsen town located near Beppu. Surrounded by mountains, it offers stunning views and a serene atmosphere. The town is known for its quaint streets lined with art galleries, cafes, and shops. Don't miss the chance to soak in an outdoor onsen while enjoying the breathtaking scenery. For families, the Oita Marine Palace, also known as Umitamago, is a fantastic destination. This aquarium features a variety of marine life, including dolphins, sea lions, and tropical fish. The interactive exhibits and shows make it an engaging experience for visitors of all ages.

Oita is not only famous for its hot springs but also for its delicious local cuisine. Here are some dishes you must try: The ideal time to visit Oita is during the spring (March to May) and autumn (September to November) months. During these seasons, the weather is mild, and the natural scenery is at its most beautiful. Spring brings cherry blossoms, while autumn showcases vibrant foliage. Oita is easily accessible by train, bus, and car. The Oita Airport connects the city to major domestic and international destinations. Once in the city, public transportation is efficient, with buses and trains available to take you to popular attractions. Oita offers a range of accommodation options, from luxury hotels to traditional ryokans (Japanese inns). Staying in a ryokan allows you to experience authentic Japanese hospitality and enjoy onsen baths right at your accommodation. For outdoor enthusiasts, the Kuju Mountains offer excellent hiking trails with stunning views. The area is known

for its diverse flora and fauna, making it a great spot for nature lovers. Art lovers should not miss the Oita Prefectural Art Museum, which features a collection of modern and contemporary art. The museum's architecture is also a sight to behold. Oita hosts various festivals throughout the year, showcasing its rich culture and traditions. The Oita River Fireworks Festival in summer is particularly popular, attracting visitors from all over. Oita is a destination that promises relaxation, adventure, and cultural immersion. With its stunning landscapes, delectable cuisine, and rejuvenating hot springs, it's a place that invites you to unwind and experience the beauty of Japan. Whether you're soaking in an onsen or savoring local delicacies, Oita will leave a lasting impression. So pack your bags and get ready for an unforgettable trip to this hidden gem! Please note, comments need to be approved before they are published. Loved Discover Oita: A Hidden Gem In Japan? Start your journey today and experience it for yourself!

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## Serenity at Ogura Pond: A Hidden Gem in Oita

Discover the tranquil beauty of Ogura Pond in Oita, Japan, a perfect spot for nature lovers and peace seekers alike. Ogura Pond, located in the charming region of Oita, Japan, is a stunning natural oasis that invites visitors to unwind and reconnect with nature. This serene lake is enveloped by lush foliage and offers picturesque views that change with the seasons, making it a captivating destination year-round. Whether you're a nature enthusiast, a photographer, or simply looking for a peaceful retreat, Ogura Pond provides the perfect backdrop for relaxation and rejuvenation.

As you wander around the pond, you'll discover various walking paths that allow you to take in the tranquil surroundings. The gentle sounds of water lapping against the shore, combined with the rustling leaves, create an ambiance of peace and calm. It's an ideal location for a leisurely stroll or a picnic with family and friends. Birdwatchers will also appreciate the diverse avian life that frequents the area, making it a wonderful spot for wildlife observation.

For those who wish to immerse themselves in the local culture, Ogura Pond is surrounded by quaint villages that showcase traditional Japanese architecture and hospitality. Visitors can explore nearby temples and historical sites that enrich the experience, providing insight into the cultural heritage of the region. The beauty of Ogura Pond, coupled with its serene atmosphere and cultural richness, makes it a hidden gem that should not be missed during your journey in Oita. Discover Ogura Pond with Evendo, a 100% free app-based travel guide. Explore attractions, landmarks, restaurants, and more with ease and convenience. If you are travelling by car, start from the center of Wakasa. Head south on Route 27 towards Usa. After approximately 30 minutes, take the exit toward Usa City. Continue on Route 10, and then follow the signs for Ogura Pond. The pond is located at coordinates 33.52127, 131.31316. There is parking available nearby. For those using public transportation, begin at Wakasa Station. Take the train on the Nippō Main Line heading towards Oita. After about 20 minutes, get off at Usa Station. From Usa Station, you can catch a local bus (Usa City Bus)

heading towards Ogura Pond. The bus ride takes approximately 15 minutes. Check the bus schedule in advance, as services may be limited on weekends. The bus will drop you off near Ogura Pond, which is a short walk from the bus stop. If you prefer a more direct route, you can take a taxi from Usa Station directly to Ogura Pond. The taxi ride takes approximately 10 minutes and should cost around 1,500 to 2,000 yen, depending on traffic. Don't miss out on news and great deals

**12 Luxurious Things to Do in Oita, Japan | Japan travel destinations,  
Oita, Travel destinations asia**

## Harajiri Falls: Japan's Hidden Gem

Discover the breathtaking beauty of Harajiri Falls, a picturesque waterfall in Oita, Japan, perfect for nature lovers and adventurers. Harajiri Falls is a captivating natural wonder located in Bungoono, Oita Prefecture, Japan. Often likened to a smaller version of Niagara Falls, this impressive waterfall cascades over a rocky ledge, creating a spectacular sight that draws visitors from near and far. Surrounded by lush greenery, the falls are particularly mesmerizing during the spring when cherry blossoms bloom, offering a picturesque backdrop for photography enthusiasts. The tranquil sound of the water crashing down adds to the serene atmosphere, making it a perfect spot for relaxation and contemplation.

The area around Harajiri Falls is equipped with well-maintained walking paths and viewing platforms, allowing tourists to get up close to the cascading water. There are also picnic areas nearby, making it an ideal location for families and groups to enjoy a day out in nature. Whether you choose to hike the trails, take a leisurely stroll, or simply sit back and soak in the magnificent views, Harajiri Falls promises an unforgettable experience. Don't forget to bring your camera to capture the stunning vistas, especially during sunrise or sunset when the light creates a magical glow over the falls.

For those interested in local culture, the nearby town offers quaint shops and traditional eateries where you can savor regional delicacies. With its unique blend of natural beauty and cultural experiences, Harajiri Falls is a must-visit destination for travelers exploring the rich landscapes of Japan. Discover Harajiri Falls with Evendo, a 100% free app-based travel guide. Explore attractions, landmarks, restaurants, and more with ease and convenience. If you are driving, the easiest way to reach Harajiri Falls is to use the expressways. From Fukuoka, take the Kyushu Expressway (Kyushu K  sokud  ro) heading towards Kumamoto. After about 45 km, take the exit towards Bungoono (Bungo-ono). Follow Route 210 for approximately 20 km until you reach Harajiri Falls. There is a

parking area available near the falls, which is free of charge. For those using public transportation, start by taking a train from Fukuoka to Oita. The train journey will take approximately 2 hours. Once you arrive at Oita Station, transfer to a local bus bound for Bungoono (Bungo-ono). The bus ride will take around 50 minutes. Upon arrival in Bungoono, you will need to take a taxi to Harajiri Falls, which is about 10 km away from the bus station. Taxi fares may vary, but expect to pay around 2,000 to 3,000 yen. Alternatively, you can take a train from Kumamoto to Bungoono. The journey takes about 1 hour and 30 minutes. Upon arrival at Bungoono Station, take a taxi to Harajiri Falls, which is approximately a 15-minute drive. The taxi fare will be similar to that from the Oita bus station, ranging between 2,000 to 3,000 yen. Don't miss out on news and great deals



## What are 3 things not to miss when visiting Oita, Japan? - Quora

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**Oita Japan**



## Japan Travel: 17 Things to do in Oita, Japan's onsen prefecture | SoraNews24 -Japan News-

Bringing you yesterday's news from Japan and Asia, today. RocketNews24 Japanese There's so much more to Oita than amazing hot springs. If you're travelling to Japan and looking to explore the country, there are 47 prefectures waiting to wow you with sacred sites, places of natural beauty and a warm sense of hospitality that will make for an unforgettable trip. One of those prefectures is Oita, on Japan's southern island of Kyushu, which is known throughout Japan as the country's "onsen prefecture", due to its abundance of rejuvenating hot springs. And while the onsen here are held in such high esteem that they even opened an onsen amusement park in the prefecture in 2016, there's plenty more on offer for those looking to explore off the beaten track. We headed down to Oita recently, and after a short 95-minute flight, we arrived at Oita Airport, which is a destination in itself that houses a genuine hot spring foot bath and photo spots. ? There are also replicas of famous centuries-old statues? ? And a giant plate of sushi that goes round and round like a sushi train at the baggage carousel. Once you've picked up your baggage, it's time to get out and explore Oita! It's pretty rural out here, though, so you'll want to hire a car, or, for a more memorable experience, you might want to hire local tour guide and fluent English speaker Kimiko Wakamatsu to show you some of the most special spots in Oita Prefecture. ? Wakamatsu (right) works with driver Eishi, aka A.C. (left) to take you to places only locals know about. We spent several days exploring with A.C. and Wakamatsu, and highly recommend using them for your trip. A.C. is known as "the best driver in Oita" and is requested by government officials for personal trips, while Wakamatsu is a licensed tour guide with years of experience under her belt. So let's get to it and check out the 17 best things to do in Oita Prefecture! Kitsuki Castle Town One of the first stops any visitor to Oita should put at the top of their itinerary is a visit to Kitsuki Castle Town. This historic area contains beautifully preserved streets and old samurai houses which are open to the public, and one of the best ways to soak up the atmosphere here is by strolling around in a kimono. Kimono rental shop Warakuan has a huge range of kimonos in all sizes which can be rented for

roughly 3,000 yen (US\$28.46) per day, with lots of accessories to make you feel like a lady from the Edo Period (1603-1868). After being dressed by the professional and friendly staff at Warakuan, who are so speedy they can dress you in a matter of minutes, you'll get to walk around a castle town that's so well preserved it's even been featured in Japanese movies and TV dramas. The local government is actually encouraging visitors to wear kimono here, as it helps to bridge the gap between cultures, and it also gets you free or discounted entrance to museums and preserved houses in the area. The Ohara Residence is the biggest and grandest samurai residence in Kitsuki Castle Town, with an impressive garden and interesting artefacts providing a firsthand insight into how people used to live back in the feudal era. Strolling through the residence in kimono makes you feel like you've stepped back in time to the Edo period, and helps you connect to Japanese culture in an unforgettable way, especially when you get to enjoy the area without the hordes of tourists you'll find at other big tourist spots. Eat the local specialty: Ureshino Kitsuki Castle Town comes with a long and rich history that extends to its food culture, so while you're here you definitely shouldn't miss out on trying a delicious sesame sauce flavoured red snapper and rice dish known locally as 'Ureshino'. 'Wakaeya is a special gem that's been serving Ureshino for more than 300 years. The prized tai chazuke dish was named 'Ureshino' after a feudal lord tried it at Wakaeya centuries ago and uttered the words 'Ureshino' (lit. 'I'm so happy'). Tasting a dish with such history behind it is an incredibly special experience, especially given that the restaurant is still run by the same family, with Gentaro Goto preserving this important culinary history as the 16th-generation head of the restaurant. 'Gentaro Goto (right) and his father (left) are continuing centuries of family-run operations. Ureshino is a delicious sesame sauce flavoured red snapper and rice dish that's ready to eat three seconds after hot green tea is poured over it. Big groups can enjoy the dish as part of a multi-course meal inside a banquet room with its very own Noh theatre stage. Beppu City Traditional Bamboo Crafts Centre Next stop on our tour is a local bamboo crafts centre, which showcases local bamboo crafts in a fun and engaging manner. The intricate designs and large works created with bamboo are all amazing to look at. The interactive woven bell-making course is a lot of fun, and easy for both adults and children to take part in. The bamboo bell ball makes for a

great souvenir afterwards, and there are plenty of gorgeous objects to purchase in the attached gift shop as well! ? Simply weave the coloured bands through the bamboo-encased bell and you've created your very own original souvenir! Yukemuri Observation Deck and Kannawa walking tour A visit to Oita wouldn't be complete without a stop at Beppu, the city renowned for having the highest yield of hot spring water in the world. There are hundreds of hot springs dotted around the area, and the best place to see them is from the Yukemuri Observation Deck, where you can gaze out at the rising plumes of hot steam. ? This yukemuri landscape has been listed as one of Japan's ?Important Cultural Landscapes?. Whether or not you love hot springs, you'll definitely enjoy a walk around Beppu's Kannawa Onsen area. It's a beautiful area to stroll around, with plenty of interesting sites that offer unique saunas with Japanese sweet flag grass, communal bathing, cafes, and cook-it-yourself steam dining areas. Steam rushes up from beneath the ground all over the area, giving it a unique atmosphere. It's also one of the rare places where you can dip your legs into a steam foot bath, which utilises the earth's natural hot steam instead of hot spring water to help improve the body's circulation. If you're looking for a place to stay in the area, Yufuin Hotel Shuhokan is conveniently located nearby. Not only do the rooms come with glorious views of dormant volcano Mt Yufu, but you can also enjoy a hearty dinner and breakfast here, with a delicious array of local delicacies, served in a communal dining room with views out to the surrounding countryside. Lake Kinrin Lake Kinrin is a lovely pocket of nature where hot springs bubble up through the lake bed, creating an ideal spa-like environment for fish and wildlife that gather here. A 19th century Confucian scholar saw fish in the lake glittering at sunset here, so the lake was named Kinrin (?Golden fish scales?). A short stroll takes you all around the lake, making it a beautiful, serene place to stop and breathe in the fresh mountain air. Hita Gion Yamaboko Kaikan The Hita Gion Yamaboko Hall is a site that's well worth a visit as it contains some of the largest and most impressive festival floats you'll find in all of Japan. These floats are paraded around the streets of Hita City once a year for the annual Hita Gion festival in late July, and for the remainder of the year they're housed here for people from around Japan to admire. These huge floats weigh up to four tonnes, and are filled with gorgeous details like dolls created by 98-year-old doll maker

Shizuo Nagashima, which are designed to represent characters from kabuki plays. Each year, a different kabuki scene is revealed as the theme for the 300-year-old festival, and the floats are so impressive they've been designated an Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO. Eat the local specialty: Hitan Sushi If you want to eat like a local in Hita City, Ginsushi is the place to go. The homely, family-run eatery specialises in Hitan sushi, which uses fruit and vegetables as toppings for sushi instead of the usual raw fish. Meals here offer a surprising array of different tastes and textures, all of which are delicious and beautifully presented and prepared. Vegetarians and meat-eaters alike are sure to be incredibly impressed by the delicious meat-free morsels on offer!

Mameda Walking Tour Walking around the beautiful Mameda district is a wonderful way to spend an afternoon, as it has a traditional, laid-back atmosphere and a variety of small stores and eateries to pop in and out of as you explore the narrow streets. This is the best place to pick up a pair of locally made geta sandals, with a huge selection of styles available, and one of the stores is even home to the largest cedar geta in all of Japan!

Ontayaki no Sato (Ontayaki Pottery Village) One of the highlights of our trip was a visit to this tiny, tranquil pottery village which makes its pottery entirely by hand, using the same techniques that have been passed down from generation to generation over 300 years. ? Ten families live and produce pottery in this village. Ontayaki pottery village is known for its kara usu, wooden clay-crushing devices powered by water from the Hanatsuki River. The sound they make echoes through the tiny village and is considered one of Japan's 100 best soundscapes. The sound of the water-powered wooden clay-crushing devices and the charm of the local families that sell their beautiful wares make this a must-visit spot. As a working pottery village, visitors are able to watch products being made, and purchase items directly from the families that make them.

Umeshugura Oyama Along the Oyama River in southern Hita is a hot spring area famous for Japanese plums. Umeshugura Oyama is a factory that makes a wide variety of umeshu liqueur from locally grown plums, and visitors can view the production process inside the facility. Visitors will want to try all the different types of umeshu available here, with a free tasting that showcases some deliciously unique varieties you won't find anywhere else.

Sakura Daki Sakura Daki, which translates to ?Sakura Waterfall?, gets its name from the cherry blossom trees that

bloom around it. Although it's just a five-minute walk from JR Amagase Station, you'll feel like you're in the middle of nowhere as the 25-metre-high veil-like stream of water sends out a light spray as it spills out into a small spherical pool below. Stay at a Ryokan One of the great things about exploring off the beaten track is the chance to experience the warmth of local hospitality with a stay at a ryokan or Japanese inn. A highly recommended ryokan in Hita is Ukiha Bekkan Shinshiyo, which is a quiet haven with an inn-like atmosphere that makes you feel instantly at home. The staff here are incredibly attentive and helpful, and they go out of their way to ensure that your stay is comfortable and pleasant. The rooms are clean and modern, and some even come with their own rotenburo hot spring outdoor baths on an attached terrace where you can relax and gaze out at the surrounding scenery. The real wow factor comes at dinner, when a feast of small dishes is served up for guests in private dining rooms. Attentive staff in kimono will help guide you through each course and answer any questions you might have about all the different dishes and the fresh local ingredients used. And then when you wake in the morning, there's a feast waiting for you at breakfast too!

**Takkiri Valley** This valley, located in Oita's Usa City, is a wonderful spot to stay cool in the warmer months, with a shallow river that meanders along a walking path for roughly two kilometres (1.2 miles). A popular spot with families, there are 13 small cottages here which can be rented for overnight stays, but daytrippers can also enjoy the nature-filled scenery. One of the most popular things to do here is kick off your shoes and socks and go for a walk inside the river. The ankle-deep water is cool and clear, and incredibly refreshing in summer.

**Ajimu Winery** This winery in Usa has been perfecting its wines since grapes were first harvested here in the '60s. The climate in this region is considered to be an ideal environment for growing grapes, which are used to create over 20 different types of wines bottled on the premises. There are plenty of areas to explore around the winery, but most visitors head straight to the shop, which offers a wide range of tastings, including award-winning sparkling wines and grape juice as a non-alcoholic option for drivers. Eat the local specialty: Fried Chicken Shozan is such a good restaurant that locals line up to dine here, where the specialty is Usa City's regional delicacy, fried chicken. The fried chicken made in Usa is renowned throughout Japan, where it's claimed by many to be the best in the country, and Shozan

is one of the best places to try it. Their round, ball-like chicken pieces are so crispy and juicy you'll be wanting to eat them every day, and adults and children alike will fall in love with them, as they're easy to eat, come served in generous portion sizes, and can be ordered as part of a set with rice, salad, tea and miso soup.

**Usa Jingu** As one of Japan's most important shrines, Usa Jingu contains a wide variety of sacred sites, and visitors can get a deeper understanding of each site on the shrine grounds with a fun-to-use interactive audio guide that comes with multi-language options. As you walk through the area, simply tap the electronic "pen" to your current site on the included map, and you'll be able to learn more about the history and significance of that particular location. The audio guide will also provide you with instructions on how to worship at the main shrine buildings. Unlike other shrines, where worshippers bow twice, clap twice and then bow once, worshippers here bow twice, clap four times and bow once. This ancient 2-4-1 style of prayer is said to only exist at two shrines in all of Japan.

**Futago-ji Temple** If this temple was located in Tokyo or Kyoto, it would be inundated with crowds of tourists. However, its rural location protects it from being overcrowded, which means visitors get to experience its sacred beauty without all the crowds. Said to have been founded in 718, the temple is famous for its stunning Nio statues, which stand as the guardians of Buddha at the stairs leading up to the temple grounds. Walking through the ancient temple on your own without other visitors is a profound experience, as it enhances your sense of adventure and deepens your connection with the sacred atmosphere of the site.

**Gojun Terada**, the 66th abbot of Futago-ji, speaks perfect English and is happy to speak to visitors, so if you see him, be sure to say hello! Terada was instrumental in helping to create the English-language guide maps that are now available at the temple, so overseas visitors can gain a deeper understanding of the site as they explore the grounds on their own.

So there you have it, 17 things to do in Oita Prefecture! It's a beautiful region that remains largely unexplored by foreign tourists, making it a less crowded, off-the-beaten path alternative to big cities like Tokyo and Kyoto. It's definitely worth adding a visit to Oita to your Japan travel itinerary. If you're looking to discover more hidden gems around the country, don't forget to check out our in-depth guides to Aomori, Okinawa, Fukushima, and Yamaguchi. There's so much to explore in Japan!

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## Oita worth without onsen visit? - japan-guide.com forum

Dear visitor, if you know the answer to this question, please post it. Thank you! Note that this thread has not been updated in a long time, and its content might not be up-to-date anymore. Oita worth without onsen visit?

2016/9/20 06:01

Hi,I am trying to expand my Kyushu diary and thought of visiting the area around Oita, Beppu, Yufuin, etc.Most of these places seem like onsen towns so I was thinking if it is even worth visiting if not interested in onsen visit. Since it is quite a bit by train I am considering if I should check it out or not...

by Oita (guest) Re: Oita worth without onsen visit?

2016/9/20 11:26



It is just Beppu, Oita Prefecture I went, but there is a place where you can enjoy even without entering the hot spring. I went to the aquarium, Umitamago. In the nearby there is a Takasakiyama inhabited by monkeys. Harmony Land African safari and amusement facilities There is also such Yabakei, Kuju large suspension bridge, Kunisaki Peninsula. I think Yufuin there are many museums and shops. <http://en.visit-oita.jp/>

by haro1210

rate this post as useful Re: Oita worth without onsen visit?

2016/9/20 11:33

Well what do you plan to do in Oita if not visit the onsen? Is there something in particular that interested you?

by jh (guest)

rate this post as useful reply to this thread

## Kyushu: Traveling Japan's Southern Gem | Japan Travel Pros

The southernmost of Japan's four main islands, Kyushu is a compelling destination of otherworldly volcanic landscapes, historic cities, cultural treasures and some of the best food in Japan you'll ever enjoy! Often overshadowed by the neon-lit allure of Tokyo or the traditional charms of Kyoto – both of which are far more inundated with international tourism these days – a Kyushu tour offers a wealth of unique, local experiences that rival those found in its more famous counterparts. Whether you're on a honeymoon in Japan, a solo trip or traveling with a group, Kyushu deserves a spot on your Japan itinerary. From ramen-obsessed big city of Fukuoka to the mist-shrouded cedars of Yakushima, and from the relaxing onsen hot spring baths of Beppu & Yufuin to the history and international vibe of Nagasaki, Kyushu rewards the traveler who is looking to step off the beaten path and experience a more authentic and local Japan. As the largest city in Kyushu and the sixth-largest in Japan, Fukuoka serves as the ideal starting point on your Kyushu tour. This vibrant metropolis (combined with Kitakyushu), known for its friendly locals and fantastic food scene, offers a variety of experiences for the discerning traveler. Fukuoka's urban core is split between two districts: historic Hakata and modern Tenjin. These are both great places to visit in Fukuoka. In Hakata, the area surrounding the railway station hub (you'll take the shinkansen to/from here) has vibes galore. Here, you'll find an array of shopping complexes, from the sleek JR Hakata City to the more traditional Kawabata Shopping Arcade. Tenjin, meanwhile, represents Fukuoka's contemporary face. This district is popular among shoppers, with department stores like Iwataya and Mitsukoshi standing alongside trendy boutiques and the vast underground shopping labyrinth of Tenjin Chikagai. Make sure Hakata and Tenjin are on your Fukuoka itinerary. You'll likely want a hotel here to begin your Kyushu tour. Fukuoka might best be known for its food culture. And it's not just about ramen (though ramen surely plays a major role here). The city's famous yatai (street food stalls) line the riverside in Nakasu, offering an intimate and authentically local dining experience. Here, you can savor Hakata ramen, characterized by its rich tonkotsu (pork bone) broth, or try local specialties like mentaiko (spicy cod roe) and motsunabe (offal hot pot). For a more refined culinary

experience, Fukuoka boasts several Michelin-starred restaurants, including the innovative Japanese cuisine of Ryotei Sagano (2 stars) and the highly elevated sushi at Sushi Sakai (3 stars). The nearby port area of Nagahama has its own style of ramen, unsurprisingly called Nagahama ramen. Though similar to its sister ramen in Hakata, Nagahama ramen has its devotees (particularly those working in the area) and can be found in ramen shops across Japan. While Fukuoka embraces modernity, it hasn't forgotten its roots. The ancient Kushida Shrine, founded in 757, stands as a calm counterpoint to the city's urban energy. Visit in July to witness the spectacular Hakata Gion Yamakasa festival, where massive, ornately decorated floats are raced through the city streets. For a relaxing escape, Ohori Park offers a vast lake surrounded by walking paths and a meticulously maintained Japanese garden. The nearby Fukuoka Castle Ruins provide a glimpse into the city's feudal past, with cherry blossoms in spring adding an ephemeral beauty to the historic stoneworks. Fukuoka's central location makes it an ideal base for exploring other parts of northern Kyushu. Weigh the options for these enriching day trips from Fukuoka on your Kyushu tour: Dazaifu: Just 30 minutes from Fukuoka, this historic town is home to the stunning Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine and the cutting-edge Kyushu National Museum Yanagawa: Often called the "Venice of Kyushu," Yanagawa offers scenic canal tours in traditional punted boats Karatsu: This coastal city is renowned for its castle, pottery, and picturesque seaside Kurume: On the way between Fukuoka & Nagasaki, this is the home of Kurume-style ramen and is well worth a stop for lunch in one of its ramen shops) While you're perusing your Fukuoka day trip options, don't forget that a Kyushu tour is about much more than Fukuoka. Let's start with the most famous of its destinations next. Perched on the western edge of Kyushu, Nagasaki tells a story of resilience, international exchange and profound historical significance. This port city, once Japan's primary window to the Western world, showcases its own blend of Japanese and European influences. It's a great part of any Kyushu tour, especially for those who appreciate history (and great food, of course). Nagasaki's most sobering attractions are undoubtedly those related to the atomic bombing of August 9, 1945. The Nagasaki Peace Park, centered around the iconic Peace Statue, provides a space for reflection and remembrance. Nearby, the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum offers a harrowing yet essential look at the bombing

and its aftermath, emphasizing the importance of peace and nuclear disarmament. Nagasaki's history as a hub of international trade is evident in its architecture and culture. Glover Garden, a collection of Western-style mansions set on a hillside overlooking the harbor, offers insight into the lives of the foreign merchants who made Nagasaki their home in the 19th century. The garden's centerpiece, Glover House, is the oldest Western-style building in Japan. Not far from Glover Garden stands Oura Church, Japan's oldest surviving Christian church. This Gothic-style structure, built by French missionaries in 1864, is evidence of Nagasaki's unique religious history and its role as a refuge for Japan's hidden Christians. Nagasaki's cuisine reflects its multicultural heritage. Don't miss the chance to try champon, a hearty noodle dish influenced by Chinese cuisine. It's like ramen in some ways, though the broth is different and there are fewer "rules." Really, it's all mixed up! Sweet tooths opt for Nagasaki castella, a sponge cake introduced by Portuguese traders. For a special dining experience, seek out shippoku ryori, a fusion cuisine that blends Japanese, Chinese and Western elements. Nestled on Kyushu's northeastern coast, Beppu has long been synonymous with Japan's onsen (hot spring) culture. It's a common stop (for very valid reasons) on many Kyushu tours. With more than 2,000 hot spring vents, this city is a haven for those seeking relaxation and rejuvenation. Beppu's most famous attractions are the Jigoku Meguri, or "Hells of Beppu." These eight spectacular hot springs are for viewing rather than bathing, each offering a unique visual spectacle. From the cobalt blue waters of Umi Jigoku (Sea Hell) to the milky white pools of Shiraike Jigoku (White Pond Hell), these natural wonders showcase the raw geothermal power beneath Beppu's surface. While the "hells" are for viewing, this whole area offers countless opportunities for bathing. Onsen and Kyushu are practically synonymous, after all. Traditional public baths like Takegawara Onsen, with its distinctive wooden exterior, provide an authentic local experience. For something truly unique, try a sand bath at Beppu Beach Sand Bath, where bathers are buried in naturally heated sand. While Beppu's onsen are set in and near a city, the hot springs destination of Yufuin is a whole other vibe. About an hour by car or train from Oita airport (north of Beppu) on your Kyushu tour, Yufuin is a classic onsen town of Japan. Here it's all about choosing the right lodging, usually in the form of a ryokan (Japanese inn). That's where you'll have most of

your onsen experiences, either in the inn's communal baths, or an onsen bath in the privacy of your room (some even offer balconies with baths). Speaking of privacy in your room, ryokan offer lavish meals, both dinner and breakfast, and room service is often standard. While the town does have independent restaurants and other onsen baths that can be enjoyed a la carte, the typical Japanese way is to choose a ryokan with everything included and spend much of your time here. Whether you're renting a car or getting around by train on your self-guided tour of Kyushu, a nice stop on the way between Beppu/Yufuin and Kumamoto is the Mount Aso national park area. Home to one of the world's largest caldera, the Aso region offers a variety of outdoor activities, from hiking along the caldera rim to horseback riding across the Kusasenri plain. The Nakadake Crater, with its steaming turquoise lake, gives a visceral reminder of the earth's geothermal power. In this same area is Kurokawa Onsen. You can combine this lovely onsen town with Yufuin on your Kyushu tour, or do a night here instead of Yufuin. Not sure which is right for your itinerary in Kyushu? Don't hesitate to ask, we're always happy to help! Travelers enjoy great eats here as well, of course, including the famous "tori-ten" fried chicken restaurants (unlike standard "karaage" Japanese fried chicken, tori-ten is tempura-style chicken. A must when visiting this part of Kyushu! Pro Tip: Check the volcanic activity levels before visiting Nakadake Crater, as access can be restricted during periods of heightened activity. Central Kyushu's Kumamoto prefecture gives travelers a mix of samurai history and natural wonders, anchored by its capital city of the same name. Kumamoto Castle, one of Japan's premier castles, is a lasting element of the region's samurai heritage. Although heavily damaged in the 2016 earthquake, ongoing restoration efforts have partially reopened the castle to visitors. The castle's massive stone walls and imposing keep offer insight into the architectural and military prowess of feudal Japan. Kumamoto as a prefecture decided to create a mascot to revive its image and civic pride. Known as Kumamon, this cute bear (like so much else in Japan that's "kawaii" cute) has gained fame inside and beyond its borders. A Kumamon souvenir, such as a stuffed animal, cap or t-shirt, makes a nice gift for those back at home. Sitting in the shadow of the active Sakurajima volcano, Kagoshima might be called the "Naples of the East" for its bay location and volcanic neighbor. But, is it really called that? And why do we call places the "blank" of the

east/west?, anyway? Point is, if you've seen Mount Vesuvius towering over the bay from Naples before, well, Kagoshima may or may not remind you of that. But this is a Kyushu tour, after all, so let's talk about Kagoshima. The city of Kagoshima itself, at the southern end of Kyushu, is lovely enough. And that's good, because that volcano has a habit of spewing off at random times, making travel to Sakurajima iffy on some days. No worries, at the very least, you'll enjoy your stay in Kagoshima. Kagoshima serves as an excellent base for exploring southern Kyushu and the nearby islands of Sakurajima and Yakushima. A short ferry ride from downtown Kagoshima brings you to Sakurajima, one of Japan's most active volcanoes. The Sakurajima Visitor Center provides comprehensive information about the volcano's history and current activity. Hiking trails around the volcano offer close-up views of the smoking crater and unique lava rock formations. As mentioned before, check the forecast and conditions for Kagoshima and Sakurajima, early and often. Ask around as well, both at your hotel and at the ferry terminal, about how things are going. You'd hate to ruin your Kyushu tour, after all, by getting stuck on the island and missing flight or train connections. This beautifully landscaped garden and former residence of the powerful Shimadzu clan offers stunning views of Sakurajima across the bay. The adjacent Shoko Shuseikan Museum showcases the industrial innovations introduced by the Shimadzu family, which played a crucial role in Japan's modernization. A short hydrofoil ride from Kagoshima port transports you to the mystical island of Yakushima, a UNESCO World Heritage site renowned for its ancient cedar forests and unique ecosystem. Hiking trails wind through moss-covered forests to magnificent waterfalls and thousand-year-old trees like the famous Jomon Sugi. Due to Yakushima's often rainy weather, come prepared with waterproof gear and allow some flexibility in your Kyushu tour schedule. No Kyushu tour would be right without indulging in the region's renowned onsen culture. While Beppu may be the most famous onsen destination, the entire island is dotted with hot spring resorts, each offering its own unique charm. Indeed, onsen in Kyushu play a pivotal both in the local culture as well as tourism here. Kurokawa Onsen: This picturesque hot spring town in Kumamoto Prefecture is known for its traditional atmosphere and open-air baths set against stunning natural backdrops. Yufuin Onsen: Located near Beppu, Yufuin offers a more laid-back onsen experience, with its hot springs

complemented by art galleries and boutique shops. Ibusuki Onsen: Famous for its unique sand baths, where bathers are buried in naturally heated volcanic sand. Unzen Onsen: Situated in Nagasaki Prefecture, this resort area is known for its sulfurous springs and scenic location amidst active geothermal vents. As discussed in our in-depth article on onsen hot spring life in Japan, be sure to follow onsen rules and etiquette. Also, travelers with tattoos may already know that body ink is forbidden in public baths in Japan; the ways around this are to either (a) cover up the tattoo with a skin-tone adhesive, if possible; (b) find an onsen where the tattoo rules are nonexistent or not enforced, or (c) book a ryokan with a private onsen in your room. Make sure you've got an onsen (or two or three) included on the itinerary for your Kyushu tour. Whether you have a week or just a few days, Kyushu offers a wealth of experiences. Here's a sample itinerary to help you start planning: Days 1-2: Explore Fukuoka, including a day trip to Dazaifu Days 3-4: Visit Nagasaki, focusing on its unique history and cultural fusion Day 5: Experience the onsen culture in Oita (Beppu or Yufuin) Day 6: Discover Kumamoto Castle and Mount Aso Days 7-8: Explore Kagoshima and take a day trip to Yakushima Remember, this is just a starting point. Tailor your journey to your interests, whether that's delving deeper into Kyushu's culinary scene, spending more time in nature, or exploring its rich cultural heritage. At Japan Travel Pros, one of our core services is Japan itinerary planning. Why not schedule your FREE initial consultation with us now, and find out how we can help put together memorable experiences for a Kyushu tour that will take your Japan trip to the next level?! Looking at how to get to Kyushu? Two primary options present themselves: the sleek efficiency of the shinkansen bullet train or the convenience of air travel. The shinkansen, Japan's world-renowned bullet train, offers excellent connections to and around Kyushu. Combined with local and regional rail on either end, train travel in Kyushu and throughout Japan is popular for good reason. From Tokyo, the shinkansen whisks passengers to Hakata Station in Fukuoka in approximately five hours. This journey, while longer than flying, provides unparalleled views of the Japanese countryside and coastline (you might even get a glimpse of Mt Fuji on the way ? pro tip, get a window on the right side on the train to Kyushu, or a window on the left side going to Tokyo. For those departing from Osaka, the trip is considerably shorter, taking just over two hours to reach



Fukuoka. The Sakura and Mizuho Shinkansen services offer slightly longer but equally comfortable alternatives. Perhaps you've been thinking about buying a Japan Rail Pass? If you plan to explore multiple regions, it is convenient and can pay off in some savings ? but not always. However, it's important to note that the Japan Rail Pass doesn't cover the fastest Nozomi or Mizuho trains, which would require a fare upgrade. Oftentimes, point-to-point tickets work out as a better option than the rail pass. For travelers prioritizing speed, flying presents an attractive option. Numerous daily flights connect Tokyo's Haneda and Narita airports with Fukuoka, Nagasaki, and Kagoshima with an average flight time of about two hours. From Osaka, flights to Kyushu's major cities are even shorter, typically lasting just over an hour. This option is particularly appealing for those with limited time or those planning to focus their travels on southern Kyushu. Even factoring in airport transfers and security procedures, which are remarkably efficient in Japan, flying can often be the right way to travel to/from Kyushu. Other times, the city-center to city-center convenience of the shinkansen can balance out the apparent time savings of flying, especially for routes such as Osaka-Fukuoka, Nagoya-Fukuoka or even Tokyo-Fukuoka (this one depends on where in Tokyo you're starting from + which Tokyo airport).. Kyushu, with its volcanic scenery, rich history, great food and warm hospitality, offers a journey through Japan that many visitors never experience. That's why we encourage our clients to add Kyushu to your Japan itineraries. As you plan your travels to this southern gem, remember that Kyushu's true magic often lies in its lesser-known corners: a family-run onsen tucked away in the mountains, a local festival in a small coastal town or a chance encounter with a craftsperson keeping ancient traditions alive. Allow yourself the time and flexibility to discover these hidden treasures, and you'll find that Kyushu has a way of making you feel at home in Japan ? and wanting to come back for more. [About Us](#) [Blog](#) [Get in Touch](#) [Terms & Privacy](#)

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## Oita, Japan: What To Do And Where To Go | CoolJapan

There are times when we travel that we just want to disconnect from the hustle and bustle of the city and spend a relaxing time somewhere more secluded. Oftentimes, we'd find ourselves in smaller towns where life feels slower, allowing us to appreciate life and experience a little more. If you're one of those wanting to escape city life for a bit, we've got the perfect destination for you: Oita Prefecture on Kyushu Island. The famous hot springs of Beppu. (Photo from: Kyushu Tourism Association) A coastal prefecture that boasts of its onsens (hot springs), history and delicious food, Oita is also known for the famous 'hells' of Beppu. Off the beaten path, Oita is a hidden gem waiting to be discovered. Here are some recommendations for your Oita adventure!

A post shared by Oita Pref Tourism Association (@tourismoita) A place where nature and architecture meet, the Takasu Suspension Bridge Park (Takasutsubashi Park) in Usa City is where you can find a 132.5-meter-long pedestrian slope bridge that connects the Kamihaita district to the ancient Takasu Kannon-do. This suspension bridge was built using the Kakezukuri architectural style, which makes use of both natural and man-made structures to keep the bridge balanced. Walking on the bridge is not for the faint-hearted though, as its entire length sits above the Yakkangawa River. But once you're on it, the nerves will fade and you'll be left with an awe-struck witnessing the beauty of nature around you. [View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by Oita Pref Tourism Association (@tourismoita) A post shared by Oita Pref Tourism Association (@tourismoita) Travel back in time and indulge in cuisine made for samurais in this well-known restaurant. Kiraku-an, located in Usuki City, has been preparing the special Honzen cuisine – one of the three basic Japanese cooking styles – since 1878. This type of cuisine was once served to the samurais of the city, including the Inaba feudal clan who ruled the area for over two centuries. The clan considers this cuisine as part of their samurai ceremonies. Kiraku-an offers various food selections for visitors to try, but their specialty? A blowfish course. You don't need to worry about safely eating blowfish, known locally as fugu, in Japan. Fugu handlers undergo rigorous training to ensure a safe culinary experience. [View this post on Instagram](#)

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(@tourismoita) A post shared by Oita Pref Tourism Association (@tourismoita) Are you an animal lover? If you happen to be one, you'll enjoy this experience in Oita. In Sakai City, there is a place they call Cat Island, and it is what its name implies. Officially known as Fukushima, Cat Island is a place where the cat population is more than that of humans! There is even a local inn that allows you to stay overnight on the island and experience various activities including miso-making and cat tours. Beyond its charming cat community, Fukushima also offers stunning coral reefs, perfect for snorkelling in shallow waters. The vibrant blue hues and surrounding greens make this a must-visit when exploring the region. View this post on Instagram

A post shared by ????????

(@opamjp) A post shared by ???????? (@opamjp) The Oita Prefectural Art Museum (OPAM) is filled with artworks made throughout the centuries. Over 5,000 pieces of art are displayed in the museum, preserved and taken care of like treasures, signifying the rich history of the region. Works from artists such as Tanomura Chikuden (1777-1835), Fukuda Heihachiro (1892-1974) and Yoshimura Masunobu (1932-2011) fill the halls of OPAM. These art pieces are housed in the building ? inspired by bamboo weaving, which is a local craft in the region ? designed by world-renowned Japanese architect Shigeru Ban. View this post on Instagram

A post shared by Oita Pref Tourism

Association (@tourismoita) A post shared by Oita Pref Tourism Association (@tourismoita) Oita Prefecture is home to the Beppu hells, a collection of several differently-coloured onsens (hot springs) located around Beppu City. Located in Beppu's Kannawa and Kamegawa regions, these hot springs ? known as Jigoku ? expel steam, hot mud and gas, earning their name ?hells? due to their unsettling nature for people in ancient times. While visitors cannot bathe in these hot springs ? as temperatures can reach up to 99 degrees Celsius ? you can still explore and see the Seven Hells of Beppu through a tour. The Jigoku Meguri, a tour bus, will take you to all seven onsens. The entrance fee to the Seven Hells of Beppu costs JPY2,200 for adults and JPY1,000 for children. You can also visit each hot spring individually for JPY400 each. Note that only Japanese guides are available on the aforementioned tours. However, several operators offer English tours at various prices. Which activity excites you the most?

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# Stunning Hidden Gems to Discover in Japan Off the Beaten Path

As tourism has been absolutely booming lately along the country's 'Golden Route,' it's easy to want to avoid crowds and explore Japan off the beaten path! While planning a Japan trip may seem a bit intimidating, I can empathise that it's not always an easy task to find these lesser-known destinations in Japan. How do you know where to start? Have no fear my newfound friend. Over the past decade, I've done my fair share of research and travelling off the beaten path in Japan (as well as the well-trodden areas) as this is part of being an invisible tourist. I'm all about seeing the best of a country while simultaneously doing what I can to avoid contributing to overtourism issues. If you're looking to tailor your very own Japan off the beaten track itinerary, this handy guide to spots often overlooked by foreign visitors will provide you with some inspiration for your own adventure. Here you'll find many of the destinations I've visited in person, as well as some others that are on my Japan bucket list. Interested in discovering how to not look like a tourist by visiting the Japan less travelled and some gorgeous hidden gems? Then read on for more!

**BY REGION** This post contains affiliate links, at no extra cost to you. I may receive a small commission if you click through and make a purchase. Sure, most people visiting Japan for the first time want to see cities such as Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka and Hiroshima along the Golden Route. These are cities Japan is famous for, and with good reason. But there are literally so many lesser-known and secret places in Japan that many tourists seem to miss during their whirlwind visit. And I don't want that for you! As I'm pretty much addicted to all things Japan, I'm forever looking for new destinations and planning my future visits there. This guide explores a range of places I've personally visited and plan to someday including small towns in Japan, the best nature in Japan, things to do at each destination and much more categorised by region. I've even found some alternatives to popular destinations so keep an eye out for my tips along the way.

**NOTE:** Because some of these locations are so unspoilt and not used to large tourist numbers, please be mindful of the locals and the environment during your time off the beaten track in Japan. There have been some damaging issues caused by overtourism in Japan in recent years. We can all do our part in being more responsible tourists across the globe.



No one likes an annoying tourist so remember to ?be invisible? to keep these spots pristine for the benefit of everyone! With that said, are you ready to venture off Japan?s Golden Route? Let?s begin by starting in the south in Okinawa and working up north towards Hokkaido to make things easy. Which locations will you choose to add to your Japan trip? Kyushu is a destination I highly recommend hiring a car to really reach the offbeat spots and allow for flexibility. Read my detailed guide for everything you need to know when driving in Japan as a tourist for more. We all know Japan is synonymous with snow-capped mountains and amazing autumn foliage. But did you know there?s a place to escape with sandy beaches and turquoise waters that could be mistaken for Hawaii? Complete with coral bays, Okinawa is an ideal destination for snorkelling and diving. As the crow flies, the laid-back Islands of Okinawa (Okinawa Shoto ?????) are situated just over 100 kilometres south-west of Japan?s mainland. The isolated location of the islands and tropical climate means it?s the perfect destination to visit in Japan off the beaten track. Once you?ve seen the stunning landscape and learnt more about local life there, it?s easy to see why this cluster of seventeen isles are home to the oldest centenarians (and supercentenarians) in the world! As Japan?s third-largest island, Kyushu ?? is bursting with beauty and historical gems to uncover. Its largest city of Fukuoka is actually closer to Seoul (South Korea) than it is to Tokyo, which resulted in Fukuoka?s port playing a vital role in trade to Asia and beyond throughout the centuries. Takachiho Gorge is an incredibly stunning beauty and an absolute highlight during one of my Japan trips (read my Takachiho Gorge day trip itinerary for details). Over millennia the Gokase River has carved its way through towering volcanic basalt to create a scene that could easily be mistaken for Iceland! Boasting incredible natural scenery from mountainous landscapes to sub-tropical islands in Kagoshima, stunning architecture of Kumamoto Castle and the dark past of port city Nagasaki, Kyushu holds numerous rewards for those who dare to venture off the beaten path in Japan. TIP: Read my full 7 days in Kyushu itinerary (with option to extend to 10 days) which covers most of the places listed below. Additionally, my 2 Days in Nagasaki Itinerary: City of Million Dollar Views details of how to spend your time there, step back in time to Fukuoka?s hidden canal city on a Yanagawa day trip, plus my review of visiting Huis Ten Bosch and my itinerary for spending one day in Arita,

the birthplace of Japanese porcelain! The Chugoku region is a great area to stay the night to break up your journey between Osaka and Hiroshima. This region features some of my favourite Japan hidden gems that I'm sure you'll love too. TIP: Overlooking the Sea of Japan towards South Korea, the rugged coastline is dotted with stunning cities that are completely overlooked by foreign visitors. These include Izumo, Matsue and Tottori. If you want to completely avoid crowds during your visit, my 10 days in Japan travel itinerary covers these locations and more! Located only a 15 minute train ride away from Okayama city, Kurashiki ?? can be described as another 'Venice of Japan' often overlooked by foreign tourists. If you're a huge lover of art and culture, Kurashiki is a must to add to your Japan itinerary. Although it's a small town, Kurashiki was the birthplace of denim in Japan and home to the very first museum dedicated to Western art. Unexpectedly, the Ohara Museum of Art displays huge names such as Monet, Picasso and Pollock. With its willow-lined canals and traditional boats, I adore this almost secret place in Japan! Here are a small selection of things to do, for even more check my Kurashiki travel guide: Not one to be found in guidebooks, for an arty seaside town with lengthy history, cliffside temples and known for cats, gorgeous Onomichi ???? is for you! It's also a popular starting point with locals for the Shimanami Kaido cycling route. My favourite part of my time in Onomichi was riding the Mountain Ropeway to take in stunning views over the Seto Inland Sea from the beautiful Senko-ji Temple. The Daruma ema are so cool! TIP: Read my full one day in Onomichi itinerary for all the details about visiting this overlooked port town between Kyoto and Hiroshima! Most know Kyoto was Japan's capital for 1,000 years, some know Nara was the capital prior to that? But did you know Izumo ?? was considered the country's prehistoric capital? Steeped in mythology and finds dating back to the Bronze Age, Izumo is believed to be the place where Japan's kami (deities in Shinto religion) have annually gathered on the tenth month of the Lunar calendar since prehistoric times. With Japan's most ancient shrine, Izumo Taisha Grand Shrine at the forefront, the city is also home to some of the best spots to see the sunset in the country. History lovers should certainly add Izumo to their itinerary! Japanese garden lovers, you need to add the 'City of Water' to your list! Matsue ?? is often overlooked but packs a punch in the flora-sphere. The city itself is picturesque, lined with canals and Edo Period

buildings in areas. Matsue Castle is one of the 12 originals remaining in Japan. While Kanazawa is known for Kenrokuen Garden, I'd have to say Yushien Garden here is even more so impressive! During Golden Week (first week of May annually), its landscaped pond is filled with thousands of harvested peony blooms, creating a striking sight. You can see all kinds of Japanese flowers and landscapes here, it's truly worth the trip. The Adachi Museum of Art is another must-see. The garden's unmatched beauty, ambience and maintenance means it has been judged the Finest Garden in Japan consecutively since 2003 by Sukiya Living Magazine. It's easy to see why when you noticed not one single leaf is out of place here! You would be forgiven for thinking the expansive Tottori Sand Dunes were right out of the Middle East, but luckily you don't have to go that far. During the winter months, the Tottori Sand Dunes, stretching 16 kilometres along the Sea of Japan, can be covered in snow which makes for an unusual sight. The wavy dunes are the prefecture's top attraction, dating back over 100,000 years and some as tall as 50 metres high. Recently, the dunes have begun to attract more foreign tourists. Despite 'sand graffiti' being illegal here for over a decade, authorities are targeting visitors who etch their names into the sand for a photo. Please be respectful of this area's history and don't be THAT tourist. This area of the country is considered one of Japan's most beautiful. The main island of Shikoku overlooks a cluster of isles prominent on the horizon of the Seto Inland Sea. Here, destinations such as Takamatsu, Naoshima Island and Iya Valley are perfect for getting off the beaten track in Japan. The port town of Takamatsu is a rising star in the Japan off the beaten path category. Prior to the creation of the Seto Ohashi Bridge that stretches from Kagawa prefecture to Okayama prefecture on the mainland, Takamatsu used to be the main entry point to Shikoku. Just off the coast of Takamatsu is Megijima Island (not to be confused with Miyajima Island, although pictures do remind me of Miyajima a little). In Japanese folklore, Megijima Island is also known as 'Ogre Island' in the popular regional tale of Momotaro, the 'Peach Boy,' as mentioned earlier in Kurashiki. Perhaps one of Japan's most visited areas by international visitors, the Kansai region has plenty of lesser-travelled locations to discover. Beyond the large cities of Osaka, Nara, Kyoto, Kobe and Himeji, there are a selection of hidden gems to explore. You don't need to wander far off the beaten path in Japan to discover alternatives to

popular destinations! TIP: My detailed guide to day trips from Osaka will help you explore more of the Kansai region. As mentioned to my guide to day trips from Osaka, Japan's largest freshwater body Lake Biwa ??? almost brushes the Shiga border of neighbouring Kyoto and is a lovely alternative to popular Miyajima (Itsukushima) Island. A similar Grand Torii gate floats on the lake's surface, creating an almost identical image to its more famous sibling found in the country's south. Hikone Castle is also worth a visit. Within Wakayama prefecture ????, the Kii Peninsula area is recognised for its lush forests and ancient pilgrimage routes. Known as the Kumano Kodo, an ancient network of trails and shrines trace across the peninsula and have attracted pilgrims from as far as Kyoto and Osaka for over 1,000 years. Here, Mt Koya (affectionately known as Koyasan) is the main attraction and headquarters of Shingon Buddhism. This region of Japan is known for its alpine scenery, preserved old towns, snow monkeys and skiing. Many of the following locations feature heavily in my itinerary for spending 3 weeks in Japan. Encapsulating all the different facets of Japan that has made some locations elsewhere incredibly popular, the Izu Peninsula ??? is completely overlooked by most foreign tourists who zip right past in on bullet trains. Discover these uncrowded locations with some of the best views in Japan! My guide to creating an Izu Peninsula itinerary covers the following and more in detail, as well as options for getting around without a car: One of my absolute favourite hidden gems in Japan, Gujo Hachiman ??? is known as Japan's 'Water City,' although I fondly call it 'Kyoto Without The Crowds.' With temple gardens to rival Kyoto, UNESCO World Heritage preserved streets and white 'Castle in the Sky' perched on a hillside overlooking an emerald valley, Gujo Hachiman really is a must-see. Producing 50% of Japan's sampuru (replica food), it's so much fun to hunt for unique Japanese souvenirs here! My full Gujo Hachiman day trip itinerary covers the following and more in detail, as well as how to get there from Nagoya: If you're planning to be at one with nature in Japan, the alpine region of Nagano ?? will be perfect for you. This is where you'll find each of Japan's 30 highest peaks (except Mt Fuji) so it's no surprise the area is synonymous for snowy adventures. Contrary to popular belief, the cheeky snow monkeys of Jigokudani Monkey Park are there year-round? even in summer! Visiting during the warmer months definitely has its perks (hint: fluffy snow monkey babies

and fewer tourists). Read my 2 days in Nagano itinerary and guide to visiting Jigokudani Monkey Park in summer for details, and also consider: If you've read this far, I'm guessing you're seeking more places to go in Japan off the beaten path. Lucky for you we're only halfway through and I have more spots up my sleeve to share! Incredible Matsumoto ?? is one such place. Matsumoto Castle (Matsumoto-jo) is one of four castles listed as National Treasures of Japan. Known colloquially as the 'Black Crow' this must-see structure is actually Japan's oldest original wooden castle, dating back to 1594! The steep 60° angle of the staircases inside caused my head to spin and made me wonder how ninjas actually managed to hurl themselves up and down them. TIP: If you're petite like me (5'2"), you may find your legs not long enough to descend the old wooden stairs without shuffling down on your bottom! My full Matsumoto day trip itinerary covers the following and more in detail, as well as how to get there: According to statistics, only 6% of tourists to Japan visit Takayama ??, but I believe it is another perfect Kyoto alternative! I absolutely LOVE it and can't wait to return. In my opinion, Takayama is a delightful Japan off the beaten path destination, its enchanting townhouse-lined streets full of pleasant surprises such as Hida beef eateries, places to sample ALL the sake and paths to explore hidden temples. TIP: Some breweries allow visitors to sample a dozen shots of sake for a few hundred yen. Each sake varies in flavour, aroma and amount the rice is polished. This system is based on goodwill so please don't be that annoying tourist who goes overboard with the drinks and ruins this experience for everyone. While many tourists day trip to Shirakawa-go ??? from Takayama, I don't recommend this as the UNESCO site is falling victim to overtourism. Tourists have been known to wait in line for two hours to get photos of the town from an elevated vantage point! If you're intrigued by the idea of Shirakawa-go without the crowds, I've written about my visit to Hida No Sato Folk Village, the perfect alternative complete with beautiful scenery and grasshatched farmhouses. TIP: Nearby Gero Onsen is a must if you want to literally soak up the local culture in a traditional Japanese hot spring town, too! Read my detailed itinerary to Gero Onsen here. Have you heard of the 'Unseen side of Mt Fuji'? Once the main gateway to climbing Mt Fuji's summit by pilgrims from Japan's ancient capital, Kyoto, Fujinomiya ??? is now often overlooked by foreign visitors to Japan. And it

shouldn't be! In the middle of Tokyo and Kyoto, Fujinomiya can be reached by bullet train and is home to numerous UNESCO World Heritage sites, stunning natural scenery, delicious local specialties, a community feel and much more. There are so many things to do in Fujinomiya over a weekend, and the best part is you can enjoy some of the best Mt Fuji views in the entire country WITHOUT the crowds. I mean, just look at the sunrise view from my hotel room below! Have you ever wondered what it would be like to walk in the footsteps of samurais? Have a peek in their homes and see the beauty they surrounded themselves with? You'll be able to in Kanazawa ??! Find out exactly how with my 2 day Kanazawa itinerary. Dubbed as "Little Kyoto", Kanazawa shines with traditional pride in its well-preserved Nagamachi district. Aged brown townhouses line the streets of Japan's other active geisha city after Kyoto. If you're incredibly lucky you may be able to spot one during your visit or even dress up as one yourself. If not, it's easy to imagine these ladies gracing the streets and samurais going about their daily lives. One of Japan's top gardens, Kenroku-en is here in Kanazawa. I thoroughly enjoyed strolling around these grounds with such different varieties of landscapes around every corner! Every spot is a little photo opportunity with ponds, bridges, cherry blossoms, mosses, autumn colours? Stunning in every season. Kenroku-en used to be part of Kanazawa Castle's outer gardens and Japan's oldest water fountain is located inside. TIP: Kanazawa is also famed for its gold leaf. It's said the 20 tonnes of gold leaf used to cover Kinkaku-ji in Kyoto came from this city. Even the Kanji name for Kanazawa has the symbol for gold in it (!)! Why not pick up a small souvenir featuring gold leaf during your trip? Niigata ??? is known for its stunning fall foliage, making it a nice alternative to popular Nikko. Off the coast of Niigata lies Sado Island with a fascinating history. Once used as an island for political exiles, today you can visit the former gold mines, enjoy the tranquil scenery of Senkaku Bay, or learn more about the once-endangered toki bird at Toki Forest Park. As the producer of some of the country's finest sake (sa-keh), you can't leave Niigata without trying some! As we reach the northernmost point of Japan's main island of Honshu, we hit the lovely uncharted area of Aomori. Aomori city ?? would be an ideal place to escape the crowds of international visitors to Kyoto, Nara and Osaka if you're visiting towards the end of April during the cherry blossom season! Iconic Hirosaki Castle is

surrounded by over 50 varieties of cherry blossoms, framing the structure in a flurry of delicate pink hues. Doesn't paddling a small boat beneath in the moat beneath these blossoms sound dreamy? The perfect Japan off the beaten path experience. You'll also be treated to a seemingly endless street of cherry trees along the 'World's Longest Cherry-Lined Road', boasting 6,500 cherry trees and stretching for 20 kilometres! An incredible of snow-capped Mt Iwaki rewards visitors who stroll along this southern road during spring. I'm yet to visit Japan's second-largest island, but there are plenty of reasons why I want to! As well as the famed Sapporo Snow Festival, mountainous Hokkaido ??? seems to be a hiker's paradise with an assortment of wildlife to be spotted throughout the region. Brown bears and deer forage through the lush wilderness while beautiful red-crowned cranes dance in the snow to attract a mate. Hokkaido is home to six national parks than span from the forests to the sea, the largest being Daisetsuzan National Park. With so much variety in scenery, Hokkaido has delightful treasures to be found around every corner. It could be argued that the stunning areas of Nikko and Hakone should be included in this guide, but I decided against it. Even though Nikko and Hakone are technically off the beaten path, they still manage to be quite popular spots for fall foliage and crowds. Exactly what we are trying to avoid! What did you think of these lesser-known Japan tourist attractions? I wanted to share some cities along Japan's 'New Golden Route' as the original Golden Route is becoming overworn with tourist love. Plus I'm a big believer that it's always rewarding stepping outside your comfort zone. There is so much stunning natural beauty, rich history and beautiful culture to be found in all regions of Japan, not just the most popular tourist spots. Now you know where to head in Japan off the beaten path with my comprehensive guide, what's stopping you from adding a few of these locations to your trip? Let me know in the comments below! If you enjoyed this article, I've written about many more off the beaten path destinations and hidden gems on my Japan travel blog to inspire you and help with your Japan trip planning, so go take a look. Want to learn my strategies for how to 'blend in' anywhere around the globe? Find out by reading my #1 Amazon New Release Book! If you found this helpful please share it with your friends or save it for later reference. I'd also love if you could join me on Facebook, my Japan Off The Beaten Path Travel Community on Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram

and TikTok for more Japan inspiration! Until next time, Like it? Pin it! ? This guide to destinations in Japan off the beaten path contains some affiliate links, at no extra cost to you. I may earn a small commission if you decide to make a purchase and if you do, thanks for your support! This helps with the costs of running my blog so I can keep my content free for you. As always, I only recommend a product or service that I genuinely love and use myself! Australian-based Alyse is founder of The Invisible Tourist, the #1 travel blog encouraging visitors to better "blend in" abroad. Alyse's passionate advice about cultural, historical & responsible travel has been especially popular with visitors to Japan, helping millions of tourists since 2017. Her first book details strategies for more enriching travel experiences without contributing to overtourism, and became a #1 Amazon New Release in two categories including Japan Travel. Alyse's unique approach to travelling has resulted in her work being featured on Japanese TV, in tourism textbooks, and has been shared by numerous tourism organisations. I loved this sadly my plan is to visit Tohoku and you don't have a lot of landscapes there. I'm sorry, Cookie!

I haven't been to the Tohoku region as yet so my knowledge is quite limited unfortunately.

But I'll get there someday and will update my findings here for sure! Hello Alyse, What a great website! We are traveling in August with our 3 teenagers to Japan for 26 days. I still have to plan the whole trip so some tips would be welcome. We love nature, culture and the Japanese lifestyle. We like to travel off the beaten tracks.

I doubt between public transport or renting a car or a combination of the two. Further more it's not the best season to visit all regions. Would you have a recommendation for us on transport , regions for that period? Hi Inge, thanks for reading!

Most of the places in this guide are ideal to reach with public transport. The exception to this is places in Kyushu not on the train line and the Japanese Alps areas (Gujo Hachiman, Takayama, Nagano) where it can be ideal to hire a car to save travel time.

I'd recommend looking at the places you wish to visit in Kyushu and the Alps, and compare the travel times between each by car and train. The car will be more convenient in those areas, and the bullet trains for almost everything else.



I hope that helps and you have an amazing time in Japan! Wow what a list, thank you for all work you've done on this blog. I want to visit all the places here ?? It's going to be really hard to narrow down our 26 days itinerary, I really love to go off the beaten track, my husband wants to visit the common places to go Tokyo ? Kyoto ? Mt Fuji and the WW2 bomb site ? I have of planning thinking of how we can see some of the above you have mentioned Thanks, BluLyn!

I hope you can narrow down a few places to add to your trip ? I'm new to your page and wanted to thank you for the incredibly detailed information. I'm going Japan for 3 weeks in October and we're keen to discover the lesser visited spots and minimise our footprint so this article especially has been super helpful. I really like the sound of Kurashiki and the 'unseen' side of Fujisan. We're hoping to do a multi-day hike of the Kumano Kodo. Thank you again and I look forward to browsing more of your articles. Thank you for your kind comments, Joya! I'm so happy to have you here, thank you for following along ?

Kurashiki is an absolutely joy to visit, and Fujinomiya is a perfect place to see some of the country's best views of Mt Fuji without the crowds.

I hope you have a wonderful time in Japan! Hey, hope you are well.

We are looking at a short 7 day trip end of June (land and depart Osaka). We are all for the unknown and non tourist options. We thinking of exploring Osaka for 3 days ? what area would you recommend for a 4 day road trip? Chugoku area or Kyushu or Honshu? Hi Colin,

Osaka is quite touristy these days, so if you are looking for the unknown and non-tourist options there, my Osaka itinerary covers a few spots (as well as the popular places).

But if you would rather avoid the big city vibes altogether in a week, I definitely recommend Kyushu or Chubu Regions instead of Chugoku.

Honshu is the largest and main island of Japan, made up of Tokohu, Kanto, Chubu, Kansai and Chugoku Regions.

Chubu is much less explored by foreign tourists compared to Chugoku. I hope that helps! Great post? I'm heading to Kanazawa and then Kyushu in May. I feel like Kagoshima should be on this list. Cheers! I absolutely agree about Kagoshima, gt! Hoping I can make it there myself someday ?

Enjoy your trip and enjoy all that wagyu for me! Thank you so much for your wonderful and thoughtful article. My 12 year old son and I are considering a trip in Mid-March. Would you be willing to share what your itinerary would be with 10 days? It will be his first trip and my second, I haven't been since 2008. Thanks again!! Carlisle Thanks for your kind words, Carlisle!

How exciting you're able to head back again after so long and take your son along too.

An itinerary would depend on your interests and things you and your son would like to see.

Are you hoping to see some kind of spring blossoms, what things would your son like to experience?

Do you like the traditional side of things, more modern aspects, or both? What kinds of foods would you like to try?

Are there any destinations from this article you'd like to include?

To help get you started, my article on Japan cultural experiences should be able to help you out.

The answer is different for everyone, so feel free to tell me a few interests and we can go from there ?

Thanks for your comment! Just wanted to say how valuable I am finding your advice and blog as I organise a 3 week trip to Japan in April/May 2023. Being a humble and quiet tourist is my goal and I like the way you think about things and write. Thanks for your unique perspective ? very helpful.

That is so kind of you to say, thank you Kim!

Comments such as yours from like-minded travellers mean so much ?

I hope you have a wonderful time in Japan and are able to chase some cherry blossoms! Saved for my next trip to Japan! I LOVED Matsumoto (the castle was wonderful, and the town had the most interesting shops), Kanazawa (so much to do, and my favorite train station in all of Japan) and Naoshima (where I enjoyed the art and stayed overnight, sampling the beaches and the onsen and watching children taiko drumming in the temple). I wish I'd had more time in Takayama, but only enough to do the Alpine Route. I'm so happy to hear you've saved this for your next Japan trip, Alli!

Thank you so much for your comment and I hope you get to spend some more time in the Alps once you're able to revisit ? Thanks so much much for your post. Japan is my favourite country to travel

to, finding lots of inspiration for my fourth trip. Definitely better to get off the beaten path for sure!

I'm so glad to hear this post inspired you, Mary! Wow your fourth trip sounds very exciting ? happy planning and thanks so much for your comment ? Thank you, your article is very good! Thanks very much, so glad yo think so ? Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked \*

Comment \* Name \* Email \* Dedicated to travellers with a mid-range budget, my blog explores responsible ways we can improve tourism for locals and ourselves by ?blending in.? With over 15 years of globetrotting experience, my personal travel guides & itineraries will help you avoid crowds whilst giving back to local communities. If you'd like to make the most of your next adventure, learn how you can ?be invisible? here! © Copyright 2017-2024 The Invisible Tourist. All rights reserved.

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## KYOTO & OITA Food and Onsen Culture | ANA

Discover Japan's regional dishes while relaxing in the country's many onsen (hot springs).

We'll take you past the usual tourist spots, from a lesser known part of Kyoto to the hidden gem of Oita Prefecture,

each of which can be explored in a short two- or three-day getaway. From Tokyo to Kyoto (From 65 mins~) Narita International Airport /Haneda Airport From Tokyo to Oita (95 mins) Haneda Airport Oita Airport via Airport Bus (45 mins) to Beppu City (Beppu Kitahama Bus Stop)

Kyoto is known as the origin of green tea in Japan. If you'd like to experience the country's tea culture at a deeper level, visit the hilly tea plantations of Wazuka Town and try tea leaf harvesting. Here you can also enjoy a variety of dishes prepared using green tea, including ramen and ice cream. Green tea is not the only thing that originated in Kyoto. In the town of Yawata, next to a beautiful Japanese garden with century-old tea houses, you can sample Japan's square bento (a traditional meal box) from Kitcho, the restaurant that invented it. If you look at a map of the Kyoto Prefecture, you'll be surprised to see that it stretches all the way north to the Sea of Japan. This is an area that is often overlooked by tourists who stick to the overcrowded city. Here you'll find the small fishing village of Ine. With its charming, old-fashioned townscape and the row of boat houses that line the coast, Ine will take you on a journey into the simple way of life of the local fishermen. You can try the freshly caught fish or the sake from the local brewery, and even stay at one of the boat houses, as some were converted into lodgings. In this area is also Kyotango City, where you can sample an old sushi recipe called bara sushi. Made by pressing rice and layers of other ingredients in a wooden container, this dish was once prepared during special celebrations. Although not widely known, Kyoto is also home to several hot spring resorts. Head to Amanohashidate, one of Japan's most scenic spots, for onsen baths with a beautiful view of the sea. For mountain fans, the mountain hot spring resort of Yunohana Onsen is a relaxing place hidden away among beautiful nature. It is said that warriors used to come to this hot spring to heal their battle injuries. Located on the eastern coast of Kyushu Island, Oita is known by Japanese people as

the hot spring prefecture?. The city of Beppu is one of Japan's most scenic and famous hot spring resorts in Japan. All kinds of spas can be found here, from hot baths to steam baths and sand baths. Visit the seven "hells", a spectacular set of hot springs that include a blood-red pool and a beautiful blue pool. Also be sure to catch a view of the city with its characteristic clouds of steam. In areas like Beppu City's Kannawa Onsen, you can enjoy a retro townscape and try the jigoku mushi, stone steaming vats where you can cook food with steam coming from the hot springs. Nagayu Onsen in Taketa City offers carbonated baths such as Ramune Onsen, named after a popular soda drink. Oita offers many delicious local dishes. Toriten, or chicken tempura, is a staple along with karaage fried chicken and tori meshi (chicken rice). The market of Saiki sells fresh fish, local food and sushi that people can eat right on the spot. A popular seasoning here is goma dashi, made from fish paste, ground sesame and soy sauce. It is used to prepare the town's signature dish, goma dashi udon. Another regional specialty of Oita is dango jiru, a miso soup packed with seasonal vegetables that contains thick and flat wheat noodles. The same noodles are also used in a dessert called yaseuma, where they are sprinkled with kinako and sugar. Oita might be famous for its hot springs, but few know that it also offers great nature escapes. The beautiful Kuju Mountain Range is home to the Tadewara Wetlands, a dreamy landscape that you can traverse on wooden boardwalks. The hot springs here are isolated and blissfully immersed in nature. If you visit the area, be sure you try Bungo-gyu, Oita's own brand of beef with a juicy meat that melts in your mouth. [Opens in a new window.](#) In the case of an external site, it may or may not meet accessibility guidelines. [Close](#) [Book a Flight](#)

# 5 Must-visit Hidden Gems Along the Southern West JR Lines From Hyogo to Kyushu

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for more information. My Favorites [\\${v.desc | trunc\(25\)}](#) [\\${v.desc | trunc\(25\)}](#) Use the Share your travel photos with us by hashtagging your images with #visitjapanjp Japan's JR train network is one of the most respected in the world for a multitude of reasons! Coming from a country like Malaysia that's still developing its network, the efficiency, cleanliness and punctuality of Japanese trains are a joy to experience every time, alongside attractions like themed trains that offer unique experiences not found anywhere else. In addition, there are also hidden gems scattered throughout Japan's JR lines that are just waiting to be discovered. All aboard the JR train. Photo Credit: JR-WEST In this article, we'll explore five amazing destinations along the JR Lines that run throughout Hyogo to Kyushu. Add one of these destinations to your itinerary, or maybe plan your own trip down the Southern West JR Line for an unforgettable adventure?but be sure that any of these destinations would be the highlight of your trip! Himeji Castle. Photo Credit: Himeji City The first thing you see when you step out of the Central exit of the Himeji JR Station are the majestic rooftops of Himeji Castle, one of Japan's national treasures and a World Heritage site. The almost 700-year-old castle's origins date back to the 14th century, when Akamatsu Norimura, a samurai of the Akamatsu clan, built a fort atop Himeyama Hill. It was dismantled in 1346 to make way for Himeyama Castle. The castle has since been restored and expanded several times before the Himeji Castle we can see today was established in 1617, after the end of the turbulent Sengoku Period. The koi pond in Koko-en Garden. Photo Credit: Himeji City Surrounding the castle itself is yet another marvel?K?ko-en Garden. Built in 1992 to celebrate Himeji City's 100th anniversary, the

garden contains nine separate walled gardens designed in various styles of the Edo Period. This includes a pond with a waterfall and a tea garden where visitors can enjoy green tea in a tea ceremony house for an additional fee. Restaurant GONTA in Himeji City is just a 20-minute walk from Himeji Castle itself and serves halal wagyu certified by the Japan Halal Foundation and other local dishes including their wagyu beef steak don. Do note in your plans that it's closed every Sunday. The restaurant is also close to the Harima Cycle Station, which houses Himeji's only Muslim prayer space! Himeji Castle (Website)

68 Honmachi, Himeji City, Hyogo Prefecture 670-0012

Access: From JR Himeji Station, walk 15 to 20 minutes to Himeji Castle. Restaurant GONTA (Website)

193, Shiomachi, Himeji City, Hyogo Prefecture, 670-0904

Access: From JR Himeji Station, walk for about 10 minutes to reach Restaurant GONTA. Ritsurin Park. Photo Credit: Kagawa Prefecture Tourism Association A quick transfer off the JR Sanyo Shinkansen from Tokyo to Okayama to the JR Marine Liner rapid train to Takamatsu brings you to the home of Ritsurin Park. Often called one of the most beautiful gardens in Japan, the park was built by the local feudal lords during the early Edo Period and features 6 ponds, hills, trees and beautiful pavilions. Many of the pine trees in the park are a testament to that legacy. The park's ancient pines are maintained by skilled gardeners, and can be viewed on a short boat ride. The park is divided into the north and south gardens, with the north garden undergoing renovations upon becoming a public park in 1875. The park is also home to a folk museum and some shops. Ritsurin Park in autumn. Photo Credit: Kagawa Prefecture Tourism Association Those looking to experience a taste of high-class Japanese culture during the feudal area can visit the Kikugetsu-tei teahouse in the southwest part of the gardens, which is open to visitors. For a small fee, you can enter and enjoy tea on its verandas. The park is also in close vicinity to several guesthouses for those looking to take in the atmosphere on their visit. Park operation hours change every month, so be sure to check the official website before making plans to visit! Once you're done taking in the sights, a 20-minute ride by car to the seaside brings you to "by age 18" in Takamatsu City. Specializing in

halal and gluten-free Sanuki udon, the restaurant features lunch and dinner courses and hosts a design shop filled with creatively designed products from all over the world curated by the restaurant's founders. Be sure to make your reservation two days in advance to allow the restaurant to curate a halal menu. More information is available on the restaurant's website.

Ritsurin Park (Website)

1-20-16 Ritsurin-cho, Takamatsu City, Kagawa Prefecture 760-0073

Access: From JR Takamatsu Station, take the Kotoden Bus heading to Ritsurin Koen-mae for 18 minutes. From there, walk about three minutes to reach Ritsurin Park. ?by age 18? (Website)

103-8 Murecho Omachi, Takamatsu City, Kagawa Prefecture 761-0122

Access: From JR Takamatsu Station, board a train on the Tokoku Line for 27 minutes until JR Sanuki-Mure Station. The restaurant is a 5-minute taxi ride away. Shimanami Kaido. A ride on the Sanyo Shinkansen bound for Shin-Onomichi reveals a 60-kilometer long toll road that connects Japan's main island of Honshu (Onomichi City, Hiroshima Prefecture) to the island of Shikoku (Imabari City, Ehime Prefecture) ? one of the most scenic journeys imaginable as it passes over six small islands along the way. There are buses across the toll road as well as ferries to cross the sea, but the avid explorer will be intrigued by the option of traversing on foot or by bicycle as there are 7 bridges and 6 small islands connecting Honshu's Onomichi to Shikoku's Imabari. The scenic Loop 1 on the Shimanami Kaido cycling route. The 70km journey across Shimanami Kaido can be crossed in a single day by bicycle, but you can opt to send your luggage ahead via the takkyubin delivery service and take your time exploring the islands of Mukaishima, Innoshima, Ikuchijima, Omishima, Hakatajima and Oshima, which feature plenty of guesthouses along the way. On Miyakubo Island just off the coast of Imabari is seafood restaurant Noshima Suigun. The restaurant, located just 11 minutes' drive from the Shimanami Kaido exit on the island, specializes in Tai meshi, which sees sea bream sashimi dipped in a special sauce and mixed with condiments and eaten over rice and offers DIY seafood barbecues on a deck overlooking the sea. Those intending to visit can call ahead for the restaurant to prepare a halal menu and non-alcoholic and vegan soy sauce at +81 0897-86-3323. Shimanami Kaido (Website)



Onomichi Station, 1-1 Higashigosho-cho, Onomichi City, Hiroshima Prefecture 722-0036

Access: From JR Shin Osaka Station, take the Sanyo Shinkansen to JR Fukuyama Station, followed by a 20-minute ride on the Sanyo Main Line to JR Onomichi Station. Noshima Suigun (Website)

1293-2 Miyakubo, Miyakubo-cho, Imabari City, Ehime Prefecture 794-2203

Access: From the Shimanami Kaido Oshima-Kita Interchange, head northeast for 2.7km by car towards the Noshima Ferry Terminal. The Kobato Blue Pond. Photo Credit: Kyushu Tourism

Organization A ride on the JR Sanyo Shinkansen from Shin Osaka to Kokura Station and a transfer to the Limited Express Sonic train will bring you to Beppu City, which is famous for its hot springs.

The city is home to the Beppu Hells, a collection of 7 hot springs and geothermal features that are part of the eight distinct major thermal spring zones that lie below the city. Jigoku mushi, an Oita

Prefecture specialty. Photo Credit: Kyushu Tourism Organization Designated as a National Place of Scenic Beauty, the 7 hot springs each display unique characteristics and vibrant colors. For

example, Umi Jigoku (which means "Sea Hell"), the largest of the hells, is a stunning sight with its cobalt blue appearance and depth of 200 meters! Bathing may not be permitted in the Beppu Hells,

but visitors can check out the practice of Jigoku Mushi, which sees fresh vegetables and seafood steamed using the vapors from the hot springs. Located in Beppu City, the Central Kyushu Masjid

hosts a vibrant community and often hosts open events inviting locals to learn more about the religion. It is easily accessible from Beppu Hells via the Kamenoi Bus at Umijigoku Mae, and will

bring you within 3 to 5 minutes' walking distance of the masjid after disembarking at Mochigahama 2 Kumi. Beppu Hells (Website)

559-1 Kannawa, Beppu City, Oita Prefecture 874-0000

Access: From JR Beppu Station, go to the west exit to take a Kamenoi Bus heading to Umi Jigoku-mae/Kannawa area. Get off depending on which hell you want to visit first. Central Kyushu

Masjid (Website)

10-19 Wakakusa-cho, Beppu City, Oita Prefecture 874-0925

Access: From JR Beppu Station, board the Kamenoi Bus for 9 minutes until the Mochigahama stop. From there, walk about 3 to 5 minutes to Central Kyushu Masjid. Nagasaki Peace Park.

©NAGASAKI CITY The solemn but resplendent Nagasaki Peace Park sits on the site of the atomic bombing of the city on August 9, 1945, and is a reminder of the might of nuclear technology and a stark symbol of why humans should never wield them against one another. The park features two Peace Symbols Zones, which are filled with monuments to peace donated from a total of 15 countries. The park was also shown in the 1991 Akira Kurosawa film, 'Rhapsody in August'. One of the displays inside the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum. Photo Credit: ©NAGASAKI CITY Museums dedicated to the bombing can also be found within the vicinity of the park, including the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, Nagai Takashi Memorial Museum (Nyokodo), Noguchi Yataro Art Museum and more. While this destination is more sobering than the others in this article, the weight of history at this site will live on long in the mind. A tram-way ride heading to Sakuramachi Station brings us to MALAYA Restaurant, which situated in front of the Nagasaki City Library. MALAYA Restaurant serves halal Malaysian/Indonesian and Japanese food for guests. Local favorites available include Kari Ayam and Satay. Nagasaki Peace Park (Website)

Matsuyamamacho, Nagasaki City, Nagasaki Prefecture 852-8118

Access: From JR Nagasaki Station, ride the Nagasaki Electric Tramway for 13 minutes to reach Heiwa Koen then walk to the Nagasaki Peace Park. MALAYA Restaurant (Website)

4-4-1F, Kozen-Machi, Nagasaki City, Nagasaki Prefecture 850-0032

Access: From Nagasaki Peace Park, board the Nagasaki Electric Tramway to Sakuramachi Station. The restaurant is 5 minutes away from the station. If you're in the middle of planning your next trip, why not consider adding one of these destinations to your itinerary? There is so much of Japan to fall in love with, and we hope this article inspires you to embark on a Japanese train discovery and, perhaps, uncover what you truly love about Japan along the way. Please Choose Your Language  
Browse the JNTO site in one of multiple languages

## Oita ????? - Japan Travel Sights

Hello, everyone! My name is Aoi, and I am the administrator of "Japan Travel Sights." I love introducing Japan's beautiful tourist destinations and culture to travelers from around the world. On this site, we showcase hidden gems and recommended spots to make your travels even more wonderful. We also highlight local favorite shops and accommodations to provide you with a fulfilling travel experience. I will continue to strive to deliver useful and engaging content, so please stay tuned. Thank you for your support!

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Beppu,oneofJapan?spremierhot?? Yufuin,locatedintheheartofOitaPre?? Japan Travel Sights ©

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## Oita City - japan-guide.com forum

Dear visitor, if you know the answer to this question, please post it. Thank you! Note that this thread has not been updated in a long time, and its content might not be up-to-date anymore. Oita City

2015/5/23 13:08

So not so recently, I returned from Kyushu. I went with my dad and I visited Beppu Onsen. Though it was a good experience, I heard that the nearby Yufuin is more interesting with the shops. But that is besides the point. Upon returning home, a passing remark was passed onto my father by a Japanese colleague. He asked whether we stopped by Oita City. He then commented that Oita City is the most beautiful Japanese city. I do not know many who have been there since it is not listed as a city with tourist attractions. Which leads to my question, is it truly the most beautiful city in Japan? Is it beautiful at all? Why so? Thanks!

by Joshua Hugh Re: Oita City

2015/5/24 10:31

Oita is the typical, industrial Japanese city. I recently visited the new art museum which is housed in a very nice building. And Takasaki Monkey Park is one of the best monkey parks in Japan. But, otherwise, I know of nothing outstanding about the city and am not aware of anything particularly beautiful about it. I suspect that he is referring to a different city. Maybe similarly named?

by Uji

rate this post as useful reply to this thread

## Oita - GaijinPot Travel

Bathe in hell (in a good way) in onsen-filled Oita. For a serious onsen (hot spring bath) experience, there's no place like Oita. Billowing steam from countless hot spring towns gives the impression that much of the prefecture is constantly on fire. Despite its hellish properties, Oita's volcanic landscape is extremely beautiful to look at. It's also just plain fun to explore. Enjoy great hiking, ancient shrines, temples and more for some rewarding entertainment in between baths. Visit the eight hells of Beppu, multi-colored volcanic pools of boiling water. Beppu is the onsen capital of Kyushu, if not the whole of Japan, boasting the highest number of hot spring sources and hundreds of baths across a dedicated spa town. Basically, it's like an onsen theme park in a relaxing rural setting. Can I use the onsen if I have a tattoo? You'll find hot spring baths, mud baths, sand baths, milky baths, blood baths, and steam baths spread out across the area. Some are said to cure ailments from backaches to gastroenteritis, while others increase beauty or restore youth. Most are for bathing but there are eight that are definitely not. These jigoku, or Hells of Beppu are touted as the area's tourist highlight. Take a tour of the eight spots including the "blood pond" and "tornado hell," and try the various steamed foods made with their hot water. Who knew Hell would be so fun? Explore the scenic streets of Yufuin. Leave the onsen gimmicks behind by heading to Yufuin, another hot spring resort town along the foot of Mount Yufu-dake. Here you'll find a slightly more refined, traditional atmosphere. Traditional inns, boutique restaurants, cafes, and stores line the main streets leading towards picturesque Lake Kinrin-ko. There's some fantastic hiking in the area around the Aso-Kuju National Park which extends all the way from Mount Aso in Kumamoto. Tattoos in onsen are traditionally taboo, but with Japan hosting both the 2020 Olympics and 2019 Rugby World Cup Games, many onsen are changing their rules (slowly). Oita has one of the largest concentrations of tattoo-friendly onsen in Japan—it's a must-visit for inked hot springs lovers. Head over towards the southeastern side of the prefecture to visit coastal Oita City and try some tasty fugu (pufferfish). Only trained chefs are allowed to prepare the notoriously-poisonous delicacy, so don't worry, it's safe! Further on is Usuki, a quaint castle town known for its awe-inspiring

cliffside Buddha carvings. Ready to go to Hell and back in Oita? Start with the locations below. Oita has the largest concentration of tattoo-friendly hot springs in Japan. Check them out plus more with our awesome list of 30 Tattoo-Friendly Onsen in Japan. Home to over 1,400 animals representing approximately 70 species, everyone will have a chance to spot some of their favorite animals. Explore one of the shrine where Shintoism and Buddhism meet Mount Yufu is an active volcano with twin peaks with accessible trails for beginners and experts alike. Located in the western end of Oita Prefecture, Kokonoe Yume Otsurhashi Bridge holds the record for Japan's longest and tallest bridge specifically designed for pedestrians. For an unforgettable stroll with fantastic views,... The Kuju Mountains will entertain day trippers and experienced hikers alike. Check out old masters and contemporary artists at the Oita Prefectural Art Museum Seek out the healing powers of the Medicine Buddha in Oita City Check out one of Oita City's best cherry blossom spots at Funai Castle Ruins! Come learn about marine life through sight and touch at Umitamago Aquarium! Get buried in warm black sand in this Meiji-era onsen ? that's tattoo friendly! Oita's secret mixed-gender onsen in a cave! We're in love with this tattoo-friendly onsen with roasting temperatures. Hidden in a bamboo grove, your Japanese basket of goodies awaits. A little bit of Africa in Japan at this safari park. A mountain with a view. Close to Beppu, this rural hot spring town is as scenic as they come. Go to hell. Fukuoka Prefecture isn't just about partying, but it's a good place to start. Traditional, tropical, mystical, and magical; Kagoshima is nothing short of extraordinary. Between the smoking crater of Mount Aso in the east and the isolated islands of Amakusa in the west, Kumamoto has plenty to keep you enthralled. The mountains and coasts of Miyazaki are calling. Looking out east, Nagasaki Prefecture has long been the gateway between the outside world and Japan. Discover white sandy beaches, crystal blue waters, wild jungles, and centuries of unique native traditions. Kyushu's smallest prefecture is big on history, culture and natural beauty. Aichi prefecture is the dynamic capital of Japanese industrialization. From glittering skyscrapers to rickety ramen shacks, Tokyo is a dazzling mix of the ultra modern and traditional. Ah, Akihabara. Where to even begin? Electric town. Cool Japan. Anime Center. Themed cafes. The list is... A whimsical wonderland that is heartbreakingly charming.

# Kunisaki City Tourist Guide | Visit Kunisaki | VISIT KUNISAKI

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**EXPLORE OITA JAPAN [Oita's Tourism Channel] - YouTube**

# Hidden Gems in Kyushu | Japan KYUSHU Tourist????????????????

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E-mail Munakata Region is located in the west part of Fukuoka-prefecture and facing to Genkai Sea. The area are consist of Munakata, Fukutsu and Okagaki. There are many beautiful seas and religious sites that have UNESCO World Heritage status including the Sacred Island of Okinoshima and other Associated Sites. The country of Green tea, Yame is a rural tranquil region of Japanese tea cultivation and the traditional crafts manufacturing. Yame grew in size after the merger with Kurogi town,Tachibana town,Yabe village and Hoshino village in 2010. The recommendable experience is to have Gyokuro tea which is the highest grade of Japanese tea cultivated in Hoshino village. Population : 58,000 people, Population density : 120 people / km2 Kujukushima Islands, located at the westernmost tip of the Japanese mainland in Kyushu, are a picturesque scenic spot consisting of a complex ria coastline and 208 large and small islands. There are only four inhabited islands: Kuroshima, Takashima, Maejima, and Todomari Island, and almost the entire area was designated as the Saikai National Park in 1955. There is Kujukushima Islands pleasure boat, departing from Kujukushima Pearl Sea Resort. Omura is the city located in the center of Nagasaki-prefecture and has Nagasaki Airport. It is approximately 40 minutes to Nagasaki-city by a car. Omura was the territory of the Omura clan. In 1549, when the missionary Francisco Xavier introduced Christianity to Japan, the feudal lord Omura Sumitada allowed to spread Christianity, and in 1563 Omura Sumitada himself became a Christian, becoming Japan?s first Christian feudal lord. And then, many people became Christians in Omura area. However, in 1587, the year Omura Sumitada died, Toyotomi Hideyoshi issued ban on Christianity. Since then,

many Christians have been martyred here. Population : 97,000 people, Population density : 770 people / km<sup>2</sup> Karatsu and Yobuko, located on the Higashi Matsuura Peninsula in the north-western part of Saga-prefecture, have been prosperous from ancient times as an important point for trade with Mainland China. Karatsu is a part of Genkai Quasi-National Park, and has many scenic spots. Yobuko is a town of Fishing industry, famous for Squid and Morning Market called Asaichi. Yobuko is located northern tip of Saga-prefecture and is facing to Genkai-nada Sea. A lot of places were as a Shooting location of Thailand drama. Takeo is a Onsen Resort, located west of Saga-city, and has 1200 years history. The hot spring temperature is 18 to 52 degrees. Spring quality is smooth with alkaline simple hot spring. It is said that the color is colorless and transparent and has an outstanding effect on recovery from fatigue. The landmark of Takeo Onsen. Romon Gate, which was designed by a renowned architect in the Meiji Era, Kingo Tatsuno, and is at the entrance of the Onsen area. Population : 47,000 people, Population density : 240 people / km<sup>2</sup> Saga is located in the Saga Plain where is spreading from the foot of Mt. Seburi. And southern part of Saga is facing to Ariake Bay. There is the Yoshinogari Remains where rice cultivation first began in Japan 2400 years ago. And the place made a great contribution to the Japanese Industrial Revolution as the starting place of industrialization. Population : 229,000 people, Population density : 530 people / km<sup>2</sup> Kunisaki Peninsula is a rural area located on the north-east side of Oita-prefecture. It is especially popular for its onsen, and trekking, and the local cuisine can be enjoyed as well. Kunisaki peninsula began to develop 1,300 years ago as a sacred religious ground influenced by local mountain and nature worship. Amakusa is situated on an archipelago consisting of several island on the west side of Kumamoto. It possesses a beautiful lush green landscape and natural geological formations giving the islands the designation "national Geopark". Marine activities such dolphin watching, boat tours, seafood & local delicacies can be enjoyed. Amakusa also has an important historical significance to Christians. Population Amakusa-city : 70,500 people, Kami-Amakusa-city : 22,500 person, Reihoku-machi : 6,400 people Hitoyoshi is a castle town once prosperous as a river port, and boasts the ruins of the Hitoyoshi castle and Hitoyoshi Onsen. The Hitoyoshi Onsen is the collective name for 30-add hot springs

including Sagara Onsen, all of which are supplied with hot water from sources around Hitoyoshi Station and in the basin of Kuma-gawa River. The most exiting thing in Hitoyoshi is Kumasawa-kudari that is riding on a boat maneuvered by a master polar down the Kuma-gawa River, one of the three fast streams in Japan. ?

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**Things to do in Beppu: Book Tours & Activities at Peek.com**

## **Preview: A Webinar to Highlight the Hidden Gems of Japan for Travel Content Creators and Influencers**

Tags: #japan, #Japantravel, #Oita JAMS.TV, the leading company for Japan inbound marketing, specialising in the Australian and New Zealand market, is proud to conduct webinars for Ibaraki and Oita Prefectures. The webinars will highlight activities in their areas and showcase their unique tourism products which is a great way to stay up-to-date with the key trends in these two areas. We are certain that this will be an ideal opportunity to gain a better understanding of their regions, which will greatly help anyone looking for topics and story ideas for their outlets. Ibaraki and Oita Web Seminars Information as followed: Monday, 30th November at 11:00am AEDT Web seminars will be distributed via Zoom. Should you wish to take part in the webinars, we kindly ask you to reach out to the Japan Travel Expo Team ([vjte@jams.tv](mailto:vjte@jams.tv)) for the URL to join seminars for for any other enquiries. We hope that you can make it to this great opportunity! The Virtual Japan Travel Expo team

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## Customized Beppu Hell Tour in Oita - Trip To Japan - Trip To Japan

+81 (0) 3 3442 1975 [info@triptojapan.com](mailto:info@triptojapan.com) Takanawa Travel K.K., Kitashinagawa 5-11-1 Shinagawa, Tokyo, Japan

The Customized Beppu Hell Tour in Oita offers a unique, personalized experience exploring the region's famous hot springs, cultural sites, and natural landscapes. With a flexible itinerary and English-speaking guides, it caters to diverse interests, ensuring a memorable exploration of Oita's rich heritage and natural beauty. Oita Prefecture in Japan is a hidden gem, renowned for its breathtaking Onsen (hot springs), thanks to the region's vibrant volcanic activity. Nestled in Oita, Beppu stands out as a hotspot for hot spring enthusiasts, offering an unparalleled soaking experience. This area is not just about relaxation; it's an adventure playground where you can immerse yourself in activities like hiking and delve into the rich history of ancient shrines and temples. Our Beppu tour is uniquely customizable, allowing you to tailor your private journey to your interests. With the assistance of our English-speaking staff, you're not just visiting; you're creating unforgettable memories. Discover a new side of Japan and its culture - book your personalized Beppu adventure today and experience the wonders of Oita firsthand!

**Unforgettable Mud Spring experience**  
Visit to the historic Yunohana Goya Guided exploration of the Hells of Beppu Encounter with the legendary Yayoi Tengu We will take a local bus to Beppu Hell in Oita from Hakata Bus Terminal. Duration: 3 hours 10 minutes You can have such a unique Japanese experience by taking a "Mud Spring." This hot spring is for curing your backache and will be one of the loveliest memories of your travel to Japan. Duration: 1 hour About 50 huts with thatched roofs have been built here since the Edo period. Yunohana is generally collected and sold as a bathing additive. Duration: 2 hours Beppu Hell Onsen has seven spectacular hot springs for viewing rather than bathing and displaying steaming ponds of various colors, bubbling mud pools, and other hydrothermal activity. You can join its hell tour and have a guide staff by bus. Duration: 3 hours A legendary creature that appears in Japanese folklore and is also known as a god or a monster is called "Tengu." Yayoi Tengu is visually impressive!! It is a mikoshi with only the face of Tengu, but it has a tremendous big red nose with white hair. It was created to avoid getting a fire in the local area. Duration: 10 minutes

This tower is the third TV tower built in Japan. It has a height of 100m and is famous as the symbol tower of Beppu. From the observation deck, you can also see a panoramic view of Beppu Bay and Beppu City. Duration: 30 minutes It is the end of the destination of your tour! Duration: 5 minutes All Fees and Taxes Travel Handling Charges and Taxes Transportation Fee Travel Insurance Bilingual Guide Service Charge Activity Expenses Entry/Admission - Hakata Bus Terminal Entry/Admission - Beppu Onsen Hoyo Land Konya Jigoku Entry/Admission - Yunohana Goya Entry/Admission - Hells of Beppu Entry/Admission - Beppu Tower Lunch Ages 0-120 Duration: 14h 30m Price: 215 Start time: Check availability Mobile ticket Live guide: English Not wheelchair accessible Near public transportation Infants must sit on laps For a full refund, cancel at least 24 hours in advance of the start date of the experience. Address: Hakata Station, ???-1-1 ??? Hakata Ward, Fukuoka, 812-0012, Japan Location: The Chikushi Entrance, Hakata Station Confirmation will be received at the time of booking. Travelers should have a moderate physical fitness level. The 14 hours 30 minutes duration will be including transportation. It is a private tour/activity. Only your group will participate. Q: What are the Featured Destinations in the Customized Beppu Hell Tour of Oita? Ans: In this adventure, you'll explore several notable locations, including: Beppu Tower Yunohana Goya Hakata Bus Terminal Q: What is the cost of the One-Day Customized Fukuoka Anime Otaku Tour Ans: The personalized Beppu Hell Tour in Oita begins at £215.72. Q: What are the Customized Beppu Hell Tour cancellation terms in Oita? Ans: Cancellation Policy for the Customized Beppu Hell Tour in Oita: Receive a complete refund by canceling no less than 24 hours before the beginning of the experience. Q: How can I customize my tour? Ans: You can customize your tour by specifying your interests and preferences, such as focusing on cultural sites, nature trails, or relaxation in the Onsen. Our English-speaking staff will assist in crafting an itinerary that suits your desires. Q: Are there any prerequisites for participating in the tour? Ans: There are no specific prerequisites, but good physical health for hiking is recommended. Also, be aware of any personal limitations or allergies to hot spring bathing. Q: Is the tour suitable for non-Japanese speakers? Ans: Absolutely! The tour provides English-speaking guides to ensure a comfortable and informative experience for non-Japanese speakers. Q: What should I bring for the tour? Ans: It's advisable to bring comfortable



clothing and footwear for walking, a hat, sunscreen, and a camera. If you plan to visit Onsen, bring swimwear and a towel, although these can often be rented on-site. Related Read: Cultural Treasures: 10 Best Museums to Visit in Tokyo We will take a local bus to Beppu Hell in Oita from Hakata Bus Terminal. You can have such a unique Japanese experience by taking a "Mud Spring." This hot spring is for curing your backache and will be one of the loveliest memories of your travel to Japan. These thatched-roofed huts were built in the Edo period and around 50 huts still stand. Beppu Hell Onsen has seven spectacular hot springs displaying steaming ponds of various colors, bubbling mud pools, and other hydrothermal activity. Grab a quick look at the legendary creature that appears in Japanese folklore known as a god or a monster called "Tengu." Standing at 100m, this TV tower is one of Beppu's famous symbols. On the observation deck, you can also see a panoramic view of Beppu Bay and Beppu City. Your tour ends here.

## **Jionnotaki Falls, Oita: A Hidden Gem in Oita - Junket Japan**

Jionnotaki Falls is a beautiful waterfall located in the Kusu District of Oita Prefecture, Japan, is a hidden gem that offers a breathtaking view and a tranquil atmosphere. The falls are a popular destination for hikers and nature lovers, and they offer stunning views of the surrounding mountains and forests. It's a place where nature's beauty is on full display, providing a serene escape from the hustle and bustle of city life. The falls are named after the Jionji Temple, which is located nearby. The temple was founded in the 17th century, and it is said that the falls were created when the bodhisattva Jizo appeared and struck the ground with his staff. Jionnotaki Falls is a two-tiered waterfall, with a total height of 30 meters. The upper tier is 20 meters high, and the lower tier is 10 meters high. The falls are surrounded by lush vegetation, and the water is a clear, emerald green color. There is a hiking trail that leads to the falls, and the journey takes about 30 minutes from the parking lot. The trail is well-maintained, and it is easy to follow. The best time to visit Jionnotaki Falls is during the spring or autumn, when the weather is mild. The falls are also beautiful during the winter, when they are frozen. If you are looking for a beautiful and peaceful place to visit in Oita, then Jionnotaki Falls is a great option. The falls are a hidden gem, and they are sure to leave you in awe. To get to Jionnotaki Falls from central Oita, you can use public transportation or drive. If you're using public transportation, you can take a bus from Oita City to Kusu, which is the nearest town to Jionnotaki Falls. From Kusu, you can take a local bus or taxi to the falls. If you're driving, you can take the Oita Expressway towards Kusu. From Kusu, follow the local roads towards the falls. The journey offers a scenic drive through the beautiful landscapes of Oita Prefecture. Jionnotaki Falls is a must-visit destination for anyone traveling in Oita. With its stunning waterfall, beautiful scenery, and variety of activities, it offers a unique experience that you won't find anywhere else. Whether you're a nature lover, a photography enthusiast, or just someone looking for a peaceful escape, Jionnotaki Falls has something to offer you. [Hover or click the text box below](#)

# Why you should visit Oita with your Japan Rail Pass ? Japan Rail Planner Blog

Japan Rail Planner Blog Oita Prefecture, situated in the northeast of Japan's Kyushu island, beckons travelers with its ancient samurai towns, rejuvenating hot springs, and tranquil mountain temples. This diverse region promises a perfect blend of beauty and adventure, easily accessible from major airports in Tokyo (Haneda), Narita, Osaka, and Nagoya. Immerse yourself in the charm of quaint ryokan inns, bathe in geothermal baths, and explore the rich history of one of Japan's most intriguing corners with our guide to Oita. Journey into the fascinating world of samurai history in Kitsuki, a stronghold in northern Oita Prefecture. Characterized by fearsome armor and a strict code of conduct, the samurai warriors left an indelible mark on Japan between the 12th and 19th centuries. Kitsuki, often referred to as a "sandwich castle town," boasts two historic samurai districts, beautifully preserved with pavilion roofs and Edo-period architecture. These districts, surrounded by a commercial area, provide a glimpse into the samurai era and serve as captivating filming locations for Japanese period dramas. Explore museums within historic samurai properties, such as Kitsuki Castle, and witness the grandeur of the Ohara Residence, a classic aristocratic home. Oita takes pride in being home to over 4000 hot springs, more than any other prefecture in Japan. Immerse yourself in the quintessential Japanese experience by bathing in traditional onsens. Sanso Tensui, overlooking Sakura Falls, offers a picturesque setting for a relaxing soak. Indulge in gourmet Japanese cuisine using fresh local ingredients like Bungo beef and Oita fish. Venture to Beppu, the hot-spring capital, where the famous Seven Hells showcase colorful pools of mineral-rich water. While too hot for bathing, these springs inspire unique culinary experiences with "hell steam cuisine." Beppu's dramatic landscapes and novel uses of thermal waters make it a must-visit for lovers of natural wonders. Beyond hot springs, Oita unfolds its beauty on the slopes of Mount Futago. A dense cedar forest conceals a moss-covered stone staircase leading to Futago-ji, an ancient Buddhist temple standing for over 1300 years. Established in 718, the temple reflects a fusion of Buddhism, Shinto, and animist mountain worship. Delight in the ornate statues of Kannon

and Fudo within centuries-old pavilions, adding a serene touch to the mystical ambiance. Conclude your Oita adventure in Oita City, the prefectural capital. The Oita Prefectural Art Museum, with its eye-catching design by acclaimed architect Shigeru Ban, showcases the region's finest artworks. Admire nature-themed paintings by Tanoura Chikuden and the vibrant wildlife artworks of local artist Fukuda Heihachiro. Wrap up your journey at the luxurious City Spa Tenku, a modern bathhouse on the 19th-21st floors of a glass skyscraper. Relax in the open-sided terrace infinity bath, reflecting on your Oita adventures against panoramic views of the city, mountains, and ocean beyond.

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April 23, 2024

For this Japanese city, one name just isn't enough. Have you ever wondered why you arrive at Hakata Station when your ticket says Fukuoka? Well, you're not alone. Fukuoka, also known as Hakata, is a city with dueling identities, and each has a rich history and vibrant present. And while this tale of two names?

For this Japanese city, one name just isn't enough. Have you ever wondered why you arrive at Hakata Station when your ticket says Fukuoka? Well, you're not alone. Fukuoka, also known as Hakata, is a city with dueling identities, and each has a rich history and vibrant present. And while this tale of two names?

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# Unveiling the Rich Tradition of Takeda Tea in Oita's Hidden Gem

## ? JAPANBITE

????????????? ?????????????????????????????????? ?????? \$0.00 USD Free shipping for the first subscription payment!! ????: Hideo Takahashi | 2024?11?15? | ??? 9 min Takeda, with its rustic charm and serene landscapes, is a hidden gem in Japan's tea-growing regions. The town's history dates back to ancient times, and its tea culture has been carefully preserved through generations. Takeda's location in Oita Prefecture provides the perfect climate for tea cultivation, with lush green hills and misty mornings that nourish the tea plants. The town's rich history is reflected in its traditional architecture and cultural festivals, which attract visitors from all over the world. Takeda's historical significance extends beyond its tea culture. The town is home to several ancient temples and shrines, where visitors can immerse themselves in Japanese spirituality and customs. Takeda Castle, often referred to as the "Machu Picchu of Japan," offers breathtaking views and a glimpse into the past. This blend of history and tea culture makes Takeda a unique destination that captivates the hearts of travelers and tea lovers alike. The town's commitment to preserving its cultural heritage is evident in its tea houses and workshops, where visitors can experience traditional tea ceremonies and learn about the intricate art of tea making. Takeda's warm and welcoming community ensures that every visitor leaves with a deeper appreciation for Japanese culture and the timeless beauty of Takeda Tea. Takeda Tea, known locally as "???" (Takeda-cha), is celebrated for its exceptional flavor and quality. The tea is cultivated using traditional methods that have been passed down through generations, ensuring that each cup is a true reflection of Takeda's rich heritage. The unique terroir of Takeda, with its fertile soil and cool climate, contributes to the tea's distinct taste and aroma. The process of making Takeda Tea begins with carefully hand-picking the tender tea leaves, which are then meticulously processed to preserve their natural flavors. The tea leaves are steamed, rolled, and dried to perfection, resulting in a delicate and refreshing brew. Whether you're sipping a cup of sencha or savoring a matcha latte, Takeda Tea offers a sensory experience that is both soothing and invigorating. Takeda Tea is not just a

beverage; it's a cultural expression that embodies the spirit of Japanese tradition. The tea is often enjoyed in traditional tea ceremonies, where every movement and gesture is imbued with meaning. Participants are encouraged to appreciate the aesthetics of the tea room, the craftsmanship of the tea utensils, and the harmonious connection between tea and nature. What sets Takeda Tea apart from other teas is its unparalleled quality and taste. The tea is known for its vibrant green color, aromatic fragrance, and umami-rich flavor profile. The careful cultivation and processing methods ensure that each cup of Takeda Tea is a testament to the skill and dedication of the tea artisans. One of the unique qualities of Takeda Tea is its ability to evoke a sense of tranquility and mindfulness. The act of brewing and savoring the tea encourages individuals to pause, reflect, and appreciate the present moment. This meditative aspect of Takeda Tea makes it a popular choice for those seeking a moment of calm in their busy lives. In addition to its soothing qualities, Takeda Tea also offers numerous health benefits. Rich in antioxidants and vitamins, the tea is believed to boost the immune system, improve digestion, and promote overall well-being. The combination of flavor, tradition, and health benefits makes Takeda Tea a cherished beverage for tea enthusiasts and health-conscious individuals alike. For those who wish to explore Takeda's tea culture firsthand, the town offers a variety of experiences that provide insight into the art of tea making. Visitors can participate in traditional tea ceremonies, where they will learn about the history and etiquette of Japanese tea. These ceremonies offer a glimpse into the rituals and customs that have shaped Japan's tea culture over the centuries. Takeda's tea houses and workshops provide an opportunity for visitors to engage with local tea artisans. From learning how to whisk matcha to sampling different tea blends, these interactive experiences allow participants to deepen their understanding of Takeda Tea. The warm hospitality of the locals ensures that every visitor feels welcomed and appreciated. In addition to tea-related activities, Takeda hosts annual festivals that celebrate its rich cultural heritage. These festivals feature traditional performances, tea tastings, and guided tours of the town's historic sites. Attending these events allows visitors to immerse themselves in the vibrant culture of Takeda and create lasting memories. No exploration of Japanese tea culture would be complete without mentioning wagashi, the traditional Japanese sweets that are often served

alongside tea. Takeda Tea pairs beautifully with a variety of wagashi, enhancing the flavors of both the tea and the confection. From delicate mochi to intricately crafted yokan, wagashi adds a touch of elegance to the tea-drinking experience. Wagashi is not only a treat for the taste buds but also a feast for the eyes. Each piece is meticulously crafted to reflect the changing seasons and the beauty of nature. The artful presentation of wagashi complements the aesthetic sensibilities of the tea ceremony, creating a harmonious balance between flavor and visual appeal. Visitors to Takeda can indulge in a variety of wagashi during their tea experiences. The town's tea houses offer a selection of seasonal sweets, allowing guests to savor the unique flavors of each season. Whether enjoyed in a traditional tea room or as part of a casual tea tasting, the combination of Takeda Tea and wagashi is a delightful fusion of taste and culture. Takeda is home to a vibrant community of tea enthusiasts who are passionate about sharing their love of tea with the world. This sense of community is evident in the town's tea events, workshops, and collaborative projects. Visitors are encouraged to connect with local tea lovers and artisans, exchanging stories and experiences that deepen their appreciation for Takeda Tea. The town's tea festivals and gatherings provide a platform for tea enthusiasts to come together and celebrate their shared passion. These events offer a unique opportunity to learn from seasoned tea masters, participate in tea tastings, and explore the diverse world of Japanese tea. The camaraderie and warmth of the community create an inviting atmosphere that leaves a lasting impression on visitors. For those who wish to stay connected with Takeda's tea community, online forums and social media groups offer a space for discussion and engagement. Tea lovers from around the world can share their experiences, ask questions, and discover new ways to enjoy Takeda Tea. This sense of belonging and connection is one of the many reasons why Takeda Tea continues to captivate the hearts of tea enthusiasts worldwide. Takeda's tea artisans are dedicated to preserving the traditional methods of tea production while also exploring new and innovative techniques. Visitors to Takeda can witness firsthand the artistry and craftsmanship that goes into creating each batch of tea. From hand-picking tea leaves to perfecting the drying process, the meticulous attention to detail is evident in every step. Participating in a tea-making workshop offers a unique opportunity to learn from experienced artisans and gain a

deeper understanding of the tea-making process. Whether crafting your own blend or observing the intricate steps of tea production, these hands-on experiences provide valuable insights into the world of Takeda Tea. The artistry of tea making extends beyond the production process to the presentation and enjoyment of the tea itself. The careful selection of teaware, the precise movements of the tea ceremony, and the appreciation of the tea's aroma and flavor all contribute to the artful experience of Takeda Tea. This attention to detail and reverence for tradition is what makes Takeda Tea a cherished cultural expression. Sampling Takeda Tea offers a taste of tradition and a connection to the rich history of Japanese tea culture. Each sip is a reminder of the dedication and craftsmanship that have shaped Takeda's tea legacy. Whether enjoyed in a quiet tea room or shared with friends, Takeda Tea invites individuals to savor the moment and appreciate the beauty of simplicity. For those new to Takeda Tea, a guided tasting experience can provide valuable insights into the nuances and flavors of different tea varieties. Tea experts offer guidance on how to brew and savor each cup, highlighting the unique characteristics that make Takeda Tea so special. These tastings allow newcomers to develop a deeper appreciation for the art of tea and the cultural significance of Takeda's traditions. For seasoned tea enthusiasts, Takeda Tea offers a chance to explore new flavors and expand their palate. The diverse range of tea varieties and blends ensures that there is always something new to discover and enjoy. Whether seeking a bold and invigorating brew or a delicate and soothing infusion, Takeda Tea caters to a wide range of preferences and tastes. The preservation of Takeda Tea's cultural heritage is a priority for the town's residents and tea artisans. Through education and outreach efforts, the community is committed to passing down the traditions and knowledge of tea making to future generations. Initiatives such as school programs, apprenticeships, and cultural exchanges ensure that the art of Takeda Tea will continue to thrive. Takeda's commitment to sustainability and ethical practices is also an important aspect of preserving its tea culture. The town's tea producers prioritize environmentally friendly methods and responsible sourcing, ensuring that the natural beauty of Takeda remains intact for years to come. By supporting local artisans and sustainable practices, visitors contribute to the preservation of Takeda's tea legacy. Through collaboration and innovation, Takeda's tea community is actively



working to share its unique culture with the world. The town's tea festivals, international collaborations, and cultural exchanges provide a platform for showcasing Takeda's rich heritage and promoting a global appreciation for Japanese tea. By fostering a sense of connection and understanding, Takeda Tea continues to inspire and captivate tea lovers everywhere. For those planning a visit to Takeda, there are a few key experiences that should not be missed. Start your journey by exploring the town's historic sites, including Takeda Castle and the local temples and shrines. Take a leisurely stroll through the tea fields and soak in the serene beauty of the landscape. Be sure to participate in a traditional tea ceremony, where you can learn about the history and etiquette of Japanese tea. Visit local tea houses and workshops to engage with artisans and gain insight into the art of tea making. Don't forget to sample a variety of Takeda Tea blends and enjoy the delightful pairing of wagashi. To make the most of your visit, consider attending one of Takeda's annual tea festivals. These events offer a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in the town's vibrant culture and connect with fellow tea enthusiasts. Whether you're a seasoned traveler or a first-time visitor, Takeda promises an unforgettable experience that will leave you with a deeper appreciation for the art of tea. Takeda Tea is more than just a beverage; it's a cultural expression that embodies the rich heritage and traditions of Japanese tea culture. Nestled in the picturesque mountains of Oita Prefecture, the town of Takeda offers a unique glimpse into this timeless tradition. From its historic sites to its vibrant community, Takeda invites tea enthusiasts to explore the art of tea making and savor the flavors of Takeda Tea. For those who have a passion for Japanese culture and a love for tea, a visit to Takeda is a must. Whether you're seeking tranquility, cultural enrichment, or a taste of tradition, Takeda Tea promises an experience that will captivate your senses and leave a lasting impression. Discover the world of Takeda Tea and join the community of tea lovers who appreciate the beauty and artistry of this cherished cultural expression.

Hideo Takahashi Born in Tokyo in 1990. Founder of JAPANBITE and CEO of its operating company, GRID Start, Ltd. Established the company in 2023 after being an IT engineer. Inspired by his travels to 15 countries and a deep love for Japanese food, he launched a service to contribute to small local Japanese manufacturers' businesses and allow many foreigners to enjoy Japanese culture. ????

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## Oita | Dive Japan

Diving in Oita Prefecture offers an exciting opportunity to explore the diverse marine environments along its expansive coastline, which stretches for 759 kilometers and boasts a variety of coastal features, from shallow beaches to saw-toothed coastlines. Located in the Kyushu region of Japan, Oita Prefecture is surrounded by Miyazaki Prefecture to the south and Fukuoka Prefecture and Kumamoto Prefecture to the west. Despite being known for its hot springs and picturesque landscapes, Oita's coastal waters also offer rich diving experiences for enthusiasts. The prefecture's abundant coastline is complemented by its designation of 28% of its area as natural parks, including national parks such as Aso Kuju and Setonaikai National Parks, as well as several quasi-national and prefectural natural parks. These protected areas contribute to the preservation of Oita's marine biodiversity and ensure a thriving ecosystem for divers to explore. Diving in Oita allows divers to encounter a wide variety of marine life, from colorful fish and vibrant coral reefs to unique underwater rock formations. The region's diverse coastal features provide opportunities for both recreational and exploratory diving, catering to divers of all skill levels. While diving infrastructure in Oita may vary, there are dive operators and facilities along the coastline that offer guided excursions, equipment rental, and certification courses. Whether you're a beginner seeking your first dive or an experienced diver looking for new underwater adventures, Oita's dive sites promise unforgettable experiences beneath the waves. So, whether you're drawn to the region for its hot springs, natural parks, or coastal beauty, don't miss the chance to explore the underwater wonders of Oita Prefecture through diving. Pack your gear, dive into the crystal-clear waters, and discover the hidden treasures awaiting beneath the surface. Unexpected surprises

Located as part of a National Park, at the southeast area of Oita prefecture, it is an Island with only 30 inhabitant. "Japanese Wood Pigeon "a special natural treasure are found on this nature filled Island. Underwater, there is a large coral reef on the North side of the Island, which has been a popular diving site for the local divers for along time. <https://www.google.com/maps/dir/?api=1&destination=32.721371,131.926145> All year round:

-Variety of nudibranch

-Variety of Shrimps and Crabs

-Variety of Macro marine life

-Black porgy (*Acanthopagrus schlegeli*)

-Japanese amberjack(*Seriola quinqueradiata*)

-Chicken grunt(*Parapristipoma trilineatum*)

-Greenfish(*Girella punctata*) On the southern tip of Kyushu Island, Saganoseki is located in from of the Hoyo Straits. It is the closest point to the Shikoku Island. Due to the strong and fast current of Hoyo strait and the many large underwater reefs, you can enjoy both macro marine animals and larger school of fishes. <https://www.google.com/maps/dir/?api=1&destination=33.25125,131.893326>

Located at the southern area of Oita prefecture,Kamae is a beach diving area. The beach has a facility(Oita cultural center) to cater for divers needs (Washing area for diving gears etc.). This facility also has, restaurants and accommodation as well.

Underwater, the maximum depth is only 5mm, but here you can enjoy the beautiful soft corals and smaller marine life. <https://www.google.com/maps/dir/?api=1&destination=32.795284,131.923846>

Newly opened(2014) diving site in Sasebo city. Zeai is a beach diving point located inside Zeai Park.

The area is filled with soft corals and also hard corals. Marine life is also abundant.

<https://www.google.com/maps/dir/?api=1&destination=33.051623,131.938795> Not having any rivers

running in to the near by ocean, Hazako is popular for it's beautiful clear waters. The beach is also

famous for the sea turtles coming to lay their eggs. Underwater, there are beautiful hard coral reefs

and table rock terrains.

<https://www.google.com/maps/dir/?api=1&destination=32.934334,132.040913>

## Cozy ??haruna: Your Next Hidden Gem Getaway ? Oita, Japan ? ?????.???

28 miles from Oita Bank Dome in Yufu, ??haruna offers accommodations with access to a hot spring bath. This property offers access to a terrace, free private parking, and free Wifi. Beppu Station is 15 miles away and Oita Station is 23 miles from the homestay. A flat-screen TV is featured. The accommodation offers an air conditioning, a heating, and a shared bathroom. Guests can also relax in the garden. Popular points of interest near the homestay include Kinrinko Lake, Yufuin Showakan, and Yufuin Chagall Museum. Oita Airport is 32 miles away. Cozy ??haruna: Your Next Hidden Gem Getaway is located in Yufu. This 2 Bedrooms House is suitable for tourists and travelers.

It has several amenities that would guarantee your comfort. These amenities include: Balcony/Terrace, Security/Safety, Fireplace/Heating, and several others.

This is a good star rated property and has over 2 reviews

with the average score of 10

.

Coming to Yufu and needing a place to stay?

Be it for work or for leisure, consider staying at this House for your next visit,

you will surely love it. You can check the reviews and description of this 2 Bedrooms House

if you want to learn more about this Casai place in Yufu. These details are

authentic, as they are provided by our partner, booking.com. This Cozy ??haruna: Your Next Hidden Gem Getaway in Yufu is well equipped and has all facilities that have been listed below.

Please note that these details were shared to us by booking.com for the listed

?Cozy ??haruna: Your Next Hidden Gem Getaway?.

We solely rely on their shared details and are regarded as ?accurate?. If you have any concerns about the

information or accuracy describing this

House, please let us know. No, pets are not allowed at this property. Check the guest reviews to learn what guests had to share. Check-in time for Yufuin Onsen house starts counting from 3:00 PM and check-out is until 10:00 AM. However, early check-in or late check-out can sometimes be negotiated between the guest and the owner or the manager of this property. No, this Yufuin Onsen house does not have a swimming pool. Check the Facility Overview section for details about the pool and other available facilities. Best-rates for the Yufuin Onsen house starts from \$56 per night with includes Internet, Air Conditioner, Parking, View, Balcony/Terrace, Security/Safety, Fireplace/Heating, Hot Tub with all other facilities. Casai matches every traveler with their perfect accommodation, whether you are traveling with a group, friends, family, or pets. Based on the information we have received from the owner or our partner, this is not considered to be a family-friendly property. As reported by the owner or manager, the house has not specified that children are welcome. Please see details about suitability for your family or inquire with the property to learn more. Based on the information received from our partner, the Yufuin Onsen house has not specified they are wheelchair accessible. Likewise, there is not an elevator specified as being available at the property. Specific accessibility details may be addressed in the property details section of this page. Based on the information reported by the owner or manager, the Yufuin Onsen house indicates 1 day stay policy at this house. Guests are cautioned that the minimum stay policy may differ based on seasonality or availability and may be at the discretion of the owner or manager. Based on the information reported by the owner or manager, details for the cancellation policy for the Yufuin Onsen house are as follows: Special conditions Guests are cautioned that the cancellation policy may differ based on seasonality, availability, or current travel restrictions. Guests should also be aware that this policy may be subject to change and should be confirmed prior to booking. More details may be available on this page in the property description. However, early

check-in or late check-out can sometimes be negotiated between the guest and the owner or the manager of this property. Most Popular Most Popular Highest Price Lowest Price Highest Rating Lowest Rating

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## 10 Interesting Things to do in Oita, Japan (that aren't the Hells)

Posted on Last updated: November 7, 2019 Oita Prefecture in Kyushu is just one and a half hours by plane from Tokyo and is the perfect addition to a trip to the capital or as a side trip from Fukuoka. Think hot springs, the outdoors, mountains and meditation, which all meld together in a kind of harmony between nature and man. Beppu is probably the most well-known area of Oita thanks to its more than 2,300 hot spring sources, making it the world's second largest source of thermal spring water after Yellowstone National Park in the United States. The "Hells of Beppu" – a circuit of seven scalding, to-be-looked-at-only onsen, ranging from vermilion red to azure blue, with bubbling mud and geyser spitting pools – have been so-named since their beginnings as their steaming waters and violent natural displays led locals to believe they must be cursed. But there's far more to Beppu and Oita Prefecture than the Jigoku Meguri (Hell Tour). Here are 10 interesting things to do in Oita that show you where you should consider venturing instead. Let's begin our exploration on the Kunisaki Peninsula, which is not only the location of Oita Airport, but considered one of the most spiritual "power spots" in the region. The peninsula is home to a unique local Buddhist culture called "Rokugo Manzan" (六ヶ所山), which contains elements of Buddhist, Shinto and mountain worship, and revolves around the 721-meter-tall Mount Futago. The mountain and the surrounding countryside is dotted with dozens of temples and shrines, traditionally divided into six areas, which is where the name Rokugo Manzan, literally meaning "Six Districts, Full of Mountains", originates. One of the unique aspects of the area is the large number of rock statues and carvings that have become one with the surrounding mountain foliage. In stark contrast to many of Japan's manicured rock gardens and botanical displays, you feel a sense of mystery and adventure as if time has stood still and you are happening upon overgrown and hidden relics of a past civilisation. In fact, Kunisaki is said to contain more than half of Japan's stone Buddhist statuary (and some of its oldest). There are many places of worship you can visit if you have the time to explore, but here are a couple of the most well-known to get you started. Located close to the peak of Mt Futago, Futagoji (ふたごじ) dates back to 718 and is one of the most prominent temples of Rokugo Manzan. It is well known for its pair



of stone Nio statues which guard the beginning of the temple approach just below the parking lot. From there it is a ten minute ascent up a flight of steps to the main temple buildings, including Gomado Hall and Okunoin Hall. About 15km away, one can find Fukiji Temple (???). Its main hall is a designated national treasure and is the oldest wooden structure in Kyushu, dating back to the Heian era (794-1185). Set against a backdrop of greenery, this simple and serene scene is often considered the personification of the beauty and tranquility of Rokugo Manzan. If you want to stay overnight on the mountain, Ryoan Fukinotou, next to Fukiji Temple, offers beautiful traditional-style rooms with dining and hot spring access. You can also participate in a special early morning zazen (seated meditation) and gongy? (reciting of Buddhist passages) experience at Fukiji Temple. Magaibutsu refer to Buddhist imagery carved directly into a natural rock face and offer a surreal opportunity to witness religious worship of centuries past. The Kumano Magaibutsu (?????) in Oita features two large stone carvings on the side of a cliff, one eight-meter-tall depiction of Fudomyoo and a 6.7-meter-tall Dainichi Nyorai Buddha, making them the largest magaibutsu relief carvings in Japan. They have been designated by the national government as an Important Cultural Property and while there is no record of when these carvings were created, it is estimated they were made during the Kamakura and late Heian periods respectively. Visitors need to take a 20-30 minute forest walk to reach the carvings, including a 10-minute climb up uneven cobblestone steps, which according to legend were built by a devil in one night. In fact, if you believe local folklore of the Kunisaki Peninsula, the whole area is said to mean ?land?s end? and was created by demons in the service of powerful gods. Note: The last toilet on the way there is 100 meters down the mountain before the car park/reception area. Venturing a few hours further south and into the interior, we can encounter a part of Oita that sees even fewer visitors and in which we can experience dense primeval forest. Biosphere Reserves, also known as Eco Parks in Japan, are UNESCO-listed areas that have unique species, ecosystems and landscapes, which are being protected through sustainable and appropriate conservation and development initiatives. The Sobo-Katamuki-Okue Biosphere Reserve became enlisted in 2017 and encompasses Mount Sobo, Mount Katamuki and Mount Okue in Oita and Miyazaki prefectures. Of the 240,000-hectare area, 85% is forest and

contains a high concentration of diverse and rare flora and fauna. Here you may encounter the Japanese serow, an unusual 'goat-antelope' that is endemic to Japan. The Japanese serow was almost hunted to extinction mid-last century, but numbers have recovered significantly thanks to its protected status in designated conservation areas like this one. There are a variety of hiking trails that can be taken here that allow you to experience this exquisite natural environment. If you're looking for a course that is both beautiful and not too challenging, the 2-hour Sobo Koubaru Hiking Course on Mount Sobo is a great option. Not only are there barely any manmade stairs, there's also a small waterfall crossing over a rickety bridge, which gives just the right amount of adventure while keeping the surrounds in sustainable harmony between visitors and nature. A small hut about halfway provides shelter and toilet facilities. Go left behind the rest house to continue on the course back to the car park. Note: The entrance to the Sobo Koubaru Hiking Course requires access by car and signage is currently not available in English. Therefore it's recommended to seek out maps and information about the trail before starting at the Kami no Sato Koryu Center Odamaki (approximately 10 mins by car from the starting point). Yufuin is a district of the city of Yufu, only 10km inland from Beppu, making it an easy and popular day trip. Yufuin is famous for its hot springs and pedestrian shopping street, Yunotsubo Kaido. Commanding over the town is the twin-peaked 1,584-meter Mount Yufu (Yufu-dake). For those who wish to climb Mt Yufu, a bus from Yufuin Station can get you to the starting point for the trails, Yufu-tozan-guchi (?????) at 896m in around 20 minutes. As there are two peaks, you can choose the one that best suits you in terms of time and difficulty. The east peak takes 2-3 hours and is more suitable for beginner or leisure hikers, while the west peak requires more climbing, including scrambling over rocks and use of chains, and will take around 4-5 hours to summit. Yunotsubo Kaido is a pedestrian street lined with shops and restaurants that leads from Yufuin Station through Yufuin town to the picturesque Lake Kinrin. The approximately 1.5km stretch is full of quaint shops selling souvenirs, as well as restaurants and food stores for full meals and grazing. The street is geared towards visitors but still manages to be touristy without being overly-commercialised. And if you've been exploring the off-the-beaten-path areas of Oita, all these options in one place might be just the ticket for an easy afternoon stroll. If you'd like to stay the

night in Yufuin and want the opportunity to interact with locals, consider a stay at Nirinsou. This local inn is run by a lovely couple who are keen to share their local ways with visitors. In addition to accommodation, they offer unique experiences to their guests, including homemade cooking and various agricultural experiences, such as vegetable cultivation, and planting and harvesting rice. Simply ask what experiences are available during the time of year you plan on staying. The cooking experience is a perfect way to check off a meal while learning about local specialty dishes (ky?do ry?ri). While your hosts don?t speak much English, they are very used to communicating with foreign guests and are unfazed by lack of a mutual language, so you needn?t worry about language skills. Your biggest problem will simply be how to eat your way through all the food they have on offer ? be sure to come on an empty stomach!Request your stay via this online contact form. Beppu is probably the most well-known onsen resort town in Japan. However, apart from the typical hot spring circuit, many visitors are unaware of the various ways they can enjoy both the abundance of hot spring waters in the area and the delicious local cuisine. Here are a few ideas for a unique and relaxing stay in Beppu, that takes you away from the tour buses. Do you have tattoos and want to visit hot springs? Here?s a list of 100 tattoo-friendly onsen in Beppu. Sand bathing in Kyushu makes for a rather interesting travel tale. If you?re looking for a unique way to enjoy the bubbling hot spring waters of Beppu, you can try bathing in sand at the Beppu Beach Sandbox. Here the sand is heated naturally by nearby hot spring sources and has equivalent health benefits of soaking in the water directly. You wear a Japanese robe, known as yukata, then lay down on the sand and are buried up to your neck. Ten to fifteen minutes is the recommended time for sand bathing. Afterwards you can use their small regular bathing facilities to refresh and wash all that sand off. Entry to the Beppu Beach Sandbox costs 1,050 yen, which includes a rental yukata, a small towel, one sand bath session and access to the public baths/shower. Literally meaning hell-steaming, jigoku mushi is a traditional way of cooking using the steam of a hot spring, dating back to the 17th century. While various tourist spots sell eggs and pudding cooked over onsen water, Sally Garden Yanagiya, a lovely ryokan meets hotel accommodation, allows guests to use their traditional steam ovens to make jigoku mushi meals. The process is incredibly simple and is a great way to self-cater without

fuss, while also adding a unique experience to your Japan itinerary. Check out how easy it is to cook up a delicious meal using an onsen steam oven. Reimen, cold noodles, were introduced to Beppu from cooks returning from Manchuria after WWII, and a tweaked recipe for local tastes has made it a signature dish of the region. The noodle is a chewier version of a buckwheat noodle similar in thickness to spaghetti. The toppings are usually a few slices of cold, well-seasoned beef, kimchi and boiled egg, all served in a clear, cold broth. Beppu reimen is available at numerous local restaurants, but one that comes highly recommended is Ikkyu no Namida. Check out how their signature reimen dish is made below. Have you been to Oita? What places and activities on this list would you like to experience? This post was sponsored by ANA with the support of the Oita Prefectural Government. As always, our opinions remain our own. Pin me for later! Posted on Last updated: November 7, 2019 Categories Asia/Oceania My Miscarriage Story: What nobody tells you about miscarriage Our daughter's birth story Notify me of follow-up comments by email. Notify me of new posts by email. ? This site uses Akismet to reduce spam. [Learn how your comment data is processed.](#) This site uses Akismet to reduce spam. [Learn how your comment data is processed.](#) © Notes of Nomads 2023

## Alice Lines' enlightening tour of Oita, Japan | homestyle

Magazine Subscribe Contact Competitions Advertise Magazine Subscribe Contact Competitions Advertise It's an off-the-beaten-track escape to a spot where creativity bubbles beneath the surface and hot springs steam their way to the top. In eras past, Oita – a prefecture on the island of Kyushu in south-western Japan – was known as Toyo no kuni, meaning 'land of abundance'. The term was coined to reflect the vast array of food on offer from the mountains and the sea, and the concept still resonates today. This area is indeed a beautiful setting in which to experience abundant delicacies, as well as hot springs and hospitality – the combination a recipe for some serious rest and relaxation. The coastal city of Beppu alone is home to about 2000 onsens with a combined hot-spring output greater than any other area in Japan. Public steam baths, ryokans (inns) with intimate bathing facilities, mud baths, sand baths where you can be buried in heated sand? you can experience it all.

Culinary culture and bathing rituals aren't the only thing Oita is known for, though. There's a legacy of arts and crafts here that a new wave of artisans is adopting to carve out an alternative way of life for themselves outside of the main centres. My host on this trip was Eiko Hashimoto, a producer at the Oita Asahi Broadcasting Corporation; I tapped into her knowledge of the region to visit makers, food producers and hospitality specialists who have found their creative calling here. We teamed up with Oita Made – an initiative developed to revitalise the creative economy by stocking independent artisans' products in a dedicated store and supporting their distribution – to visit the studios and workplaces of some of the people they champion.

In Beppu, Cotake – the workshop and store of Mikiko Sato – is a great place in which to observe bamboo crafts in action. Mikiko specialises in fine bamboo jewellery and also sells a range of intricately woven baskets, trays, kitchenware and decorative objects. The skill involved in splitting a hollow round of bamboo into the thin strips required for weaving is really quite something to witness. Toyokazu Ono runs his textile art and graphic design practice, Yotsume, from his home in Kunimimachi Imi at the northern end of the Oita Kunisaki Peninsula. Focusing on the traditional

method of katazome fabric dyeing, Toyokazu hand-cuts elaborate stencils that are then adhered to fabric and hand-painted with dye, before being made into table linen, coasters, cushions, noren (room dividers) and clothing. He learned the trade from his father and grandfather before him, but his own aesthetic is decidedly contemporary, with bold, figurative prints all hand-drawn and brought to life in striking colours. On the outskirts of Usuki, an old castle town known for its stone Buddhas, the Usukiyaki studio is abuzz with the production of fine porcelain ceramics. The story goes that the Usukiware aesthetic was prevalent in the Edo period (1603 to 1868) but somehow abandoned. Centuries on, Hiroyuki Usami and his team are reviving this art form using historical records to inspire modern tableware. Usukiyaki's signature look comes together as a collection of rounded bloom-like shapes, using lotus flowers and chrysanthemums to inform pieces including tiny condiment dishes, delicate cups and grooved cake plates. Their aim is to create dishes that frame the food served on them, and the result was put into practice when I was lucky enough to enjoy lunch prepared by Hiroyuki's wife Yuka, who runs a wholefood catering business. The meal included local specialities fried chicken, miso, preserved vegetables and thick hand-pulled noodles, all served in Usukiyaki dishes. Hospitality is a true art form in Japan too, and staying at an authentic ryokan provides an opportunity to indulge in cultural rituals without feeling too touristy. In Beppu's Kannawa neighbourhood, Yanagiya keeps the customs of inn hospitality alive with breakfast served in bamboo baskets that open to reveal steamed savoury morsels, an outdoor cooking area where you can prepare your own meals over steam vents, and an on-site onsen. Ryokan owners take pride in hosting their guests, and at Yanagiya, owner Eiko Hashimoto was kind enough to take me on a morning walk to show me sights otherwise hidden among the winding cobbled streets.

Okamotoya is another charming ryokan. On the hillside in Beppu, it has a view across to Beppu Myoban Bridge arching over the bay. Sliding shoji screens separated my room from the corridor, and inside the tatami flooring was sparsely decorated with little more than a chabudai dining table and a futon that's whipped out before bed. That night, I enjoyed a multi-course kaiseki dinner of famed Oita wagyu, a series of dishes carefully prepared with a focus on ingredients harvested from the surrounding area and ocean, and Beppu's signature pudding, steamed crème caramel. After

dinner, my gracious host Nobuko Iwase showed me how to create an ikebana floral arrangement, and I was quietly chuffed that my efforts were deemed worthy of being displayed in the corridor. Having been treated to all sorts of local delicacies during my stay in Oita, I ended the week on a fun note with an okonomiyaki (savoury pancake) at Bari Bari. Falling into the category of 'B-grade gourmet', which is a thing in Japan, this mom-and-pop eatery epitomises the craft of comfort food and colloquial chat at an appealing price. Sated, I returned to my hotel to repack my carry-on filled with carefully wrapped packages in preparation for an early-morning transit to Fukuoka Airport. The ceramics, bamboo wares and textiles I collected from the artisans' studios I visited will forever be a reminder of the abundant culture Oita has to share.

Alice journeyed to Oita with Japanese travel experts [jtboi.co.nz](http://jtboi.co.nz). Otto e Sette, Beppu: The on-site restaurant at the aforementioned ryokan Yanagiya offers a unique twist on Italian cuisine using all local ingredients.

Hasshin Zushi, Beppu: The type of food experience I've had on my bucket list since watching Jiro Dreams of Sushi. Simple yet exquisite nigiri.

Jigoku Mushi Kobo, Beppu: Grab a ticket from the vending machine, pick up your ready-to steam ingredients and prepare your own meal in one of the outdoor ovens.

Spica, Beppu: A unique design store/gallery where a husband-and-wife duo curate a thoughtful edit of objects, art and fashion.

Sanshoro, Yufuin: A must for its lunchbox meals so delightfully presented, they're a feast for the eyes as well.

Sansou Murata, Yufuin: The best of East and West combine at this high-end ryokan. The interior is super-cool, so even if you're not staying the night, it's well worth visiting for a drink in the bar.

Tamanoyu, Yufuin: This ryokan once provided lodging for zen Buddhist monks, and now you can enjoy the serenity in rooms dotted around a woodland garden.

Mount Yufu, Yufuin: Follow the lead of local hikers and make the four-hour ascent to the peak.

Suzunari Coffee, Usuki: If you're after a real coffee fix, this café roasts their own beans and serves up a good brew.

Kitsuki Castle Town: Check out the old samurai houses, particularly Ohara residence right beside the Suya no Saka cobblestoned slope. Words & photography Alice Lines    Design Unplugged  
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## Oita Travel Guide by Travel Editor / Golf in Japan

Nestled in the Tohoku region of Japan, Yamagata Prefecture is a hidden gem for golfers and travelers alike. Known for its lush landscapes, hot springs, and cultural richness, Yamagata offers a memorable blend of relaxation, adventure, and indulgence. Here's what you need to know to make the most of it.

Nestled in the captivating landscape of northeastern Kyushu, Oita Prefecture beckons travelers with its breathtaking scenery and rich cultural offerings, just a short 90-minute flight from the bustling metropolis of Tokyo. Embraced by majestic mountains, Oita boasts an impressive 70% forest cover, inviting visitors to immerse themselves in Japan's pristine natural beauty. Renowned worldwide for its renowned hot springs, Oita's crown jewel, Beppu, epitomizes opulent indulgence, offering an array of luxurious experiences. Discover an array of mesmerizing locales, each an oasis of relaxation and rejuvenation amidst stunning surroundings. For aficionados of golf, Oita presents a golfer's paradise, boasting an impressive collection of 22 exceptional courses. After a thrilling round, unwind in the tranquility of this serene prefecture and truly relax. Immersed in a tapestry of vibrant history, Oita Prefecture beckons explorers to delve into its culturally significant destinations. For enthusiasts of Japanese heritage, a pilgrimage to Nakatsu, Kitsuki, Usuki, Hiji-machi, Taketa, and Usuki is a must, each bearing the noble vestiges of castles and castle ruins that echo tales of a bygone era. Nakatsu, the birthplace of Fuzukawa Yukichi, a luminary scholar credited as a founding figure of "Modern Japan" and whose visage graces the esteemed 10,000 yen note, stands as a testament to the province's historical significance. Among the hallowed sites that grace Oita's landscape are the venerable Fuki-ji Temple, the venerable Usa Shrine, the exquisite Peacock Buddhist Altar Fitting, and the remarkable Usuki Stone Buddhas. For those seeking communion with nature, the winding hiking trails of Mount Yufu and Mount Kuju promise breathtaking panoramas, while encounters with wildlife at the African Safari Park and the mesmerizing marine life at the Umi-Tamago (Sea Egg) Aquarium offer unforgettable experiences. As the undisputed onsen capital of Japan, Oita presents an irresistible array of hot-spring retreats. Beyond the traditional hot springs, indulge in therapeutic soaks in rejuvenating mud, invigorating sand, or soothing steam baths. With

an abundance of choices, discover the allure of hot springs in Beppu City, Yufu City, Kokonoe Town, Taketa City, and Hita City, each promising a unique and blissful immersion into the art of relaxation. Oita Prefecture pulsates with captivating events all year round, reaching their zenith in February and July, when the region comes alive with vibrant celebrations. For an unforgettable experience, venture to Beppu City in early April to partake in the beloved Beppu Hatto Hot Spring Festival and the enchanting Oka Castle Cherry Blossom Festival. Delve into the province's rich history by immersing yourself in traditional festivities such as the Nakatsu Gion, Hita Gion Festival, Tenjin Festival, the mesmerizing Tsukumi Traditional Fan Dance, and the evocative Onta Folk Pottery Festival. For enthusiasts of Japanese dolls, February heralds a plethora of doll festivals across the prefecture, offering an immersive glimpse into this fascinating art form. In the midst of January, Bungotakada City reverberates with the Horan Enya festival, where local fishermen embark on a symbolic journey to Wakamiya Hachiman, invoking blessings for safety and a fruitful catch. A highlight of this jubilee is the daring spectacle of young men fearlessly plunging into the frigid river to retrieve ceremonial gifts from onlooking spectators. Oita Prefecture boasts a culinary tradition that tantalizes the palate with its unique flavors. Distinguished as the top producer of dried mushrooms in Japan, Oita takes pride in its shiitake mushrooms, renowned for their robust size, rich flavor, and enticing aroma. Equally celebrated is the esteemed Oita Bungo Beef, prized for its exquisite marbling, velvety texture, and unparalleled taste. Savoring seafood in Oita is an experience to relish, with an array of delicacies such as mackerel, blowfish, Shiroshita-Karei (marbled flounder), Hamo (conger pike), Ayu (sweetfish), Japanese spiny lobster, sea bream, oysters, softshell turtles, cutlass fish, tiger prawns, amberjack, and halibut gracing the local cuisine. The province also boasts a diverse array of sake and shochu. Mugi shochu, a homegrown libation, finds favor among locals when paired with a hint of freshly squeezed kabosu citrus. To truly savor Oita's essence, indulge in the comforting staple dish, dango jiru. This savory dumpling soup, crafted from salted flour, taro, vegetables, miso, shiitake mushrooms, and edible burdock, encapsulates the heart and soul of Oita's culinary prowess. Blessed with an ideal climate for grape cultivation, Oita fosters a flourishing vineyard culture, epitomized by the Ajimu Budoshu Koubou, a charming

boutique winery nestled deep within the picturesque Usa countryside. Since its establishment in 1964, this esteemed winery has cultivated a legacy of crafting wines that embody the essence of the region. Proudly offering a repertoire of 22 distinct wine varieties, including chardonnay, sauvignon, and merlot, Ajimu Budoshu Koubou invites enthusiasts to partake in tastings and acquisitions. Their collection extends beyond wines to encompass brandy and fortified wines, each meticulously crafted and available for purchase. Noteworthy among their offerings is the Ajimu Sparkling Wine, undergoing a second fermentation in the bottle, imparting a delightful effervescence and unique character. Renowned for their distinctiveness, these wines stand among the finest in Japan, making for an exceptional souvenir or cherished gift, encapsulating the essence of Oita's viticulture. Oita has some great courses suit every level of golfer and budget, check out a few of our recommended courses as played by our customers: 9. Shiraki Golf Club 8. Oita Country Club Yoshino Course 7. Usuki Country Club 6. Oita Sunny Hill Golf Club 5. Yufu Kogen Golf Club 4. Oita Chuo Golf Club 3. Nakatsu Country Club 2. Amase Onsen Country Club 1. Beppu Golf Club

Tokyo ? The quickest way to get to Oita Prefecture is by plane. From the Tokyo Haneda Airport, it takes 1.5 hours and 2 hours from Tokyo Narita Airport. If you choose to travel by train, the Shikansen (transfer at Kokura) ? Express (Nippo Main Line) route will take you to the prefecture in 6 hours and 30 minutes. Osaka ? There are three ways to get to Oita from Osaka -- by plane, bus and ferry. Air travel, which is the fastest, takes 1 hour, while bus is 10 hours and 30 minutes, and ferry 11 hours and 45 minutes. By subscribing you agree to our privacy policy

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## Tofu adventures in Oita, Japan - Trinidad and Tobago Newsday

PAUL HADDEN From the journal: May, 2019 It's a beautiful spring morning here in Oita, Japan. I am standing in the empty car park of my school, leaning on the cool frame of my little Honda Life, a car so small that it would be banned from the roads back home in Trinidad, and am waiting on my friend to come and pick me up. I have just finished chatting with my family back home, and because of the time difference our nights and days are totally switched and as I am preparing to begin my day, they are getting ready to go to sleep. It's funny how the sounds of the tiny tree frogs in the background always seem to make me homesick. Here, as dawn continues to break and the last of the twinkling stars disappear into the purple sky, it is not the tree frogs, but the sounds of the chirping cicadas that will keep me company. If there was one sound that truly captures the essence of the Japanese summer, it is the cicada. As one of colleagues loudly exclaimed in the staffroom the other day, ?

Natsu toieba, semi da!? which can be taken to mean something like, ?Summer and cicadas sure do go hand in hand!? The scenery in the mountains of Oita, Japan. Photo courtesy Paul Hadden - That I am waiting in this empty car park on a Saturday morning is all due to a spontaneous invitation from one of my work colleagues to join her on a road trip to get, ?some of the best tofu in all of Oita.? Shocked that I had never tried tofu before arriving in Japan, my colleague, Takeshita-san, told me that she knew of a hidden gem up in the mountains on the way to one of Oita's most famous waterfalls (Haraji falls, which is also known as the Niagara falls of Japan) The tofu shop, which apparently is frequented by bikers in the area, is known for their delicious age-tofu (fried-tofu), tofu purin (tofu pudding) as well as hot, fresh tofu donuts. I immediately jumped at the opportunity. A hidden gem of a tofu restaurant in the mountains of Oita, Japan, which is frequented by bikers. - ?Ohayou gozaimasu!? yells out Takeshita-san from her massive four wheel drive Suburu, as she pulls up next to my dinky little Honda Life. ?

Ikimashou ka?? ?Shall we go?? she says, and with a resounding ?Yes!? I hop into her car and off we go to find this hidden gem of a tofu shop. Along the way and throughout all of the winding

mountain paths, Takeshita-san chats to me all about life in Oita, and I try my best to concentrate on what she is saying even though I am completely wrapped up in the magnificent scenery which surrounds us. Here is a wild overwhelming beauty of ancient mountains punctuated with waterfalls, sprawling rice paddies, and roads lined with giant pine trees. Takeshita-san is a biker herself, and has been holding her own as a female biker in a world which is mostly dominated by men, most of whom tend to be a bit rough around the edges. This has never held her back, she explains, and since she was in her early twenties, her trusty motorcycle has taken her all the way from the frozen tip of northern Japan, right to the bottom of Kyushu island. The thought of a tofu restaurant being a meeting point for bikers strikes me as a little odd, but then again I know that there are so many things about my own cultural quirks that strike them as bizarre too. If it's one thing that living abroad teaches you, it's that most things are all about perspective. One man's weird is definitely another's normal. The menu and a fresh batch of tofu. Photo courtesy Paul Hadden - After a few hours (yes, a few hours ? Oita is huge and most outings warrant a road trip) we arrive at the restaurant. A bustling wooden cabin nestled next to a modest Buddhist temple whose car park is chock full of motorcycles. As we walk towards the restaurant, I notice many people filling bottles with water that seems to be sprouting from a large jagged rock right by the entrance. ? Savoury tofu pudding. - Waki-mizu desu!? explains Takeshita-san, ?It's fresh mountain spring-water!? This already bodes well. We join the queue, fill up our thermoses with fresh spring water and then make our way to the entrance. As we reach the kitchen to place our orders I can see several strange looking machines in the background which obviously are the things responsible for transforming the humble soy bean into all the different kinds of tofu treats that this place is known for. We order a few things to share: fried tofu pieces with soy sauce, ginger, and fish flakes, tofu pudding sweetened with kinako, or roasted soybean powder, and of course a dozen warm tofu donuts. All of this we eat with fresh glasses of spring mountain water and hot coffee. We pick up our chopsticks, shout out ? itadakimasu!?, a Japanese phrase said before eating to give thanks for the meal, and dig in to our tofu treats... (to be continued)

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As a former gateway to the West, the seaside town of Oita has many religious and European artifacts as well as a wealth of museums and art galleries. Filled with plenty to see, do and discover, it's the perfect place to explore a different side of Japan. Oita is easily accessed by plane, car or train from all across Japan. Oita can be reached from Tokyo's Haneda Airport in less than two hours and Osaka's Itami Airport in one hour. It is then a one-hour bus ride from the airport into the city. By train, Oita Station is served by the Kyudai, Hohi and Nippo lines, with access to much of Kyushu and wider Japan. With the influence of trading ships from the West and the conversion of a local feudal lord in the 16th century, many people in Oita became Christians. When Japan prohibited the religion in the 17th century, many believers were forced to renounce their faith to avoid execution, or practice their faith in secret. The Oita Christian Martyrs Memorial Park is a tribute to the 200 local people who died as Christian martyrs in the 17th century. The figures remembered here decided they'd rather face execution than denounce their faith. Oita Prefectural Art Museum's 5,000 works include pieces designated Important Cultural Properties of Japan. Dive deep into the world of the local artistic talent, by visiting the Oita Prefectural Art Museum, a modern structure built in 2015 that houses work by artists inspired by the local way of life. Whether you want to unwind while watching fish and other sea creatures or interacting with them in shallow pools, Oita Marine Palace Aquarium "Umitamago" offers something for everyone. There are many performances and interactive sessions where you can watch dolphins, sea lions and other animals in action and find out more about their living environments. Opened as a means to manage the local monkey population and their natural environment, Takasakiyama Natural Zoological Garden is a great way of seeing a typical day of the 1,000 wild monkeys. Don't miss feeding time, a daily highlight of the monkey garden. After feeding these fuzzy locals, you can watch them run around, groom each other and sunbathe. Follow one of the park's

walking courses to see the more of the monkeys. \* The information on this page may be subject to change due to COVID-19. out of found this information helpful. Oita City Tourist Association Please Choose Your Language Browse the JNTO site in one of multiple languages

# Ultimate Yufuin Travel Guide: Discovering the Hidden Onsen Gem of Kyushu

Yufuin reminds you of that charming rural countryside vibe you always see in anime. Tucked away in the Oita Prefecture of Kyushu island, Japan lies the quaint and charming little town of Yufuin, known for its gorgeous idyllic vistas, intricate traditional Japanese architecture, and the most famous of all, the soothing and enlightening hot springs (Onsen). Whether it's a weekend getaway or a quick day trip, tourists and locals alike flock to Yufuin to unwind from the chaos of city life. Even if you do not intend on visiting the Onsens, Yufuin still has plenty to offer from the serene Kinrin lake to the charming and Ghibli-esque Floral Village. So let's start exploring and join me in this Yufuin Travel Guide as we venture through this lovely little town.

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A luxury dining train, the Aru Ressha by JR Kyushu. By far the easiest way to get to Yufuin is by train. Assuming you are starting at the city of Fukuoka, board the train at Hakata station on the Yufu line which will bring you directly to Yufuin, from there disembark at Yufuin Station. The journey will take you 2 hours and 15 minutes. It is highly recommended you purchase a JR train pass if you are intending to travel long distances often by train such as from Fukuoka to Yufuin or Fukuoka to Osaka. A JR pass will save you a LOT of money and can be used for all JR trains including the Shinkansen as well as other services like JR busses or JR ferries. There are way too many rail passes to choose from but the ones that are most convenient and apply to Yufuin and the surrounding areas are:

- JR Pass for the whole of Japan - Covers the entirety of Japan
- JR Sanyo-San in-Northern Kyushu Area Pass - Covers the northern/western parts of Kyushu
- JR Kyushu Rail Pass - Covers the entire Kyushu Island

If you are planning on purchasing a pass, be sure to double check which pass is usable in which region as it can be quite confusing. If you have already purchased one of the above rail passes, you will also have access to the Yufuin no Mori Limited Express Train, a famous tourist train built specifically for transporting you to the town of

Yufuin. Note: It is recommended you book your seats for the Yufuin no Mori train in advance, as the tickets sell out quickly. The famous luxury Yufuin no Mori Limited Express train with its distinctive green paint. The Yufuin no Mori Limited Express train runs between Hakata Station and Yufuin Station. The train is very popular among tourists travelling to Yufuin and I would describe it as an attraction in of itself. The train is named after Yufuin (duh!) and it's Mori no Furusato (Forest Hometown) concept. This concept is reflected in the train's decor with the interior being lined with luxurious wooden paneling and large windows providing a scenic and panoramic view of the Kyushu region's towering mountains, calming rivers, and evergreen plains. Another popular luxury train is the Aru Ressha dining train by JR Kyushu which has a Hakata to/from Yufuin. The interior of the Yufuin no Mori train, lounge, seating, and bar. If you have one of the aforementioned Rail passes, you will be able to book a seat free of charge either at the ticket office in Hakata Station, or online via the JR Kyushu Rail Pass Booking website. The timetable of the train is as follows, note that the train from Hakata to Yufuin operates only 3 times a day. \*For the most up to date information visit the [jrkyushu.co.jp](http://jrkyushu.co.jp) \*Note: All of these Ryokans have free private Onsens available for booking! The interior of Ryokan Yuri, the tatami mats are very comfortable. Ryokan Yuri was a pleasant surprise, when walking up to the building I thought I was at the wrong place because it looked like a regular apartment building, however once I stepped inside I was greeted with the kindest and friendliest man ever. Like Japanese people are already a friendly bunch, but this man was like an uncle I never knew I needed. Anyways hotel looks to be a family run business, and it shows (in a good way). The rooms are clean and the atmosphere was charming and pleasant. The breakfast (not included) was delicious and healthy. The price was not too expensive either. If you are looking for a more affordable Ryokan option, Ryokan Yuri is your go to hotel. You can read my review for Ryokan Yuri here: [Ryokan Yuri Review](#) Google Maps Rating: 4.6 / 5 Location: 2968-10 Yufuincho Kawakami, Yufu, Oita 879-5102, Japan Phone: +81 97 784 3128 Pros: Near the train station easy access to main walking street Every room has river and mountain views, the same goes for the dining room Clean rooms with good heating and ac The friendliest staff anywhere, the owners make you feel like you are part of their family. Delicious and healthy traditional Japanese style breakfast Cons: None



that I can think of, perhaps the Ryokan feels more modern and less traditional than you would hope, but that is just a nitpick Yufuin Baien's hot springs has a nice open air design Yufuin Baien is pretty big compared to other Ryokan options and here there is an emphasis on natural beauty. The hotel is surrounded by gorgeous plum and cherry trees as well as offering views of Mount Yufu. I like the addition of free flowing alcohol during the late evening, a perfect way to relax after a long day of exploring the lovely town of Yufuin. Google Maps Rating: 4.5 / 5 Location: 2106-2 Yufuincho Kawakami, Yufu, Oita 879-5102, Japan Phone: +81 97 728 8288 Pros: Family onsen that you can use without booking Free flowing, self-service alcohol drinks at night Traditional hotel design and emphasis on natural beauty The rooms are big and spacious, very clean Cons: Quite far away from the train station and walking street Tell me that that onsen doesn't look cozy Ikkoten is expensive. Like really expensive, but this is due to the immense luxury that this Ryokan provides. The rooms here are large they include an open-air bath for you to relax in. Though if you are planning to stay here, I recommend you plan your trip to Yufuin wisely as this hotel is located a long ways away from the town center, if you stay here you are staying here to escape life and reality to be in the natural wilderness. Which isn't a bad thing as you can bathe your soul in the Zen and tranquil landscape and designs of Ikkoten. Google Maps Rating: 4.4 / 5 Location: 302-7 Yufuincho Kawakami, Yufu, Oita 879-5102, Japan Phone: +81 97 728 8815 Pros: A luxury hot spring inn in Yufuin to enjoy and relax to your heart's content Large and relaxing rooms with an open-air bath Breakfasts and meals are served in a private room Full of Zen and tranquility, nature is the highlight of Ikkoten Cons: Incredibly far from the train station and town center, if you stay here, you are coming to Yufuin to enjoy the nature and escape city/town life Can be incredibly expensive I love the black and white colors of Yawaragi-no-Sato Yadoya, it looks clean and modern Yawaragi-no-Sato Yadoya might have a hard to pronounce name for us gaijins (foreigners) but this Ryokan is superb, with excellent service from the staff and delicious foods for you to try. The hotel is also close to the walking street and various attractions, this is a huge plus. I quite like the aesthetic of this hotel as well, managing to maintain the traditional Japanese charm while also modernizing the design language. The only minus is that this hotel is a little bit far from the train station so I would recommend you find a taxi to

take you to and from here. Google Maps Rating: 4.6 / 5 Location: 2717-5 Yufuincho Kawakami, Yufu, Oita 879-5102, Japan Phone: +81 97 728 2828 Pros: Excellent staff, very friendly, responsive and polite The location is close to the main walking street and attractions such as Kinrin Lake Western and traditional rooms are available for you to choose from Delicious foods that uses high quality ingredients Both private and public onsens are available Cons: A little far from the train station Did you spot that retro sound system? A blend of old and new Yurari Rokumyo is the highest rated Ryokan on this list and it might be the best as well. The whole annex is very beautifully decorated with such intricate detail giving the whole place such a wholesome and comforting vibe. Plus the staff is super friendly and kind. The location is also close to the walking street so it's easy to explore the town of Yufuin. The only downside is that no food is provided, meaning you'll have to find your own food. Google Maps Rating: 4.8 / 5 Location: 3090-1 Yufuincho Kawakami, Yufu, Oita 879-5102, Japan Phone: +81 97 785 2200 Pros: Excellent hospitality from the staff, probably the most fluent English speaker in Yufuin The hotel is very beautifully decorated with incredible attention to detail. Super relaxing and home-y vibe Spacious room but all the amenities such as a living room, toilet, and outdoor onsen and shower area Good location, located near the walking street and the train station Cons: No food is provided, and since the restaurants and shops here close early, it might be difficult to find something to eat The train station looks like a top hat not gonna lie Unfortunately my exploration grinded to a halt as soon as I stepped foot outside of the JR Yufuin train station. Upon my arrival the clouds darkened and heavy rain started pouring. Needless to say, my family and I quickly had to haul ourselves and our luggage to our ryokan. On that note, all of the sunny photos you see are from the second day we were in Yufuin. What I will say though, when I saw the train station from the outside, the town immediately gave off a charming vibe. I feel like this vibe can be felt in every rural Japanese town, but something about Yufuin is just different. The main road of Yufuin is long Directly in front of the main station is a long stretch of road that divides into many other stretches of roads. Exploration proved difficult due to the aforementioned rain but I could spot mainly cafe's and souvenir/snack shops selling local favorites. The main road is not the main shopping highlight of Yufuin however, that title goes to Yunotubo Street which is a little bit further

down the road, You'll know when you're there when you spot B-Speak, a famous cake shop that I will talk about later. You can spot a lot of these shops selling your typical Japanese foods like soba noodles or udon. There are surprisingly not that many restaurants on this road, only a handful of shops selling typical Japanese lunch set menus (Teishoku), although I did spot some Udon, and grilled meat or Yakiniku restaurants. Actually on the subject of Yakiniku, I actually had it for dinner on my first day at Yufuin and you know what? They have HORSE MEAT! No kidding, you can order horse meat like any other regular cuts of marinated meat. Of course, I ordered a serving and honestly? It tastes like beef, I could barely tell the difference. Interesting, if you're feeling adventurous then you can try ordering it. It does feel morally wrong as the next day I saw a horse drawn carriage just casually strolling through the street? Horse meat aside, a restaurant you truly cannot miss is Yufu Mabushi Shin, a clay pot rice restaurant that I will tell you about later in this article. A canal runs through the town, it looks overgrown but that just adds to the charm. You'll definitely notice the nature and greenery while you're here. I couldn't help but to stop every few steps and just admire the gargantuan mountains in the distance and the lush green trees and bushes dotted all around the town. While I was there it was quite foggy so I couldn't get a clear picture of the mountains but hopefully when it's your time to visit the skies will be clear. For you Ghibli fans, this is the place to go to. If the picturesque scenic rural Japanese landscapes didn't already remind you of classic Japanese films like Studio Ghibli's Ponyo or My Neighbor Totoro then surely the Totoro Donguri No Mori will, a souvenir store selling all manner of Studio Ghibli merchandise. The store is hard to miss as it sits near the beginning of Yunotubo Street just past B-Speak. Unfortunately I did not get a chance to enter the store and peruse the wares, but seeing the large crowd gathering in front of the store is already a good indicator of how popular this place is. I don't know why I just like this picture, maybe because of the wholesome couple walking down the street together. The town just has a really cute aesthetic. Although there are many roads and corners to explore, the main activity is centered at the main road and Yunotubo street. But that is not a bad thing as you could easily spend an entire day just walking around, eating, taking photos, shopping, and much more. And with this being a food blog, you bet I spent a lot more time eating

than shopping. Yufuin is a small town so admittedly there aren't that many things to do. The attractions that are present are mostly themed around nature or the charming little countryside town aesthetic. Honestly, Kinrin lake would've looked better without this building out of the way? Kinrin Lake is a scenic basin that sits at the very end of the Yunotubo walking street surrounded by natural lush flora and fauna. In the early hours of the day, the whole lake will be covered by a thick mist and the atmosphere will be eerily creepy yet beautiful. There sits an elongated building at the far end of the lake which I honestly think kind of ruins the view but that's ok. You have to politely wait your turn before taking a picture at the viewpoint! When I went there were many tourists, all cramming in at one are trying to get a picture. There was even a group of girls that brought a whole setup making TikTok content. I stumbled across an old Chinese lady who I assume travelled alone and she asked me to take a picture of her as she believed I was a photographer due to the camera I was holding. After our little modeling session, she thanked me profusely in multiple languages, from Mandarin, to Japanese, to English. I tried damn hard to take good photos for that auntie, I hope she likes them. The birds atop of this torii gate make this look very ominous Kinrin lake stretches along a walking path that you can take, at the end of the walking path there is a small greenery and park that you can sit and leisure around, toilets are also available for you. At the far end a mini torii gate can be spotted that a lot of visitors missed. Kinrin Lake is a must see attraction in Yufuin particularly if you enjoy nature and scenic views. It's hard to miss as well as you will naturally come across the location while walking along the Yunotubo shopping street. Never have I expected to see a church right in the middle of the rural Japanese countryside The Yufuin Stained Glass Museum is an interesting beast, the building is a church which houses a large collection of stained glass works from all around the world, over 2000 pieces of stained glass artworks! Another fun thing is that the museum offers a workshop for you to make your own stained glass art, the time you'll need is about an hour and a half and the price will be around 3000 - 5000 JYP depending on the size and complexity of your design. You're not allowed to take pictures inside but these look absolutely stunning If you enjoy getting your hands dirty and to express your creativity then the Yufuin Stained Glass Museum is definitely a place you should check out. There is also a gift shop for you to buy

souvenirs or gifts for you or your friends and family. The only downside was that you are not allowed to take photos inside. You can't miss it when there is literally a giant sign that says "Yufuin Floral Village". Entering Yufuin Floral Village feels like you are stepping into a Studio Ghibli film, the village is a collection of souvenir shops and cafes all decorated with beautiful flowers and greenery. The buildings are made out of bricks like in the Three Little Pigs fairy tale, with wooden doors, chimneys, and corrugated iron windows. It's like I've been transported to another country. There are many tight alleys for you to explore and even a small zoo-like area where you can pet animals. The shops here mostly sell random plushies and dolls, I remember there was a shop selling Tom and Jerry merchandise of all things. There is also a building full of cafes and food where you can enjoy traditional Japanese sweets. Even the pond looks completely out of place in Japan. The highlight of Yufuin Floral Village is undoubtedly its garden, it is decorated with a miniature pond and colorful flowers that changes with the season. This area is where a lot of visitors take their photos so it might be crowded. The pond even has ducks floating around enjoying their day. If you are a huge fan of fairytales or classic Ghibli films like My Neighbour Totoro, then the Yufuin Floral Village is right up your alley. Just imagine you on that train seeing the beautiful mountain pass by. While on your way to Yufuin via the Yufuin no Mori train you'll surely spot the towering Mount Yufu. This gorgeous mountain is made up of 2 peaks, the east and west peak. The east peak comes in at 1,584 meters tall while the west peak is 1,538 meters tall. A popular activity here is hiking up the mountain, don't be afraid or intimidated as the trail is actually well maintained. Once you reach the peak you will be rewarded with the stunning view of the town of Yufuin and its surrounding areas. You actually get the choice of which peak to ascend, the east peak is more suitable for beginners and will take about 2 - 3 hours, the west peak on the other hand is more challenging, forcing you to climb your way up and use chains to aid in supporting your trek. If you got time and are looking for an adventure, Mount Yufu is a must see and a must do activity while you are in Yufuin. If you are looking for a tour to ease your planning stresses or just want to take a day trip to try out the onsens, this Beppu Onsen and Yufuin Spa Town One Day Private Trip from Fukuoka will bring you to 2 of Japan's most famous Onsen towns, Beppu and Yufuin. The private tour will bring you to the Hells of Beppu, a

place of scenic beauty where you can enjoy dipping your toes into the various hotsprings, as well as dropping you off at various locations in Yufuin for you to explore. If you book at the link above, you can enjoy the best discounts and prices available, book now to kickstart your hotspring getaway! While Yufuin may be a small town there is no shortage of things to eat. From simple and delicious pastries and cakes, to full on Japanese Yakiniku barbecue. I would advise you to have your dinners early however, as the shops here close pretty early, at about 7-8pm you can already see restaurants and shops closing for the day. You could imagine it was quite a surprise for me when I went looking for dinner after my relaxing late evening onsen bath only to find out that almost every restaurant is already closed. It must be hard to keep track of all those clay pots The most popular restaurant in Yufuin definitely has to be Yufu Mabushi Shin, who are serving deliciously sizzling hot claypot rice to hungry customers for years. There are only 3 items on they are all variations of claypot rice, you get a choice of Beef, Chicken, or Eel. The eating experience is also quite interesting as there is a 3 step method to enjoying your meal. I guarantee you, you might not see it but there is rice underneath that layer of beef I've only had the beef option but it was absolutely delicious, imagine the most tender slice of beef you've ever had, now image the rice beneath soaking up all the delicious meaty juices. I've actually reviewed this place on another blog post, in it I talked in more detail about the eating experience as well as the taste. Yufu Mabushi Shin Details Location: 5-3 Yufuincho Kawakita, Yufu, Oita 879-5114, Japan Phone: +81 97 784 5825 Opening Hours: 10:30?AM - 7:30?PM | Mon - Sun You can read my review for Yufumabushi Shin here: [Yufumabushi Shin Claypot Rice Review](#) So many options to choose from While walking along the busy Yunotsubo market street you'll come across a lone stall selling various types of deep fried patties also known as Japanese Croquettes. While Croquettes can easily be found all over Japan, I don't see any that has the label of 'Gold Ribbon?'. That's right, there was a national competition for the best croquette and apparently this won the gold medal! There are many different types of croquettes to try, the Crab Cream in particular looked very interesting, but personally, I was debating between the Pumpkin and Gold Medal one. Fried golden crispy and absolutely delicious I was skeptical at first but I decided to get the Gold Medal Croquette anyway out of curiosity. When I took that first bite, i'll admit that it was

totally different from what I was expecting. I thought it was going to be like a beef patty or a hamburger steak but no, it was soft, and really creamy. The crunchy outer shell was excellent, hot and fresh, as for the filling, I could taste a strong peppery flavor as well as the potatoes, not much of the beef is present unfortunately. All in all I quite like it, but I wouldn't give this a gold medal sadly. Still good though.

**Yufuin Kinsho Croquettes Details** Location: 1079-8 Yufuincho Kawakami, Yufu, Oita 879-5102, Japan Phone: +81 97 728 8691 Opening Hours: 9:00AM - 5:30PM | Mon - Sun You can already tell just by looking at it, the cake is really light and fluffy Another must try snack (or in this case dessert) to try in Yufuin is their famous roll cakes. A sweet and fluffy egg cake rolled and filled with the most decadent cream you'll ever have. The cake is really fluffy, perhaps maybe too fluffy because as you don't even need to chew, I bet an old person who had lost all their teeth can enjoy this cake. The cake does have a slight eggy flavor to it, not too pungent but you'd know that egg was a main ingredient. The cream was also delightful, airy and fluffy with a slight milky and vanilla taste. This dessert is famous in the area and one such place you must try it at is Milch and B-Speak, these two are cafe's that serve up the best version of this dessert. WARNING! I hate to have to talk negatively about a store especially in Japan where everyone is super kind and are immensely dedicated to their craft. But there is a roll cake shop just a few steps away from the train station, Yufufu Yufuin Ekimae, that is just really bad. The 1.8 star review on Google Maps isn't lying, it's not because the cakes were pastries where bad, no they were actually very delicious, but the service is horrible. The owner is grumpy, rude, and incredibly unfriendly towards foreign visitors. In fact, in all of my experiences of traveling Japan, he was the only rude person I have come across.

**Milch Details** Location: 3015-1 Yufu, Oita 879-5102, Japan Phone: +81 97 728 2800 Opening Hours: 10:30AM - 5:30PM | Mon - Sun

**B-Speak Details** Location: 3040-2 Yufuincho Kawakami, Yufu, Oita 879-5102, Japan Phone: +81 97 728 2166 Opening Hours: 10:00AM - 5:00PM | Mon - Sun

This is the private onsen at Ryokan Yuri, I got this all to myself hehe The onsen experience may not be as simple as you think it is. There are a few steps to follow before dipping your toes into the hot bath. Firstly an Onsen is not meant for cleaning your body, it is meant to relax your soul. The water will be HOT so take a moment to prepare yourself by dipping your toes slowly

into the water. Once you are in only stay for about 10-15 minutes, or until you start sweating. The temperature of the water is around 39°C - 42°C. Warning: Staying in the onsen for too long can cause dehydration and you could even faint in the water. The whole experience is incredibly relaxing and satisfying, you'll feel like every ache and pain in your body slowly healing. There are actually a few benefits to soaking your body in an onsen bath: Increase Blood Circulation: Natural elements and minerals in the water get absorbed into our bodies and increase blood flow. Reduce Stress: A nice hot bath has the obvious effect of reducing stress in your mind and your muscles. Relieve Pain: This is a bit of a cheat, the hot water has a numbing effect on our pain and aching joints. It doesn't really heal them but acts more so as a painkiller. Though that doesn't stop placebo from making you believe that you are fully healed. Treat Skin Problems: If you want beautiful clean skin then the minerals in the onsen will provide you with that, this is also the reason why onsens are popular with local Japanese women. If you are in a private onsen it doesn't really matter if you follow the etiquette or not because no one will ever know, although following onsen etiquettes will significantly improve your enjoyment of the whole experience. If you are in a public onsen however, please follow these etiquettes: Shower before entering: As previously mentioned, the onsen is not for cleaning your body, that's why there is a shower for you located right next to the onsen pool. Here soap, shampoo, and conditioners are provided for you. Take a quick shower to clean your body and avoid polluting the pool with your bodily oils and dirt. No clothing: Onsens are a completely nude affair, baskets will be provided for you to store your clothes and belongings, Onsens are also gender segregated so there is no need to feel embarrassed. Cover tattoos: If you have a tattoo try to cover it up as tattoos in Japan are associated with gangs and criminals and can make fellow onsen goers feel uncomfortable. Be respectful: Keep noise down and avoid splashing the water like you are in the swimming pool, also avoid using your phone or doing anything that can disturb others. Watch the time: Again, as previously mentioned, you should only spend somewhere around 15 minutes in the onsen. Wash your body afterwards: This is optional but highly recommended as you would want to rinse your body clean and shower a little bit with cold water to freshen yourself up from all that sweat. Don't mix hot and cold water: Don't mix the water from the showers into the onsen pool as



this will affect the temperature and ruin the experience for other patrons. Know the towels: Small towels are provided to dry your body but they are not meant for covering your private parts. If you follow these simple onsen rules then you will surely be having a greater experience in enjoying the hot springs. Note: Feel free to edit this itinerary as you wish according to your preferences, this is only a suggestion where I try to cover all the major attractions and things to do so that you can make the most of your time in Yufuin. Day 1 Morning (9:00AM - 12:00PM) Arrive in Yufuin via train at Yufuin Station and check in to your hotel or ryokan. Explore the town of Yufuin from the train station through the Yunotubo walking street. Stop by B-Speak to have a cup of coffee or tea and try out their famous cake roll. Afternoon (12:00PM - 5:00PM) Try out all the various street foods or have lunch at a local restaurant serving traditional Japanese cuisine. Visit Yufuin Floral Village and Kinrin Lake. Evening (5:00PM - 8:00PM) Trek to a scenic viewpoint such as Mount Yufu to watch the sunset. Have dinner at a Yufu Mabushi Shin to try out their famous clay pot rice. Settle down for the night and enjoy the relaxing onsen bath at your hotel or ryokan. Day 2 Morning (7:00AM - 12:00PM) Wake up and enjoy a deliciously healthy traditional Japanese breakfast at your hotel or ryokan. Optional: Enjoy another relaxing onsen bath to start your day. Rent a bike or walk around the town to see the beautiful scenery and experience the serene landscapes of the town. Afternoon (12:00PM - 5:00PM) Visit Yufuin Stained Glass Museum and enjoy the local artwork. Have lunch at a local restaurant serving traditional Japanese cuisine. Shop for souvenirs, snacks, and merchandise to bring back home to your friends, family, or for yourself. Evening (5:00PM - 8:00PM) Catch a train back home. Private Day Trip - Beppu Onsen and Yufuin Spa Town One Day Private Trip from Fukuoka Rickshaw Experience in Yufuin - Enjoy the scenic views while riding a traditional rickshaw ARU RESSHA by JR Kyushu - Luxury dining train from Hakata to Yufuin and vice versa Discounted Tickets - Browse a variety of attractions, tours, and transports all for a great price Tourism Information - All the information you need when traveling in Japan Pocket Wi-Fi - Important for staying connected on the go JR Rail Pass (Whole of Japan) - Easy, cheap, and unlimited access to JR transports Sign up with your email address to receive news, updates, and FREE goodies! We respect your privacy. Join our newsletter to receive exclusive updates, benefits, and FREE Travel



## Things to do in Oita 2024 | Pelago by Singapore Airlines

Sign up to enjoy 10% off your first 2 bookings Oita is a picturesque city located on the island of Kyushu, Japan, known for its stunning natural landscapes and rich cultural heritage. The local currency is the Japanese Yen (JPY), which is widely accepted throughout the city. Oita is famous for its hot springs, or 'onsen', which attract visitors seeking relaxation and rejuvenation. The city is also home to beautiful parks, historical sites, and vibrant markets that showcase the region's unique traditions. With its blend of modern amenities and traditional charm, Oita offers a delightful experience for travelers of all kinds. The best time to visit Oita is during the spring (March to May) and autumn (September to November) when the weather is mild and pleasant. Spring brings cherry blossoms that create a breathtaking landscape, while autumn showcases vibrant foliage. Summer can be hot and humid, making outdoor activities less enjoyable. Winter, although cooler, offers a unique charm with fewer crowds and the opportunity to enjoy hot springs. Overall, the transitional seasons provide the most comfortable conditions for exploring the city. Getting around Oita is convenient, with various transportation options available. The city has a reliable bus system that connects major attractions and neighborhoods. For those who prefer a more personal experience, renting a bicycle is a popular choice, allowing travelers to explore at their own pace. Taxis are also readily available, providing a quick and easy way to navigate the city. Additionally, Oita's compact size makes it easy to walk between many attractions. When visiting Oita, it's essential to try the local onsen etiquette to fully enjoy the hot springs experience. Be sure to carry cash, as some smaller establishments may not accept credit cards. Learning a few basic Japanese phrases can enhance your interactions with locals. Don't miss the chance to explore the nearby Beppu, famous for its hot springs and unique 'hells' tour. Lastly, be respectful of local customs and traditions, as this will enrich your travel experience.

**Japan's Forgotten Tourist Destination | Hidden Gems Japan Guide - YouTube**

## Hidden Gems of Osaka | City Unscripted

October 18, 2024 Every twist and turn in Osaka holds a secret. Hey there! I'm Mia, your go-to for all the hidden gems Osaka has to offer Six years and counting! That's the time I've joyfully spent as a resident of this ever-evolving metropolis. If you're planning to visit Osaka for a day trip or longer, you'd know about its famous attractions. But the real charm lies in its hidden corners. Between the delicious bites to eat and the winding alleyways, every twist and turn here holds secrets waiting to be unraveled. My quest for adventure brought me to this city, and every day I uncover non-touristy things that make me feel like I'm discovering Osaka all over again. Dive into this journey with me, and let's explore the lesser-known treasures of my beloved city. While many Osaka tours naturally gravitate towards the iconic landmarks, visitors can find so much more beyond the usual sights. Think Osaka Castle, Universal Studios Japan, and the mesmerizing view from the Umeda Sky Building's Floating Garden Observatory. These spots are definitely bucket-list-worthy and capture the vibrant essence of Japanese culture. However, if you're looking for a more intimate experience, the real enchantment of Osaka shines brightest in its lesser-known corners. Venturing off the beaten track is where you'll uncover the heart and soul of this city. Every narrow lane, every local eatery, every traditional shop tells a story that most tourists might miss out on. To me, these hidden niches are what make Osaka such a great place to explore and live in. With this guide, I aim to share the best things that might not make it to the regular travel brochures but are absolute must-visits for anyone wanting to experience Osaka's authentic charm. When most people think of Japan, they often picture ancient temples juxtaposed against ultra-modern skyscrapers. In the heart of this vibrant contrast stands Osaka, my adopted home. While not born here, the city's iconic structures and those less frequented have shaped my life in so many profound ways. Osaka Castle isn't just another tourist stop—it's a piece of Japan's epic past come to life. Sure, the towering walls and samurai battles are cool, but the hidden temple grounds are where the real magic happens. I've spent hours soaking up local stories from sweet elderly guides, and it made the place feel so much more alive! The first time I stumbled upon this marvel near one of Osaka's bustling train stations, I

was left awestruck. An actual highway slicing through a building! It seemed straight out of a science fiction tale, but it's just another day in Osaka - a city that harmoniously marries the audacious with the efficient. In Osaka's skyline, the Umeda Sky Building might steal the spotlight with its sleek, futuristic design, but it's Tsutenkaku's old-school charm that really hooks you. It may not be the tallest, but at night, when the city lights sparkle, finding a quiet spot up there feels like touching the heart of Osaka. Not every architectural gem gleams in daylight. Venture into the nightlife of Osaka, and the Misono Building awaits. On the surface, it might look like any other building, but step inside, and it's a labyrinth of bars, eateries, and tiny clubs pulsating with life. It embodies the spirit of Osaka - where traditions meet the contemporary, and every corner has a tale. Experience Osaka like a local through the vibrant nooks and crannies I've come to adore. Dive deep into the heartbeats of these neighborhoods, each one echoing tales of culture, food, fun and history. Not far from the busy tracks of the high-speed bullet train, this residential area near Osaka Station offers a breather. A step away from the beaten path, Nakazakicho feels like a nostalgic journey back in time. Vintage shops, artisan boutiques, and cozy cafes line the streets, making it a personal refuge amid Osaka's relentless energy. This famous alley is a treasure trove of secrets waiting to be uncovered. Some of my fondest memories are of indulging in Osaka's delectable street food here, especially crafting my own Okonomiyaki in intimate local cooking classes. Every corner of this neighborhoods tells a story, and it's no wonder visitors are drawn to its allure. When I'm craving some peace and quiet, Tamatsukuri is my go-to spot. It's near beautiful Buddhist temples and calming onsen waters, giving you that perfect mix of zen and tradition. Plus, the oldest temple around has the coolest stories - it's like stepping into a hidden treasure for history buffs and spiritual explorers! A little slice of Korea right in the heart of Japan! Just a quick hop from JR Tenma Station, this lively neighborhood is packed with the mouthwatering smells of sizzling Korean BBQ, vibrant K-pop tunes blasting from every corner, and colorful shops filled with all the latest Korean goodies. It's a feast for your senses! A district echoing the vibes of the Showa era, Shinsekai stands as a testament to Osaka's rich history. It's also where I often direct friends who want to taste the best kushikatsu in town. Just a stone's throw from Tennoji, this area is a little slice of calm in the hustle of the city! With peaceful

parks perfect for a laid-back stroll and the historic Ikutama Shrine surrounded by beautiful Buddhist temples, it's like stepping into a hidden, spiritual oasis right in the heart of it all! Whenever I'm in the mood for some indie tunes or a night out at a trendy bar, these up-and-coming neighborhoods are my absolute favorites. Picture this: old-school Japanese food stalls right next to modern eateries and cool cafés. It's a perfect blend of tradition and fresh, exciting vibes! Here are some of my favorite street food restaurants and spots that offer a true taste of Osaka's heart and history. Just a short walk from Osaka Castle, this bustling alleyway feels like a step back in time. More than the famed Takoyaki, every bite here, from kushikatsu to local specialties, narrates a tale of Osaka's rich history. In a city where Takoyaki is king, this place takes it to another level! They've mastered the art, crafting each ball with a crispy outside, gooey inside, and a burst of flavor that'll blow your mind. Every bite is like a fun, delicious tribute to Osaka's food scene—pure street food magic you won't forget! Tucked away in a cozy corner, these savory pancakes are like a fun, flavorful journey through Osaka's rich food scene! Each bite bursts with generations of culinary magic, blending tradition and creativity. If you're craving something truly special, this hidden gem is a must-try for any foodie! This little mobile stall, usually parked near the buzz of train stations, is dishing out some of the tastiest fried noodles you'll ever try. And forget about basic Cup Noodles—this is next-level street food magic, packed with flavor and a whole lot of yum! Trust me, you're gonna want seconds! Ditch the usual ramen for a day and dive into the comforting embrace of udon at this local haven. This is what Osaka's authentic food scene looks like: no English instructions, just pure, unadulterated Japanese flavors. Their shoyu ramen? A warm, delicious bowl of Japanese history. Note: This spot is only open from Monday to Friday. Hidden away from the bustling city, this cozy spot feels like a secret doorway to old Japan! With the rich aromas of sizzling sukiyaki and shabu-shabu filling the air, every bite is a delicious journey through tradition. It's the kind of place that makes dining an adventure you'll never forget! Welcome to the birthplace of takoyaki, where they keep it old-school with a soy sauce and dashi batter, no mayo or sauce needed! Packed with ginger and green onions, the flavor really pops. It's a clean, savory bite that takes you back to the dish's roots. If you love takoyaki, this is a must-try! An ode to the octopus in all its glory. Whether you're into grilled skewers

or hearty stews, they've got you covered. Dive into the heart of the city's culinary spirit and savor horumon dishes. It's a testament to the adventurous and innovative spirit of Japanese cuisine. As for the craft beer scene? Let me paint a picture: imagine holding a cold beer from a local bar, wandering Osaka's lively streets, and soaking in the nocturnal symphony. Each eatery I've mentioned isn't just about food but an immersive experience, a dance of flavors, history, and local warmth. Tucked just a stone's throw away from bustling Namba, this charming alley transports me to a time when Osaka was just a budding merchant city. The aroma of ramen broth, the sizzle of yakitori, and the inviting warmth of the shops make it a timeless treasure. While Tachibana sees its fair share of visitors, it's the authentic local atmosphere that resonates with me the most. Here, I've spent many nights laughing with friends at izakayas over drinks and being lured by the ever-enticing smell of delicious food. Sure, some parts of this 2.6km stretch buzz with shoppers, but for me, it's all about the food. Rather than shopping bags, I find my hands full of takoyaki, skewers, and other tasty bites as I weave through its length. When the bustle of the daytime business scene fades, Kitashinchi unveils its gastronomic wonders. Nestled between its more renowned restaurants are tiny gems where I've sat shoulder to shoulder with locals, indulging in comfort dishes that are close to my heart. Away from the tourist circuit, Karako is where I go to taste Osaka in its purest form. From the briny freshness of seafood to the sweetness of age-old candies, it's a sensory journey I cherish. In Osaka, the well-trodden paths offer glimmers of the city's soul, but it's in the quiet alleys and hidden markets where I truly connect with its essence. Join me, and let's savor the stories these streets have to tell. Living in a bustling metropolis like Osaka means that every once in a while, I crave a moment of tranquility. While Osaka might dazzle with its neon and skyscrapers, for me, its soul rests in the quiet corners that remain overshadowed by places like Tokyo. Here are the sacred spaces that have touched my heart and where I find solace in the midst of urban cacophony: Tucked away from the hustle and bustle, this hidden gem is one of Japan's oldest shrines. It's not your usual touristy spot, and that's exactly why I love it! Wandering through its peaceful grounds feels like stepping back in time, offering a little slice of ancient Japan right in the city. It's like a secret escape! Founded by Prince Shotoku, this place feels like a journey back in time! Said to be



Japan's first Buddhist temple, it's peaceful and packed with stories that seem to whisper from the walls. Every visit is an adventure, and I never get tired of wandering through its serene, mysterious halls?it's pure magic! This shrine is like a secret in the heart of the city. The myriad fox statues dedicated to the Inari god always intrigue me. It's a quiet corner where I often retreat to for some introspection. We locals call it the "temple of bones," and it's every bit as intriguing as it sounds! Statues made from the ashes of the deceased tell stories of life, love, and legacy. It's eerie, exciting, and unforgettable?a reminder to live boldly, embrace every moment, and leave a lasting impact. Nestled in the lively Namba district, the giant lion's head stage never ceases to astonish me. The shrine is a delightful paradox, encapsulating Osaka's vibrant spirit that melds tradition with the contemporary. These are the places where I often wander off the beaten path, seeking a deeper connection to my beloved Osaka. They're not just tourist spots, but pockets of serenity and history that echo with stories and silences alike. So if you ever find yourself amidst the rush of Osaka's streets, remember there's a spiritual tapestry waiting to be discovered, just around the corner. While most tourists flock to the big-ticket rides, my heart is with the lesser-known attractions. Hidden gems like "Jurassic Park ? The Ride" and "Hello Kitty's Cupcake Dream" that many visitors overlook are my personal favorites. These, coupled with the unexpected street performances off the beaten path, give me a unique USJ experience. It truly is a touch of Hollywood in Osaka. Don't let the name fool you?this is no ordinary waste facility! With its vibrant, quirky design, it turns something as mundane as waste management into a creative masterpiece. Every visit is a reminder of Osaka's ability to reinvent the everyday, showcasing the city's innovative and artistic spirit. The daytime buzz is cool, but at night? The vibe is next level! With the soft, dim lighting and all that stunning marine life, it's like you've been transported to another world. It's this magical underwater oasis right in the middle of Osaka?totally dreamy and something you won't forget! Manga, anime, and electronics galore! But it's the hidden cafes serving traditional Japanese treats that make me linger. They offer a slice of nostalgia in the midst of all that modernity. Amidst the hustle of Amerikamura, I've found solace in the cozy karaoke bars nestled in its alleys. Singing my heart out, from trending hits to age-old Japanese classics, I connect with the city's rhythmic pulse. One of my favorites is "Moonshine",

tucked away in a narrow lane. Its wooden exterior and dimmed lanterns offer an intimate escape. Whether you're up for a thrilling ride at USJ or a serene evening observing marine life, Osaka has an off-the-beaten-path gem waiting just for you. Dive deep, stay curious, and let the city surprise you at every turn. The heart of Osaka isn't just in its bustling centers. It's in the overlooked lanes, quirky boutiques, and hidden arcades where local life thrives. Forget the mainstream shopping destinations; dive into these favorite hidden gems of mine for an authentic shopping experience. Each shop and shopping street tells a unique tale, and here's where I love to spend my time:

Tucked away from the usual tourist spots, this trendy street in Minami Horie is a treasure trove of cool boutiques. You'll find everything from quirky vintage gems to stylish homewares. It's my go-to for uncovering those rare, unique pieces that totally vibe with my style?shopping here is always an adventure! Tucked away in the lively streets of Namba, this is my absolute go-to spot when I want to dive into Osaka's buzzing food scene. It's not just shopping?it's a full-on adventure! Handmade knives, gorgeous Japanese ceramics, and all the coolest stuff for my kitchen. Seriously, I can't resist! A stone's throw from the crowds of Shinsaibashi, this shopping street is an insider secret I cherish. From budget-friendly finds to specialty kitchen supplies shops, it's where locals like me shop. I'm a total music lover, and this place is my little slice of heaven! Tucked away in the heart of Namba, this cozy record shop is my happy place. With rows and rows of vinyl?from smooth jazz to rock legends?it's like a treasure hunt every time, and I'm always discovering something cool! Tucked away in the heart of Shinsaibashi, this place is like a mini escape from the city's buzz! It's not just shopping?it's an adventure! You'll find cool fashion, cozy book nooks, and lush greenery all around. Every corner feels fresh, stylish, and full of surprises. It's a total vibe! When in Amerikamura, I often find myself lost in the aisles of DEEP. A hidden gem for sneaker aficionados, this shop showcases some of the rarest kicks in the city. Each of these shopping streets and shops is more than just a place to spend money. They're where I reconnect with the soul of Osaka and discover stories embedded in every item. So, when in Osaka, shop like a local and uncover the hidden tales that make this city truly special. Living in Osaka as an expat, I often get asked: "Are there a lot of foreigners in Osaka?" My answer? It's a beautiful mix. Over the last few years, I've

noticed a delightful uptick in the number of visitors from around the world, making our vibrant city their home, even if just for a short while. However, when pitted against colossal magnets like Tokyo, we're still a tad under the radar?and honestly, I think it's for the best. Being slightly overshadowed by Tokyo's colossal fame has given Osaka its unique identity. Here, the fusion of cultures feels more intimate. Strolling the streets, it's not uncommon for me to hear a mix of languages, see a blend of traditional and contemporary fashion, or stumble upon restaurants offering dishes inspired by corners of the world I've only dreamt of visiting. But even with this infusion of global influences, Osaka retains its distinct flavor. Foreigners who visit or decide to reside here often tell me they appreciate this balance?the opportunity to experience the true essence of Japan, complemented by pockets of familiarity. It's a place where traditional tea ceremonies coexist harmoniously with expat-run cafes, where ancient temples can be found a stone's throw away from global stores. In essence, while the world has undoubtedly visited and left its mark on Osaka, our heart remains profoundly local. So, for those considering a visit or stay, expect an embrace of both the global and the familiar, wrapped up in the warm, vibrant spirit that is quintessentially Osaka. To me, Osaka isn't just another pin on the world map; it's where my heart truly resides. With every step, be it towards the towering Tsutenkaku or down an unsuspecting alley in Ura Namba, I'm reminded of why I fell in love with this city. It's not about the giant head sculptures, the tallest buildings, or even the most famed tourist spots. No, it's about the undiscovered stories, the hidden shops, and those quiet moments when the city speaks directly to your soul. Over the years, I've come to realize that Osaka's magic isn't just in its landmarks. It's in the aroma that floats from a tucked-away eatery, the faint laughter echoing from a distant bar, and the soft glow of a ferris wheel as the day comes to a close. It's in the way history and the present coalesce at every turn, beckoning the curious to delve deeper. To all those considering a visit, I'd say this: don't merely come to Osaka. Engage with it. Walk its streets, taste its delicacies, shop at its local stores, and immerse in its stories. And if you ever need a companion to discover the best things this city has to offer, know that I am always here, eager to share my treasured spots and memories. So, pack your bags, and as you plan your trip, dream of the adventures we'll embark on together. From the bustling day trips to the serene

moments under the Tsutenkaku Tower, I promise it's a journey you won't forget. I hope you'll follow some of my Osaka travel tips! Hey curious traveler, visiting Osaka soon?

Hey curious traveler, visiting Osaka soon?

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# Discovering Yufuin Floral Village: A Ghibli-Inspired Journey through Oita, Japan | Japan I can travel

Japan I can travel Embarking on a whimsical adventure to Yufuin Floral Village in Oita, Japan, feels like stepping into a scene from a beloved Ghibli film. Known for its stunning landscapes and enchanting atmosphere, this destination captivates travelers with its extraordinary beauty and charm. Starting from Beppu, a scenic one-hour drive reveals picturesque views reminiscent of *Howl's Moving Castle*. Visitors can soak in the vistas while relishing a cup of coffee, setting the stage for an unforgettable experience. The ride culminates in Yufuin, a quaint town that welcomes guests with the warm hospitality of locals, eager to share the town's treasures. Yufuin Floral Village draws inspiration from the charming streets of the Cotswolds, known as the filming location for Harry Potter movies. Upon arrival, the village unfolds like a fairytale, complete with Kiki's bakery, characterized by delightful treats and unique themes in every shop. The vibrant atmosphere, coupled with the surrounding autumn scenery, adds color to the experience, enticing visitors to savor local snacks like meat buns and Mont Blanc ice cream. Another highlight of the journey is a visit to the Hells of Beppu, famous for its visually striking hot springs. The vivid blue waters of Umi Jigoku, known for their natural beauty, demonstrate the wonder of Japanese onsen culture. Although bathing is prohibited, visitors can appreciate the stunning colors of this unique spot and even take home some mineral-rich water. The trip concludes with a soothing onsen experience at Ebisu Onsen, where relaxation is enhanced by breathtaking views of the ocean and mountains. The charm of Oita and the thrill of culinary discoveries paired with nature's beauty make Yufuin a must-visit destination for travelers seeking a Ghibli-like escape. Travel to Japan |

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## Discover the Hidden Christian History of Japan at Oita's Taketa

Store Sponsored by Tourism Oita When arriving in Taketa city for the first time, the best advice I can give you is "Don't forget to look back." This advice can be applied in several ways, but the first and most obvious is if you arrive by train, don't forget to look back as you exit the station toward Taketa's main street. When you do, you'll find the first of Taketa's many surprises for first-time visitors: a lovely waterfall cascading down a sheer rock face behind the station. Bungo-Taketa station is one of the most picturesque I have seen in Japan. If you start your exploration of this lovely castle town located in the once protective shadow of Oka Castle Ruins from the station (or the parking lot next to the station if you arrive by car), take the main street leading over the bridge and away from the station. About 100 meters further on the right side of the street you will find Misterio, Taketa's Hidden Christian Museum. You might be aware that although Christianity in Japan had a strong start in the 16th century, political influences from both inside and outside of Japan eventually caused Christianity to be outlawed under threat of torture and death. As a result, the 15,000 Christians who once lived in the Taketa area were either persecuted, forced to recant their faith, or as many chose to do, go into hiding. Because of the extreme secrecy required to continue practicing their faith, little history has been recorded about these people. But the researchers behind Misterio, the first museum of its kind in Japan, have sought to uncover those mysteries. Christianity in Taketa flourished in a large part because the samurai clans who ruled Oka Castle were either Christians themselves or sympathetic to those of the Christian faith. Shiga Chikatsugu, who also took the Christian name Don Paulo, was a samurai Lord who once ruled Oka Castle and was a great evangelist of the faith. Even when the Shiga family were persecuted for their faith by the government under Toyotomi, the Nakagawa clan, who took over the castle, were generally sympathetic to the Christian cause and there is some evidence that members of the clan became Christians themselves. While the museum contains a great deal of discovered evidence of hidden Christians in Taketa, the most stunning evidence is found at the Christian Cave Chapel, hidden in the forest beneath the Hirose Shrine. The land containing the cave was once owned by a

high-ranking official of the Nakagawa clan, so the existence of such a place was extremely dangerous for both himself and the Nakagawa clan. The cave was used both to hide Christians who were being sought after and to hold Christian services. A small cross and candleholder are still visible on an altar carved into the stone in the back of the cave. For those interested in learning more about the fascinating history of Taketa's hidden Christians, Misterio produces a map of some of the places of interest so you can take a self-guided tour. If you can plan ahead, it is possible to book a tour guide in advance by calling the museum at 0974-63-3383. Taketa's city officials have a refreshingly progressive take on the future of their city. Instead of tearing down old buildings in favor of modernization, the city has aggressively pursued the path of restoring and reusing historic buildings. Strolling through the city, I found a former warehouse that was now a workshop and showroom for local artisans. An old building selling items made from recycled kimono. A samurai guest house that has been converted into a cafe and gallery space. At the latter, a young woman emerged from the building and encouraged me to "look around the back". There I found a small garden flanked by bamboo. Always look back. Along Bukeyashiki Street, the old samurai quarter, the remains of 13 former samurai residences remain, an odd combination of stone-walled homes with hybrid automobiles in their driveways. The corner building, Taketa Soseikan, houses a collection of armor and Japanese dolls. At the top of a long flight of stone steps, Kanonji Temple and Aizendo Shrine simultaneously offer a panoramic view of the city and a "power spot" to pray for a marriage partner. The future success of Taketa is being built on the hopes that future generations will appreciate the way Taketa values and embraces its historic past. Chikuraku, a festival of bamboo lights that occurs each November, attracts thousands of visitors to see the beauty of this spectacle, but a single annual event will not guarantee the survival of a small town like Taketa. I sit outside of Mugikura, established as a soy sauce brewery well over a century ago, eating soy sauce flavored soft cream, which is much more delicious than it sounds. But Mugikura is not content to rest on its soy sauce roots and has now expanded into coffee and coffee beans. I still purchase some delicious soy sauce to pack into my suitcase to take back to Tokyo. Taketa based businesses like Mugikura are not content to rest on their roots and hope to survive for another generation. They are

reinventing themselves for the future while holding on and giving honor to their historic past. It seems the entire city embraces this philosophy, melding their history with their future. Today, I take another look back at Taketa, at the fond memories of a day spent there. As long as Taketa remains in the memories of those who visit there and we share our fondness of this lovely town with others, I have no doubt future generations will always be able to look back on Taketa. The most convenient way to access Taketa city is by rental car, from Oita Airport or one of the major train stations in Oita Prefecture. From the airport, it is a lovely hour and a half drive to Taketa city. The Hohi Line train from Oita city can get you to Bungo-Taketa station in roughly the same amount of time, but it is easier to access other sights in the area by car. The best way to plan a day in Taketa is to combine it with exploring the amazing Oka Castle ruins, a short walk or drive from Taketa city. Oka Castle was an immense castle that was decommissioned at the demand of the Meiji government at the conclusion of the Edo period but retains awe-inspiring views of nature and its remaining stone foundation. Freelance writer, photographer, and mentor. Japan-based, Oaktown (Oakland, California) born. Freelance writing and photography work includes Lonely Planet, Voyapon, Metropolis Japan, and many regional tourism websites around Japan. <https://www.toddfong.com> Save my name, email, and website in this browser for the next time I comment. I have read and accepted the Privacy Policy

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# Kyushu Travel || Full list Best Fukuoka & Kyushu Travel Spots

Essential resource for anyone travelling to Kyushu island Japan. Fully updated for 2024. Complete list of best Fukuoka and Kyushu travel spots. Ask questions or share your recommendations in the comments section below. Fukuoka Best Places Oita Best Places Kumamoto Best Places Nagasaki Best Places Saga Best Places Miyazaki Best Places Kagoshima Best Places Arriving in Kyushu Travelling around Kyushu Comments and Questions According to many surveys, Kyushu is the island most loved by Japanese travellers. Outside of Japan it is still relatively unknown. Now is the perfect time to visit before the secret gets out. With fewer tourists than Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto, it's the best place to escape the crowds. Visit Kyushu for the food, lively volcanoes, wonderful onsen (natural hot-spring bathing), traditional Japanese inns (ryokan), beautiful nature, pottery towns, local culture and many historic places. Visit Kyushu to rediscover the side of Japan long-lost in the big cities. Note: all photos on this page taken by us (Kyushu Journeys) Kyushu has 7 prefectures (local districts); Fukuoka, Oita, Kumamoto, Nagasaki, Saga, Miyazaki, and Kagoshima. Let's look at the best places in each prefecture so you can decide where to visit and what to do in Kyushu. You'll probably arrive here either at Fukuoka Airport or Hakata Station. Fukuoka is Kyushu's biggest city yet not too big. The population of Fukuoka city is 1.5 million compared to 10 million in Tokyo. Fukuoka city is famous throughout Japan for its food. You can dine in Michelin-starred restaurants, simple street stalls and everything in between. Pro Tip We recommend eating in the 'yatai' food stalls in the evening. It's a great chance to try local dishes and take a stroll along the lively riverside. Fukuoka city has two main areas; Hakata and Tenjin. You can walk from one to the other or take a 5-minute cab/bus/subway ride. Hakata has more eateries and hotels whereas Tenjin is a place to shop. In Hakata you can take a self-guided walking tour of some very historic Buddhist temples. In Tenjin head to Oyafuko Dori for casual dining and trendy nightlife scene. Yanagawa is an hour by train from Fukuoka city. It's a bit too touristy for our liking but taking a gondola ride along the canals is fun. Don't miss Yanagawa's signature eel dish after your gondola ride. Dazaifu is also an hour by train from Fukuoka city. There is an impressive and historic shrine there (Dazaifu Tenmang?) but

it is always incredibly crowded. It's dedicated to the Shinto deity of education and so is popular with students. Don't miss Dazaifu's famous Umegae Mochi rice cakes. Kyushu National Museum is also located in Dazaifu. Itoshima is a summer destination with a nice beach, good surf and feels a bit like Bali or Thailand. There are a couple of well-known sunset viewpoints. Lovers like to take selfies at Couples Rock. It takes less than 30 minutes to reach Kurume by shinkansen from Fukuoka city. Kurume is known as the 'common man's food city'. There are over 100 ramen noodle shops, more yakitori shops per person than anywhere in Japan, and 18 saké breweries along the river. It's one of the best places to see camellia in the whole of Japan. The annual fire festival is wow! Yame is off the rail network but only an hour's drive from Fukuoka city. We love Yame because we love green tea and Japanese tradition. The green tea plantation views are wonderful. Visit one of the local tea shops for drinking and buying best quality green tea. Pro Tip If you visit in May you get the best quality green tea (freshly harvested) and can get hands-on picking tea yourself. There is a traditional craft museum where you can see local craftspeople at work. Ask to see their wonderful puppet theatre too. There is a shop for viewing or purchase of exquisite traditional handmade dolls. We'll meet a green tea Master in Yame on our Kyushu Food Tour in February 2024. Ukiha is an hour by train from Kurume. It's a wonderful place to see Japan as it once was. Wander the old streets and visit traditional shops. There is a famous rice terrace viewpoint and orchards where you can pick your own fruit. The natural hot-spring onsen water is excellent quality. We're big fans of Ukiha (it's best to visit by car). Asakura is 30 minutes drive from Ukiha. Asakura and Ukiha offer similar things to see and do and we enjoy visiting them both. The ruins of Akizuki castle are one of the best cherry blossom viewing spots in Fukuoka Prefecture. Sasaguri is just 20 minutes by train from Fukuoka city but a world away. There are thick cedar forests and a pilgrimage circuit of 88 Buddhist temples. This is a miniature version (50KM) of the more strenuous 88 temple Shikoku Pilgrimage. You can follow our route description and photos if you want to enjoy a half-day walk through the forests of Sasaguri. We also run a yoga retreat in the peaceful surroundings of Sasaguri. The most famous and photogenic inhabitant of Sasaguri is the reclining Buddha of Nanzoin Temple. He's utterly serene and the largest bronze Buddha in the world. Not much

happening here but we live here and we love it! The only thing of note is the Kaho Theater. It's a fine example of a traditional kabuki theater of which very few remain in Japan. We were lucky enough to see a Kabuki performance here and it was utterly enchanting. Performances are held just once a year (or even less often!) so we felt privileged to get the opportunity. I also feel privileged taking my morning walk around rice fields instead of traffic-filled streets. The best onsen in Fukuoka are away from Fukuoka city. There are very few onsen within Fukuoka city and those are very busy city-style ones. Our favourite onsen village in Fukuoka Prefecture is Harazuru Onsen. There are several onsen resorts along the riverbank. As a wonderful bonus, in season you can see the unique spectacle of cormorant fishing. Not familiar with onsen bathing? Our Introduction to Onsen page is a great place to start. Be part of the Kyushu travel community. Ask questions if you're planning a trip. If you've been to Kyushu before (or live here now) share your knowledge, experience and photos so others can benefit. If you love Japan travel, this is the group for you. It's completely free of charge so join now and start planning your next Kyushu holiday. If you want to skip Fukuoka, you can fly into Oita Airport from other parts of Japan. If you arrive by train from Fukuoka (2 hours) there is a wonderful Showa-era onsen just 2-minutes walk from Oita Station. Also within walking distance of Oita Station is Oita Prefectural Art Museum (OPAM). OPAM is most well-known for its wonderful building design. Other than this, you may prefer to skip Oita city and head to the countryside. We love Beppu. It's just 90 minutes drive from our house so we visit often. We visit for the onsen (natural hot-spring baths) and the seafood. There are almost 3,000 hot springs gushing water around town so you'll surely find one you like. We have bathed in simple hot spring baths that cost just ¥100 (less than a dollar) but you can find luxurious ones too. Beppu is also a good choice to find clean but relatively inexpensive accommodation. The Hells of Beppu are its most famous tourist attraction. The Hells (jigoku) are eight different bubbling, boiling pools of various colours. They are too hot to bathe but fun, unique and photogenic. Beppu Hells Pro Tips: Kamado Jigoku is the most fun; Chinoike Jigoku (Blood Pond Hell) is the most colourful; animal lovers may want to avoid Oniyama Jigoku (Crocodile Hell) You can also take a boat from Beppu to visit an early morning fisherman's market. In addition to stuffing yourself with fresh, tasty and inexpensive seafood in

Beppu, don't forget to have your 'onsen egg' and (our favourite) onsen steamed pudding. Yufuin is another very famous onsen resort in Oita. It's in a prettier rural setting than Beppu and is more famous for beef than seafood. Accommodation in Yufuin is mostly ryokan (traditional Japanese inns) and so more expensive than Beppu. From Hakata Station in Fukuoka you can reach Yufuin in 2 hours on the stylish Yufuin no Mori train. Yufuin Pro Tip: Yufuin no Mori is one of Kyushu's most popular trains so we strongly recommend you book in advance. For Kyushu Journeys clients we'll make all required train and bus bookings. Check out our family trip planning service. Yufuin is much-loved by the Japanese so gets very busy at weekends and on public holidays. The main activity in Yufuin is strolling along the high street to pretty Lake Kinrin. The route is lined with boutiques, cafés, restaurants and galleries. If you have a sweet tooth (like we do) you'll be in heaven. You can take the quieter route back along the riverbank to burn off some calories. Even if you don't stay in Yufuin you can take an outdoor onsen bath there enjoying the classic view of Mount Yufu. Kunisaki Peninsula is one the least visited areas of Oita Prefecture but one of our favourites. It has everything we love; nature, history and culture. The main shrine in the area (Usa Jingu) was built in the 8th century and is set in sprawling forested grounds. There are many other temples and temple ruins dating back 1,300 years. The ancient Buddhists longed for serenity so many of these temples are found in mountainous areas and thick forests. Even today they are far from the crowds. Pro Tip It's very difficult to explore the best parts of Kunisaki Peninsula by public transport. Our Kyushu Foodie Tour includes Kunisaki or you can visit by self-drive rental car. You can find Buddhist images carved into rock faces by patient hands a millenia or more ago. The Kunisaki Long Trail is a meandering 134 KM hiking route that follows in the footsteps of ancient monks. If you want to escape the 21st century there is no better place than Kunisaki Peninsula. You will probably visit Usuki to see the wonderful Usuki Stone Buddhas. They are believed to have been carved in the 12th century. Who carved them and why is lost in time. There are 59 statues set in a peaceful park. The Usuki Stone Buddhas are officially designated as a 'National Treasure of Japan'. For lovers of fresh seafood there is no better place than Saiki. Saiki fishing port lands a wider variety of fish (350+ kinds) than anywhere else in Japan. The morning fish auction at Saiki

harbour offers a fascinating glimpse into the fishermen's world (although it isn't officially open to the public). Whenever we visit Saiki we eat an enormous amount of fish and other seafood (and take lots home fresh, frozen and dried). The sushi is exceptional. Between meals you can visit the easternmost point in Kyushu (Tsurumisaki lighthouse) and gaze across to Shikoku island. Aso-Kuju National Park is the scenic heartland of Kyushu. The east part of Aso-Kuju National Park is in Oita Prefecture and the west part is in Kumamoto Prefecture. As you drive around you'll almost certainly see a plume of smoke drifting up from Aso volcano (see Kumamoto section below). Enjoy driving through picturesque rolling hills and vast grasslands. The cows here roam free and the area is famous for its beef and ice cream. There are some wonderful rural onsen in this area and we seldom visit without taking a bath. I think it's our favourite part of Kyushu. Kitsuki is a small town with a historic feel and a tiny little castle. It has some very well-preserved streets so you can tread where fearsome samurai feet once trod. The most popular activity in Kitsuki is renting a kimono and strolling around Instagramming. If you have kids you can keep them quiet for an afternoon with a visit to Harmony Land Theme Park. I've never been and definitely will never go but apparently it's home to Hello Kitty, Cinnamon and My Melody. Hita is our kind of town. You can drift back in time as you wander the streets and visit the traditional shops. Do a tour and tasting in one of the soy sauce or miso shops still using age-old techniques. Don't miss the display of wonderful handmade dolls. The hot spring waters are good quality and many of the onsen are in picturesque locations. Eel is the local specialty dish. We've been to several eel restaurants in Hita and they were all excellent. We even found a man grilling eel at the roadside and took one home for mum. Takatsuka Atago Jizosan is an unusual temple and very photogenic. It features 2,000 Jizo statues (the Guardian Deity of children). You can enjoy Hita without a car because it's just 90 minutes by train from Hakata Station in Fukuoka city. It's worth stopping at Kokonoe just to walk across the bridge (Kokonoe Yume Otsurihasi). It's Japan's highest footbridge above a valley and the views are incredible. It's the perfect place for viewing autumn leaves. Don't go if you're scared of heights. Kokonoe is in the mountains and there is a ski resort nearby. However honestly speaking, if you want to go skiing we suggest you visit Hokkaido instead of Kyushu. Bungo is home to Kyushu's own version of the

Niagara Falls (Harajiri Falls). Unlike the real Niagara Falls you can wander around freely and get right to the edge. When we visited we saw some people taking crazy selfies. Oka castle ruins are also worth a visit. The views are wonderful. This whole area is famed for its autumn colours. Nakatsu is another of our favourite areas. It's very picturesque and we always visit on our Autumn Colours Tour. Yabakei is especially nice. It's another mountainous region so a good place to have a bowl of soba noodles (you probably know already that soba noodles is a traditional mountain food). If you are feeling energetic you can rent a bicycle and pedal around. One of our favourite temples is in Nakatsu. Rakanji Temple is over 700 years old and there are Buddha statues everywhere (3,700 if you count them carefully). It's perched on a cliff top overlooking thick forest. Rakanji Temple is a beautifully peaceful place and (shock, horror!) photography isn't allowed. The best onsen in Oita Prefecture are ?. everywhere! It's one of Japan's top places for onsen and Japanese flock here to bathe. Beppu and Yufuin are the most popular onsen resorts in Oita. Beppu is a cheap and cheerful onsen city. Yufuin is a more high-end rural onsen town. Personally we prefer the quality of water in Beppu. Hita has some wonderful onsen where you can bathe outdoors with scenic views. There are also many small onsen resorts in the Oita countryside. We love some of the onsen resorts around Kokonoe for the spectacular views. There are many, many others. Leave a comment below to share your favourite scenic onsen. The only parts of Oita Prefecture not well supplied with onsen are east in Kunisaki Peninsula and south around Saiki city. Get the latest updates about Japan tourism coronavirus restrictions. Learn about our latest tours and exclusive discounts. If you're serious about visiting Kyushu, this newsletter is for you. You can whizz down to Kumamoto city from Fukuoka in 45 minutes by Shinkansen. If you're in a car it's fun to take the ferry from Nagasaki Prefecture. The pride of Kumamoto city is the castle. It is considered one of the three premier castles in Japan but was badly damaged in the 2016 earthquake. We were lucky enough to visit the castle just before the earthquake and it was grand. The other main attraction in Kumamoto city is the Japanese Garden (Suizenji Jojuen). It doesn't rival the great gardens of Kyoto but it's a pleasant place. You can sip green tea and gaze out over the lake as the feudal lords once did. If you like eating weird things when you travel, try basashi (raw horse-meat sashimi). It's a Kumamoto specialty. Aso volcano is

the largest active volcano in Japan and one of the largest in the world. Amazingly you can stand on the crater rim and peer down into the bubbling lava below. Pro Tip Check before you travel to see the current status of Aso volcanic eruption. At the time of writing (Nov 2021) there is a level 2 eruption warning so the area within 1km from the crater is closed. When we last visited a few months ago there were no restrictions at all. Even when the crater is closed you can usually still get close enough to smell the devilish pong of sulphur and feel the volcanic vibes. Taking a walk around is the nearest you'll get to strolling on the moon. Aso city can be reached by train and the Beppu to Kumamoto railway line is one of the most scenic in Japan. It recently reopened after being closed for years due to earthquake and landslide damage. You can hop off en-route and rent an electric bike to explore Aso area. We were foolish enough to do this in July; it was boiling hot (37°C) and we got completely drenched in a summer rainstorm. Aso shrine is said to be 2,000 years old (not sure if I really believe that) but was badly damaged in the 2016 earthquake. Hitoyoshi is a beautiful area but was absolutely devastated by floods in 2020. We were shocked to see photos of places we had stood the year before flooded to higher than head height! Despite this, it's still a wonderful place to enjoy nature, hot-spring onsen, and drink shochu (Japanese vodka). The locals are proud that their shochu is made from rice. In other parts of Kyushu it's usually made from sweet potato or barley. We visited Hitoyoshi again after the floods. We had fun gathering mushrooms and bamboo shoots from the forest (video here). We were happy to see Hitoyoshi is recovering and we wish them well ? Kikuchi Gorge is a very pretty area. You can take gentle walks here passing by streams and waterfalls. It's a favourite spot for viewing autumn leaves. There are many pleasant onsen ryokan (Japanese inns with natural hot-spring baths) in the Kikuchi Valley. It's somewhere to revive your spirits and take a break from the modern world. Oguni is another nice area to stay in ryokan. Who doesn't love relaxing, eating good food and onsen bathing? Head to Nabegataki Falls to stretch your legs. You can walk behind the wall of water to snap a cool photo. Yamaga Onsen is one of our favourite natural hot-spring baths (though we've got lots of favourites). The water quality is good and the locals have been bathing here for more than 1,000 years. It was tastefully renovated recently keeping the old Edo-period architectural style. Feel the history as you gaze up at the

1950's retro advertisements from your bath. Find wild and remote countryside in Takamori. Some of the roads become lanes as they get narrower and narrower. You can really feel as if you are driving in wilderness. The cows graze freely not fenced in fields. There is a great dengaku restaurant in Takamori that we love to visit. It's such fun to barbecue your own meat, veggies and river fish at your table (just as the samurai once did). Minamiaso is another wonderfully scenic area. It's home to Aso Volcano, huge sweeping grasslands and the purest mountain springs. In spring visit our favourite cherry blossom tree ([video here](#)). Kurokawa Onsen is a delightful onsen (hot-spring) village. It has around 30 upscale traditional Japanese inns (ryokan) all with onsen baths. Kurokawa Onsen is especially famous for outdoor onsen bathing. Relax up to your neck in toasty and healing onsen waters with trees overhanging and birds tweeting all around. Of course all the ryokan have indoor baths too. Many also have "family baths" so you can bathe in private with your loved ones. You will be served wonderful kaiseki dinners and lavish breakfasts. Take time to stroll around the pretty village too. You can read about our stay at Kurokawa Onsen (and some photos) in the write up our Oita and Kumamoto road trip. It's quite difficult to differentiate many of the areas around central Kyushu in Oita and Kumamoto prefectures. As you pass from one to the other you wouldn't notice (except for the road signs). It's the heartland of Kyushu's most amazing countryside. The scenery is wonderful and there are too many hot-spring resorts to mention. Make sure to try the yummy soft cream and meat-lovers rave about the grass-reared beef. The best onsen in Kumamoto are in the Aso countryside and south around Hitoyoshi. Both areas have onsen with quality water in beautifully scenic locations. Our favourite "muddy hot spring" is in Kumamoto Prefecture although not everybody enjoys this kind of bathing. We are also big fans of Yamaga Onsen for the quality of water and retro style. Another great area in Kumamoto Prefecture for hot-spring bathing is around the towns of Oguni and Minamioguni. These towns are north of Aso-Kuju National Park but share the same beautiful scenery. You have probably guessed by now that we are fans of rural onsen. However if you find yourself in Kumamoto city there are many nice onsen there too. It takes two hours from Fukuoka to Nagasaki by car or train. There is no Shinkansen line yet but one will open soon. Nagasaki city is definitely most famous for the Atomic Bomb Museum. Visiting the Atomic



Bomb Museum and the nearby Peace Park is a poignant experience. You may also want to visit Urakami Cathedral. It stood only 500 meters from where the bomb was dropped and was almost completely destroyed. For a more cheery experience head to Huis Ten Bosch. It's interesting to see a fake Amsterdam in the heart of Kyushu and the gardens are beautiful. When you get hungry in Nagasaki take a stroll around bustling Chinatown. To explore Nagasaki's colonial history visit Dejima and the Dutch Slope. In the evening take the Nagasaki Ropeway to see one of Japan's very best night views. Nagasaki is a fun and lively city and it's worth spending a day or two exploring by tram. For a unique experience take a boat ride to Battleship Island (Gunkanjima or Hashima Island). As the name suggests it looks like a battleship and was featured in a James Bond movie (Skyfall). You can't always land on the island itself but you can get some great photos. Omura Park covers the remains of a ruined castle. Approximately 2,000 cherry trees burst into bloom in Omura Park, officially one of Japan's 100 'Famous Cherry Blossom-viewing Sites'. In the right season you can find an amazing 300,000 iris flowers. Shimabara is far down south of Nagasaki Prefecture. If you take the ferry from Kumamoto you'll arrive in Shimabara. The castle is very photogenic with good ocean views but the interior is mostly modern concrete. There are some old samurai houses you can visit. Although there isn't much to see inside the houses you get a feel for history with the old houses and old streets around them. Shimabara is known as the 'city of the swimming carps' and you can easily spot the big colourful fish swimming in the small crystal-clear roadside canals. Our favourite place in Shimabara is Shimabara Hibari Sanka Park (although there isn't much information in English on the web about it). Depending on when you visit you can see cherry blossom blooming amongst rape blossoms, poppies, cosmos and sunflower. It's wonderful both in spring and autumn. The Unzen Hells is a unique and very photogenic landscape of boiling, bubbling volcanic pools with plumes of steam rising all around. You may want to pay your respects at the small cross erected in memory of the Christians martyred there in the 1600's. You can read about this in Shusaku Endo's novel 'Silence' or watch Martin Scorsese's film. For a bird's eye view of the area head up Unzen Ropeway. The views are especially pretty in spring and autumn. The Unzen area was buried in a dramatic mudslide (after a volcanic eruption) 30 years ago. Visit the

Unzen Disaster Memorial Hall to see the remains of houses buried up to their roofs. You can also visit the nearby elementary school abandoned after the eruption. Look out for the signboard there with a dramatic photo of the last kid to escape. You can see him sprinting out of the school as a huge cloud 100's of meters high looms behind him. We like Unzen and always have an onsen egg while we are there. The Goto Islands are reached by flight or ferry from Nagasaki or Fukuoka. Once there, you'll need to take ferries to travel around the different islands. The Goto Islands are most famous as the home of the 'hidden Christian' churches (see below). Goto is also a nice place to visit in summer for the good beaches and unspoilt nature. At any time of the year the seafood is exceptional. Tsushima island lies halfway between Japan and Korea. I've never been to Tsushima but I mention it because my Japanese teacher is from there and she says it's very nice. Youngsters may recognise it from the video game Ghost of Tsushima. Iki Island is a popular summer retreat for residents of Fukuoka and Nagasaki. Enjoy rugged nature, gorgeous beaches and the best sea urchin in Japan. Iki island is can be visited any time of year but is only popular in summer. You can find the 'hidden Christian' sites of Nagasaki on the mainland and also the outer islands. These sites bear unique testimony to the hidden Christians of Nagasaki. They secretly worshipped throughout terrible persecution in the 1600s. Read the book or watch the movie 'Silence' to learn more about Nagasaki's hidden christian history. Many of the churches still remain and some of them are very small, pretty and unique. The best onsen in Nagasaki are in the south around Unzen and Obama. This is an active volcanic area and where we find volcanoes we usually find natural hot-springs too. Although the onsen in Nagasaki Prefecture aren't as scenic as Oita or Kumamoto, the water quality is excellent. We stayed in an onsen hotel in Unzen and were lucky enough to have a private hot-spring bath in our room. The water was silky white, which is always a sign of powerful water. Obama not only has a cool name, it also has the longest footbath in Japan in addition to regular onsen baths. For lovers of nature, head north to Iki Island to enjoy great onsen on this wonderfully peaceful island. Unfortunately, Nagasaki city itself isn't an onsen area. This doesn't matter really because there are so many other activities in Nagasaki. Honestly speaking, there isn't much to see in Saga City. Saga Shrine is large and photogenic and is very conveniently located in

the heart of the city. You can also visit Saga Castle and the castle museum. Cultured travellers will enjoy Saga Prefectural Art Museum. The Saga International Balloon Festival is an internationally famous hot-air balloon festival. We enjoyed our visit a lot even though we aren't balloon enthusiasts. It's wonderful to witness 100's of huge balloons soaring across the planes at dawn. It's also fun to see the themed balloons (Star Wars for example) and night-time finale of 'dancing balloons'. Karatsu is one of our favourite cities in north Kyushu. Its most striking feature is the castle. Karatsu Castle looks wonderful from the outside and has displays of samurai armour and local pottery inside. Karatsu pottery is a much rougher style than in the nearby town of Arita but very highly regarded. As with all seaside towns in Japan, you can enjoy some great sushi in Karatsu. For best viewpoint head to Karatsu Observatory as the sun goes down. Experience spectacular views of the ocean and the 'one-million-tree' pine forest below. Yobuko is a quiet fishing village on the coast north of Karatsu. Its most famous dish is Yobuko Squid (squid sashimi). Some visitors are uncomfortable seeing the squid wriggling around on the dish as it is served. Other visitors see this as a sign of freshness and quality. Yobuko Morning Market is very well-known although you may be disappointed. Although the fishing harbour is very pretty the market itself is probably smaller and less lively than you expect. Kashima City is home to the very famous and photogenic Y'toku Inari Shrine. In recent years it has become very popular with Thai visitors as a Thai movie and TV drama were both filmed here. Kashima is also famous as the town with the largest tidal difference in Japan. When the tide is out the ocean can barely be seen in the distance. Visitors love to photograph the red torii gates stretching from the shore to the sea. For a taste of times gone by stroll along the well-preserved Sake Breweries Street. If you love seafood, don't leave Kashima without trying the local specialty of Takezaki crab. Arita and Imari are the two towns most strongly-associated with pottery and porcelain production in Kyushu. You can visit kilns, workshops and a clay mine, and browse the many different pottery shops. At a very reasonable price you can buy a genuine and quality hand-made souvenir. The bright and modern Kyushu Ceramic Museum shows the rich history of local production. Visit the back lanes of Arita (near the old cemetery) to see where pottery production first began 400 years ago. Arita Porcelain Park is a pottery-themed recreation of a

traditional German village. The Arita spring fair is Japan's biggest pottery fair. If you like mingling with one million other visitors, this is the pottery fair for you. Arita & Karatsu Roadtrip: Meeting the incredible craftsmen of two of the most popular Kyushu pottery villages Mifuneyama Rakuen is a vast and semi-wild Japanese Garden. Huge numbers of visitors flock here from all around Japan for the garden's seasonal delights. With more than 2,000 cherry trees the garden is a blaze of colour in spring. The autumn foliage colours are also wonderful with a very popular evening light-up spectacle. The psychedelic electric light displays of Teamlab are popular (although we were underwhelmed). Daikozenji Temple is probably the best autumn leaves spot in Saga Prefecture. It's included on our Autumn Colours (Fall Foliage) Tour. It is also unmissable in spring as 50,000 azaleas gayly bloom. Take the chance to spend an hour or two strolling the thickly forested grounds of this 1,300 year-old temple. Takeo City has been a natural hot-spring bathing resort for 1,300 years. The quality of the water is consistently excellent and also very hot. I bathed in one bath here that was 46°C (115°F)! Don't worry, you can choose a cooler bath if you prefer. The old courtyard, historic buildings and traditional bathhouses are all still in good condition. Takeo is an excellent destination for people (like us) who hunt the best quality onsen water and love to explore the old-style streets. To get further back in history visit the giant camphor tree in Takeo Shrine, estimated to be 3,000 years old. Return to the 21st century with a visit to Takeo's spectacular and very modern-looking library. Ureshino is famous for green tea and onsen hot-spring bathing. As with Takeo (see above) Ureshino has a long history as a hot-spring bathing resort. You can also taste and buy some of the best quality Japanese tea and visit a tea production factory. We joined a green tea making class in Ureshino and picked up some very helpful tips. In Ureshino we enjoy buying our tea directly from the producer (farm to pot). Takeo Onsen & Ureshino Roadtrip Report: Green tea and natural hot-spring onsen off the beaten path Yoshinogari Historical Park recreates an ancient settlement amongst a 2,000 year-old archaeological site. It's a vast area to explore and has some interesting exhibits in the field. It's depressing to see that even 2,000 years ago humans were killing each other for wealth and power. The terraced rice fields of Hamanoura offer an iconic Asian photo. Just make sure to be there at the right time of year (April) and at the right time of day (sundown).

The Village of the Secret Kilns (Okawachiyama) lay hidden away in the mountains for centuries. The feudal lords wanted to protect the valuable secret of porcelain production. Now you can wander around freely and rummage through Aladdin's Caves of hand-painted treasures. The best onsen in Saga are in Ureshino and Takeo. Samurai soldiers soothed their weary bones in this area over 1,000 years ago. You are unlikely to meet samurai there these days, though their modern equivalent (weary salarymen) still follow this tradition. My hottest ever onsen (46°C / 115°F) was in Takeo. If you don't enjoy being boiled like a lobster there are more moderate temperature baths too. Find more details and photos in our Takeo Onsen & Ureshino road trip report. You can also find onsen in Karatsu however we certainly recommend Ureshino and Takeo due to the excellent quality of water and wide choice of baths. After bathing here you'll notice your skin become silky smooth. Be part of the Kyushu travel community. Ask questions if you're planning a trip. If you've been to Kyushu before (or live here now) share your knowledge, experience and photos so others can benefit. If you love Japan travel, this is the group for you. It's completely free of charge so join now and start planning your next Kyushu holiday. Miyazaki city isn't a top tourist spot and most visitors will just be passing through. Surfers visit in summer. You can take a stroll to enjoy the natural scenery of Heiwadai Park with its iconic Peace Tower and weird clay statues. Miyazaki Shrine is claimed to be 2,600 years old (but I guess it isn't really so old). It's a serene Shinto shrine in lush tropical grounds with rows of red torii gates and a majestic grand avenue. After visiting the shrine you can pop into the next door Miyazaki Prefectural Museum of Nature and History. Youngsters may prefer to visit the Miyazaki Science Center. It houses one of the world's largest planetariums and a lifesize model of the Apollo 11 Moon Lander. Aoshima Island is a picturesque little island just offshore from Miyazaki City. If you google 'Aoshima Island' you will probably read about all the cats running wild. Unfortunately for cat-lovers, that is a different Aoshima Island far from Kyushu. You'll visit Aoshima Island in Kyushu for its beautiful beach, curious rock formation and wildly fresh seafood. Don't forget to explore inland too. Head through the jungle and find the quaint Aoshima Shrine in the centre of the island. Although the waters around Aoshima are gentle, you can find some surfing breaks on the mainland nearby. There are some glitzy resort hotels catering to the sun-loving

tourists. Udo Shrine is further south from Miyazaki city past Aoshima. The coastal views are excellent and its very hot. The shrine is in a dramatic coastal location, very picturesque and is fun to visit. Try your hand throwing small balls from the cave into a marked target on the rock below. Women throw with the right hand, men with their left, and winners earn themselves good fortune. Udo Shrine (so they say) helps with fertility, childbirth and a happy marriage so is popular with young couples. Takachiho is Miyazaki Prefecture's most popular destination (our clients love it). For this reason, Takachiho gets incredibly busy at certain times. It's off the rail network so you'll need to drive or go by bus. The whole area is wonderfully picturesque with thick forest, rivers and farming land all around. Takachiho Gorge is the highlight attraction. It's a steep dramatic river gorge with a waterfall crashing over. Walk along the side of the gorge or hire a rowing boat for a memorable adventure. Amano Iwato Shrine is an important shrine for the Japanese with its origin steeped in myth. Head down from there for a pretty walk to the holy riverside cave. The most spectacular view in Takachiho is of the 'Sea of Clouds'. It isn't guaranteed however, you have to get up horribly early and it's usually only seen in autumn. Takachiho Shrine is an incredible 1,900 years old. Visit in the evening to experience the tragic comic masked Kagura dance. For a fun lunch in Takachiho try the local specialty of somen noodles served whizzing down a long bamboo shoot. Gokase Highland Ski Resort is open from December to March for skiing and snowboarding. We hope global warming doesn't mess up their business plans. Kojima Island lies in the far south of Miyazaki Prefecture. Curiously, the resident monkeys wash their potatoes before eating and stand on two legs like humans. Very civilized and definitely worth an Insta moment. The best onsen in Miyazaki are scattered around the prefecture. Although Miyazaki isn't famous for hot spring bathing, there are many good quality onsen here. Shima Onsen is popular and has the oldest wooden bathhouse in Japan (built 1691). It is also believed to be an inspiration for some scenes from the massive worldwide movie hit Spirited Away. Other onsen to visit in Miyazaki include Yunomoto Onsen. It claims to be one of the most carbonated (fizzy) springs in Japan. I must note however that when I bathed in Nagayu Onsen in Oita Prefecture I noticed they make the same claim! For a silky bath you can visit Yamagiri. To enjoy the health-giving properties of a heavily mineralised onsen head to

Kannogo Onsen. The great thing about onsen in Miyazaki is that they are likely to be less crowded than other more famous hot spring resorts in Kyushu. Get the latest updates about Japan tourism coronavirus restrictions. Learn about our latest tours and exclusive discounts. If you're serious about visiting Kyushu, this newsletter is for you. Kagoshima city has some interesting visitor attractions and is worth a visit. It takes only 1.5 hours by bullet train to reach Kagoshima (in the far south of Kyushu) from Fukuoka (in the far north). Once you arrive in Kagoshima it's fun and convenient to use the local tram system. The first place you will probably visit will be Sengan-en. It's the best Japanese Garden in Kyushu and offers great views across to Sakurajima volcano. Another impressive viewpoint is the observatory in Shiroyama Park. Enjoy it in the late afternoon sun or stay for the night view. For shopping and evening dining head to the Tenmonkan area of Kagoshima City. Sakurajima is Japan's most active volcano. It regularly sprinkles ash over the inhabitants of Kagoshima city and occasionally produces spectacular fire shows. Although accessible by road, you will probably find it most convenient to visit Sakurajima by ferry. Once there, take a sightseeing bus around the eerie landscape and get some up-close shots of the volcano. Sakurajima is only a few kilometers from Kagoshima city so it's easy to visit while sightseeing that area. Chiran was a major kamikaze base in WW2. Of the 1,000+ kamikaze pilots killed during the war, almost half were from Chiran. The Chiran Peace Museum explores the short lives and sadly futile deaths of these kamikaze pilots. I've never been and don't plan to visit. I'm sure it will be a miserable experience. For a more traditional Japanese experience explore the well-preserved samurai district of Chiran. Ibusuki is the spiritual home of hot-sand bathing in Japan. Apparently it's both healthy and relaxing getting buried up to your neck in damp, black steaming sand (I enjoyed it). A quirky place to visit around Ibusuki is Nishi-Oyama Station. It's Japan's most southerly train station, enchantingly cute and with a stunning view of Sakurajima volcano. With more than half a million flowers and lovely coastal views, Kagoshima Flower Park is also worth a visit. You can travel from Kagoshima to Ibusuki on the handsome sightseeing train JR Kyushu Ibusuki no Tamatebako. Kirishima is a glorious area of natural beauty north of Kagoshima. You can travel there in style on the JR Kyushu Hayato no Kaze sightseeing train (Update April 2022: Hayato no Kaze train discontinued). Discover

mist-covered forests and invigorating trails. Treat yourself to the finest views and fresh mountain air. Indulge in the Japanese pastime of forest bathing. Don't go to Kirishima for sightseeing; just go to relax and renew. The Izumi Observation Center is Japan's top crane wintering grounds. Over 10,000 cranes winter here as they migrate from Siberia. We sometimes get contacted by bird-watchers wanting us to arrange their visit. You need to be tough because the best time to see the cranes is at dawn, in winter, when it's freezing cold. Tanegashima Space Center is said to be the most beautiful rocket-launch site in the world. It's at the very southern tip of Kyushu, surrounded by blue waters and white sand beaches. Enjoy a guided tour of the largest rocket-launch complex in Japan and learn all about space travel. Amami Oshima Island is a sub-tropical island 380 km from Kagoshima. Visit Amami Oshima island for pristine beaches, thick mangrove forests and clear blue ocean. Compare the culture and cuisine of Amami Oshima to that of the Kyushu mainland. In our modern age of jet travel, Amami Oshima is just 2.5 hours from Tokyo or 1 hour from Kagoshima. If you have time to kill you can take the 12-hour ferry! I'm curious to visit because the scuba diving is highly rated (my previous business was a scuba diving centre in Indonesia). Yakushima Island is home to some of Japan's most ancient forests. The ancient J'mon Sugi is believed to be one of the oldest trees in the world. Visitors are attracted to Yakushima island by the thick cedar forests and abundant wildlife. There are numerous hiking trails suitable for all levels. Shiratani Unsuikyo Ravine is the most popular hike on the island. It's enchantingly beautiful and was inspiration for the Studio Ghibli animation Princess Mononoke. It's also possible to go scuba diving around Yakushima. Yakushima is wild and beautiful and has become increasingly popular in recent years. Be warned though, it rains like hell. You can fly to Yakushima from Kagoshima in less than an hour. The best onsen in Kagoshima are found in Kagoshima city, Kirishima and Ibusuki. If you head south to Yakushima Island you can find some wonderful onsen there too. With more than 2,700 hot springs in Kagoshima Prefecture you are definitely spoilt for choice. It's fun to take an outdoor bath (rotenburo) in Kagoshima with a view of Sakurajima volcano smoking in the distance. Kirishima offers a much greener bathing experience with an abundance of thick natural forest. After enjoying the local pastime of 'forest bathing' you can jump into a toasty bath for hot spring bathing.



Personally, I can hardly think of a better way to spend a day. Ibusuki city is most well-known for hot sand bathing. It's not as weird as it sounds; I've tried it and loved it! Of course, in addition to hot sand bathing, there are many excellent regular hot spring onsen baths. Along with Oita Prefecture and Kumamoto Prefecture, Kagoshima is one of Kyushu's most popular onsen destinations. Enjoy!

Do you have any questions? Been to Kyushu before and want to share your recommendation, tips or advice? Leave your comment or question in the comments section below.

Fukuoka city (the main city on Kyushu) is a major transport hub. Many airlines fly into Fukuoka International Airport (airport code: FUK) including Singapore Airlines, Korean Air, Cathay Pacific and Thai Airways. Discover which flights are flying into Fukuoka on this page on Fukuoka Airport website. You will need to write the name and address of your first hotel on the arrival card. Remember to carry that information with you on the plane (not packed in your check-in luggage).

**Customs Inspection** It is not unusual to have your bags checked on arrival at Fukuoka airport by humans or sniffer dogs. Meat, plants and vegetables are not allowed. Japan is also more strict than many countries about medicines. Even Vicks inhalers are banned! Check our Japan Travel Tips page for more detailed information. Many airlines fly into Fukuoka Airport from other parts of Japan including several budget options. From Tokyo to Fukuoka takes around 1.5 hours by plane. From Osaka to Fukuoka takes 1 hour by plane. You can fly from from Kyoto to Fukuoka via Osaka Airport. You may prefer to fly to a different Kyushu airport (instead of Fukuoka) to start your travel adventure. Many of our clients fly directly from Tokyo or Osaka to Oita, Kumamoto or Kagoshima airports. Fukuoka airport is in a super-convenient location. It takes just 5 minutes by subway to reach Hakata Station (in the center of Fukuoka) from Fukuoka Airport. Taxis take 15 minutes and cost around ¥2,000. **Pro Tip** Fukuoka airport subway station is at the domestic terminal. If you fly into the international terminal (overseas flight) you will first need to take the free shuttle bus from the international terminal to the domestic terminal (15 minutes). You can then take the subway (5 minutes) from the domestic terminal to Hakata Station. If it's too much hassle to take the shuttle bus with all your luggage, just take a taxi directly from the international terminal into Fukuoka city. You can also take the airport bus from the international terminal into Fukuoka if you prefer. The international terminal at Fukuoka Airport is very

small so it's easy to find the airport bus stop. Details of Fukuoka Airport buses can be found on this page of the Fukuoka Airport website. You can take the bullet train (shinkansen) to Fukuoka from all parts of Japan. From Tokyo to Fukuoka takes around 5 hours by train. From Osaka to Fukuoka takes 2.5 hours by train. From Kyoto to Fukuoka takes 3 hours by train. All shinkansen arrive at Hakata Station, which is the main railway station in Fukuoka. From Hakata Station you can continue by shinkansen onto Kumamoto (45 minutes) or Kagoshima in the south of Kyushu (1.5 hours). Travelling around Kyushu by rental car is the most popular option for our clients. However driving into Kyushu from other parts of Japan is tiresome. It takes around 8 hours to drive from Osaka to Tokyo. From Tokyo to Fukuoka takes two days drive! We suggest you fly or take the train to Kyushu from other parts of Japan and then rent a car when you arrive in Kyushu. There are four options for travelling around Kyushu; Let's look at each option in more detail. Travelling independently (without a guide) in a self-drive rental car is a very popular way to travel around Kyushu. Here in Kyushu the roads are good, we drive on the left (apologies to our American and European friends) and I seldom see a traffic jam. For Kyushu Journeys clients we will arrange a car with English GPS (SatNav) and include easy to input numerical mapcodes for all sightseeing spots, restaurants and hotels along the route. We include Google map links as a backup too! This is how we love to travel ourselves. You can take a look at some of the many road trips we have taken ourselves; Takeo Onsen & Ureshino: Green tea and natural hot-spring onsen off the beaten path Arita & Karatsu: Meeting the incredible craftsmen of two of the most popular Kyushu pottery villages Oita & Kumamoto: Bubbling Hells, a quaint fishing port, and one of Kyushu's most colourful shrines. Take a look at our private family trip planning service if you want us to plan your Kyushu road trip. Read our FAQ about driving in Japan to decide if self-driving is right for you. Japan's rail system is excellent so travelling by train is another popular option for visiting Kyushu. You can take the bus when the railway line doesn't reach your destination. For example Takachiho, one of the most popular places in Kyushu, is off the railway network. You will probably also need to take some short taxi rides too. For example to travel from the nearest station to your hotel. Luckily taxis are plentiful in Japan. You can find them waiting at most railways stations. Read our FAQ and see how much it costs to take a taxi in Fukuoka. We

often plan train and bus adventures for our clients. We do all the itinerary planning, hotel bookings if required and detailed timetable research. It's all part of our private family trip planning service. You just need to turn up at the station on time! We also advise about which rail pass to buy to get the best-value trip. JR Kyushu offers some great bargains for overseas visitors. Who doesn't want to relax on the shinkansen (bullet train) as the Kyushu countryside whizzes by? Hiring a private driver in Kyushu is only for the comfortably wealthy. You can expect to pay around ¥50,000+ (\$500+) a day for a standard 4-seater taxi. Also please note it's almost impossible to find drivers who speak English. Contact us if you want us to arrange a private driver in Kyushu for you. In this case we will discuss the route and timings with the driver in advance. We will also be available on the day by phone or WhatsApp to help with any language communication problems. Joining a package group tour is the easiest way to travel. You just need to book, arrive and enjoy! You will be travelling on a private tour bus escorted by English-speaking tour leader. You usually pay an all-inclusive price except for international flights. Here at Kyushu Journeys we offers small-group intimate tours with maximum 12 participants per tour. Here are the package tours currently open for booking: Kyushu Autumn Tour (November 2023) Kyushu Foodie Tour (January 2024) Kyushu Cherry Blossom Tour (March 2024) We can also arrange private escorted package tours just for you, your friends and family. Contact us for details.

Hi, Does it snow in Kyushu at the end of December? Will driving be difficult during this period? Hi Alan, Snowfall depends on the region and altitude, but generally the roads are well-maintained and there is little snow in coastal regions. Of course drive carefully and be aware of ice in the more rural/high altitude areas, but overall you shouldn't be worried. Amazing resource for smaller areas in Kyushu.. exactly what I was looking for. Thank you! I'm planning to Kyushu this end of April or early of May Hi Linda, the weather is usually nice at that time of year but please note it is Golden Week in Japan. This means peak travel season so many hotels get full quickly and prices increase. If you can change your dates it may be better. Feel free to email [email protected] for more info, cheers, Simon Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked \*

Name Email Comment \* Notify me of followup comments via e-mail (you can opt-out later) ? Kyushu island Japan Autumn Tour Brochure 2023. Full details, price, photos and

FAQ [download here](#). Cost-effective Kyushu cherry blossom guided tour. Best spots, great wonderful, wonderful nature. Details [here](#). The best Kyushu dishes and exclusive culinary experiences. Waiting list open for 2024. Kyushu Journeys aims to encourage travellers to visit our beloved island of Kyushu. We want to help you escape the tourist trail and find the real Japan. We're Kyushu's biggest fans and we love to share what we know. T +81-90-8354-1194

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# OITA - EXPERIENCE THE QUINTESSENTIAL | KYUSHU x TOKYO (JAPAN)

After being exposed to the charm of Japanese food through the Kappabashi Dougu Street and Sushi cooking class, take a trip to old-line Prefecture, Oita. You can spend calm and peaceful time at Usa Jingu and Onsenkyou (spa resort) and feel real significance of Japan. Official

Tokyo Travel Guide <https://www.gotokyo.org/en/Local> government official website

<https://www.discover-oita.com/> Sydney Airport ANA Examine the directions from your country

ANA international flight? The ANA Flight from Sydney to Tokyo was on time. The in-flight service was good and prompt, providing two options for dinner. For the in-flight entertainment, there were some English movies and TV shows and I enjoyed them. Narita International Airport Narita Express Tokyo Metropolitan Area Kappabashi Kitchenware Town more Kappabashi Kitchenware Town? Kappabashi Kitchenware town was very interesting, we were able to see different styles of plates, knives, and woks in the area? which were surprisingly cheap! We spoke at length to someone at a knife store, who explained how knives were made in a similar manner to how Samurai swords were made and the different uses for all the different styles of knives. Kappabashi Kitchenware Town? Kappabashi is one of the best places in Tokyo to window shop and learn about traditional Japanese dining culture, with all sorts of cooking utensils and crockery for sale. Some of the highlights you'll find along the store-lined street include plastic food samples, engraved knives and custom-made pots and pans. One of the places to stop and photograph during your stroll around the neighbourhood is the golden kappa statue. Train 30 minutes Sushi making experience (Hassan) more RECOMMENDED DESTINATIONS Sushi-making experience (Hassan)? The Sushi making experience at Hassan was by far my favourite experience of the day! We had a lot of fun and laughs with the Sushi Master chef, who taught us how to make two different kind of sushi? wrapped seaweed sushi rolls and traditional sushi. We were also provided with a short history of sushi in Japan and at the end, we were provided with certificates to show that we completed the sushi making experience, as well as a small souvenir from the chef. The best part was being able to eat all of the yummy sushi we made

with the chef. Sushi-making experience (Hassan)?The highlight here is the hands-on sushi-making experience led by a professional sushi chef, who teaches you how to make your own makizushi rolls and nigiri sushi. By the end of the short lesson, you'll be able to eat your own sushi creations, along with a number of other tasty Japanese dishes. The sushi-making skills and trade-industry tips and techniques you'll pick up during the lesson will help you to recreate some amazing sushi for friends when you return home, and you'll also receive a personalised 'graduation certificate' signed by the chef himself, as a memento of the experience.

Train 25 minutes Ameyoko (Shopping Street) more

Ameyoko is a shopping street full of life now and in the old days and also a well-known spot for visitors to feel and experience the local atmosphere. In addition to fresh food and candy, it also has shops offering clothes, shoes, bags, and even cosmetics. The good-humored vendors of each shop are firm supporters of face-to-face interaction. 'Ameya Yokochō' is the official name for Ameyoko and it became a famous market spot after World War II. Ameyoko (Shopping street)?Ameyoko was an interesting area to walk through. We learned about its history and found out that this is a unique area in Tokyo where you can buy things after haggling. There was plenty to see here, including fresh foods from fish and fruit, clothing and a very large (and old) candy store. Dinner at Tsujigahana (Ueno location)?Dinner at Tsujigahana in Ueno location was delicious; we ordered a number of different items from the menu as well as tried sake and Japanese whiskey. We had our fill of more sashimi (after plenty at lunch), along with a salad and a few hot dishes of steak and pork with veggies. Ameyoko (Shopping Street)?Ameya Yokochō, or 'Ameyoko' as it's affectionately known, is a popular destination for tourists, who come to soak up the lively market-style atmosphere while strolling through the narrow stall-lined streets. There are plenty of vendors selling everything from snacks, sweets, and fresh produce to clothing, accessories and souvenirs, and staff hold up signs while shouting out limited-time sale announcements to passersby. Dinner at Tsujigahana (Ueno location)?One of the surprising things about dining out in Tokyo is the fact that you can find hidden gems tucked away inside random buildings on floors high above eye-level from the street. Tsujigahana is one of these hidden gems, accessed by an elevator that whisks you away from a busy street and up into a beautiful traditional dining area. Here you can dine in private rooms,

choosing a la carte or from the course menu, with pork and vegetables steamed in bamboo boxes being one of the must-try specialties. Tokyo Metropolitan Area Haneda Airport ANA (ANA Expericence JAPAN Fare)      Show details ANA Domestic flight?The ANA flight to Oita was very good?we were provided with hot drinks of tea and coffee. Due to the length of flight no in-flight entertainment was provided. The flight was fairly short and very pleasant. ANA Domestic flight?Flying with ANA is so smooth and easy. The flight from Tokyo to Oita is about 90 minutes, and it?s a comfortable way to travel from the mainland to the southern island of Kyushu, where Oita is located.Even flying within Japan, free drinks are served and free Wi-Fi is also available on some flights.(Routes and aircraft are limited) Oita Airportmore Oita Airport?I was very surprised to find out how easy it was to navigate Oita airport; we got off the plane and within 1-2 minutes, we arrived in the baggage collection area, and our bags came out very quickly. We received a large welcome at the Oita airport with a large banner welcoming us to Oita! Oita Airport ?Oita Airport is a delightfully small and stress-free terminal that introduces you to the wonders of Japan?s ?onsen prefecture? from the minute you step off the plane.There?s a foot bath filled with local hot spring water, a giant faux hot tub for visitors to sit in, and a huge plate of sushi sitting on the revolving conveyor belt where you pick up your luggage! Bus30 minutes 10 minutes by foot Kitsukimore Kitsuki Castle Town?While in Kitsuki Castle town, we dressed in kimonos and then wandered around the city taking photos. Our first stop was at Vinegar Shop Slope which was named after a vinegar shop at the bottom of the slope, when it was built?now there is a miso store at the bottom of the slope. From there, we visited the Ohara family home (an old style samurai home) which the city of Oita purchased and turned into a museum of sorts. It took them over 3 years to rebuild the home after it had aged and many things had needed to be replaced. Lunch at Wakaeya?Wakaeya restaurant is very famous in Oita and has also been visited by the Emperor of Japan. We got to meet the 16th generation owner and found out that the secret sauce they use on their popular fish dish is passed down from father to son. Their popular fish dish is also served on Japan's 7-star luxury train every weekend. They pour green tea over rice and sea bream, leave the lid on for 3 seconds, and then you may eat it. Kitsuki Castle Town?Kitsuki Castle Town is a beautiful place to explore, and if you

have time, stop by the Warakuan kimono store to get dressed by ladies who can style you in traditional dress in minutes. Strolling through the residence in kimono makes you feel like you've stepped back in time to the Edo period. Some of the picturesque locations here include the beautiful 'Vinegar Slope', which is so pretty it's been used in historical films and television dramas, and a number of beautifully preserved samurai residences. Lunch at Wakaeya? Wakaeya is a special gem that's been serving the same prized tai chazuke dish for more than 300 years. The delicious sesame sauce flavoured red snapper and rice dish is known locally as 'Ureshino', after a feudal lord tried it at Wakaeya centuries ago and uttered the words 'Ureshino' (lit. 'I'm so happy'). Tasting a dish with such history behind it is an incredibly special experience, especially once you learn that the restaurant is still being run by the same family, with the 16th generation currently overseeing operations to ensure that the culinary history is preserved.

Beppu City Traditional Bamboo Crafts Center? This was a nice stop on the tour which showcased local bamboo crafts in a fun and engaging manner. The intricate designs and large works created with bamboo were all amazing to look at, while the interactive woven bell-making course was a lot of fun and easy for both adults and children to take part in. The bamboo bell ball makes for a great souvenir afterwards, and there are plenty of gorgeous objects to purchase in the attached gift shop as well!

10 minutes by foot Bus 11 minutes Train (JR) 90 minutes Yufuin Hot Spring

more Yufuin Hotel Shuhokan Dinner at Accommodation? We enjoyed dinner at the restaurant of the hotel we stayed at. We ate everything from shabu shabu to sashimi and a few other local dishes. They were kind enough to deliver dessert to our rooms. The atmosphere of the restaurant was very comfortable and the staff were very friendly and helpful.

Yufuin Onsen (Yufuin Hotel Shuhokan)? In Yufu City, it has around 1,000 hot spring (onsen) sources. The city was developed as a hot spring resort and the onsen there are said to help various ailments and injuries while also providing relaxation. Bathing in onsen in Yufu City provides a new way of having fun and relaxation in Japan. You can see why onsen are very important in Japanese culture.

Dinner at Accommodation? Dinner at Yufuin Hotel Shuhokan contained a delicious array of local delicacies, served in a brightly lit communal dining room with views out to the surrounding countryside. Each dish was beautifully prepared and presented on



plates and bowls adorned with seasonal motifs, enhancing the dining experience. Yufuin Onsen (Yufuin Hotel Shuhokan)?I felt the history of Yufuin Hotel Shukuhokan from this building. There was a nice view from the hotel room. Some rooms offer the view of Mt. Yufudake. You will be able to relax in the public bath. They also have a footbath in the garden, and it is an easy way to enjoy Japanese onsen culture. Yufuin Hotel Shuhokan Lake Kinrin?Lake Kinrin is one of Yufuin?s top sightseeing spots. There were beautiful reflections of the surrounding mountains and buildings in the crystal-clear still water of the lake, and I was amazed. The lake supports a lot of wildlife, including carp, and the area is overflowing with the charm of nature. Also, because the water temperature is relatively high all year, you may see a fantastic scene when steam rises from the lake surface on early winter mornings. Lunch at Ginsushi?We enjoyed lunch at Ginsushi in a private room; the staff were so lovely and brought each dish explaining what it was and why it was special to the area. We had "Hitan sushi" which comes with veggies and fruit (instead of fish) such as tomato, onion, cabbage, fig, and mushroom?all of which are sourced locally as Hita is a mountain area and not very close to the sea so fish is more expensive. We also enjoyed some sashimi sushi. Mameda Town walking tour ?We did a walking tour of the Mameda area, where we looked through shops that sold souvenirs, Japanese shoes (geta), and items made out of kimono clothing. After walking through the main streets, we went to the plum sake brewery Oyama for a quick tasting of some sake, which to me tasted like a mix of white wine and vodka and warms your chest like whiskey. Ontayaki no Sato?Here we visited the pottery museum where we learned that the people of the village were initially half farmers and half pottery makers. After finding out how popular their pottery become, 10 households in the village started to make their own pottery, using different methods, and continue to do so. We visited a number of houses with small shops attached and were shown how the clay is collected, stored and the whole process of how it goes from the mountain and made into household items. Lake Kinrin?Lake Kinrin was a lovely pocket of nature teeming with fish and wildlife, thanks to the hot springs that bubble up through the lake bed, creating an ideal spa-like environment. A short stroll takes you all around the lake, making it a beautiful, serene place to stop and breathe the fresh mountain air. Hita Gion Yamaboko hall?The Hita Gion Yamaboko hall is a site

that's well worth a visit as it contains some of the largest and most impressive festival floats you'll find in all of Japan. These floats are paraded around the streets once a year for the annual Hita Gion festival in late July, and for the remainder of the year they're housed here for people from around Japan to admire. Gazing up at the huge floats and discovering all their intricate details makes for an awe-inspiring experience.

Lunch at Ginsushi? If you want to eat like a local, Ginsushi is the place to go. The homely, family-run eatery specialises in Hitan sushi, which uses fruit and vegetables as toppings for sushi instead of the usual raw fish. Meals here offer a surprising array of different tastes and textures, all of which are delicious and beautifully presented and prepared. Vegetarians and meat-eaters alike are sure to be incredibly impressed by the delicious meat-free morsels on offer!

Mameda walking tour? Walking around the beautiful Mameda district is a wonderful way to spend an afternoon, as it has a traditional, laid-back atmosphere and a variety of small stores and eateries to pop in and out of as you explore the narrow streets. This is the best place to pick up a pair of locally made geta sandals, with a huge selection of styles available, and you can find the largest cedar geta in all of Japan!

Ontayaki no Sato? One of the highlights of the tour, this tiny, tranquil pottery village and its brilliant soundscape—one of the 100 best Soundscapes of Japan—will leave a lasting impression on you long after you've returned home. The sound of the water-powered wooden clay-crushing devices and the charm of the local families that sell their beautiful wares make this a must-visit spot.

Ukiha Bekkan Shinshiyo Dinner at Accommodation? We were treated to a Japanese course dinner which provide 9 dishes included sashimi, a local fish dish, egg custard, beef, and vegetables that we were able to fry ourselves and many many other dishes—we left very happy and full!

Accommodation (Ukiha Bekkan Shinshiyo)? Our stay at Ukiha Bekkan Shinshiyo in Amazase Onsen was lovely, check-in was very quick and our rooms were very comfortable. We were able to enjoy our own private hot spring bath on the balcony overlooking the river below. It was a lovely way to end a busy day of sightseeing by relaxing in the bath while listening to the river below.

Dinner at Accommodation? One of the best things about staying at a ryokan inn is the meals, which come in feast-like proportions, featuring fresh local ingredients and beautiful seasonal embellishments. Ukiha Bekkan Shinshiyo knows how to treat their guests to stunning meals, served in private rooms with

gorgeous views and attentive staff to help guide you through each course. Accommodation (Ukiha Bekkan Shinshiyo)?Ukiha Bekkan Shinshiyo in Amagase Onsen is a quiet haven with an inn-like atmosphere that makes you feel instantly at home. The staff are incredibly attentive and helpful, and they go out of their way to ensure that your stay is comfortable and pleasant. The rooms are clean and modern, and some even come with their own rotenburo hot spring outdoor baths on an attached terrace where you can relax and gaze out at the surrounding scenery. Ukiha Bekkan Shinshiyo Takkiri Valley?Our visit to Takkiri Valley was by far the best way to start our day, we wandered down a beautiful walkway next to a shallow river bed, which goes on for about 2 km. We stopped at around the 1.3 km mark and took our socks and shoes off and were able to walk in the river, the water lapping at our ankles. It was so peaceful and relaxing! Train (JR)120 minutes Bus7 minutes Lunch at Shozan?Lunch at Shozan was incredible, we enjoyed a local USA specialty of crispy fried chicken, salad, dumplings, and miso soup. This was by far my favourite meal throughout this trip; the chicken was so tender and juicy. Lunch at Shozan?Shozan is such a good restaurant that locals line up to dine here, where the specialty is Usa City?s regional delicacy, fried chicken. Their round, ball-like chicken pieces are so crispy and juicy you?ll be wanting to eat them every day, and adults and children alike will fall in love with them, as they?re easy to eat, come served in generous portion sizes, and can be ordered as part of a set with rice, salad, tea, and miso soup. Usa Jingu Shrinemore RECOMMENDED DESTINATIONS Usa Jingu Shirine?The visit to Usa Jingu shrine was really interesting. We were provided with audio guides to try out, and I found that we could listen to guidance about the places we were. They would be perfect for self-guided tours. The scenery was a mixture of green shrubs, trees, and then specks of red from the branches and main shrines. It was really interesting to learn about the history and the intertwining of religious history among Buddhism and Shinto. Futago-ji Temple?The entrance to Futago-ji temple features the same protective statues as they have at Oita airport?the Nio Guardians are there to protect and ensure you have a good, safe trip. This is a temple blessed by nature, with associated buildings surrounded by many trees. We were able to meet a monk here, which is unusual as not many other temples offer such interactions with visitors. Usa Jingu Shrine?Usa Jingu contains a wide variety of sacred

sites, and visitors can get a deeper understanding of each site on the shrine grounds with a fun-to-use interactive audio guide that comes with multi-language options. This is how you'll learn about things like *meoto iwa*, two flat stones on the steps leading to the main shrine. Partners who hold hands whilst standing side-by-side on the stones are said to receive happiness. Futago-ji Temple? This ancient temple enhances your sense of adventure and deepens your connection with the sacred atmosphere of the site. It's a stunning place to explore, and the English-language guide map is very helpful so you can walk through the grounds on your own. Bus 65 minutes Oita Airport ANA (ANA Japan Explorer Pass) [Show details](#) Haneda Airport This trip to Tokyo and Oita was up there as one of my all-time favourite trips! I feel so blessed to be given an opportunity to visit a lesser known area of Japan and will forever have fond memories of all the experiences. I was able to see so many cool new sights and enjoyed a lot of fresh fish, sashimi and sushi! This tour is a great introduction to two very different sides of Japan, allowing you to gain a greater understanding of city life and country living through hands-on activities and visits to renowned sites. Every stop makes for a truly memorable experience! I was able to enjoy new sights of Tokyo, that I did see on my last trip here, as well as different side to Tokyo? you'll have to read on to find out more about the sights I saw. Oita prefecture is not a very well-known area to Australian travellers but I hope this report will give some insight to my trip to both Tokyo and Oita and I hope it excites you enough to visit. I can't wait to come back to Japan again! Travelling, going to the gym and spending time with my husband This is my 3rd time to Japan This tour takes you from the busy streets of Tokyo to the picturesque mountains of Oita, Japan's No.1 *onsen* prefecture.? A terrific tour for those who love nature walks, onsen hot springs, traditional scenery, local food and drink, and historic shrines and temples. Travel, photography, taiko, kyudo Living in Japan for 10 years [Back to Top](#) This website introduces Tokyo, Japan's most well-known tourist destination, plus the travelogues and routes detailing the spectacular nature, one of Japan's best hot springs, and good food that can be enjoyed in Kyushu. Some of the photos provided by AFLO The rates posted on this site are subject to change. For the most up-to-date information, please check the facilities (transportation facilities) on the website, etc.

## The best 7 things to do while you travel to Oita | GoWithGuide

Close Things To Do Share Oita Prefecture in Kyushu is surrounded by mountains and sea and would make an excellent place for relaxation and light sightseeing. Beppu is one of the most famous areas in Japan to enjoy natural hot spring baths. Festivals throughout the year, and interesting wildlife, Oita is a great place to spend a day or two. We have selected seven of the best things to do while you travel to Oita: Beppu Park is simply beautiful. Great views of the sea beyond and the mountains in the distance, and an array of lush greenery. If it is too hot, you can take in the shelter of the bamboo forest. There are many seasonal flowers growing here, an amazing stream, and one hundred year old pine trees. A beautiful place to go for a picnic on the perfectly cut lawns, or great for a nice leisurely walk. Admission: Free Global Tower is the symbol for one of the largest most advanced conference facilities in Western Japan. After entering, you ride the elevator 100 meters to the top. Taking those first few steps out of the lift leads onto the upper observation deck. You will be instinctively given a feeling that there is nothing below you. The platform hangs in mid-air. You can enjoy a lovely 360-degree panoramic view of Beppu and the ocean beyond, before heading down a staircase encased with glass. The staircase literally floats in the sky between the upper and lower observation decks. As you cross it, it might take you a while to find your feet. The view from Global Tower is breathtaking. You can see the other famous tower in the distance, Beppu Tower, but the view from Global Tower is perhaps more enjoyable. On a clear day, everything is visible from the mountains to the sea. Admission: ¥300 This is the very first summer festival held in Oita Prefecture every year. It is famous for rice cakes and merchants selling hand made dolls, pictures, and other unique works. Unfortunately for me, when I visited Nagahama Shrine Summer Festival, summer was probably the wrong word to have used. I visited during a typhoon, and with it brought heavy rain to Oita. There were markets stalls selling various foods spread all along the side of the road. I found the main ceremony in full swing; around fifty people dressed in purple clothing carrying portable shrines. People banging drums and playing flutes. Spirit levels were quite high, in spite of the weather. After following the procession for a good twenty minutes, I became soaking

wet, which was of course, no fault of the festival. It was great to see that despite the weather, everyone was enjoying the festival and doing their best to put on a great performance. I would recommend visiting this festival on a clear day, to really get the most out of the atmosphere.

**Admission: Free** The entrance to Mount Takasaki Monkey Land National Park is at the bottom of a mountain. The mountain is 628 meters high, and the monkeys are about halfway up. At the top of the stairs, there are wild monkeys wandering around all over the place. A sign says, "If you look into their eyes, they will perceive this as a threat and they will attack." Not looking into their eyes is actually harder than you might think. At Monkey Park there are Japanese monkeys everywhere. Just over 1200 monkeys, to be almost exact. They will wander around by your feet in a park free from any cages. If you are lucky enough to arrive just before feeding time, you will get to experience the monkeys screaming because they know this and want their food. Usually, a crate of food is brought out and the screams will get even more intense. From every direction monkeys will run toward the food. The member of staff carries a makeshift wheelbarrow carrying a crate of food, and runs away from all of the monkeys. They will chase after him, each jumping into the crate to grab food before jumping out again, satisfied. It is a spectacle absolutely worth seeing. After collecting their lunch, the monkeys will try to find their own little private spots to enjoy their food. Perhaps even sitting down right next to your foot as they munch on miscellaneous vegetables, or devour their meal whilst swinging back and forth on a swing.

**Admission: ¥510** Oita Marine Palace Aquarium Umitamago is located across from the monkey park, so that these two attractions can easily be enjoyed on the same day. After paying to enter the amazing aquarium, your ticket and nice brochure will tell you that, "The friendly aquarium welcomes you!" Indeed, it really is a most welcoming experience. Inside, the aquarium is massive. Animals living there include seals, otters, dolphins, penguins, sharks, sea lions, frogs, sea turtles, walruses, and various other fish. There are dolphins on show too, and stingrays that you can touch with your hand. A great place to go as a family, as there are plenty of hands-on activities to enjoy for children and families alike.

**Admission: ¥1950** One of my personal favourite sights in Oita is the east coast of the Kunisaki Peninsula, a huge footpath that stretches between Beppu and the city of Oita. The aquarium and

monkey park are also along this route, so if the weather is nice, and you don't fancy taking public transport, it is a great route to take on your way to either of these attractions. It makes for a perfect cycling or running track, because it is one straight smooth path with no interlocking roads or intersections. I often cycled this route before sunset, admiring the waves of the ocean and the beautiful twilight sky. Along the way, you can find a strange attraction in the shape of an old landlocked boat, converted into a play park. There are slides, tunnels, ladders, and a climbing frame. There is also a weird rope ladder that leads into the hull below. A perfect place to bring the children, or a great place to relax on a romantic evening. Admission: Free

Beppu is a place famous for its many hot spring baths. Perhaps the most famous of those is Kannawa Onsen, but if you don't have the time to visit, then there are plenty of others to enjoy. Sand baths, outdoor bathing, and multiple different varieties of geothermal healing can be found here. Even Beppu Station boasts its very own (albeit small) Onsen, specifically for hands. Most hotels or hostels here also offer their own Onsen services, foot baths, and other varieties, so if you are looking for a good soak in sulphuric water, you won't have to travel far. Check how is an onsen in the following video. Admission: Various

Travel to a foreign country is hard. Lot of things to do in a short period of time. Lot of things to discovered, to know and to be surprised. A different to language to do all the daily things and more. The weight of regreting to visit a place instead of other or getting lost and also lost the day. Surprises about the time required to visit a place. You will want to have someone that knows the place to help you. For this, we recommend you to hire a private guide from GoWithGuide. He will help you with all these problems and also will make the trip in your own way. You can go at the places that better fits your interest and also make it in your own time because all the tours are private and customized. And also, with trustful and professionals guides because all of them are selected by our team for being well-capable. So, you might be thinking, okay, it will be probably cost a lot. No. The price is affordable and certainly worths the value since you have sent a lot to go other country and want to make the most of it. You can hire private guides and talk with him to make it according to your own interests or join a tour and customize it. Check some recommended tours that we selected for you. Beppu Tour in Oita Kuju Yamanami Highway Tour in Oita Yufuin Tour in

Oita Hot Springs and A Natural Monkey Mountain Park Or, if you want to explore outside Oita:  
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# Shidaka Lake: A Guide to One of Beppu's Best Hidden Gems

2020/06/25

Beppu, Boating, Camping, Cherry Blossoms, Fishing, Great View, Lake, Mount, Nature, Park, Shidaka, Swan, Tsurumi, Yufu Not far from the city center of Beppu, mountains and forests await the footsteps of adventurous travelers. Many magnificent sights and natural wonders can be found here such as Mount Tsurumi, Mount Yufu, and a myriad of swamps and valleys. In this same area, Lake Shidaka stretches across the land with its glimmering water. At an altitude of 600m, this quiet location proves itself time and time again as one of Beppu's most spectacular hidden gems.

Lakeside Relaxation at the Foot of Awe-Inspiring Mount Yufu and Mount Tsurumi Across a green plateau on the outskirts of Beppu, Lake Shidaka is a peaceful pocket of nature with an abundance of natural features. There are no buildings, no noisiness ? just the tranquility of the outdoors. With epic Mount Yufu and Mount Tsurumi looming closeby, it is the perfect place for families and couples to relax in a breathtaking setting. This scenic spot has been a secret gem amongst Beppu locals for a long time, and only in recent years has it started to see more tourists. Admire the Season's Beautiful Colours While Strolling Along the Banks It's not just the peaceful atmosphere that makes Lake Shidaka special; the sights, too, are spectacular. As the seasons change, so does the vibrant scenery. A promenade winds along the shore, allowing visitors to walk beneath the trees with their ever-changing colours. People of all ages will enjoy strolling along the water. In springtime, cherry blossoms bloom around the lake. This brings a delightful splash of pink to the beautiful landscape. As visitors stroll down a pathway lined with bright pink trees, Japan's most enchanting colours are in full view. For this reason, Lake Shidaka is a very popular attraction in the spring. Its natural beauty continues to evolve over the course of the year. In the summer, sunlight paints the area golden and the joyful chirping of birds can be heard in the trees. On hot days in Oita, it offers a quiet respite with cooler temperatures and soft breezes. And when autumn comes, the colours of Lake Shidaka flare into bright reds, crimsons, oranges, and yellows ? another season where visitors come in droves to gaze in awe. Lake Shidaka sees its lowest number of visitors in the winter, but it still remains a

must-see location during the coldest months of the year. In fact, to take full advantage of Beppu's marvelous blessings, we advise following up your winter stroll with a dip in one of Beppu's famous onsens! Fun Outdoor Activities for All Travelers to Enjoy Lake Shidaka is not just a must-see location for leisurely strolls and walks, it's also a brilliant place to take part in outdoor activities. Visitors can use the rowing boats, swan boats, rental bicycles, and even barbecue grills scattered across the area. For those who want to maximise their time by this lovely lake, rest assured that the surrounding grounds are an open campsite. Visitors are welcome to set up camp at a spot of their choosing and spend the night. There's nothing like waking up to this heavenly view! For a change of pace, fishing can also be enjoyed at Lake Shidaka between the months of December and March. Excellent Access from Beppu City Lake Shidaka feels so tranquil and remote that, at first, one thinks it has to be far away from civilisation. Fortunately, this is not so. Lake Shidaka is easy to access and is only a 15-minute drive from the Beppu Interchange (via Prefectural Road 11). And for those taking public transportation, the journey is only 30 minutes by bus from Beppu Station. Whether you intend to take a half-day trip or stay overnight, one thing is for sure: Lake Shidaka should not be missed! See Another Side of Beppu at Lake Shidaka Beppu is renowned for its abundance of hot springs, but its beauty does not end there. Reminiscent of the highlands of Europe, Lake Shidaka allows travelers to see a greener side of this hot spring town. Pay a visit to this hidden patch of nature and experience all that Beppu has to offer. Comments are closed. Private time with a special person ?Room service included? Enjoy our Oita Seki (Aji) mackerel A special anniversary spent in luxury Beppu-shi, Shinbeppu 4 kumi,Oita, Japan 874-0834

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## 10 amazing things to do in Oita, Japan! - fromJapan

fromJapan MENU Aug 27, 2020 Oita Prefecture is located at the northeast of Kyushu region, bordered by Fukuoka, Kumamoto, and Miyazaki prefectures. Known for its incredible hot spring sources, the prefecture is often called "Onsen Prefecture", for having the two most visited onsen towns in Japan: Beppu and Yufuin. Although the prefecture is best known for its onsen towns, it has a lot of things to offer for those looking for hidden gems. From a number of scenic towns and cities to other unique spots known for their Buddhist arts and historical architectures, the prefecture is brimming in culture and exciting places to visit! How to get there Recommended sightseeing spots in Oita: Oita's best local treats: Oita is accessible by airplanes from major airports, including Haneda (95 minutes), Narita (115 minutes), Nagoya (70 minutes), and Itami (60 minutes). You can also take the JR Limited Express from JR Hakata Station (Fukuoka) to visit the prefecture, or also take the highway bus operated by Nishitetsu from Fukuoka Airport International Terminal to Beppu Kitahama. Although Oita is relatively far from Tokyo, this one prefecture of Kyushu Island is worth visiting for its adorable sightseeing spots, unspoiled countryside sceneries, and delicious local treats. Here are our picks for the best things to do in Oita, Japan! Beppu Hells Tour, or Jigoku Meguri (?????), is perhaps one of the most popular attractions in Beppu. Attracting more than hundred thousands of visitors from all over Japan and from abroad, the hot springs included in Beppu Hells Tour are not the regular hot springs where you bathe yourself. These hot springs are more for viewing rather than bathing, as their temperatures are much higher than the ordinary onsen. There are seven hells in total; five of them are located in the Kannawa district, and two of them are in the Shibaseki district. Business hours: 8:00 ~ 17:00 Open throughout the year Ticket booklet (valid for 2 days): adults (age 15 and above) 2000 yen; children (age 6-14) 1000 yen Google MAP Website (in Japanese) Beppu Beach Sand Bath is a sand onsen located along the coast of Beppu, where you bathe in hot sand instead of in hot water. Unlike hot springs, you bury your whole body in hot sand with just your face poking out, and you'll sweat after 15 minutes bathing in the sand. Famous for its various health benefits, the Beppu Beach Sand Bath is believed to improve stiff muscles or joints, relieve chronic

muscle or joint pains, stabilize high blood pressure, reduce stress, and improve poor blood circulation. Business hours: March to November 8:30 ? 18:00 (last entry is at 17:00); December to February 9:00 ? 17:00 (last entry is at 16:00) Closed on the fourth Wednesday of each month (if a public holiday falls on a Thursday, it will close on the next day) Admissions: 1050 yen Access: about a 15-minutes bus ride from JR Beppu Station Google MAP Website (in Japanese) Looking for something cute? How about visiting the Takasakiyama Monkey Park to see its adorable monkeys? Opened in 1952, Takasakiyama Monkey Park is located at the foot of Mt. Takasaki, and is apparently one of the world's largest monkey parks as it occupies approximately 1500 wild Japanese macaques. These monkeys eat as they are fed, run around, play, or just sit in the sun while grooming each other. Although the monkeys look tame, you should never touch or feed these monkeys, and eye contact should be avoided as the monkeys might attack randomly. Business hours: 9:00 ? 17:00 (last entry is at 16:30) Open throughout the year Admissions: adults (age 15 and above) 520 yen; children (age 6 -14) 260 yen; free admission for age 6 and under Google MAP Website Suchart Boonyavech / Shutterstock.com Yunotsubo Street connects JR Yufuin Station and Lake Kinrin, and it's located at the foot of Mt. Yufu-dake. Lined with souvenir stores selling Oita's local specialties, and eateries offering Oita's local treats, this street is always packed with tourists visiting from other prefectures and other countries. Suchart Boonyavech / Shutterstock.com One of the most interesting spots to visit is the Yunotsubo Alley, a small alley filled with stores offering seasonal desserts and snacks, local craftwork, and accessories. Business hour varies by each store, but most close early (17:00 or 18:00) Open throughout the year Google MAP Lake Kinrin is located in Yufuin, an onsen city of Oita, and is famous for its mystical morning mists, which are created when water welling up from hot and cold springs mix during cold seasons. Located just a 25-minute walk from JR Yufuin Station, there are many onsen, restaurants, and cafes to explore on the lake's shores. When you visit Lake Kinrin, don't miss the art museums along the main road between Yufuin and the lake, and also the small shrine at the lake's southern end! Access: about a 25-minute walk from JR Yufuin Station Google MAP Website (in Japanese) Suchart Boonyavech / Shutterstock.com Need a break from reality? How about visiting Yufuin Floral Village to enjoy its

fairytale-like vibes? Inspired by the Cotswold region of England, where the famous movie ?Harry Potter? was made, Yufuin Floral Village offers a lot of fun experiences to enjoy. The theme park is lined with many cute and petite stores, where you can pet animals like cats and owls, or shop for cute souvenirs and gifts. Some of the most popular stores are ?Kiki?s Bakery?, which is modeled after Ghibli?s ?Kiki?s Delivery Service?, and ?The Rabbit?, a shop selling Peter Rabbit goods. Yufuin Floral Village offers a truly lovely sight, and you?ll definitely enjoy strolling around this English garden-style wonderland! Business hours: 9:00 ? 18:00 (last entry is at 17:30) Open throughout the year Access: about a 5-minute taxi ride or a 15-minute walk from JR Yufuin Station Google MAP Website (in Japanese) Located about 15 kilometers east of Kurokawa Onsen, Kuju Flower Park is a marvelous and attractive park that has about 3 million plants of more than 500 different varieties. The park is very spacious; it covers 49 acres of land with various flower species, including lavender, salvia, blueberries, pink moss, tulips, sunflowers, and poppies. On sunny days, you can enjoy lovely views of colorful flowers with the Kuju Mountain Range in the backdrop. Business hours: March to November 8:30 ? 17:30 (last entry at 17:00) Closed during winter (December to February) Admissions: adults (age 15 and above) 1300 yen; children (age 5 -14) 500 yen Access: about a 60-minute drive from Oita City Google MAP Website (in Japanese) English pamphlet Usa Shrine is located at the foot of the Kunisaki Peninsula and was built in the 8th Century. Known as the head shrine of thousands of Hachiman shrines across Japan, the shrine had a big influence on the Kunisaki Peninsula?s culture. The shrine holds a large compound that includes an upper shrine complex, a lower shrine complex, a treasure hall, a couple of ponds, and several secondary shrine buildings. The upper shrine complex is located at the top of a hill and has three main halls dedicated to Hachiman (the God of archery and war), to his mother (Empress Jingu), and to his wife (Hime Okami). The lower shrine complex at the foot of the hill also features three main halls dedicated to the same deities. Business hours: April to September 5:30 ? 19:00; October to March 6:00 ? 19:00 Access: about a 10-minute bus ride or a 10-minute taxi ride from JR Usa Station Google MAP Website (in Japanese) Looking for a peaceful hidden spot? Head to Yamaura area of Kusu-machi to see Jion Falls; a 30-meter high two-tiered waterfall that is famous for its breathtaking view and clear

water. Unlike other waterfalls, Jion Falls has a walking track around it, so the waterfall is easily accessible and also wheelchair friendly. Google MAP The Usuki Stone Buddhas are located about 5km southwest of Usuki's city center, and they are the only stone Buddhas in Japan to be designated as national treasures. Unlike most Buddha statues in Japan, which are usually made of wood or metal, Usuki Stone Buddhas are statues of various Buddhas sculpted into a cliff. These beautiful and marvelous stone Buddhas were built around the late Heian Period (794 ? 1185), using the workable and soft volcanic rock from the nearby Mt. Aso. Business hours: April to September 6:00 ? 19:00; October to March 6:00 ? 18:00 Admissions: adults (age 15 & above) 550 yen; children (age 6 ? 14) 270 yen Access: about a-15 minute taxi ride or a 20-minute bus ride from JR Usuki Station Google MAP Website Public transportation guide (PDF) Located in the Kyushu region, Oita is blessed with locally grown fish, meat, and vegetables. From the famous Toriten to the underrated Bungo beef, wherever you go, scrumptious local treats await in Oita. Here are our picks for the best food to try when visiting Oita! Toriten is a chicken tempura and perhaps the most famous local treat of Oita Prefecture. Made by deep-frying large chunks of chicken battered in tempura coating, Toriten is famous for its crunchy texture and juicy flavor. Widely available through the prefecture, make sure to try these yummy treats when visiting Oita! Ryukyu is one of the most famous local specialties of Oita, and it's usually served as a side dish or on a bed of rice. Made by marinating sliced fresh fish meat with soy sauce, sake (rice wine), and sesame, fish like yellowtail, mackerel, and horse mackerel are usually used to make Ryukyu. Jigoku-mushi (????, hell steaming) is a traditional cooking method used in Kannawa neighborhood in Beppu to cook the food. Cooked using only the steam produced from the hot spring, jigoku-mushi is also known as one of the healthiest cooking methods in Japan as no oil is used during the process. Seasonal vegetables and locally caught seafood are steamed in special steaming baskets made of bamboo to prevent the flavor from escaping. Since the mineral-laden steam brings out the true flavors of the food, the ingredients of jigoku-mushi usually use light seasonings, or sometimes no seasonings at all. Have you ever heard of tori meshi before? Tori meshi is one the most popular local specialties of Oita Prefecture and perhaps one of the most famous comfort foods in the prefecture. Literally means "chicken rice", tori

meshi is a rice cooked together with chicken and burdock, then seasoned with soy sauce, cooking sake (rice wine), and sugar. Japan is famous for its melting and juicy wagyu (Japanese beef), and Bungo beef (???), Bungogyu) is a high-end kuroge wagyu (Japanese black cattle) brand originating from Oita Prefecture. Known for its rich taste and high unsaturated fat content, Bungo beef is usually served in the form of a steak, shabu shabu (Japanese hotpot), or yakiniku (Japanese barbecue). One of the best places to try Bungo beef is in Beppu, a popular hot spring town in Oita Prefecture. Now that you have an idea of how many incredible destinations are in Oita, all you have to do is plan your itinerary to enjoy unforgettable experiences in Oita!

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# Oita Castle Ruin Park?THE GATE?Japan Travel Magazine: Find Tourism & Travel Info

THE GATE Oita Castle Ruin Park locates right by the Oita Castle's castle keep area. Also known as Funai Castle, the castle was built in 1579 for feudal lord Takenaka Shigetoshi, who ruled the area. The park is known for its over 70 cherry blossom trees that blossom every April. During cherry blossoms season, the castle lights up to create an ethereal view. Basic Information Access SHARE!

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Rakanji Temple locates in the city of Nakatsu in Oita prefecture. It rests on the rocky Mount Rakan, and the view of and from the temple is breathtaking. Climb your way up the mountain, or take a lift for easier access. Shrines & Temples Hot Springs like Hell? Exploring the 'Hells of Beppu' in Oita Walking Yufuin, Oita's Retro Hot Spring Town: Where to Eat, Shop & Bathe Take a ¥100 Bath at



Takegawara Onsen in Beppu Hot Springs like Hell? Exploring the 'Hells of Beppu' in Oita Walking Yufuin, Oita's Retro Hot Spring Town: Where to Eat, Shop & Bathe Take a ¥100 Bath at Takegawara Onsen in Beppu EDITORS' PICKS Japan's Top 3 Fireworks: Omagari, Tsuchiura, & Nagaoka Firework Festivals Explore Togakushi's Five Shrines in Nagano's Woods Photogenic Factory Night Views at Yokkaichi Industrial Complex: 4 Must-see Views Guide to Asakusa & Sensoji Temple! Exploring Tokyo's Old-town Charm Revisiting Tokyo Tower! Events, Sights & Things to do at the Tokyo Icon 5 Edo-Period Old Towns: Traditional Post Town Sceneries of the Nakasendo Road POPULAR TAGS LATEST ARTICLES Tokyo Samurai Stage Fighting: Japanese Minds in the Art of Tate Sword-Fighting ? Shimanami Sea Route ? 17 sightseeing spots! the recommended model course. Manju Buns for Saitama Souvenirs! We Asked the Locals for some Hidden Gems Discover Nostalgic Scenes! Railroad Journey Through Gunma & Tochigi Discover Unique Hot Springs in Kagoshima along the East China Sea Coast Meet the Rabbit Herd of Japan's Rabbit Island, Okunoshima! ARTICLE RANKING 5 Edo-Period Old Towns: Traditional Post Town Sceneries of the Nakasendo Road What is Hakone's Traditional Craft: Yosegi Zaiku? 2 Places to buy them in Tokyo! What is Tanabata, Japan's Star Festival? 3 Tanabata Festivals to Visit! Behold the dreamy kingdom of cats at Kichijoji Petit Mura (village) Hitachi Seaside Park's Autumn Kochia Fields make a Vast Red Carpet Ueno Zoo: Meet Pandas, Polar Bears & Capybaras at Tokyo's Oldest Zoo! ARTICLE SPOT THE GATE OFFICIAL SNS FOLLOW ME No part of this site may be reproduced without our written permission. ©2022 Roseau Pensant Inc. All rights reserved.

# Discover Oita: A Hidden Gem In Japan

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Nestled on the eastern coast of Kyushu, Oita is a captivating city that offers a unique blend of natural beauty, rich culture, and rejuvenating hot springs. Whether you are a solo traveler seeking tranquility or a family looking for adventure, Oita has something for everyone. This article will guide you through the key attractions, activities, and practical information to make your visit unforgettable.

Beppu, a city within Oita Prefecture, is renowned for its numerous hot springs. With over 2,000 hot spring sources, it is one of Japan's most famous onsen towns. Visitors can enjoy various types of baths, including mud baths, sand baths, and steam baths. The "Hells of Beppu" (Jigoku) are a must-see, featuring unique geothermal phenomena that showcase the area's volcanic activity.

Yufuin is another charming onsen town located near Beppu. Surrounded by mountains, it offers stunning views and a serene atmosphere. The town is known for its quaint streets lined with art galleries, cafes, and shops. Don't miss the chance to soak in an outdoor onsen while enjoying the breathtaking scenery.

For families, the Oita Marine Palace, also known as Umitamago, is a fantastic destination. This aquarium features a variety of marine life, including dolphins, sea lions, and tropical fish. The interactive exhibits and shows make it an engaging experience for visitors of all ages.

Oita is not only famous for its hot springs but also for its delicious local cuisine. Here are some dishes you must try:

The ideal time to visit Oita is during the spring (March to May) and autumn (September to November) months. During these seasons, the weather is mild, and the natural scenery is at its most beautiful. Spring brings cherry blossoms, while autumn showcases vibrant foliage.

Oita is easily accessible by train, bus, and car. The Oita Airport connects the city to major domestic and international destinations. Once in the city, public transportation is efficient, with buses and trains available to take you to popular attractions.

Oita offers a range of accommodation options, from luxury hotels to traditional ryokans (Japanese inns). Staying in a ryokan allows you to experience authentic Japanese hospitality and enjoy onsen baths right at your accommodation.

For outdoor enthusiasts, the Kuju Mountains offer excellent hiking trails with stunning views. The area is known

for its diverse flora and fauna, making it a great spot for nature lovers. Art lovers should not miss the Oita Prefectural Art Museum, which features a collection of modern and contemporary art. The museum's architecture is also a sight to behold. Oita hosts various festivals throughout the year, showcasing its rich culture and traditions. The Oita River Fireworks Festival in summer is particularly popular, attracting visitors from all over. Oita is a destination that promises relaxation, adventure, and cultural immersion. With its stunning landscapes, delectable cuisine, and rejuvenating hot springs, it's a place that invites you to unwind and experience the beauty of Japan. Whether you're soaking in an onsen or savoring local delicacies, Oita will leave a lasting impression. So pack your bags and get ready for an unforgettable trip to this hidden gem! Please note, comments need to be approved before they are published. Loved Discover Oita: A Hidden Gem In Japan? Start your journey today and experience it for yourself!

Puerto Rico, a vibrant Caribbean island, is a paradise for travelers seeking a blend of rich culture, stunning landscapes, and delectable cuisine. With its all-inclusive travel options, visitors can enjoy... Puerto Rico, a vibrant Caribbean island, is a paradise for travelers seeking a blend of rich culture, stunning landscapes, and delectable cuisine. With its all-inclusive travel options, visitors can enjoy... Traveling is one of life's greatest joys, and what better way to enhance that experience than with thoughtful gifts? Whether you're shopping for a seasoned globetrotter or a weekend wanderer,... Traveling is one of life's greatest joys, and what better way to enhance that experience than with thoughtful gifts? Whether you're shopping for a seasoned globetrotter or a weekend wanderer,... Hawaii, the enchanting archipelago in the Pacific Ocean, is a dream destination for many travelers. With its stunning landscapes, rich culture, and warm hospitality, each island offers unique experiences that... Hawaii, the enchanting archipelago in the Pacific Ocean, is a dream destination for many travelers. With its stunning landscapes, rich culture, and warm hospitality, each island offers unique experiences that...

## Serenity at Ogura Pond: A Hidden Gem in Oita

Discover the tranquil beauty of Ogura Pond in Oita, Japan, a perfect spot for nature lovers and peace seekers alike. Ogura Pond, located in the charming region of Oita, Japan, is a stunning natural oasis that invites visitors to unwind and reconnect with nature. This serene lake is enveloped by lush foliage and offers picturesque views that change with the seasons, making it a captivating destination year-round. Whether you're a nature enthusiast, a photographer, or simply looking for a peaceful retreat, Ogura Pond provides the perfect backdrop for relaxation and rejuvenation.

As you wander around the pond, you'll discover various walking paths that allow you to take in the tranquil surroundings. The gentle sounds of water lapping against the shore, combined with the rustling leaves, create an ambiance of peace and calm. It's an ideal location for a leisurely stroll or a picnic with family and friends. Birdwatchers will also appreciate the diverse avian life that frequents the area, making it a wonderful spot for wildlife observation.

For those who wish to immerse themselves in the local culture, Ogura Pond is surrounded by quaint villages that showcase traditional Japanese architecture and hospitality. Visitors can explore nearby temples and historical sites that enrich the experience, providing insight into the cultural heritage of the region. The beauty of Ogura Pond, coupled with its serene atmosphere and cultural richness, makes it a hidden gem that should not be missed during your journey in Oita. Discover Ogura Pond with Evendo, a 100% free app-based travel guide. Explore attractions, landmarks, restaurants, and more with ease and convenience. If you are travelling by car, start from the center of Wakasa. Head south on Route 27 towards Usa. After approximately 30 minutes, take the exit toward Usa City. Continue on Route 10, and then follow the signs for Ogura Pond. The pond is located at coordinates 33.52127, 131.31316. There is parking available nearby. For those using public transportation, begin at Wakasa Station. Take the train on the Nippō Main Line heading towards Oita. After about 20 minutes, get off at Usa Station. From Usa Station, you can catch a local bus (Usa City Bus)

heading towards Ogura Pond. The bus ride takes approximately 15 minutes. Check the bus schedule in advance, as services may be limited on weekends. The bus will drop you off near Ogura Pond, which is a short walk from the bus stop. If you prefer a more direct route, you can take a taxi from Usa Station directly to Ogura Pond. The taxi ride takes approximately 10 minutes and should cost around 1,500 to 2,000 yen, depending on traffic. Don't miss out on news and great deals

## Harajiri Falls: Japan's Hidden Gem

Discover the breathtaking beauty of Harajiri Falls, a picturesque waterfall in Oita, Japan, perfect for nature lovers and adventurers. Harajiri Falls is a captivating natural wonder located in Bungoono, Oita Prefecture, Japan. Often likened to a smaller version of Niagara Falls, this impressive waterfall cascades over a rocky ledge, creating a spectacular sight that draws visitors from near and far. Surrounded by lush greenery, the falls are particularly mesmerizing during the spring when cherry blossoms bloom, offering a picturesque backdrop for photography enthusiasts. The tranquil sound of the water crashing down adds to the serene atmosphere, making it a perfect spot for relaxation and contemplation.

The area around Harajiri Falls is equipped with well-maintained walking paths and viewing platforms, allowing tourists to get up close to the cascading water. There are also picnic areas nearby, making it an ideal location for families and groups to enjoy a day out in nature. Whether you choose to hike the trails, take a leisurely stroll, or simply sit back and soak in the magnificent views, Harajiri Falls promises an unforgettable experience. Don't forget to bring your camera to capture the stunning vistas, especially during sunrise or sunset when the light creates a magical glow over the falls.

For those interested in local culture, the nearby town offers quaint shops and traditional eateries where you can savor regional delicacies. With its unique blend of natural beauty and cultural experiences, Harajiri Falls is a must-visit destination for travelers exploring the rich landscapes of Japan. Discover Harajiri Falls with Evendo, a 100% free app-based travel guide. Explore attractions, landmarks, restaurants, and more with ease and convenience. If you are driving, the easiest way to reach Harajiri Falls is to use the expressways. From Fukuoka, take the Kyushu Expressway (Kyushu K  sokud  ro) heading towards Kumamoto. After about 45 km, take the exit towards Bungoono (Bungo-ono). Follow Route 210 for approximately 20 km until you reach Harajiri Falls. There is a

parking area available near the falls, which is free of charge. For those using public transportation, start by taking a train from Fukuoka to Oita. The train journey will take approximately 2 hours. Once you arrive at Oita Station, transfer to a local bus bound for Bungoono (Bungo-ono). The bus ride will take around 50 minutes. Upon arrival in Bungoono, you will need to take a taxi to Harajiri Falls, which is about 10 km away from the bus station. Taxi fares may vary, but expect to pay around 2,000 to 3,000 yen. Alternatively, you can take a train from Kumamoto to Bungoono. The journey takes about 1 hour and 30 minutes. Upon arrival at Bungoono Station, take a taxi to Harajiri Falls, which is approximately a 15-minute drive. The taxi fare will be similar to that from the Oita bus station, ranging between 2,000 to 3,000 yen. Don't miss out on news and great deals





## What are 3 things not to miss when visiting Oita, Japan? - Quora

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**Oita Japan**

## Japan Travel: 17 Things to do in Oita, Japan's onsen prefecture | SoraNews24 -Japan News-

Bringing you yesterday's news from Japan and Asia, today. RocketNews24 Japanese There's so much more to Oita than amazing hot springs. If you're travelling to Japan and looking to explore the country, there are 47 prefectures waiting to wow you with sacred sites, places of natural beauty and a warm sense of hospitality that will make for an unforgettable trip. One of those prefectures is Oita, on Japan's southern island of Kyushu, which is known throughout Japan as the country's "onsen prefecture", due to its abundance of rejuvenating hot springs. And while the onsen here are held in such high esteem that they even opened an onsen amusement park in the prefecture in 2016, there's plenty more on offer for those looking to explore off the beaten track. We headed down to Oita recently, and after a short 95-minute flight, we arrived at Oita Airport, which is a destination in itself that houses a genuine hot spring foot bath and photo spots. ? There are also replicas of famous centuries-old statues? ? And a giant plate of sushi that goes round and round like a sushi train at the baggage carousel. Once you've picked up your baggage, it's time to get out and explore Oita! It's pretty rural out here, though, so you'll want to hire a car, or, for a more memorable experience, you might want to hire local tour guide and fluent English speaker Kimiko Wakamatsu to show you some of the most special spots in Oita Prefecture. ? Wakamatsu (right) works with driver Eishi, aka A.C. (left) to take you to places only locals know about. We spent several days exploring with A.C. and Wakamatsu, and highly recommend using them for your trip. A.C. is known as "the best driver in Oita" and is requested by government officials for personal trips, while Wakamatsu is a licensed tour guide with years of experience under her belt. So let's get to it and check out the 17 best things to do in Oita Prefecture! Kitsuki Castle Town One of the first stops any visitor to Oita should put at the top of their itinerary is a visit to Kitsuki Castle Town. This historic area contains beautifully preserved streets and old samurai houses which are open to the public, and one of the best ways to soak up the atmosphere here is by strolling around in a kimono. Kimono rental shop Warakuan has a huge range of kimonos in all sizes which can be rented for

roughly 3,000 yen (US\$28.46) per day, with lots of accessories to make you feel like a lady from the Edo Period (1603-1868). After being dressed by the professional and friendly staff at Warakuan, who are so speedy they can dress you in a matter of minutes, you'll get to walk around a castle town that's so well preserved it's even been featured in Japanese movies and TV dramas. The local government is actually encouraging visitors to wear kimono here, as it helps to bridge the gap between cultures, and it also gets you free or discounted entrance to museums and preserved houses in the area. The Ohara Residence is the biggest and grandest samurai residence in Kitsuki Castle Town, with an impressive garden and interesting artefacts providing a firsthand insight into how people used to live back in the feudal era. Strolling through the residence in kimono makes you feel like you've stepped back in time to the Edo period, and helps you connect to Japanese culture in an unforgettable way, especially when you get to enjoy the area without the hordes of tourists you'll find at other big tourist spots. Eat the local specialty: Ureshino Kitsuki Castle Town comes with a long and rich history that extends to its food culture, so while you're here you definitely shouldn't miss out on trying a delicious sesame sauce flavoured red snapper and rice dish known locally as 'Ureshino'. 'Wakaeya is a special gem that's been serving Ureshino for more than 300 years. The prized tai chazuke dish was named 'Ureshino' after a feudal lord tried it at Wakaeya centuries ago and uttered the words 'Ureshino' (lit. 'I'm so happy'). Tasting a dish with such history behind it is an incredibly special experience, especially given that the restaurant is still run by the same family, with Gentaro Goto preserving this important culinary history as the 16th-generation head of the restaurant. 'Gentaro Goto (right) and his father (left) are continuing centuries of family-run operations. Ureshino is a delicious sesame sauce flavoured red snapper and rice dish that's ready to eat three seconds after hot green tea is poured over it. Big groups can enjoy the dish as part of a multi-course meal inside a banquet room with its very own Noh theatre stage. Beppu City Traditional Bamboo Crafts Centre Next stop on our tour is a local bamboo crafts centre, which showcases local bamboo crafts in a fun and engaging manner. The intricate designs and large works created with bamboo are all amazing to look at. The interactive woven bell-making course is a lot of fun, and easy for both adults and children to take part in. The bamboo bell ball makes for a

great souvenir afterwards, and there are plenty of gorgeous objects to purchase in the attached gift shop as well! ? Simply weave the coloured bands through the bamboo-encased bell and you've created your very own original souvenir! Yukemuri Observation Deck and Kannawa walking tour A visit to Oita wouldn't be complete without a stop at Beppu, the city renowned for having the highest yield of hot spring water in the world. There are hundreds of hot springs dotted around the area, and the best place to see them is from the Yukemuri Observation Deck, where you can gaze out at the rising plumes of hot steam. ? This yukemuri landscape has been listed as one of Japan's ?Important Cultural Landscapes?. Whether or not you love hot springs, you'll definitely enjoy a walk around Beppu's Kannawa Onsen area. It's a beautiful area to stroll around, with plenty of interesting sites that offer unique saunas with Japanese sweet flag grass, communal bathing, cafes, and cook-it-yourself steam dining areas. Steam rushes up from beneath the ground all over the area, giving it a unique atmosphere. It's also one of the rare places where you can dip your legs into a steam foot bath, which utilises the earth's natural hot steam instead of hot spring water to help improve the body's circulation. If you're looking for a place to stay in the area, Yufuin Hotel Shuhokan is conveniently located nearby. Not only do the rooms come with glorious views of dormant volcano Mt Yufu, but you can also enjoy a hearty dinner and breakfast here, with a delicious array of local delicacies, served in a communal dining room with views out to the surrounding countryside. Lake Kinrin Lake Kinrin is a lovely pocket of nature where hot springs bubble up through the lake bed, creating an ideal spa-like environment for fish and wildlife that gather here. A 19th century Confucian scholar saw fish in the lake glittering at sunset here, so the lake was named Kinrin (?Golden fish scales?). A short stroll takes you all around the lake, making it a beautiful, serene place to stop and breathe in the fresh mountain air. Hita Gion Yamaboko Kaikan The Hita Gion Yamaboko Hall is a site that's well worth a visit as it contains some of the largest and most impressive festival floats you'll find in all of Japan. These floats are paraded around the streets of Hita City once a year for the annual Hita Gion festival in late July, and for the remainder of the year they're housed here for people from around Japan to admire. These huge floats weigh up to four tonnes, and are filled with gorgeous details like dolls created by 98-year-old doll maker

Shizuo Nagashima, which are designed to represent characters from kabuki plays. Each year, a different kabuki scene is revealed as the theme for the 300-year-old festival, and the floats are so impressive they've been designated an Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO. Eat the local specialty: Hitan Sushi If you want to eat like a local in Hita City, Ginsushi is the place to go. The homely, family-run eatery specialises in Hitan sushi, which uses fruit and vegetables as toppings for sushi instead of the usual raw fish. Meals here offer a surprising array of different tastes and textures, all of which are delicious and beautifully presented and prepared. Vegetarians and meat-eaters alike are sure to be incredibly impressed by the delicious meat-free morsels on offer!

Mameda Walking Tour Walking around the beautiful Mameda district is a wonderful way to spend an afternoon, as it has a traditional, laid-back atmosphere and a variety of small stores and eateries to pop in and out of as you explore the narrow streets. This is the best place to pick up a pair of locally made geta sandals, with a huge selection of styles available, and one of the stores is even home to the largest cedar geta in all of Japan!

Ontayaki no Sato (Ontayaki Pottery Village) One of the highlights of our trip was a visit to this tiny, tranquil pottery village which makes its pottery entirely by hand, using the same techniques that have been passed down from generation to generation over 300 years. ? Ten families live and produce pottery in this village. Ontayaki pottery village is known for its kara usu, wooden clay-crushing devices powered by water from the Hanatsuki River. The sound they make echoes through the tiny village and is considered one of Japan's 100 best soundscapes. The sound of the water-powered wooden clay-crushing devices and the charm of the local families that sell their beautiful wares make this a must-visit spot. As a working pottery village, visitors are able to watch products being made, and purchase items directly from the families that make them.

Umeshugura Oyama Along the Oyama River in southern Hita is a hot spring area famous for Japanese plums. Umeshugura Oyama is a factory that makes a wide variety of umeshu liqueur from locally grown plums, and visitors can view the production process inside the facility. Visitors will want to try all the different types of umeshu available here, with a free tasting that showcases some deliciously unique varieties you won't find anywhere else.

Sakura Daki Sakura Daki, which translates to ?Sakura Waterfall?, gets its name from the cherry blossom trees that

bloom around it. Although it's just a five-minute walk from JR Amagase Station, you'll feel like you're in the middle of nowhere as the 25-metre-high veil-like stream of water sends out a light spray as it spills out into a small spherical pool below. Stay at a Ryokan One of the great things about exploring off the beaten track is the chance to experience the warmth of local hospitality with a stay at a ryokan or Japanese inn. A highly recommended ryokan in Hita is Ukiha Bekkan Shinshiyo, which is a quiet haven with an inn-like atmosphere that makes you feel instantly at home. The staff here are incredibly attentive and helpful, and they go out of their way to ensure that your stay is comfortable and pleasant. The rooms are clean and modern, and some even come with their own rotenburo hot spring outdoor baths on an attached terrace where you can relax and gaze out at the surrounding scenery. The real wow factor comes at dinner, when a feast of small dishes is served up for guests in private dining rooms. Attentive staff in kimono will help guide you through each course and answer any questions you might have about all the different dishes and the fresh local ingredients used. And then when you wake in the morning, there's a feast waiting for you at breakfast too!

**Takkiri Valley** This valley, located in Oita's Usa City, is a wonderful spot to stay cool in the warmer months, with a shallow river that meanders along a walking path for roughly two kilometres (1.2 miles). A popular spot with families, there are 13 small cottages here which can be rented for overnight stays, but daytrippers can also enjoy the nature-filled scenery. One of the most popular things to do here is kick off your shoes and socks and go for a walk inside the river. The ankle-deep water is cool and clear, and incredibly refreshing in summer.

**Ajimu Winery** This winery in Usa has been perfecting its wines since grapes were first harvested here in the '60s. The climate in this region is considered to be an ideal environment for growing grapes, which are used to create over 20 different types of wines bottled on the premises. There are plenty of areas to explore around the winery, but most visitors head straight to the shop, which offers a wide range of tastings, including award-winning sparkling wines and grape juice as a non-alcoholic option for drivers. Eat the local specialty: Fried Chicken Shozan is such a good restaurant that locals line up to dine here, where the specialty is Usa City's regional delicacy, fried chicken. The fried chicken made in Usa is renowned throughout Japan, where it's claimed by many to be the best in the country, and Shozan

is one of the best places to try it. Their round, ball-like chicken pieces are so crispy and juicy you'll be wanting to eat them every day, and adults and children alike will fall in love with them, as they're easy to eat, come served in generous portion sizes, and can be ordered as part of a set with rice, salad, tea and miso soup.

**Usa Jingu** As one of Japan's most important shrines, Usa Jingu contains a wide variety of sacred sites, and visitors can get a deeper understanding of each site on the shrine grounds with a fun-to-use interactive audio guide that comes with multi-language options. As you walk through the area, simply tap the electronic "pen" to your current site on the included map, and you'll be able to learn more about the history and significance of that particular location. The audio guide will also provide you with instructions on how to worship at the main shrine buildings. Unlike other shrines, where worshippers bow twice, clap twice and then bow once, worshippers here bow twice, clap four times and bow once. This ancient 2-4-1 style of prayer is said to only exist at two shrines in all of Japan.

**Futago-ji Temple** If this temple was located in Tokyo or Kyoto, it would be inundated with crowds of tourists. However, its rural location protects it from being overcrowded, which means visitors get to experience its sacred beauty without all the crowds. Said to have been founded in 718, the temple is famous for its stunning Nio statues, which stand as the guardians of Buddha at the stairs leading up to the temple grounds. Walking through the ancient temple on your own without other visitors is a profound experience, as it enhances your sense of adventure and deepens your connection with the sacred atmosphere of the site.

**Gojun Terada**, the 66th abbot of Futago-ji, speaks perfect English and is happy to speak to visitors, so if you see him, be sure to say hello! Terada was instrumental in helping to create the English-language guide maps that are now available at the temple, so overseas visitors can gain a deeper understanding of the site as they explore the grounds on their own.

So there you have it, 17 things to do in Oita Prefecture! It's a beautiful region that remains largely unexplored by foreign tourists, making it a less crowded, off-the-beaten path alternative to big cities like Tokyo and Kyoto. It's definitely worth adding a visit to Oita to your Japan travel itinerary. If you're looking to discover more hidden gems around the country, don't forget to check out our in-depth guides to Aomori, Okinawa, Fukushima, and Yamaguchi. There's so much to explore in Japan!

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## Oita worth without onsen visit? - japan-guide.com forum

Dear visitor, if you know the answer to this question, please post it. Thank you! Note that this thread has not been updated in a long time, and its content might not be up-to-date anymore. Oita worth without onsen visit?

2016/9/20 06:01

Hi,I am trying to expand my Kyushu diary and thought of visiting the area around Oita, Beppu, Yufuin, etc.Most of these places seem like onsen towns so I was thinking if it is even worth visiting if not interested in onsen visit. Since it is quite a bit by train I am considering if I should check it out or not...

by Oita (guest) Re: Oita worth without onsen visit?

2016/9/20 11:26

It is just Beppu, Oita Prefecture I went, but there is a place where you can enjoy even without entering the hot spring. I went to the aquarium, Umitamago. In the nearby there is a Takasakiyama inhabited by monkeys. Harmony Land African safari and amusement facilities There is also such Yabakei, Kuju large suspension bridge, Kunisaki Peninsula. I think Yufuin there are many museums and shops. <http://en.visit-oita.jp/>

by haro1210

rate this post as useful Re: Oita worth without onsen visit?

2016/9/20 11:33

Well what do you plan to do in Oita if not visit the onsen? Is there something in particular that interested you?

by jh (guest)

rate this post as useful reply to this thread

## Kyushu: Traveling Japan's Southern Gem | Japan Travel Pros

The southernmost of Japan's four main islands, Kyushu is a compelling destination of otherworldly volcanic landscapes, historic cities, cultural treasures and some of the best food in Japan you'll ever enjoy! Often overshadowed by the neon-lit allure of Tokyo or the traditional charms of Kyoto – both of which are far more inundated with international tourism these days – a Kyushu tour offers a wealth of unique, local experiences that rival those found in its more famous counterparts. Whether you're on a honeymoon in Japan, a solo trip or traveling with a group, Kyushu deserves a spot on your Japan itinerary. From ramen-obsessed big city of Fukuoka to the mist-shrouded cedars of Yakushima, and from the relaxing onsen hot spring baths of Beppu & Yufuin to the history and international vibe of Nagasaki, Kyushu rewards the traveler who is looking to step off the beaten path and experience a more authentic and local Japan. As the largest city in Kyushu and the sixth-largest in Japan, Fukuoka serves as the ideal starting point on your Kyushu tour. This vibrant metropolis (combined with Kitakyushu), known for its friendly locals and fantastic food scene, offers a variety of experiences for the discerning traveler. Fukuoka's urban core is split between two districts: historic Hakata and modern Tenjin. These are both great places to visit in Fukuoka. In Hakata, the area surrounding the railway station hub (you'll take the shinkansen to/from here) has vibes galore. Here, you'll find an array of shopping complexes, from the sleek JR Hakata City to the more traditional Kawabata Shopping Arcade. Tenjin, meanwhile, represents Fukuoka's contemporary face. This district is popular among shoppers, with department stores like Iwataya and Mitsukoshi standing alongside trendy boutiques and the vast underground shopping labyrinth of Tenjin Chikagai. Make sure Hakata and Tenjin are on your Fukuoka itinerary. You'll likely want a hotel here to begin your Kyushu tour. Fukuoka might best be known for its food culture. And it's not just about ramen (though ramen surely plays a major role here). The city's famous yatai (street food stalls) line the riverside in Nakasu, offering an intimate and authentically local dining experience. Here, you can savor Hakata ramen, characterized by its rich tonkotsu (pork bone) broth, or try local specialties like mentaiko (spicy cod roe) and motsunabe (offal hot pot). For a more refined culinary

experience, Fukuoka boasts several Michelin-starred restaurants, including the innovative Japanese cuisine of Ryotei Sagano (2 stars) and the highly elevated sushi at Sushi Sakai (3 stars). The nearby port area of Nagahama has its own style of ramen, unsurprisingly called Nagahama ramen. Though similar to its sister ramen in Hakata, Nagahama ramen has its devotees (particularly those working in the area) and can be found in ramen shops across Japan. While Fukuoka embraces modernity, it hasn't forgotten its roots. The ancient Kushida Shrine, founded in 757, stands as a calm counterpoint to the city's urban energy. Visit in July to witness the spectacular Hakata Gion Yamakasa festival, where massive, ornately decorated floats are raced through the city streets. For a relaxing escape, Ohori Park offers a vast lake surrounded by walking paths and a meticulously maintained Japanese garden. The nearby Fukuoka Castle Ruins provide a glimpse into the city's feudal past, with cherry blossoms in spring adding an ephemeral beauty to the historic stoneworks. Fukuoka's central location makes it an ideal base for exploring other parts of northern Kyushu. Weigh the options for these enriching day trips from Fukuoka on your Kyushu tour: Dazaifu: Just 30 minutes from Fukuoka, this historic town is home to the stunning Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine and the cutting-edge Kyushu National Museum Yanagawa: Often called the "Venice of Kyushu," Yanagawa offers scenic canal tours in traditional punted boats Karatsu: This coastal city is renowned for its castle, pottery, and picturesque seaside Kurume: On the way between Fukuoka & Nagasaki, this is the home of Kurume-style ramen and is well worth a stop for lunch in one of its ramen shops) While you're perusing your Fukuoka day trip options, don't forget that a Kyushu tour is about much more than Fukuoka. Let's start with the most famous of its destinations next. Perched on the western edge of Kyushu, Nagasaki tells a story of resilience, international exchange and profound historical significance. This port city, once Japan's primary window to the Western world, showcases its own blend of Japanese and European influences. It's a great part of any Kyushu tour, especially for those who appreciate history (and great food, of course). Nagasaki's most sobering attractions are undoubtedly those related to the atomic bombing of August 9, 1945. The Nagasaki Peace Park, centered around the iconic Peace Statue, provides a space for reflection and remembrance. Nearby, the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum offers a harrowing yet essential look at the bombing

and its aftermath, emphasizing the importance of peace and nuclear disarmament. Nagasaki's history as a hub of international trade is evident in its architecture and culture. Glover Garden, a collection of Western-style mansions set on a hillside overlooking the harbor, offers insight into the lives of the foreign merchants who made Nagasaki their home in the 19th century. The garden's centerpiece, Glover House, is the oldest Western-style building in Japan. Not far from Glover Garden stands Oura Church, Japan's oldest surviving Christian church. This Gothic-style structure, built by French missionaries in 1864, is evidence of Nagasaki's unique religious history and its role as a refuge for Japan's hidden Christians. Nagasaki's cuisine reflects its multicultural heritage. Don't miss the chance to try champon, a hearty noodle dish influenced by Chinese cuisine. It's like ramen in some ways, though the broth is different and there are fewer "rules." Really, it's all mixed up! Sweet tooths opt for Nagasaki castella, a sponge cake introduced by Portuguese traders. For a special dining experience, seek out shippoku ryori, a fusion cuisine that blends Japanese, Chinese and Western elements. Nestled on Kyushu's northeastern coast, Beppu has long been synonymous with Japan's onsen (hot spring) culture. It's a common stop (for very valid reasons) on many Kyushu tours. With more than 2,000 hot spring vents, this city is a haven for those seeking relaxation and rejuvenation. Beppu's most famous attractions are the Jigoku Meguri, or "Hells of Beppu." These eight spectacular hot springs are for viewing rather than bathing, each offering a unique visual spectacle. From the cobalt blue waters of Umi Jigoku (Sea Hell) to the milky white pools of Shiraike Jigoku (White Pond Hell), these natural wonders showcase the raw geothermal power beneath Beppu's surface. While the "hells" are for viewing, this whole area offers countless opportunities for bathing. Onsen and Kyushu are practically synonymous, after all. Traditional public baths like Takegawara Onsen, with its distinctive wooden exterior, provide an authentic local experience. For something truly unique, try a sand bath at Beppu Beach Sand Bath, where bathers are buried in naturally heated sand. While Beppu's onsen are set in and near a city, the hot springs destination of Yufuin is a whole other vibe. About an hour by car or train from Oita airport (north of Beppu) on your Kyushu tour, Yufuin is a classic onsen town of Japan. Here it's all about choosing the right lodging, usually in the form of a ryokan (Japanese inn). That's where you'll have most of

your onsen experiences, either in the inn's communal baths, or an onsen bath in the privacy of your room (some even offer balconies with baths). Speaking of privacy in your room, ryokan offer lavish meals, both dinner and breakfast, and room service is often standard. While the town does have independent restaurants and other onsen baths that can be enjoyed a la carte, the typical Japanese way is to choose a ryokan with everything included and spend much of your time here. Whether you're renting a car or getting around by train on your self-guided tour of Kyushu, a nice stop on the way between Beppu/Yufuin and Kumamoto is the Mount Aso national park area. Home to one of the world's largest caldera, the Aso region offers a variety of outdoor activities, from hiking along the caldera rim to horseback riding across the Kusasenri plain. The Nakadake Crater, with its steaming turquoise lake, gives a visceral reminder of the earth's geothermal power. In this same area is Kurokawa Onsen. You can combine this lovely onsen town with Yufuin on your Kyushu tour, or do a night here instead of Yufuin. Not sure which is right for your itinerary in Kyushu? Don't hesitate to ask, we're always happy to help! Travelers enjoy great eats here as well, of course, including the famous "tori-ten" fried chicken restaurants (unlike standard "karaage" Japanese fried chicken, tori-ten is tempura-style chicken. A must when visiting this part of Kyushu! Pro Tip: Check the volcanic activity levels before visiting Nakadake Crater, as access can be restricted during periods of heightened activity. Central Kyushu's Kumamoto prefecture gives travelers a mix of samurai history and natural wonders, anchored by its capital city of the same name. Kumamoto Castle, one of Japan's premier castles, is a lasting element of the region's samurai heritage. Although heavily damaged in the 2016 earthquake, ongoing restoration efforts have partially reopened the castle to visitors. The castle's massive stone walls and imposing keep offer insight into the architectural and military prowess of feudal Japan. Kumamoto as a prefecture decided to create a mascot to revive its image and civic pride. Known as Kumamon, this cute bear (like so much else in Japan that's "kawaii" cute) has gained fame inside and beyond its borders. A Kumamon souvenir, such as a stuffed animal, cap or t-shirt, makes a nice gift for those back at home. Sitting in the shadow of the active Sakurajima volcano, Kagoshima might be called the "Naples of the East" for its bay location and volcanic neighbor. But, is it really called that? And why do we call places the "blank" of the



east/west?, anyway? Point is, if you've seen Mount Vesuvius towering over the bay from Naples before, well, Kagoshima may or may not remind you of that. But this is a Kyushu tour, after all, so let's talk about Kagoshima. The city of Kagoshima itself, at the southern end of Kyushu, is lovely enough. And that's good, because that volcano has a habit of spewing off at random times, making travel to Sakurajima iffy on some days. No worries, at the very least, you'll enjoy your stay in Kagoshima. Kagoshima serves as an excellent base for exploring southern Kyushu and the nearby islands of Sakurajima and Yakushima. A short ferry ride from downtown Kagoshima brings you to Sakurajima, one of Japan's most active volcanoes. The Sakurajima Visitor Center provides comprehensive information about the volcano's history and current activity. Hiking trails around the volcano offer close-up views of the smoking crater and unique lava rock formations. As mentioned before, check the forecast and conditions for Kagoshima and Sakurajima, early and often. Ask around as well, both at your hotel and at the ferry terminal, about how things are going. You'd hate to ruin your Kyushu tour, after all, by getting stuck on the island and missing flight or train connections. This beautifully landscaped garden and former residence of the powerful Shimadzu clan offers stunning views of Sakurajima across the bay. The adjacent Shoko Shuseikan Museum showcases the industrial innovations introduced by the Shimadzu family, which played a crucial role in Japan's modernization. A short hydrofoil ride from Kagoshima port transports you to the mystical island of Yakushima, a UNESCO World Heritage site renowned for its ancient cedar forests and unique ecosystem. Hiking trails wind through moss-covered forests to magnificent waterfalls and thousand-year-old trees like the famous Jomon Sugi. Due to Yakushima's often rainy weather, come prepared with waterproof gear and allow some flexibility in your Kyushu tour schedule. No Kyushu tour would be right without indulging in the region's renowned onsen culture. While Beppu may be the most famous onsen destination, the entire island is dotted with hot spring resorts, each offering its own unique charm. Indeed, onsen in Kyushu play a pivotal both in the local culture as well as tourism here. Kurokawa Onsen: This picturesque hot spring town in Kumamoto Prefecture is known for its traditional atmosphere and open-air baths set against stunning natural backdrops. Yufuin Onsen: Located near Beppu, Yufuin offers a more laid-back onsen experience, with its hot springs

complemented by art galleries and boutique shops. Ibusuki Onsen: Famous for its unique sand baths, where bathers are buried in naturally heated volcanic sand. Unzen Onsen: Situated in Nagasaki Prefecture, this resort area is known for its sulfurous springs and scenic location amidst active geothermal vents. As discussed in our in-depth article on onsen hot spring life in Japan, be sure to follow onsen rules and etiquette. Also, travelers with tattoos may already know that body ink is forbidden in public baths in Japan; the ways around this are to either (a) cover up the tattoo with a skin-tone adhesive, if possible; (b) find an onsen where the tattoo rules are nonexistent or not enforced, or (c) book a ryokan with a private onsen in your room. Make sure you've got an onsen (or two or three) included on the itinerary for your Kyushu tour. Whether you have a week or just a few days, Kyushu offers a wealth of experiences. Here's a sample itinerary to help you start planning: Days 1-2: Explore Fukuoka, including a day trip to Dazaifu Days 3-4: Visit Nagasaki, focusing on its unique history and cultural fusion Day 5: Experience the onsen culture in Oita (Beppu or Yufuin) Day 6: Discover Kumamoto Castle and Mount Aso Days 7-8: Explore Kagoshima and take a day trip to Yakushima Remember, this is just a starting point. Tailor your journey to your interests, whether that's delving deeper into Kyushu's culinary scene, spending more time in nature, or exploring its rich cultural heritage. At Japan Travel Pros, one of our core services is Japan itinerary planning. Why not schedule your FREE initial consultation with us now, and find out how we can help put together memorable experiences for a Kyushu tour that will take your Japan trip to the next level?! Looking at how to get to Kyushu? Two primary options present themselves: the sleek efficiency of the shinkansen bullet train or the convenience of air travel. The shinkansen, Japan's world-renowned bullet train, offers excellent connections to and around Kyushu. Combined with local and regional rail on either end, train travel in Kyushu and throughout Japan is popular for good reason. From Tokyo, the shinkansen whisks passengers to Hakata Station in Fukuoka in approximately five hours. This journey, while longer than flying, provides unparalleled views of the Japanese countryside and coastline (you might even get a glimpse of Mt Fuji on the way ? pro tip, get a window on the right side on the train to Kyushu, or a window on the left side going to Tokyo. For those departing from Osaka, the trip is considerably shorter, taking just over two hours to reach

Fukuoka. The Sakura and Mizuho Shinkansen services offer slightly longer but equally comfortable alternatives. Perhaps you've been thinking about buying a Japan Rail Pass? If you plan to explore multiple regions, it is convenient and can pay off in some savings ? but not always. However, it's important to note that the Japan Rail Pass doesn't cover the fastest Nozomi or Mizuho trains, which would require a fare upgrade. Oftentimes, point-to-point tickets work out as a better option than the rail pass. For travelers prioritizing speed, flying presents an attractive option. Numerous daily flights connect Tokyo's Haneda and Narita airports with Fukuoka, Nagasaki, and Kagoshima with an average flight time of about two hours. From Osaka, flights to Kyushu's major cities are even shorter, typically lasting just over an hour. This option is particularly appealing for those with limited time or those planning to focus their travels on southern Kyushu. Even factoring in airport transfers and security procedures, which are remarkably efficient in Japan, flying can often be the right way to travel to/from Kyushu. Other times, the city-center to city-center convenience of the shinkansen can balance out the apparent time savings of flying, especially for routes such as Osaka-Fukuoka, Nagoya-Fukuoka or even Tokyo-Fukuoka (this one depends on where in Tokyo you're starting from + which Tokyo airport).. Kyushu, with its volcanic scenery, rich history, great food and warm hospitality, offers a journey through Japan that many visitors never experience. That's why we encourage our clients to add Kyushu to your Japan itineraries. As you plan your travels to this southern gem, remember that Kyushu's true magic often lies in its lesser-known corners: a family-run onsen tucked away in the mountains, a local festival in a small coastal town or a chance encounter with a craftsperson keeping ancient traditions alive. Allow yourself the time and flexibility to discover these hidden treasures, and you'll find that Kyushu has a way of making you feel at home in Japan ? and wanting to come back for more. [About Us](#) [Blog](#) [Get in Touch](#) [Terms & Privacy](#)

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## Oita, Japan: What To Do And Where To Go | CoolJapan

There are times when we travel that we just want to disconnect from the hustle and bustle of the city and spend a relaxing time somewhere more secluded. Oftentimes, we'd find ourselves in smaller towns where life feels slower, allowing us to appreciate life and experience a little more. If you're one of those wanting to escape city life for a bit, we've got the perfect destination for you: Oita Prefecture on Kyushu Island. The famous hot springs of Beppu. (Photo from: Kyushu Tourism Association) A coastal prefecture that boasts of its onsens (hot springs), history and delicious food, Oita is also known for the famous 'hells' of Beppu. Off the beaten path, Oita is a hidden gem waiting to be discovered. Here are some recommendations for your Oita adventure!

A post shared by Oita Pref Tourism Association (@tourismoita) A place where nature and architecture meet, the Takasu Suspension Bridge Park (Takasutsubashi Park) in Usa City is where you can find a 132.5-meter-long pedestrian slope bridge that connects the Kamihaita district to the ancient Takasu Kannon-do. This suspension bridge was built using the Kakezukuri architectural style, which makes use of both natural and man-made structures to keep the bridge balanced. Walking on the bridge is not for the faint-hearted though, as its entire length sits above the Yakkangawa River. But once you're on it, the nerves will fade and you'll be left with an awe-struck witnessing the beauty of nature around you. [View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by Oita Pref Tourism Association (@tourismoita) A post shared by Oita Pref Tourism Association (@tourismoita) Travel back in time and indulge in cuisine made for samurais in this well-known restaurant. Kiraku-an, located in Usuki City, has been preparing the special Honzen cuisine – one of the three basic Japanese cooking styles – since 1878. This type of cuisine was once served to the samurais of the city, including the Inaba feudal clan who ruled the area for over two centuries. The clan considers this cuisine as part of their samurai ceremonies. Kiraku-an offers various food selections for visitors to try, but their specialty? A blowfish course. You don't need to worry about safely eating blowfish, known locally as fugu, in Japan. Fugu handlers undergo rigorous training to ensure a safe culinary experience. [View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by Oita Pref Tourism Association

(@tourismoita) A post shared by Oita Pref Tourism Association (@tourismoita) Are you an animal lover? If you happen to be one, you'll enjoy this experience in Oita. In Sakai City, there is a place they call Cat Island, and it is what its name implies. Officially known as Fukushima, Cat Island is a place where the cat population is more than that of humans! There is even a local inn that allows you to stay overnight on the island and experience various activities including miso-making and cat tours. Beyond its charming cat community, Fukushima also offers stunning coral reefs, perfect for snorkelling in shallow waters. The vibrant blue hues and surrounding greens make this a must-visit when exploring the region. View this post on Instagram

A post shared by ????????

(@opamjp) A post shared by ???????? (@opamjp) The Oita Prefectural Art Museum (OPAM) is filled with artworks made throughout the centuries. Over 5,000 pieces of art are displayed in the museum, preserved and taken care of like treasures, signifying the rich history of the region. Works from artists such as Tanomura Chikuden (1777-1835), Fukuda Heihachiro (1892-1974) and Yoshimura Masunobu (1932-2011) fill the halls of OPAM. These art pieces are housed in the building ? inspired by bamboo weaving, which is a local craft in the region ? designed by world-renowned Japanese architect Shigeru Ban. View this post on Instagram

A post shared by Oita Pref Tourism

Association (@tourismoita) A post shared by Oita Pref Tourism Association (@tourismoita) Oita Prefecture is home to the Beppu hells, a collection of several differently-coloured onsens (hot springs) located around Beppu City. Located in Beppu's Kannawa and Kamegawa regions, these hot springs ? known as Jigoku ? expel steam, hot mud and gas, earning their name ?hells? due to their unsettling nature for people in ancient times. While visitors cannot bathe in these hot springs ? as temperatures can reach up to 99 degrees Celsius ? you can still explore and see the Seven Hells of Beppu through a tour. The Jigoku Meguri, a tour bus, will take you to all seven onsens. The entrance fee to the Seven Hells of Beppu costs JPY2,200 for adults and JPY1,000 for children. You can also visit each hot spring individually for JPY400 each. Note that only Japanese guides are available on the aforementioned tours. However, several operators offer English tours at various prices. Which activity excites you the most?



# Stunning Hidden Gems to Discover in Japan Off the Beaten Path

As tourism has been absolutely booming lately along the country's 'Golden Route,' it's easy to want to avoid crowds and explore Japan off the beaten path! While planning a Japan trip may seem a bit intimidating, I can empathise that it's not always an easy task to find these lesser-known destinations in Japan. How do you know where to start? Have no fear my newfound friend. Over the past decade, I've done my fair share of research and travelling off the beaten path in Japan (as well as the well-trodden areas) as this is part of being an invisible tourist. I'm all about seeing the best of a country while simultaneously doing what I can to avoid contributing to overtourism issues. If you're looking to tailor your very own Japan off the beaten track itinerary, this handy guide to spots often overlooked by foreign visitors will provide you with some inspiration for your own adventure. Here you'll find many of the destinations I've visited in person, as well as some others that are on my Japan bucket list. Interested in discovering how to not look like a tourist by visiting the Japan less travelled and some gorgeous hidden gems? Then read on for more!

**BY REGION** This post contains affiliate links, at no extra cost to you. I may receive a small commission if you click through and make a purchase. Sure, most people visiting Japan for the first time want to see cities such as Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka and Hiroshima along the Golden Route. These are cities Japan is famous for, and with good reason. But there are literally so many lesser-known and secret places in Japan that many tourists seem to miss during their whirlwind visit. And I don't want that for you! As I'm pretty much addicted to all things Japan, I'm forever looking for new destinations and planning my future visits there. This guide explores a range of places I've personally visited and plan to someday including small towns in Japan, the best nature in Japan, things to do at each destination and much more categorised by region. I've even found some alternatives to popular destinations so keep an eye out for my tips along the way.

**NOTE:** Because some of these locations are so unspoilt and not used to large tourist numbers, please be mindful of the locals and the environment during your time off the beaten track in Japan. There have been some damaging issues caused by overtourism in Japan in recent years. We can all do our part in being more responsible tourists across the globe.

No one likes an annoying tourist so remember to be invisible? to keep these spots pristine for the benefit of everyone! With that said, are you ready to venture off Japan's Golden Route? Let's begin by starting in the south in Okinawa and working up north towards Hokkaido to make things easy. Which locations will you choose to add to your Japan trip? Kyushu is a destination I highly recommend hiring a car to really reach the offbeat spots and allow for flexibility. Read my detailed guide for everything you need to know when driving in Japan as a tourist for more. We all know Japan is synonymous with snow-capped mountains and amazing autumn foliage. But did you know there's a place to escape with sandy beaches and turquoise waters that could be mistaken for Hawaii? Complete with coral bays, Okinawa is an ideal destination for snorkelling and diving. As the crow flies, the laid-back Islands of Okinawa (Okinawa Shoto ????) are situated just over 100 kilometres south-west of Japan's mainland. The isolated location of the islands and tropical climate means it's the perfect destination to visit in Japan off the beaten track. Once you've seen the stunning landscape and learnt more about local life there, it's easy to see why this cluster of seventeen isles are home to the oldest centenarians (and supercentenarians) in the world! As Japan's third-largest island, Kyushu ?? is bursting with beauty and historical gems to uncover. Its largest city of Fukuoka is actually closer to Seoul (South Korea) than it is to Tokyo, which resulted in Fukuoka's port playing a vital role in trade to Asia and beyond throughout the centuries. Takachiho Gorge is an incredibly stunning beauty and an absolute highlight during one of my Japan trips (read my Takachiho Gorge day trip itinerary for details). Over millennia the Gokase River has carved its way through towering volcanic basalt to create a scene that could easily be mistaken for Iceland! Boasting incredible natural scenery from mountainous landscapes to sub-tropical islands in Kagoshima, stunning architecture of Kumamoto Castle and the dark past of port city Nagasaki, Kyushu holds numerous rewards for those who dare to venture off the beaten path in Japan. TIP: Read my full 7 days in Kyushu itinerary (with option to extend to 10 days) which covers most of the places listed below. Additionally, my 2 Days in Nagasaki Itinerary: City of Million Dollar Views details of how to spend your time there, step back in time to Fukuoka's hidden canal city on a Yanagawa day trip, plus my review of visiting Huis Ten Bosch and my itinerary for spending one day in Arita,

the birthplace of Japanese porcelain! The Chugoku region is a great area to stay the night to break up your journey between Osaka and Hiroshima. This region features some of my favourite Japan hidden gems that I'm sure you'll love too. TIP: Overlooking the Sea of Japan towards South Korea, the rugged coastline is dotted with stunning cities that are completely overlooked by foreign visitors. These include Izumo, Matsue and Tottori. If you want to completely avoid crowds during your visit, my 10 days in Japan travel itinerary covers these locations and more! Located only a 15 minute train ride away from Okayama city, Kurashiki ?? can be described as another "Venice of Japan" often overlooked by foreign tourists. If you're a huge lover of art and culture, Kurashiki is a must to add to your Japan itinerary. Although it's a small town, Kurashiki was the birthplace of denim in Japan and home to the very first museum dedicated to Western art. Unexpectedly, the Ohara Museum of Art displays huge names such as Monet, Picasso and Pollock. With its willow-lined canals and traditional boats, I adore this almost secret place in Japan! Here are a small selection of things to do, for even more check my Kurashiki travel guide: Not one to be found in guidebooks, for an arty seaside town with lengthy history, cliffside temples and known for cats, gorgeous Onomichi ???? is for you! It's also a popular starting point with locals for the Shimanami Kaido cycling route. My favourite part of my time in Onomichi was riding the Mountain Ropeway to take in stunning views over the Seto Inland Sea from the beautiful Senko-ji Temple. The Daruma ema are so cool! TIP: Read my full one day in Onomichi itinerary for all the details about visiting this overlooked port town between Kyoto and Hiroshima! Most know Kyoto was Japan's capital for 1,000 years, some know Nara was the capital prior to that? But did you know Izumo ?? was considered the country's prehistoric capital? Steeped in mythology and finds dating back to the Bronze Age, Izumo is believed to be the place where Japan's kami (deities in Shinto religion) have annually gathered on the tenth month of the Lunar calendar since prehistoric times. With Japan's most ancient shrine, Izumo Taisha Grand Shrine at the forefront, the city is also home to some of the best spots to see the sunset in the country. History lovers should certainly add Izumo to their itinerary! Japanese garden lovers, you need to add the "City of Water" to your list! Matsue ?? is often overlooked but packs a punch in the flora-sphere. The city itself is picturesque, lined with canals and Edo Period

buildings in areas. Matsue Castle is one of the 12 originals remaining in Japan. While Kanazawa is known for Kenrokuen Garden, I'd have to say Yushien Garden here is even more so impressive! During Golden Week (first week of May annually), its landscaped pond is filled with thousands of harvested peony blooms, creating a striking sight. You can see all kinds of Japanese flowers and landscapes here, it's truly worth the trip. The Adachi Museum of Art is another must-see. The garden's unmatched beauty, ambience and maintenance means it has been judged the Finest Garden in Japan consecutively since 2003 by Sukiya Living Magazine. It's easy to see why when you noticed not one single leaf is out of place here! You would be forgiven for thinking the expansive Tottori Sand Dunes were right out of the Middle East, but luckily you don't have to go that far. During the winter months, the Tottori Sand Dunes, stretching 16 kilometres along the Sea of Japan, can be covered in snow which makes for an unusual sight. The wavy dunes are the prefecture's top attraction, dating back over 100,000 years and some as tall as 50 metres high. Recently, the dunes have begun to attract more foreign tourists. Despite 'sand graffiti' being illegal here for over a decade, authorities are targeting visitors who etch their names into the sand for a photo. Please be respectful of this area's history and don't be THAT tourist. This area of the country is considered one of Japan's most beautiful. The main island of Shikoku overlooks a cluster of isles prominent on the horizon of the Seto Inland Sea. Here, destinations such as Takamatsu, Naoshima Island and Iya Valley are perfect for getting off the beaten track in Japan. The port town of Takamatsu is a rising star in the Japan off the beaten path category. Prior to the creation of the Seto Ohashi Bridge that stretches from Kagawa prefecture to Okayama prefecture on the mainland, Takamatsu used to be the main entry point to Shikoku. Just off the coast of Takamatsu is Megijima Island (not to be confused with Miyajima Island, although pictures do remind me of Miyajima a little). In Japanese folklore, Megijima Island is also known as 'Ogre Island' in the popular regional tale of Momotaro, the 'Peach Boy,' as mentioned earlier in Kurashiki. Perhaps one of Japan's most visited areas by international visitors, the Kansai region has plenty of lesser-travelled locations to discover. Beyond the large cities of Osaka, Nara, Kyoto, Kobe and Himeji, there are a selection of hidden gems to explore. You don't need to wander far off the beaten path in Japan to discover alternatives to

popular destinations! TIP: My detailed guide to day trips from Osaka will help you explore more of the Kansai region. As mentioned to my guide to day trips from Osaka, Japan's largest freshwater body Lake Biwa ??? almost brushes the Shiga border of neighbouring Kyoto and is a lovely alternative to popular Miyajima (Itsukushima) Island. A similar Grand Torii gate floats on the lake's surface, creating an almost identical image to its more famous sibling found in the country's south. Hikone Castle is also worth a visit. Within Wakayama prefecture ????, the Kii Peninsula area is recognised for its lush forests and ancient pilgrimage routes. Known as the Kumano Kodo, an ancient network of trails and shrines trace across the peninsula and have attracted pilgrims from as far as Kyoto and Osaka for over 1,000 years. Here, Mt Koya (affectionately known as Koyasan) is the main attraction and headquarters of Shingon Buddhism. This region of Japan is known for its alpine scenery, preserved old towns, snow monkeys and skiing. Many of the following locations feature heavily in my itinerary for spending 3 weeks in Japan. Encapsulating all the different facets of Japan that has made some locations elsewhere incredibly popular, the Izu Peninsula ??? is completely overlooked by most foreign tourists who zip right past in on bullet trains. Discover these uncrowded locations with some of the best views in Japan! My guide to creating an Izu Peninsula itinerary covers the following and more in detail, as well as options for getting around without a car: One of my absolute favourite hidden gems in Japan, Gujo Hachiman ??? is known as Japan's 'Water City,' although I fondly call it 'Kyoto Without The Crowds.' With temple gardens to rival Kyoto, UNESCO World Heritage preserved streets and white 'Castle in the Sky' perched on a hillside overlooking an emerald valley, Gujo Hachiman really is a must-see. Producing 50% of Japan's sampuru (replica food), it's so much fun to hunt for unique Japanese souvenirs here! My full Gujo Hachiman day trip itinerary covers the following and more in detail, as well as how to get there from Nagoya: If you're planning to be at one with nature in Japan, the alpine region of Nagano ?? will be perfect for you. This is where you'll find each of Japan's 30 highest peaks (except Mt Fuji) so it's no surprise the area is synonymous for snowy adventures. Contrary to popular belief, the cheeky snow monkeys of Jigokudani Monkey Park are there year-round? even in summer! Visiting during the warmer months definitely has its perks (hint: fluffy snow monkey babies

and fewer tourists). Read my 2 days in Nagano itinerary and guide to visiting Jigokudani Monkey Park in summer for details, and also consider: If you've read this far, I'm guessing you're seeking more places to go in Japan off the beaten path. Lucky for you we're only halfway through and I have more spots up my sleeve to share! Incredible Matsumoto ?? is one such place. Matsumoto Castle (Matsumoto-jo) is one of four castles listed as National Treasures of Japan. Known colloquially as the 'Black Crow' this must-see structure is actually Japan's oldest original wooden castle, dating back to 1594! The steep 60° angle of the staircases inside caused my head to spin and made me wonder how ninjas actually managed to hurl themselves up and down them. TIP: If you're petite like me (5'2"), you may find your legs not long enough to descend the old wooden stairs without shuffling down on your bottom! My full Matsumoto day trip itinerary covers the following and more in detail, as well as how to get there: According to statistics, only 6% of tourists to Japan visit Takayama ??, but I believe it is another perfect Kyoto alternative! I absolutely LOVE it and can't wait to return. In my opinion, Takayama is a delightful Japan off the beaten path destination, its enchanting townhouse-lined streets full of pleasant surprises such as Hida beef eateries, places to sample ALL the sake and paths to explore hidden temples. TIP: Some breweries allow visitors to sample a dozen shots of sake for a few hundred yen. Each sake varies in flavour, aroma and amount the rice is polished. This system is based on goodwill so please don't be that annoying tourist who goes overboard with the drinks and ruins this experience for everyone. While many tourists day trip to Shirakawa-go ??? from Takayama, I don't recommend this as the UNESCO site is falling victim to overtourism. Tourists have been known to wait in line for two hours to get photos of the town from an elevated vantage point! If you're intrigued by the idea of Shirakawa-go without the crowds, I've written about my visit to Hida No Sato Folk Village, the perfect alternative complete with beautiful scenery and grasshatched farmhouses. TIP: Nearby Gero Onsen is a must if you want to literally soak up the local culture in a traditional Japanese hot spring town, too! Read my detailed itinerary to Gero Onsen here. Have you heard of the 'Unseen side of Mt Fuji'? Once the main gateway to climbing Mt Fuji's summit by pilgrims from Japan's ancient capital, Kyoto, Fujinomiya ??? is now often overlooked by foreign visitors to Japan. And it

shouldn't be! In the middle of Tokyo and Kyoto, Fujinomiya can be reached by bullet train and is home to numerous UNESCO World Heritage sites, stunning natural scenery, delicious local specialties, a community feel and much more. There are so many things to do in Fujinomiya over a weekend, and the best part is you can enjoy some of the best Mt Fuji views in the entire country WITHOUT the crowds. I mean, just look at the sunrise view from my hotel room below! Have you ever wondered what it would be like to walk in the footsteps of samurais? Have a peek in their homes and see the beauty they surrounded themselves with? You'll be able to in Kanazawa ??! Find out exactly how with my 2 day Kanazawa itinerary. Dubbed as "Little Kyoto", Kanazawa shines with traditional pride in its well-preserved Nagamachi district. Aged brown townhouses line the streets of Japan's other active geisha city after Kyoto. If you're incredibly lucky you may be able to spot one during your visit or even dress up as one yourself. If not, it's easy to imagine these ladies gracing the streets and samurais going about their daily lives. One of Japan's top gardens, Kenroku-en is here in Kanazawa. I thoroughly enjoyed strolling around these grounds with such different varieties of landscapes around every corner! Every spot is a little photo opportunity with ponds, bridges, cherry blossoms, mosses, autumn colours? Stunning in every season. Kenroku-en used to be part of Kanazawa Castle's outer gardens and Japan's oldest water fountain is located inside. TIP: Kanazawa is also famed for its gold leaf. It's said the 20 tonnes of gold leaf used to cover Kinkaku-ji in Kyoto came from this city. Even the Kanji name for Kanazawa has the symbol for gold in it (!)! Why not pick up a small souvenir featuring gold leaf during your trip? Niigata ??? is known for its stunning fall foliage, making it a nice alternative to popular Nikko. Off the coast of Niigata lies Sado Island with a fascinating history. Once used as an island for political exiles, today you can visit the former gold mines, enjoy the tranquil scenery of Senkaku Bay, or learn more about the once-endangered toki bird at Toki Forest Park. As the producer of some of the country's finest sake (sa-keh), you can't leave Niigata without trying some! As we reach the northernmost point of Japan's main island of Honshu, we hit the lovely uncharted area of Aomori. Aomori city ?? would be an ideal place to escape the crowds of international visitors to Kyoto, Nara and Osaka if you're visiting towards the end of April during the cherry blossom season! Iconic Hirosaki Castle is

surrounded by over 50 varieties of cherry blossoms, framing the structure in a flurry of delicate pink hues. Doesn't paddling a small boat beneath in the moat beneath these blossoms sound dreamy? The perfect Japan off the beaten path experience. You'll also be treated to a seemingly endless street of cherry trees along the 'World's Longest Cherry-Lined Road', boasting 6,500 cherry trees and stretching for 20 kilometres! An incredible of snow-capped Mt Iwaki rewards visitors who stroll along this southern road during spring. I'm yet to visit Japan's second-largest island, but there are plenty of reasons why I want to! As well as the famed Sapporo Snow Festival, mountainous Hokkaido ??? seems to be a hiker's paradise with an assortment of wildlife to be spotted throughout the region. Brown bears and deer forage through the lush wilderness while beautiful red-crowned cranes dance in the snow to attract a mate. Hokkaido is home to six national parks than span from the forests to the sea, the largest being Daisetsuzan National Park. With so much variety in scenery, Hokkaido has delightful treasures to be found around every corner. It could be argued that the stunning areas of Nikko and Hakone should be included in this guide, but I decided against it. Even though Nikko and Hakone are technically off the beaten path, they still manage to be quite popular spots for fall foliage and crowds. Exactly what we are trying to avoid! What did you think of these lesser-known Japan tourist attractions? I wanted to share some cities along Japan's 'New Golden Route' as the original Golden Route is becoming overworn with tourist love. Plus I'm a big believer that it's always rewarding stepping outside your comfort zone. There is so much stunning natural beauty, rich history and beautiful culture to be found in all regions of Japan, not just the most popular tourist spots. Now you know where to head in Japan off the beaten path with my comprehensive guide, what's stopping you from adding a few of these locations to your trip? Let me know in the comments below! If you enjoyed this article, I've written about many more off the beaten path destinations and hidden gems on my Japan travel blog to inspire you and help with your Japan trip planning, so go take a look. Want to learn my strategies for how to 'blend in' anywhere around the globe? Find out by reading my #1 Amazon New Release Book! If you found this helpful please share it with your friends or save it for later reference. I'd also love if you could join me on Facebook, my Japan Off The Beaten Path Travel Community on Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram



and TikTok for more Japan inspiration! Until next time, Like it? Pin it! ? This guide to destinations in Japan off the beaten path contains some affiliate links, at no extra cost to you. I may earn a small commission if you decide to make a purchase and if you do, thanks for your support! This helps with the costs of running my blog so I can keep my content free for you. As always, I only recommend a product or service that I genuinely love and use myself! Australian-based Alyse is founder of The Invisible Tourist, the #1 travel blog encouraging visitors to better "blend in" abroad. Alyse's passionate advice about cultural, historical & responsible travel has been especially popular with visitors to Japan, helping millions of tourists since 2017. Her first book details strategies for more enriching travel experiences without contributing to overtourism, and became a #1 Amazon New Release in two categories including Japan Travel. Alyse's unique approach to travelling has resulted in her work being featured on Japanese TV, in tourism textbooks, and has been shared by numerous tourism organisations. I loved this sadly my plan is to visit Tohoku and you don't have a lot of landscapes there. I'm sorry, Cookie!

I haven't been to the Tohoku region as yet so my knowledge is quite limited unfortunately.

But I'll get there someday and will update my findings here for sure! Hello Alyse, What a great website! We are traveling in August with our 3 teenagers to Japan for 26 days. I still have to plan the whole trip so some tips would be welcome. We love nature, culture and the Japanese lifestyle. We like to travel off the beaten tracks.

I doubt between public transport or renting a car or a combination of the two. Further more it's not the best season to visit all regions. Would you have a recommendation for us on transport , regions for that period? Hi Inge, thanks for reading!

Most of the places in this guide are ideal to reach with public transport. The exception to this is places in Kyushu not on the train line and the Japanese Alps areas (Gujo Hachiman, Takayama, Nagano) where it can be ideal to hire a car to save travel time.

I'd recommend looking at the places you wish to visit in Kyushu and the Alps, and compare the travel times between each by car and train. The car will be more convenient in those areas, and the bullet trains for almost everything else.

I hope that helps and you have an amazing time in Japan! Wow what a list, thank you for all work you've done on this blog. I want to visit all the places here ?? It's going to be really hard to narrow down our 26 days itinerary, I really love to go off the beaten track, my husband wants to visit the common places to go Tokyo ? Kyoto ? Mt Fuji and the WW2 bomb site ? I have of planning thinking of how we can see some of the above you have mentioned Thanks, BluLyn!

I hope you can narrow down a few places to add to your trip ? I'm new to your page and wanted to thank you for the incredibly detailed information. I'm going Japan for 3 weeks in October and we're keen to discover the lesser visited spots and minimise our footprint so this article especially has been super helpful. I really like the sound of Kurashiki and the 'unseen' side of Fujisan. We're hoping to do a multi-day hike of the Kumano Kodo. Thank you again and I look forward to browsing more of your articles. Thank you for your kind comments, Joya! I'm so happy to have you here, thank you for following along ?

Kurashiki is an absolutely joy to visit, and Fujinomiya is a perfect place to see some of the country's best views of Mt Fuji without the crowds.

I hope you have a wonderful time in Japan! Hey, hope you are well.

We are looking at a short 7 day trip end of June (land and depart Osaka). We are all for the unknown and non tourist options. We thinking of exploring Osaka for 3 days ? what area would you recommend for a 4 day road trip? Chugoku area or Kyushu or Honshu? Hi Colin,

Osaka is quite touristy these days, so if you are looking for the unknown and non-tourist options there, my Osaka itinerary covers a few spots (as well as the popular places).

But if you would rather avoid the big city vibes altogether in a week, I definitely recommend Kyushu or Chubu Regions instead of Chugoku.

Honshu is the largest and main island of Japan, made up of Tokohu, Kanto, Chubu, Kansai and Chugoku Regions.

Chubu is much less explored by foreign tourists compared to Chugoku. I hope that helps! Great post? I'm heading to Kanazawa and then Kyushu in May. I feel like Kagoshima should be on this list. Cheers! I absolutely agree about Kagoshima, gt! Hoping I can make it there myself someday ?

Enjoy your trip and enjoy all that wagyu for me! Thank you so much for your wonderful and thoughtful article. My 12 year old son and I are considering a trip in Mid-March. Would you be willing to share what your itinerary would be with 10 days? It will be his first trip and my second, I haven't been since 2008. Thanks again!! Carlisle Thanks for your kind words, Carlisle!

How exciting you're able to head back again after so long and take your son along too.

An itinerary would depend on your interests and things you and your son would like to see.

Are you hoping to see some kind of spring blossoms, what things would your son like to experience?

Do you like the traditional side of things, more modern aspects, or both? What kinds of foods would you like to try?

Are there any destinations from this article you'd like to include?

To help get you started, my article on Japan cultural experiences should be able to help you out.

The answer is different for everyone, so feel free to tell me a few interests and we can go from there ?

Thanks for your comment! Just wanted to say how valuable I am finding your advice and blog as I organise a 3 week trip to Japan in April/May 2023. Being a humble and quiet tourist is my goal and I like the way you think about things and write. Thanks for your unique perspective ? very helpful.

That is so kind of you to say, thank you Kim!

Comments such as yours from like-minded travellers mean so much ?

I hope you have a wonderful time in Japan and are able to chase some cherry blossoms! Saved for my next trip to Japan! I LOVED Matsumoto (the castle was wonderful, and the town had the most interesting shops), Kanazawa (so much to do, and my favorite train station in all of Japan) and Naoshima (where I enjoyed the art and stayed overnight, sampling the beaches and the onsen and watching children taiko drumming in the temple). I wish I'd had more time in Takayama, but only enough to do the Alpine Route. I'm so happy to hear you've saved this for your next Japan trip, Alli!

Thank you so much for your comment and I hope you get to spend some more time in the Alps once you're able to revisit ? Thanks so much much for your post. Japan is my favourite country to travel

to, finding lots of inspiration for my fourth trip. Definitely better to get off the beaten path for sure!

I'm so glad to hear this post inspired you, Mary! Wow your fourth trip sounds very exciting ? happy planning and thanks so much for your comment ? Thank you, your article is very good! Thanks very much, so glad yo think so ? Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked \*

Comment \* Name \* Email \* Dedicated to travellers with a mid-range budget, my blog explores responsible ways we can improve tourism for locals and ourselves by ?blending in.? With over 15 years of globetrotting experience, my personal travel guides & itineraries will help you avoid crowds whilst giving back to local communities. If you'd like to make the most of your next adventure, learn how you can ?be invisible? here! © Copyright 2017-2024 The Invisible Tourist. All rights reserved.

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## KYOTO & OITA Food and Onsen Culture | ANA

Discover Japan's regional dishes while relaxing in the country's many onsen (hot springs).

We'll take you past the usual tourist spots, from a lesser known part of Kyoto to the hidden gem of Oita Prefecture,

each of which can be explored in a short two- or three-day getaway. From Tokyo to Kyoto (From 65 mins~) Narita International Airport /Haneda Airport From Tokyo to Oita (95 mins) Haneda Airport Oita Airport via Airport Bus (45 mins) to Beppu City (Beppu Kitahama Bus Stop)

Kyoto is known as the origin of green tea in Japan. If you'd like to experience the country's tea culture at a deeper level, visit the hilly tea plantations of Wazuka Town and try tea leaf harvesting. Here you can also enjoy a variety of dishes prepared using green tea, including ramen and ice cream. Green tea is not the only thing that originated in Kyoto. In the town of Yawata, next to a beautiful Japanese garden with century-old tea houses, you can sample Japan's square bento (a traditional meal box) from Kitcho, the restaurant that invented it. If you look at a map of the Kyoto Prefecture, you'll be surprised to see that it stretches all the way north to the Sea of Japan. This is an area that is often overlooked by tourists who stick to the overcrowded city. Here you'll find the small fishing village of Ine. With its charming, old-fashioned townscape and the row of boat houses that line the coast, Ine will take you on a journey into the simple way of life of the local fishermen. You can try the freshly caught fish or the sake from the local brewery, and even stay at one of the boat houses, as some were converted into lodgings. In this area is also Kyotango City, where you can sample an old sushi recipe called bara sushi. Made by pressing rice and layers of other ingredients in a wooden container, this dish was once prepared during special celebrations. Although not widely known, Kyoto is also home to several hot spring resorts. Head to Amanohashidate, one of Japan's most scenic spots, for onsen baths with a beautiful view of the sea. For mountain fans, the mountain hot spring resort of Yunohana Onsen is a relaxing place hidden away among beautiful nature. It is said that warriors used to come to this hot spring to heal their battle injuries. Located on the eastern coast of Kyushu Island, Oita is known by Japanese people as

the hot spring prefecture?. The city of Beppu is one of Japan's most scenic and famous hot spring resorts in Japan. All kinds of spas can be found here, from hot baths to steam baths and sand baths. Visit the seven "hells", a spectacular set of hot springs that include a blood-red pool and a beautiful blue pool. Also be sure to catch a view of the city with its characteristic clouds of steam. In areas like Beppu City's Kannawa Onsen, you can enjoy a retro townscape and try the jigoku mushi, stone steaming vats where you can cook food with steam coming from the hot springs. Nagayu Onsen in Taketa City offers carbonated baths such as Ramune Onsen, named after a popular soda drink. Oita offers many delicious local dishes. Toriten, or chicken tempura, is a staple along with karaage fried chicken and tori meshi (chicken rice). The market of Saiki sells fresh fish, local food and sushi that people can eat right on the spot. A popular seasoning here is goma dashi, made from fish paste, ground sesame and soy sauce. It is used to prepare the town's signature dish, goma dashi udon. Another regional specialty of Oita is dango jiru, a miso soup packed with seasonal vegetables that contains thick and flat wheat noodles. The same noodles are also used in a dessert called yaseuma, where they are sprinkled with kinako and sugar. Oita might be famous for its hot springs, but few know that it also offers great nature escapes. The beautiful Kuju Mountain Range is home to the Tadewara Wetlands, a dreamy landscape that you can traverse on wooden boardwalks. The hot springs here are isolated and blissfully immersed in nature. If you visit the area, be sure you try Bungo-gyu, Oita's own brand of beef with a juicy meat that melts in your mouth. [Opens in a new window.](#) In the case of an external site, it may or may not meet accessibility guidelines. [Close](#) [Book a Flight](#)

# 5 Must-visit Hidden Gems Along the Southern West JR Lines From Hyogo to Kyushu

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for more information. My Favorites [\\${v.desc | trunc\(25\)}](#) [\\${v.desc | trunc\(25\)}](#) Use the Share your travel photos with us by hashtagging your images with #visitjapanjp Japan's JR train network is one of the most respected in the world for a multitude of reasons! Coming from a country like Malaysia that's still developing its network, the efficiency, cleanliness and punctuality of Japanese trains are a joy to experience every time, alongside attractions like themed trains that offer unique experiences not found anywhere else. In addition, there are also hidden gems scattered throughout Japan's JR lines that are just waiting to be discovered. All aboard the JR train. Photo Credit: JR-WEST In this article, we'll explore five amazing destinations along the JR Lines that run throughout Hyogo to Kyushu. Add one of these destinations to your itinerary, or maybe plan your own trip down the Southern West JR Line for an unforgettable adventure?but be sure that any of these destinations would be the highlight of your trip! Himeji Castle. Photo Credit: Himeji City The first thing you see when you step out of the Central exit of the Himeji JR Station are the majestic rooftops of Himeji Castle, one of Japan's national treasures and a World Heritage site. The almost 700-year-old castle's origins date back to the 14th century, when Akamatsu Norimura, a samurai of the Akamatsu clan, built a fort atop Himeyama Hill. It was dismantled in 1346 to make way for Himeyama Castle. The castle has since been restored and expanded several times before the Himeji Castle we can see today was established in 1617, after the end of the turbulent Sengoku Period. The koi pond in Koko-en Garden. Photo Credit: Himeji City Surrounding the castle itself is yet another marvel?K?ko-en Garden. Built in 1992 to celebrate Himeji City's 100th anniversary, the

garden contains nine separate walled gardens designed in various styles of the Edo Period. This includes a pond with a waterfall and a tea garden where visitors can enjoy green tea in a tea ceremony house for an additional fee. Restaurant GONTA in Himeji City is just a 20-minute walk from Himeji Castle itself and serves halal wagyu certified by the Japan Halal Foundation and other local dishes including their wagyu beef steak don. Do note in your plans that it's closed every Sunday. The restaurant is also close to the Harima Cycle Station, which houses Himeji's only Muslim prayer space! Himeji Castle (Website)

68 Honmachi, Himeji City, Hyogo Prefecture 670-0012

Access: From JR Himeji Station, walk 15 to 20 minutes to Himeji Castle. Restaurant GONTA (Website)

193, Shiomachi, Himeji City, Hyogo Prefecture, 670-0904

Access: From JR Himeji Station, walk for about 10 minutes to reach Restaurant GONTA. Ritsurin Park. Photo Credit: Kagawa Prefecture Tourism Association A quick transfer off the JR Sanyo Shinkansen from Tokyo to Okayama to the JR Marine Liner rapid train to Takamatsu brings you to the home of Ritsurin Park. Often called one of the most beautiful gardens in Japan, the park was built by the local feudal lords during the early Edo Period and features 6 ponds, hills, trees and beautiful pavilions. Many of the pine trees in the park are a testament to that legacy. The park's ancient pines are maintained by skilled gardeners, and can be viewed on a short boat ride. The park is divided into the north and south gardens, with the north garden undergoing renovations upon becoming a public park in 1875. The park is also home to a folk museum and some shops. Ritsurin Park in autumn. Photo Credit: Kagawa Prefecture Tourism Association Those looking to experience a taste of high-class Japanese culture during the feudal area can visit the Kikugetsu-tei teahouse in the southwest part of the gardens, which is open to visitors. For a small fee, you can enter and enjoy tea on its verandas. The park is also in close vicinity to several guesthouses for those looking to take in the atmosphere on their visit. Park operation hours change every month, so be sure to check the official website before making plans to visit! Once you're done taking in the sights, a 20-minute ride by car to the seaside brings you to "by age 18" in Takamatsu City. Specializing in



halal and gluten-free Sanuki udon, the restaurant features lunch and dinner courses and hosts a design shop filled with creatively designed products from all over the world curated by the restaurant's founders. Be sure to make your reservation two days in advance to allow the restaurant to curate a halal menu. More information is available on the restaurant's website.

Ritsurin Park (Website)

1-20-16 Ritsurin-cho, Takamatsu City, Kagawa Prefecture 760-0073

Access: From JR Takamatsu Station, take the Kotoden Bus heading to Ritsurin Koen-mae for 18 minutes. From there, walk about three minutes to reach Ritsurin Park. ?by age 18? (Website)

103-8 Murecho Omachi, Takamatsu City, Kagawa Prefecture 761-0122

Access: From JR Takamatsu Station, board a train on the Kotoku Line for 27 minutes until JR Sanuki-Mure Station. The restaurant is a 5-minute taxi ride away. Shimanami Kaido. A ride on the Sanyo Shinkansen bound for Shin-Onomichi reveals a 60-kilometer long toll road that connects Japan's main island of Honshu (Onomichi City, Hiroshima Prefecture) to the island of Shikoku (Imabari City, Ehime Prefecture) ? one of the most scenic journeys imaginable as it passes over six small islands along the way. There are buses across the toll road as well as ferries to cross the sea, but the avid explorer will be intrigued by the option of traversing on foot or by bicycle as there are 7 bridges and 6 small islands connecting Honshu's Onomichi to Shikoku's Imabari. The scenic Loop 1 on the Shimanami Kaido cycling route. The 70km journey across Shimanami Kaido can be crossed in a single day by bicycle, but you can opt to send your luggage ahead via the takkyubin delivery service and take your time exploring the islands of Mukaishima, Innoshima, Ikuchijima, Omishima, Hakatajima and Oshima, which feature plenty of guesthouses along the way. On Miyakubo Island just off the coast of Imabari is seafood restaurant Noshima Suigun. The restaurant, located just 11 minutes' drive from the Shimanami Kaido exit on the island, specializes in Tai meshi, which sees sea bream sashimi dipped in a special sauce and mixed with condiments and eaten over rice and offers DIY seafood barbecues on a deck overlooking the sea. Those intending to visit can call ahead for the restaurant to prepare a halal menu and non-alcoholic and vegan soy sauce at +81 0897-86-3323. Shimanami Kaido (Website)

Onomichi Station, 1-1 Higashigosho-cho, Onomichi City, Hiroshima Prefecture 722-0036

Access: From JR Shin Osaka Station, take the Sanyo Shinkansen to JR Fukuyama Station, followed by a 20-minute ride on the Sanyo Main Line to JR Onomichi Station. Noshima Suigun (Website)

1293-2 Miyakubo, Miyakubo-cho, Imabari City, Ehime Prefecture 794-2203

Access: From the Shimanami Kaido Oshima-Kita Interchange, head northeast for 2.7km by car towards the Noshima Ferry Terminal. The Kobato Blue Pond. Photo Credit: Kyushu Tourism

Organization A ride on the JR Sanyo Shinkansen from Shin Osaka to Kokura Station and a transfer to the Limited Express Sonic train will bring you to Beppu City, which is famous for its hot springs.

The city is home to the Beppu Hells, a collection of 7 hot springs and geothermal features that are part of the eight distinct major thermal spring zones that lie below the city. Jigoku mushi, an Oita

Prefecture specialty. Photo Credit: Kyushu Tourism Organization Designated as a National Place of Scenic Beauty, the 7 hot springs each display unique characteristics and vibrant colors. For

example, Umi Jigoku (which means "Sea Hell"), the largest of the hells, is a stunning sight with its cobalt blue appearance and depth of 200 meters! Bathing may not be permitted in the Beppu Hells,

but visitors can check out the practice of Jigoku Mushi, which sees fresh vegetables and seafood steamed using the vapors from the hot springs. Located in Beppu City, the Central Kyushu Masjid

hosts a vibrant community and often hosts open events inviting locals to learn more about the religion. It is easily accessible from Beppu Hells via the Kamenoi Bus at Umijigoku Mae, and will

bring you within 3 to 5 minutes' walking distance of the masjid after disembarking at Mochigahama 2 Kumi. Beppu Hells (Website)

559-1 Kannawa, Beppu City, Oita Prefecture 874-0000

Access: From JR Beppu Station, go to the west exit to take a Kamenoi Bus heading to Umi Jigoku-mae/Kannawa area. Get off depending on which hell you want to visit first. Central Kyushu

Masjid (Website)

10-19 Wakakusa-cho, Beppu City, Oita Prefecture 874-0925

Access: From JR Beppu Station, board the Kamenoi Bus for 9 minutes until the Mochigahama stop. From there, walk about 3 to 5 minutes to Central Kyushu Masjid. Nagasaki Peace Park.

©NAGASAKI CITY The solemn but resplendent Nagasaki Peace Park sits on the site of the atomic bombing of the city on August 9, 1945, and is a reminder of the might of nuclear technology and a stark symbol of why humans should never wield them against one another. The park features two Peace Symbols Zones, which are filled with monuments to peace donated from a total of 15 countries. The park was also shown in the 1991 Akira Kurosawa film, 'Rhapsody in August'. One of the displays inside the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum. Photo Credit: ©NAGASAKI CITY Museums dedicated to the bombing can also be found within the vicinity of the park, including the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, Nagai Takashi Memorial Museum (Nyokodo), Noguchi Yataro Art Museum and more. While this destination is more sobering than the others in this article, the weight of history at this site will live on long in the mind. A tram-way ride heading to Sakuramachi Station brings us to MALAYA Restaurant, which situated in front of the Nagasaki City Library. MALAYA Restaurant serves halal Malaysian/Indonesian and Japanese food for guests. Local favorites available include Kari Ayam and Satay. Nagasaki Peace Park (Website)

Matsuyamamacho, Nagasaki City, Nagasaki Prefecture 852-8118

Access: From JR Nagasaki Station, ride the Nagasaki Electric Tramway for 13 minutes to reach Heiwa Koen then walk to the Nagasaki Peace Park. MALAYA Restaurant (Website)

4-4-1F, Kozen-Machi, Nagasaki City, Nagasaki Prefecture 850-0032

Access: From Nagasaki Peace Park, board the Nagasaki Electric Tramway to Sakuramachi Station. The restaurant is 5 minutes away from the station. If you're in the middle of planning your next trip, why not consider adding one of these destinations to your itinerary? There is so much of Japan to fall in love with, and we hope this article inspires you to embark on a Japanese train discovery and, perhaps, uncover what you truly love about Japan along the way. Please Choose Your Language  
Browse the JNTO site in one of multiple languages

## Oita ????? - Japan Travel Sights

Hello, everyone! My name is Aoi, and I am the administrator of "Japan Travel Sights." I love introducing Japan's beautiful tourist destinations and culture to travelers from around the world. On this site, we showcase hidden gems and recommended spots to make your travels even more wonderful. We also highlight local favorite shops and accommodations to provide you with a fulfilling travel experience. I will continue to strive to deliver useful and engaging content, so please stay tuned. Thank you for your support!

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Beppu,oneofJapan?spremierhot?? Yufuin,locatedintheheartofOitaPre?? Japan Travel Sights ©

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## Oita City - japan-guide.com forum

Dear visitor, if you know the answer to this question, please post it. Thank you! Note that this thread has not been updated in a long time, and its content might not be up-to-date anymore. Oita City

2015/5/23 13:08

So not so recently, I returned from Kyushu. I went with my dad and I visited Beppu Onsen. Though it was a good experience, I heard that the nearby Yufuin is more interesting with the shops. But that is besides the point. Upon returning home, a passing remark was passed onto my father by a Japanese colleague. He asked whether we stopped by Oita City. He then commented that Oita City is the most beautiful Japanese city. I do not know many who have been there since it is not listed as a city with tourist attractions. Which leads to my question, is it truly the most beautiful city in Japan? Is it beautiful at all? Why so? Thanks!

by Joshua Hugh Re: Oita City

2015/5/24 10:31

Oita is the typical, industrial Japanese city. I recently visited the new art museum which is housed in a very nice building. And Takasaki Monkey Park is one of the best monkey parks in Japan. But, otherwise, I know of nothing outstanding about the city and am not aware of anything particularly beautiful about it. I suspect that he is referring to a different city. Maybe similarly named?

by Uji

rate this post as useful reply to this thread

## Oita - GaijinPot Travel

Bathe in hell (in a good way) in onsen-filled Oita. For a serious onsen (hot spring bath) experience, there's no place like Oita. Billowing steam from countless hot spring towns gives the impression that much of the prefecture is constantly on fire. Despite its hellish properties, Oita's volcanic landscape is extremely beautiful to look at. It's also just plain fun to explore. Enjoy great hiking, ancient shrines, temples and more for some rewarding entertainment in between baths. Visit the eight hells of Beppu, multi-colored volcanic pools of boiling water. Beppu is the onsen capital of Kyushu, if not the whole of Japan, boasting the highest number of hot spring sources and hundreds of baths across a dedicated spa town. Basically, it's like an onsen theme park in a relaxing rural setting. Can I use the onsen if I have a tattoo? You'll find hot spring baths, mud baths, sand baths, milky baths, blood baths, and steam baths spread out across the area. Some are said to cure ailments from backaches to gastroenteritis, while others increase beauty or restore youth. Most are for bathing but there are eight that are definitely not. These jigoku, or Hells of Beppu are touted as the area's tourist highlight. Take a tour of the eight spots including the "blood pond" and "tornado hell," and try the various steamed foods made with their hot water. Who knew Hell would be so fun? Explore the scenic streets of Yufuin. Leave the onsen gimmicks behind by heading to Yufuin, another hot spring resort town along the foot of Mount Yufu-dake. Here you'll find a slightly more refined, traditional atmosphere. Traditional inns, boutique restaurants, cafes, and stores line the main streets leading towards picturesque Lake Kinrin-ko. There's some fantastic hiking in the area around the Aso-Kuju National Park which extends all the way from Mount Aso in Kumamoto. Tattoos in onsen are traditionally taboo, but with Japan hosting both the 2020 Olympics and 2019 Rugby World Cup Games, many onsen are changing their rules (slowly). Oita has one of the largest concentrations of tattoo-friendly onsen in Japan—it's a must-visit for inked hot springs lovers. Head over towards the southeastern side of the prefecture to visit coastal Oita City and try some tasty fugu (pufferfish). Only trained chefs are allowed to prepare the notoriously-poisonous delicacy, so don't worry, it's safe! Further on is Usuki, a quaint castle town known for its awe-inspiring

cliffside Buddha carvings. Ready to go to Hell and back in Oita? Start with the locations below. Oita has the largest concentration of tattoo-friendly hot springs in Japan. Check them out plus more with our awesome list of 30 Tattoo-Friendly Onsen in Japan. Home to over 1,400 animals representing approximately 70 species, everyone will have a chance to spot some of their favorite animals. Explore one of the shrine where Shintoism and Buddhism meet Mount Yufu is an active volcano with twin peaks with accessible trails for beginners and experts alike. Located in the western end of Oita Prefecture, Kokonoe Yume Otsurhashi Bridge holds the record for Japan's longest and tallest bridge specifically designed for pedestrians. For an unforgettable stroll with fantastic views,... The Kuju Mountains will entertain day trippers and experienced hikers alike. Check out old masters and contemporary artists at the Oita Prefectural Art Museum Seek out the healing powers of the Medicine Buddha in Oita City Check out one of Oita City's best cherry blossom spots at Funai Castle Ruins! Come learn about marine life through sight and touch at Umitamago Aquarium! Get buried in warm black sand in this Meiji-era onsen ? that's tattoo friendly! Oita's secret mixed-gender onsen in a cave! We're in love with this tattoo-friendly onsen with roasting temperatures. Hidden in a bamboo grove, your Japanese basket of goodies awaits. A little bit of Africa in Japan at this safari park. A mountain with a view. Close to Beppu, this rural hot spring town is as scenic as they come. Go to hell. Fukuoka Prefecture isn't just about partying, but it's a good place to start. Traditional, tropical, mystical, and magical; Kagoshima is nothing short of extraordinary. Between the smoking crater of Mount Aso in the east and the isolated islands of Amakusa in the west, Kumamoto has plenty to keep you enthralled. The mountains and coasts of Miyazaki are calling. Looking out east, Nagasaki Prefecture has long been the gateway between the outside world and Japan. Discover white sandy beaches, crystal blue waters, wild jungles, and centuries of unique native traditions. Kyushu's smallest prefecture is big on history, culture and natural beauty. Aichi prefecture is the dynamic capital of Japanese industrialization. From glittering skyscrapers to rickety ramen shacks, Tokyo is a dazzling mix of the ultra modern and traditional. Ah, Akihabara. Where to even begin? Electric town. Cool Japan. Anime Center. Themed cafes. The list is... A whimsical wonderland that is heartbreakingly charming.



# Kunisaki City Tourist Guide | Visit Kunisaki | VISIT KUNISAKI

Explore hidden treasure in the gorgeous scenery! Satisfy Your Taste Bud with Local Specialties. Say Hello to Our Good Old Locals? Kunisaki's Breathtaking Traditional Festivals!

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**EXPLORE OITA JAPAN [Oita's Tourism Channel] - YouTube**

# Hidden Gems in Kyushu | Japan KYUSHU Tourist????????????????

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???????????????????? TEL +81 93-521-8897

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E-mail Munakata Region is located in the west part of Fukuoka-prefecture and facing to Genkai Sea. The area are consist of Munakata, Fukutsu and Okagaki. There are many beautiful seas and religious sites that have UNESCO World Heritage status including the Sacred Island of Okinoshima and other Associated Sites. The country of Green tea, Yame is a rural tranquil region of Japanese tea cultivation and the traditional crafts manufacturing. Yame grew in size after the merger with Kurogi town,Tachibana town,Yabe village and Hoshino village in 2010. The recommendable experience is to have Gyokuro tea which is the highest grade of Japanese tea cultivated in Hoshino village. Population : 58,000 people, Population density : 120 people / km2 Kujukushima Islands, located at the westernmost tip of the Japanese mainland in Kyushu, are a picturesque scenic spot consisting of a complex ria coastline and 208 large and small islands. There are only four inhabited islands: Kuroshima, Takashima, Maejima, and Todomari Island, and almost the entire area was designated as the Saikai National Park in 1955. There is Kujukushima Islands pleasure boat, departing from Kujukushima Pearl Sea Resort. Omura is the city located in the center of Nagasaki-prefecture and has Nagasaki Airport. It is approximately 40 minutes to Nagasaki-city by a car. Omura was the territory of the Omura clan. In 1549, when the missionary Francisco Xavier introduced Christianity to Japan, the feudal lord Omura Sumitada allowed to spread Christianity, and in 1563 Omura Sumitada himself became a Christian, becoming Japan?s first Christian feudal lord. And then, many people became Christians in Omura area. However, in 1587, the year Omura Sumitada died, Toyotomi Hideyoshi issued ban on Christianity. Since then,

many Christians have been martyred here. Population : 97,000 people, Population density : 770 people / km<sup>2</sup> Karatsu and Yobuko, located on the Higashi Matsuura Peninsula in the north-western part of Saga-prefecture, have been prosperous from ancient times as an important point for trade with Mainland China. Karatsu is a part of Genkai Quasi-National Park, and has many scenic spots. Yobuko is a town of Fishing industry, famous for Squid and Morning Market called Asaichi. Yobuko is located northern tip of Saga-prefecture and is facing to Genkai-nada Sea. A lot of places were as a Shooting location of Thailand drama. Takeo is a Onsen Resort, located west of Saga-city, and has 1200 years history. The hot spring temperature is 18 to 52 degrees. Spring quality is smooth with alkaline simple hot spring. It is said that the color is colorless and transparent and has an outstanding effect on recovery from fatigue. The landmark of Takeo Onsen. Romon Gate, which was designed by a renowned architect in the Meiji Era, Kingo Tatsuno, and is at the entrance of the Onsen area. Population : 47,000 people, Population density : 240 people / km<sup>2</sup> Saga is located in the Saga Plain where is spreading from the foot of Mt. Seburi. And southern part of Saga is facing to Ariake Bay. There is the Yoshinogari Remains where rice cultivation first began in Japan 2400 years ago. And the place made a great contribution to the Japanese Industrial Revolution as the starting place of industrialization. Population : 229,000 people, Population density : 530 people / km<sup>2</sup> Kunisaki Peninsula is a rural area located on the north-east side of Oita-prefecture. It is especially popular for its onsen, and trekking, and the local cuisine can be enjoyed as well. Kunisaki peninsula began to develop 1,300 years ago as a sacred religious ground influenced by local mountain and nature worship. Amakusa is situated on an archipelago consisting of several island on the west side of Kumamoto. It possesses a beautiful lush green landscape and natural geological formations giving the islands the designation "national Geopark". Marine activities such dolphin watching, boat tours, seafood & local delicacies can be enjoyed. Amakusa also has an important historical significance to Christians. Population Amakusa-city : 70,500 people, Kami-Amakusa-city : 22,500 person, Reihoku-machi : 6,400 people Hitoyoshi is a castle town once prosperous as a river port, and boasts the ruins of the Hitoyoshi castle and Hitoyoshi Onsen. The Hitoyoshi Onsen is the collective name for 30-add hot springs

including Sagara Onsen, all of which are supplied with hot water from sources around Hitoyoshi Station and in the basin of Kuma-gawa River. The most exiting thing in Hitoyoshi is Kumasawa-kudari that is riding on a boat maneuvered by a master polar down the Kuma-gawa River, one of the three fast streams in Japan. ?

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**Things to do in Beppu: Book Tours & Activities at Peek.com**

## **Preview: A Webinar to Highlight the Hidden Gems of Japan for Travel Content Creators and Influencers**

Tags: #japan, #Japantravel, #Oita JAMS.TV, the leading company for Japan inbound marketing, specialising in the Australian and New Zealand market, is proud to conduct webinars for Ibaraki and Oita Prefectures. The webinars will highlight activities in their areas and showcase their unique tourism products which is a great way to stay up-to-date with the key trends in these two areas. We are certain that this will be an ideal opportunity to gain a better understanding of their regions, which will greatly help anyone looking for topics and story ideas for their outlets. Ibaraki and Oita Web Seminars Information as followed: Monday, 30th November at 11:00am AEDT Web seminars will be distributed via Zoom. Should you wish to take part in the webinars, we kindly ask you to reach out to the Japan Travel Expo Team ([vjte@jams.tv](mailto:vjte@jams.tv)) for the URL to join seminars for for any other enquiries. We hope that you can make it to this great opportunity! The Virtual Japan Travel Expo team

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## Customized Beppu Hell Tour in Oita - Trip To Japan - Trip To Japan

+81 (0) 3 3442 1975 [info@triptojapan.com](mailto:info@triptojapan.com) Takanawa Travel K.K., Kitashinagawa 5-11-1 Shinagawa, Tokyo, Japan

The Customized Beppu Hell Tour in Oita offers a unique, personalized experience exploring the region's famous hot springs, cultural sites, and natural landscapes. With a flexible itinerary and English-speaking guides, it caters to diverse interests, ensuring a memorable exploration of Oita's rich heritage and natural beauty. Oita Prefecture in Japan is a hidden gem, renowned for its breathtaking Onsen (hot springs), thanks to the region's vibrant volcanic activity. Nestled in Oita, Beppu stands out as a hotspot for hot spring enthusiasts, offering an unparalleled soaking experience. This area is not just about relaxation; it's an adventure playground where you can immerse yourself in activities like hiking and delve into the rich history of ancient shrines and temples. Our Beppu tour is uniquely customizable, allowing you to tailor your private journey to your interests. With the assistance of our English-speaking staff, you're not just visiting; you're creating unforgettable memories. Discover a new side of Japan and its culture - book your personalized Beppu adventure today and experience the wonders of Oita firsthand!

**Unforgettable Mud Spring experience**  
Visit to the historic Yunohana Goya Guided exploration of the Hells of Beppu Encounter with the legendary Yayoi Tengu We will take a local bus to Beppu Hell in Oita from Hakata Bus Terminal. Duration: 3 hours 10 minutes You can have such a unique Japanese experience by taking a "Mud Spring." This hot spring is for curing your backache and will be one of the loveliest memories of your travel to Japan. Duration: 1 hour About 50 huts with thatched roofs have been built here since the Edo period. Yunohana is generally collected and sold as a bathing additive. Duration: 2 hours Beppu Hell Onsen has seven spectacular hot springs for viewing rather than bathing and displaying steaming ponds of various colors, bubbling mud pools, and other hydrothermal activity. You can join its hell tour and have a guide staff by bus. Duration: 3 hours A legendary creature that appears in Japanese folklore and is also known as a god or a monster is called "Tengu." Yayoi Tengu is visually impressive!! It is a mikoshi with only the face of Tengu, but it has a tremendous big red nose with white hair. It was created to avoid getting a fire in the local area. Duration: 10 minutes



This tower is the third TV tower built in Japan. It has a height of 100m and is famous as the symbol tower of Beppu. From the observation deck, you can also see a panoramic view of Beppu Bay and Beppu City. Duration: 30 minutes It is the end of the destination of your tour! Duration: 5 minutes All Fees and Taxes Travel Handling Charges and Taxes Transportation Fee Travel Insurance Bilingual Guide Service Charge Activity Expenses Entry/Admission - Hakata Bus Terminal Entry/Admission - Beppu Onsen Hoyo Land Konya Jigoku Entry/Admission - Yunohana Goya Entry/Admission - Hells of Beppu Entry/Admission - Beppu Tower Lunch Ages 0-120 Duration: 14h 30m Price: 215 Start time: Check availability Mobile ticket Live guide: English Not wheelchair accessible Near public transportation Infants must sit on laps For a full refund, cancel at least 24 hours in advance of the start date of the experience. Address: Hakata Station, ???-1-1 ??? Hakata Ward, Fukuoka, 812-0012, Japan Location: The Chikushi Entrance, Hakata Station Confirmation will be received at the time of booking. Travelers should have a moderate physical fitness level. The 14 hours 30 minutes duration will be including transportation. It is a private tour/activity. Only your group will participate. Q: What are the Featured Destinations in the Customized Beppu Hell Tour of Oita? Ans: In this adventure, you'll explore several notable locations, including: Beppu Tower Yunohana Goya Hakata Bus Terminal Q: What is the cost of the One-Day Customized Fukuoka Anime Otaku Tour Ans: The personalized Beppu Hell Tour in Oita begins at £215.72. Q: What are the Customized Beppu Hell Tour cancellation terms in Oita? Ans: Cancellation Policy for the Customized Beppu Hell Tour in Oita: Receive a complete refund by canceling no less than 24 hours before the beginning of the experience. Q: How can I customize my tour? Ans: You can customize your tour by specifying your interests and preferences, such as focusing on cultural sites, nature trails, or relaxation in the Onsen. Our English-speaking staff will assist in crafting an itinerary that suits your desires. Q: Are there any prerequisites for participating in the tour? Ans: There are no specific prerequisites, but good physical health for hiking is recommended. Also, be aware of any personal limitations or allergies to hot spring bathing. Q: Is the tour suitable for non-Japanese speakers? Ans: Absolutely! The tour provides English-speaking guides to ensure a comfortable and informative experience for non-Japanese speakers. Q: What should I bring for the tour? Ans: It's advisable to bring comfortable

clothing and footwear for walking, a hat, sunscreen, and a camera. If you plan to visit Onsen, bring swimwear and a towel, although these can often be rented on-site. Related Read: Cultural Treasures: 10 Best Museums to Visit in Tokyo We will take a local bus to Beppu Hell in Oita from Hakata Bus Terminal. You can have such a unique Japanese experience by taking a "Mud Spring." This hot spring is for curing your backache and will be one of the loveliest memories of your travel to Japan. These thatched-roofed huts were built in the Edo period and around 50 huts still stand. Beppu Hell Onsen has seven spectacular hot springs displaying steaming ponds of various colors, bubbling mud pools, and other hydrothermal activity. Grab a quick look at the legendary creature that appears in Japanese folklore known as a god or a monster called "Tengu." Standing at 100m, this TV tower is one of Beppu's famous symbols. On the observation deck, you can also see a panoramic view of Beppu Bay and Beppu City. Your tour ends here.

## **Jionnotaki Falls, Oita: A Hidden Gem in Oita - Junket Japan**

Jionnotaki Falls is a beautiful waterfall located in the Kusu District of Oita Prefecture, Japan, is a hidden gem that offers a breathtaking view and a tranquil atmosphere. The falls are a popular destination for hikers and nature lovers, and they offer stunning views of the surrounding mountains and forests. It's a place where nature's beauty is on full display, providing a serene escape from the hustle and bustle of city life. The falls are named after the Jionji Temple, which is located nearby. The temple was founded in the 17th century, and it is said that the falls were created when the bodhisattva Jizo appeared and struck the ground with his staff. Jionnotaki Falls is a two-tiered waterfall, with a total height of 30 meters. The upper tier is 20 meters high, and the lower tier is 10 meters high. The falls are surrounded by lush vegetation, and the water is a clear, emerald green color. There is a hiking trail that leads to the falls, and the journey takes about 30 minutes from the parking lot. The trail is well-maintained, and it is easy to follow. The best time to visit Jionnotaki Falls is during the spring or autumn, when the weather is mild. The falls are also beautiful during the winter, when they are frozen. If you are looking for a beautiful and peaceful place to visit in Oita, then Jionnotaki Falls is a great option. The falls are a hidden gem, and they are sure to leave you in awe. To get to Jionnotaki Falls from central Oita, you can use public transportation or drive. If you're using public transportation, you can take a bus from Oita City to Kusu, which is the nearest town to Jionnotaki Falls. From Kusu, you can take a local bus or taxi to the falls. If you're driving, you can take the Oita Expressway towards Kusu. From Kusu, follow the local roads towards the falls. The journey offers a scenic drive through the beautiful landscapes of Oita Prefecture. Jionnotaki Falls is a must-visit destination for anyone traveling in Oita. With its stunning waterfall, beautiful scenery, and variety of activities, it offers a unique experience that you won't find anywhere else. Whether you're a nature lover, a photography enthusiast, or just someone looking for a peaceful escape, Jionnotaki Falls has something to offer you. [Hover or click the text box below](#)

# Why you should visit Oita with your Japan Rail Pass ? Japan Rail Planner Blog

Japan Rail Planner Blog Oita Prefecture, situated in the northeast of Japan's Kyushu island, beckons travelers with its ancient samurai towns, rejuvenating hot springs, and tranquil mountain temples. This diverse region promises a perfect blend of beauty and adventure, easily accessible from major airports in Tokyo (Haneda), Narita, Osaka, and Nagoya. Immerse yourself in the charm of quaint ryokan inns, bathe in geothermal baths, and explore the rich history of one of Japan's most intriguing corners with our guide to Oita. Journey into the fascinating world of samurai history in Kitsuki, a stronghold in northern Oita Prefecture. Characterized by fearsome armor and a strict code of conduct, the samurai warriors left an indelible mark on Japan between the 12th and 19th centuries. Kitsuki, often referred to as a "sandwich castle town," boasts two historic samurai districts, beautifully preserved with pavilion roofs and Edo-period architecture. These districts, surrounded by a commercial area, provide a glimpse into the samurai era and serve as captivating filming locations for Japanese period dramas. Explore museums within historic samurai properties, such as Kitsuki Castle, and witness the grandeur of the Ohara Residence, a classic aristocratic home. Oita takes pride in being home to over 4000 hot springs, more than any other prefecture in Japan. Immerse yourself in the quintessential Japanese experience by bathing in traditional onsens. Sanso Tensui, overlooking Sakura Falls, offers a picturesque setting for a relaxing soak. Indulge in gourmet Japanese cuisine using fresh local ingredients like Bungo beef and Oita fish. Venture to Beppu, the hot-spring capital, where the famous Seven Hells showcase colorful pools of mineral-rich water. While too hot for bathing, these springs inspire unique culinary experiences with "hell steam cuisine." Beppu's dramatic landscapes and novel uses of thermal waters make it a must-visit for lovers of natural wonders. Beyond hot springs, Oita unfolds its beauty on the slopes of Mount Futago. A dense cedar forest conceals a moss-covered stone staircase leading to Futago-ji, an ancient Buddhist temple standing for over 1300 years. Established in 718, the temple reflects a fusion of Buddhism, Shinto, and animist mountain worship. Delight in the ornate statues of Kannon

and Fudo within centuries-old pavilions, adding a serene touch to the mystical ambiance. Conclude your Oita adventure in Oita City, the prefectural capital. The Oita Prefectural Art Museum, with its eye-catching design by acclaimed architect Shigeru Ban, showcases the region's finest artworks. Admire nature-themed paintings by Tanoura Chikuden and the vibrant wildlife artworks of local artist Fukuda Heihachiro. Wrap up your journey at the luxurious City Spa Tenku, a modern bathhouse on the 19th-21st floors of a glass skyscraper. Relax in the open-sided terrace infinity bath, reflecting on your Oita adventures against panoramic views of the city, mountains, and ocean beyond.

Sitemap

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April 23, 2024

For this Japanese city, one name just isn't enough. Have you ever wondered why you arrive at Hakata Station when your ticket says Fukuoka? Well, you're not alone. Fukuoka, also known as Hakata, is a city with dueling identities, and each has a rich history and vibrant present. And while this tale of two names?

For this Japanese city, one name just isn't enough. Have you ever wondered why you arrive at Hakata Station when your ticket says Fukuoka? Well, you're not alone. Fukuoka, also known as Hakata, is a city with dueling identities, and each has a rich history and vibrant present. And while this tale of two names?

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# Unveiling the Rich Tradition of Takeda Tea in Oita's Hidden Gem

## ? JAPANBITE

????????????? ?????????????????????????????????? ?????? \$0.00 USD Free shipping for the first subscription payment!! ????: Hideo Takahashi | 2024?11?15? | ??? 9 min Takeda, with its rustic charm and serene landscapes, is a hidden gem in Japan's tea-growing regions. The town's history dates back to ancient times, and its tea culture has been carefully preserved through generations. Takeda's location in Oita Prefecture provides the perfect climate for tea cultivation, with lush green hills and misty mornings that nourish the tea plants. The town's rich history is reflected in its traditional architecture and cultural festivals, which attract visitors from all over the world. Takeda's historical significance extends beyond its tea culture. The town is home to several ancient temples and shrines, where visitors can immerse themselves in Japanese spirituality and customs. Takeda Castle, often referred to as the "Machu Picchu of Japan," offers breathtaking views and a glimpse into the past. This blend of history and tea culture makes Takeda a unique destination that captivates the hearts of travelers and tea lovers alike. The town's commitment to preserving its cultural heritage is evident in its tea houses and workshops, where visitors can experience traditional tea ceremonies and learn about the intricate art of tea making. Takeda's warm and welcoming community ensures that every visitor leaves with a deeper appreciation for Japanese culture and the timeless beauty of Takeda Tea. Takeda Tea, known locally as "???" (Takeda-cha), is celebrated for its exceptional flavor and quality. The tea is cultivated using traditional methods that have been passed down through generations, ensuring that each cup is a true reflection of Takeda's rich heritage. The unique terroir of Takeda, with its fertile soil and cool climate, contributes to the tea's distinct taste and aroma. The process of making Takeda Tea begins with carefully hand-picking the tender tea leaves, which are then meticulously processed to preserve their natural flavors. The tea leaves are steamed, rolled, and dried to perfection, resulting in a delicate and refreshing brew. Whether you're sipping a cup of sencha or savoring a matcha latte, Takeda Tea offers a sensory experience that is both soothing and invigorating. Takeda Tea is not just a

beverage; it's a cultural expression that embodies the spirit of Japanese tradition. The tea is often enjoyed in traditional tea ceremonies, where every movement and gesture is imbued with meaning. Participants are encouraged to appreciate the aesthetics of the tea room, the craftsmanship of the tea utensils, and the harmonious connection between tea and nature. What sets Takeda Tea apart from other teas is its unparalleled quality and taste. The tea is known for its vibrant green color, aromatic fragrance, and umami-rich flavor profile. The careful cultivation and processing methods ensure that each cup of Takeda Tea is a testament to the skill and dedication of the tea artisans. One of the unique qualities of Takeda Tea is its ability to evoke a sense of tranquility and mindfulness. The act of brewing and savoring the tea encourages individuals to pause, reflect, and appreciate the present moment. This meditative aspect of Takeda Tea makes it a popular choice for those seeking a moment of calm in their busy lives. In addition to its soothing qualities, Takeda Tea also offers numerous health benefits. Rich in antioxidants and vitamins, the tea is believed to boost the immune system, improve digestion, and promote overall well-being. The combination of flavor, tradition, and health benefits makes Takeda Tea a cherished beverage for tea enthusiasts and health-conscious individuals alike. For those who wish to explore Takeda's tea culture firsthand, the town offers a variety of experiences that provide insight into the art of tea making. Visitors can participate in traditional tea ceremonies, where they will learn about the history and etiquette of Japanese tea. These ceremonies offer a glimpse into the rituals and customs that have shaped Japan's tea culture over the centuries. Takeda's tea houses and workshops provide an opportunity for visitors to engage with local tea artisans. From learning how to whisk matcha to sampling different tea blends, these interactive experiences allow participants to deepen their understanding of Takeda Tea. The warm hospitality of the locals ensures that every visitor feels welcomed and appreciated. In addition to tea-related activities, Takeda hosts annual festivals that celebrate its rich cultural heritage. These festivals feature traditional performances, tea tastings, and guided tours of the town's historic sites. Attending these events allows visitors to immerse themselves in the vibrant culture of Takeda and create lasting memories. No exploration of Japanese tea culture would be complete without mentioning wagashi, the traditional Japanese sweets that are often served

alongside tea. Takeda Tea pairs beautifully with a variety of wagashi, enhancing the flavors of both the tea and the confection. From delicate mochi to intricately crafted yokan, wagashi adds a touch of elegance to the tea-drinking experience. Wagashi is not only a treat for the taste buds but also a feast for the eyes. Each piece is meticulously crafted to reflect the changing seasons and the beauty of nature. The artful presentation of wagashi complements the aesthetic sensibilities of the tea ceremony, creating a harmonious balance between flavor and visual appeal. Visitors to Takeda can indulge in a variety of wagashi during their tea experiences. The town's tea houses offer a selection of seasonal sweets, allowing guests to savor the unique flavors of each season. Whether enjoyed in a traditional tea room or as part of a casual tea tasting, the combination of Takeda Tea and wagashi is a delightful fusion of taste and culture. Takeda is home to a vibrant community of tea enthusiasts who are passionate about sharing their love of tea with the world. This sense of community is evident in the town's tea events, workshops, and collaborative projects. Visitors are encouraged to connect with local tea lovers and artisans, exchanging stories and experiences that deepen their appreciation for Takeda Tea. The town's tea festivals and gatherings provide a platform for tea enthusiasts to come together and celebrate their shared passion. These events offer a unique opportunity to learn from seasoned tea masters, participate in tea tastings, and explore the diverse world of Japanese tea. The camaraderie and warmth of the community create an inviting atmosphere that leaves a lasting impression on visitors. For those who wish to stay connected with Takeda's tea community, online forums and social media groups offer a space for discussion and engagement. Tea lovers from around the world can share their experiences, ask questions, and discover new ways to enjoy Takeda Tea. This sense of belonging and connection is one of the many reasons why Takeda Tea continues to captivate the hearts of tea enthusiasts worldwide. Takeda's tea artisans are dedicated to preserving the traditional methods of tea production while also exploring new and innovative techniques. Visitors to Takeda can witness firsthand the artistry and craftsmanship that goes into creating each batch of tea. From hand-picking tea leaves to perfecting the drying process, the meticulous attention to detail is evident in every step. Participating in a tea-making workshop offers a unique opportunity to learn from experienced artisans and gain a



deeper understanding of the tea-making process. Whether crafting your own blend or observing the intricate steps of tea production, these hands-on experiences provide valuable insights into the world of Takeda Tea. The artistry of tea making extends beyond the production process to the presentation and enjoyment of the tea itself. The careful selection of teaware, the precise movements of the tea ceremony, and the appreciation of the tea's aroma and flavor all contribute to the artful experience of Takeda Tea. This attention to detail and reverence for tradition is what makes Takeda Tea a cherished cultural expression. Sampling Takeda Tea offers a taste of tradition and a connection to the rich history of Japanese tea culture. Each sip is a reminder of the dedication and craftsmanship that have shaped Takeda's tea legacy. Whether enjoyed in a quiet tea room or shared with friends, Takeda Tea invites individuals to savor the moment and appreciate the beauty of simplicity. For those new to Takeda Tea, a guided tasting experience can provide valuable insights into the nuances and flavors of different tea varieties. Tea experts offer guidance on how to brew and savor each cup, highlighting the unique characteristics that make Takeda Tea so special. These tastings allow newcomers to develop a deeper appreciation for the art of tea and the cultural significance of Takeda's traditions. For seasoned tea enthusiasts, Takeda Tea offers a chance to explore new flavors and expand their palate. The diverse range of tea varieties and blends ensures that there is always something new to discover and enjoy. Whether seeking a bold and invigorating brew or a delicate and soothing infusion, Takeda Tea caters to a wide range of preferences and tastes. The preservation of Takeda Tea's cultural heritage is a priority for the town's residents and tea artisans. Through education and outreach efforts, the community is committed to passing down the traditions and knowledge of tea making to future generations. Initiatives such as school programs, apprenticeships, and cultural exchanges ensure that the art of Takeda Tea will continue to thrive. Takeda's commitment to sustainability and ethical practices is also an important aspect of preserving its tea culture. The town's tea producers prioritize environmentally friendly methods and responsible sourcing, ensuring that the natural beauty of Takeda remains intact for years to come. By supporting local artisans and sustainable practices, visitors contribute to the preservation of Takeda's tea legacy. Through collaboration and innovation, Takeda's tea community is actively

working to share its unique culture with the world. The town's tea festivals, international collaborations, and cultural exchanges provide a platform for showcasing Takeda's rich heritage and promoting a global appreciation for Japanese tea. By fostering a sense of connection and understanding, Takeda Tea continues to inspire and captivate tea lovers everywhere. For those planning a visit to Takeda, there are a few key experiences that should not be missed. Start your journey by exploring the town's historic sites, including Takeda Castle and the local temples and shrines. Take a leisurely stroll through the tea fields and soak in the serene beauty of the landscape. Be sure to participate in a traditional tea ceremony, where you can learn about the history and etiquette of Japanese tea. Visit local tea houses and workshops to engage with artisans and gain insight into the art of tea making. Don't forget to sample a variety of Takeda Tea blends and enjoy the delightful pairing of wagashi. To make the most of your visit, consider attending one of Takeda's annual tea festivals. These events offer a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in the town's vibrant culture and connect with fellow tea enthusiasts. Whether you're a seasoned traveler or a first-time visitor, Takeda promises an unforgettable experience that will leave you with a deeper appreciation for the art of tea. Takeda Tea is more than just a beverage; it's a cultural expression that embodies the rich heritage and traditions of Japanese tea culture. Nestled in the picturesque mountains of Oita Prefecture, the town of Takeda offers a unique glimpse into this timeless tradition. From its historic sites to its vibrant community, Takeda invites tea enthusiasts to explore the art of tea making and savor the flavors of Takeda Tea. For those who have a passion for Japanese culture and a love for tea, a visit to Takeda is a must. Whether you're seeking tranquility, cultural enrichment, or a taste of tradition, Takeda Tea promises an experience that will captivate your senses and leave a lasting impression. Discover the world of Takeda Tea and join the community of tea lovers who appreciate the beauty and artistry of this cherished cultural expression.

Hideo Takahashi Born in Tokyo in 1990. Founder of JAPANBITE and CEO of its operating company, GRID Start, Ltd.Established the company in 2023 after being an IT engineer.Inspired by his travels to 15 countries and a deep love for Japanese food, he launched a service to contribute to small local Japanese manufacturers' businesses and allow many foreigners to enjoy Japanese culture. ????

JAPANBITE Premium Snack Box \$53.99 ?????? Discovering Kanuma Tea the Hidden Gem of Japanese Teas Discover the Joy of Mochi with These Top Snack Ideas The Sweet Harmony of Wagashi and Regional Revitalization in Japan ???????

## Oita | Dive Japan

Diving in Oita Prefecture offers an exciting opportunity to explore the diverse marine environments along its expansive coastline, which stretches for 759 kilometers and boasts a variety of coastal features, from shallow beaches to saw-toothed coastlines. Located in the Kyushu region of Japan, Oita Prefecture is surrounded by Miyazaki Prefecture to the south and Fukuoka Prefecture and Kumamoto Prefecture to the west. Despite being known for its hot springs and picturesque landscapes, Oita's coastal waters also offer rich diving experiences for enthusiasts. The prefecture's abundant coastline is complemented by its designation of 28% of its area as natural parks, including national parks such as Aso Kuju and Setonaikai National Parks, as well as several quasi-national and prefectural natural parks. These protected areas contribute to the preservation of Oita's marine biodiversity and ensure a thriving ecosystem for divers to explore. Diving in Oita allows divers to encounter a wide variety of marine life, from colorful fish and vibrant coral reefs to unique underwater rock formations. The region's diverse coastal features provide opportunities for both recreational and exploratory diving, catering to divers of all skill levels. While diving infrastructure in Oita may vary, there are dive operators and facilities along the coastline that offer guided excursions, equipment rental, and certification courses. Whether you're a beginner seeking your first dive or an experienced diver looking for new underwater adventures, Oita's dive sites promise unforgettable experiences beneath the waves. So, whether you're drawn to the region for its hot springs, natural parks, or coastal beauty, don't miss the chance to explore the underwater wonders of Oita Prefecture through diving. Pack your gear, dive into the crystal-clear waters, and discover the hidden treasures awaiting beneath the surface. Unexpected surprises

Located as part of a National Park, at the southeast area of Oita prefecture, it is an Island with only 30 inhabitant. "Japanese Wood Pigeon "a special natural treasure are found on this nature filled Island. Underwater, there is a large coral reef on the North side of the Island, which has been a popular diving site for the local divers for along time. <https://www.google.com/maps/dir/?api=1&destination=32.721371,131.926145> All year round:

-Variety of nudibranch

-Variety of Shrimps and Crabs

-Variety of Macro marine life

-Black porgy (*Acanthopagrus schlegeli*)

-Japanese amberjack(*Seriola quinqueradiata*)

-Chicken grunt(*Parapristipoma trilineatum*)

-Greenfish(*Girella punctata*) On the southern tip of Kyushu Island, Saganoseki is located in from of the Hoyo Straits. It is the closest point to the Shikoku Island. Due to the strong and fast current of Hoyo strait and the many large underwater reefs, you can enjoy both macro marine animals and larger school of fishes. <https://www.google.com/maps/dir/?api=1&destination=33.25125,131.893326>

Located at the southern area of Oita prefecture,Kamae is a beach diving area. The beach has a facility(Oita cultural center) to cater for divers needs (Washing area for diving gears etc.). This facility also has, restaurants and accommodation as well.

Underwater, the maximum depth is only 5mm, but here you can enjoy the beautiful soft corals and smaller marine life. <https://www.google.com/maps/dir/?api=1&destination=32.795284,131.923846>

Newly opened(2014) diving site in Sasebo city. Zeai is a beach diving point located inside Zeai Park.

The area is filled with soft corals and also hard corals. Marine life is also abundant.

<https://www.google.com/maps/dir/?api=1&destination=33.051623,131.938795> Not having any rivers

running in to the near by ocean, Hazako is popular for it's beautiful clear waters. The beach is also

famous for the sea turtles coming to lay their eggs. Underwater, there are beautiful hard coral reefs

and table rock terrains.

<https://www.google.com/maps/dir/?api=1&destination=32.934334,132.040913>

## Cozy ??haruna: Your Next Hidden Gem Getaway ? Oita, Japan ? ?????.???

28 miles from Oita Bank Dome in Yufu, ??haruna offers accommodations with access to a hot spring bath. This property offers access to a terrace, free private parking, and free Wifi. Beppu Station is 15 miles away and Oita Station is 23 miles from the homestay. A flat-screen TV is featured. The accommodation offers an air conditioning, a heating, and a shared bathroom. Guests can also relax in the garden. Popular points of interest near the homestay include Kinrinko Lake, Yufuin Showakan, and Yufuin Chagall Museum. Oita Airport is 32 miles away. Cozy ??haruna: Your Next Hidden Gem Getaway is located in Yufu. This 2 Bedrooms House is suitable for tourists and travelers.

It has several amenities that would guarantee your comfort. These amenities include: Internet, Air Conditioner, Parking, and several others.

This is a good star rated property and has over 2 reviews

with the average score of 10

.

Coming to Yufu and needing a place to stay?

Be it for work or for leisure, consider staying at this House for your next visit,

you will surely love it. You can check the reviews and description of this 2 Bedrooms House

if you want to learn more about this Casai place in Yufu. These details are

authentic, as they are provided by our partner, booking.com. This Cozy ??haruna: Your Next Hidden Gem Getaway in Yufu is well equipped and has all facilities that have been listed below.

Please note that these details were shared to us by booking.com for the listed

?Cozy ??haruna: Your Next Hidden Gem Getaway?.

We solely rely on their shared details and are regarded as ?accurate?. If you have any concerns about the

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House, please let us know. No, pets are not allowed at this property. Check the guest reviews to learn what guests had to share. Check-in time for Yufuin Onsen house starts counting from 3:00 PM and check-out is until 10:00 AM. However, early check-in or late check-out can sometimes be negotiated between the guest and the owner or the manager of this property. No, this Yufuin Onsen house does not have a swimming pool. Check the Facility Overview section for details about the pool and other available facilities. Best-rates for the Yufuin Onsen house starts from \$56 per night with includes Air Conditioner, Parking, View, Balcony/Terrace, Security/Safety, Fireplace/Heating, Hot Tub, Internet with all other facilities. Casai matches every traveler with their perfect accommodation, whether you are traveling with a group, friends, family, or pets. Based on the information we have received from the owner or our partner, this is not considered to be a family-friendly property. As reported by the owner or manager, the house has not specified that children are welcome. Please see details about suitability for your family or inquire with the property to learn more. Based on the information received from our partner, the Yufuin Onsen house has not specified they are wheelchair accessible. Likewise, there is not an elevator specified as being available at the property. Specific accessibility details may be addressed in the property details section of this page. Based on the information reported by the owner or manager, the Yufuin Onsen house indicates 1 day stay policy at this house. Guests are cautioned that the minimum stay policy may differ based on seasonality or availability and may be at the discretion of the owner or manager. Based on the information reported by the owner or manager, details for the cancellation policy for the Yufuin Onsen house are as follows: Special conditions Guests are cautioned that the cancellation policy may differ based on seasonality, availability, or current travel restrictions. Guests should also be aware that this policy may be subject to change and should be confirmed prior to booking. More details may be available on this page in the property description. However, early

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## 10 Interesting Things to do in Oita, Japan (that aren't the Hells)

Posted on Last updated: November 7, 2019 Oita Prefecture in Kyushu is just one and a half hours by plane from Tokyo and is the perfect addition to a trip to the capital or as a side trip from Fukuoka. Think hot springs, the outdoors, mountains and meditation, which all meld together in a kind of harmony between nature and man. Beppu is probably the most well-known area of Oita thanks to its more than 2,300 hot spring sources, making it the world's second largest source of thermal spring water after Yellowstone National Park in the United States. The "Hells of Beppu" – a circuit of seven scalding, to-be-looked-at-only onsen, ranging from vermilion red to azure blue, with bubbling mud and geyser spitting pools – have been so-named since their beginnings as their steaming waters and violent natural displays led locals to believe they must be cursed. But there's far more to Beppu and Oita Prefecture than the Jigoku Meguri (Hell Tour). Here are 10 interesting things to do in Oita that show you where you should consider venturing instead. Let's begin our exploration on the Kunisaki Peninsula, which is not only the location of Oita Airport, but considered one of the most spiritual "power spots" in the region. The peninsula is home to a unique local Buddhist culture called "Rokugo Manzan" (六ヶ所山), which contains elements of Buddhist, Shinto and mountain worship, and revolves around the 721-meter-tall Mount Futago. The mountain and the surrounding countryside is dotted with dozens of temples and shrines, traditionally divided into six areas, which is where the name Rokugo Manzan, literally meaning "Six Districts, Full of Mountains", originates. One of the unique aspects of the area is the large number of rock statues and carvings that have become one with the surrounding mountain foliage. In stark contrast to many of Japan's manicured rock gardens and botanical displays, you feel a sense of mystery and adventure as if time has stood still and you are happening upon overgrown and hidden relics of a past civilisation. In fact, Kunisaki is said to contain more than half of Japan's stone Buddhist statuary (and some of its oldest). There are many places of worship you can visit if you have the time to explore, but here are a couple of the most well-known to get you started. Located close to the peak of Mt Futago, Futagoji (futagoji) dates back to 718 and is one of the most prominent temples of Rokugo Manzan. It is well known for its pair

of stone Nio statues which guard the beginning of the temple approach just below the parking lot. From there it is a ten minute ascent up a flight of steps to the main temple buildings, including Gomado Hall and Okunoin Hall. About 15km away, one can find Fukiji Temple (???). Its main hall is a designated national treasure and is the oldest wooden structure in Kyushu, dating back to the Heian era (794-1185). Set against a backdrop of greenery, this simple and serene scene is often considered the personification of the beauty and tranquility of Rokugo Manzan. If you want to stay overnight on the mountain, Ryoan Fukinotou, next to Fukiji Temple, offers beautiful traditional-style rooms with dining and hot spring access. You can also participate in a special early morning zazen (seated meditation) and gongy? (reciting of Buddhist passages) experience at Fukiji Temple. Magaibutsu refer to Buddhist imagery carved directly into a natural rock face and offer a surreal opportunity to witness religious worship of centuries past. The Kumano Magaibutsu (?????) in Oita features two large stone carvings on the side of a cliff, one eight-meter-tall depiction of Fudomyoo and a 6.7-meter-tall Dainichi Nyorai Buddha, making them the largest magaibutsu relief carvings in Japan. They have been designated by the national government as an Important Cultural Property and while there is no record of when these carvings were created, it is estimated they were made during the Kamakura and late Heian periods respectively. Visitors need to take a 20-30 minute forest walk to reach the carvings, including a 10-minute climb up uneven cobblestone steps, which according to legend were built by a devil in one night. In fact, if you believe local folklore of the Kunisaki Peninsula, the whole area is said to mean ?land?s end? and was created by demons in the service of powerful gods. Note: The last toilet on the way there is 100 meters down the mountain before the car park/reception area. Venturing a few hours further south and into the interior, we can encounter a part of Oita that sees even fewer visitors and in which we can experience dense primeval forest. Biosphere Reserves, also known as Eco Parks in Japan, are UNESCO-listed areas that have unique species, ecosystems and landscapes, which are being protected through sustainable and appropriate conservation and development initiatives. The Sobo-Katamuki-Okue Biosphere Reserve became enlisted in 2017 and encompasses Mount Sobo, Mount Katamuki and Mount Okue in Oita and Miyazaki prefectures. Of the 240,000-hectare area, 85% is forest and

contains a high concentration of diverse and rare flora and fauna. Here you may encounter the Japanese serow, an unusual 'goat-antelope' that is endemic to Japan. The Japanese serow was almost hunted to extinction mid-last century, but numbers have recovered significantly thanks to its protected status in designated conservation areas like this one. There are a variety of hiking trails that can be taken here that allow you to experience this exquisite natural environment. If you're looking for a course that is both beautiful and not too challenging, the 2-hour Sobo Koubaru Hiking Course on Mount Sobo is a great option. Not only are there barely any manmade stairs, there's also a small waterfall crossing over a rickety bridge, which gives just the right amount of adventure while keeping the surrounds in sustainable harmony between visitors and nature. A small hut about halfway provides shelter and toilet facilities. Go left behind the rest house to continue on the course back to the car park. Note: The entrance to the Sobo Koubaru Hiking Course requires access by car and signage is currently not available in English. Therefore it's recommended to seek out maps and information about the trail before starting at the Kami no Sato Koryu Center Odamaki (approximately 10 mins by car from the starting point). Yufuin is a district of the city of Yufu, only 10km inland from Beppu, making it an easy and popular day trip. Yufuin is famous for its hot springs and pedestrian shopping street, Yunotsubo Kaido. Commanding over the town is the twin-peaked 1,584-meter Mount Yufu (Yufu-dake). For those who wish to climb Mt Yufu, a bus from Yufuin Station can get you to the starting point for the trails, Yufu-tozan-guchi (?????) at 896m in around 20 minutes. As there are two peaks, you can choose the one that best suits you in terms of time and difficulty. The east peak takes 2-3 hours and is more suitable for beginner or leisure hikers, while the west peak requires more climbing, including scrambling over rocks and use of chains, and will take around 4-5 hours to summit. Yunotsubo Kaido is a pedestrian street lined with shops and restaurants that leads from Yufuin Station through Yufuin town to the picturesque Lake Kinrin. The approximately 1.5km stretch is full of quaint shops selling souvenirs, as well as restaurants and food stores for full meals and grazing. The street is geared towards visitors but still manages to be touristy without being overly-commercialised. And if you've been exploring the off-the-beaten-path areas of Oita, all these options in one place might be just the ticket for an easy afternoon stroll. If you'd like to stay the

night in Yufuin and want the opportunity to interact with locals, consider a stay at Nirinsou. This local inn is run by a lovely couple who are keen to share their local ways with visitors. In addition to accommodation, they offer unique experiences to their guests, including homemade cooking and various agricultural experiences, such as vegetable cultivation, and planting and harvesting rice. Simply ask what experiences are available during the time of year you plan on staying. The cooking experience is a perfect way to check off a meal while learning about local specialty dishes (ky?do ry?ri). While your hosts don?t speak much English, they are very used to communicating with foreign guests and are unfazed by lack of a mutual language, so you needn?t worry about language skills. Your biggest problem will simply be how to eat your way through all the food they have on offer ? be sure to come on an empty stomach!Request your stay via this online contact form. Beppu is probably the most well-known onsen resort town in Japan. However, apart from the typical hot spring circuit, many visitors are unaware of the various ways they can enjoy both the abundance of hot spring waters in the area and the delicious local cuisine. Here are a few ideas for a unique and relaxing stay in Beppu, that takes you away from the tour buses. Do you have tattoos and want to visit hot springs? Here?s a list of 100 tattoo-friendly onsen in Beppu. Sand bathing in Kyushu makes for a rather interesting travel tale. If you?re looking for a unique way to enjoy the bubbling hot spring waters of Beppu, you can try bathing in sand at the Beppu Beach Sandbox. Here the sand is heated naturally by nearby hot spring sources and has equivalent health benefits of soaking in the water directly. You wear a Japanese robe, known as yukata, then lay down on the sand and are buried up to your neck. Ten to fifteen minutes is the recommended time for sand bathing. Afterwards you can use their small regular bathing facilities to refresh and wash all that sand off. Entry to the Beppu Beach Sandbox costs 1,050 yen, which includes a rental yukata, a small towel, one sand bath session and access to the public baths/shower. Literally meaning hell-steaming, jigoku mushi is a traditional way of cooking using the steam of a hot spring, dating back to the 17th century. While various tourist spots sell eggs and pudding cooked over onsen water, Sally Garden Yanagiya, a lovely ryokan meets hotel accommodation, allows guests to use their traditional steam ovens to make jigoku mushi meals. The process is incredibly simple and is a great way to self-cater without

fuss, while also adding a unique experience to your Japan itinerary. Check out how easy it is to cook up a delicious meal using an onsen steam oven. Reimen, cold noodles, were introduced to Beppu from cooks returning from Manchuria after WWII, and a tweaked recipe for local tastes has made it a signature dish of the region. The noodle is a chewier version of a buckwheat noodle similar in thickness to spaghetti. The toppings are usually a few slices of cold, well-seasoned beef, kimchi and boiled egg, all served in a clear, cold broth. Beppu reimen is available at numerous local restaurants, but one that comes highly recommended is Ikkyu no Namida. Check out how their signature reimen dish is made below. Have you been to Oita? What places and activities on this list would you like to experience? This post was sponsored by ANA with the support of the Oita Prefectural Government. As always, our opinions remain our own. Pin me for later! Posted on Last updated: November 7, 2019 Categories Asia/Oceania My Miscarriage Story: What nobody tells you about miscarriage Our daughter's birth story Notify me of follow-up comments by email. Notify me of new posts by email. ? This site uses Akismet to reduce spam. [Learn how your comment data is processed.](#) This site uses Akismet to reduce spam. [Learn how your comment data is processed.](#) © Notes of Nomads 2023

## Alice Lines' enlightening tour of Oita, Japan | homestyle

Magazine Subscribe Contact Competitions Advertise Magazine Subscribe Contact Competitions Advertise It's an off-the-beaten-track escape to a spot where creativity bubbles beneath the surface and hot springs steam their way to the top. In eras past, Oita – a prefecture on the island of Kyushu in south-western Japan – was known as Toyo no kuni, meaning 'land of abundance'. The term was coined to reflect the vast array of food on offer from the mountains and the sea, and the concept still resonates today. This area is indeed a beautiful setting in which to experience abundant delicacies, as well as hot springs and hospitality – the combination a recipe for some serious rest and relaxation. The coastal city of Beppu alone is home to about 2000 onsens with a combined hot-spring output greater than any other area in Japan. Public steam baths, ryokans (inns) with intimate bathing facilities, mud baths, sand baths where you can be buried in heated sand? you can experience it all.

Culinary culture and bathing rituals aren't the only thing Oita is known for, though. There's a legacy of arts and crafts here that a new wave of artisans is adopting to carve out an alternative way of life for themselves outside of the main centres. My host on this trip was Eiko Hashimoto, a producer at the Oita Asahi Broadcasting Corporation; I tapped into her knowledge of the region to visit makers, food producers and hospitality specialists who have found their creative calling here. We teamed up with Oita Made – an initiative developed to revitalise the creative economy by stocking independent artisans' products in a dedicated store and supporting their distribution – to visit the studios and workplaces of some of the people they champion.

In Beppu, Cotake – the workshop and store of Mikiko Sato – is a great place in which to observe bamboo crafts in action. Mikiko specialises in fine bamboo jewellery and also sells a range of intricately woven baskets, trays, kitchenware and decorative objects. The skill involved in splitting a hollow round of bamboo into the thin strips required for weaving is really quite something to witness. Toyokazu Ono runs his textile art and graphic design practice, Yotsume, from his home in Kunimimachi Imi at the northern end of the Oita Kunisaki Peninsula. Focusing on the traditional

method of katazome fabric dyeing, Toyokazu hand-cuts elaborate stencils that are then adhered to fabric and hand-painted with dye, before being made into table linen, coasters, cushions, noren (room dividers) and clothing. He learned the trade from his father and grandfather before him, but his own aesthetic is decidedly contemporary, with bold, figurative prints all hand-drawn and brought to life in striking colours. On the outskirts of Usuki, an old castle town known for its stone Buddhas, the Usukiyaki studio is abuzz with the production of fine porcelain ceramics. The story goes that the Usukiware aesthetic was prevalent in the Edo period (1603 to 1868) but somehow abandoned. Centuries on, Hiroyuki Usami and his team are reviving this art form using historical records to inspire modern tableware. Usukiyaki's signature look comes together as a collection of rounded bloom-like shapes, using lotus flowers and chrysanthemums to inform pieces including tiny condiment dishes, delicate cups and grooved cake plates. Their aim is to create dishes that frame the food served on them, and the result was put into practice when I was lucky enough to enjoy lunch prepared by Hiroyuki's wife Yuka, who runs a wholefood catering business. The meal included local specialities fried chicken, miso, preserved vegetables and thick hand-pulled noodles, all served in Usukiyaki dishes. Hospitality is a true art form in Japan too, and staying at an authentic ryokan provides an opportunity to indulge in cultural rituals without feeling too touristy. In Beppu's Kannawa neighbourhood, Yanagiya keeps the customs of inn hospitality alive with breakfast served in bamboo baskets that open to reveal steamed savoury morsels, an outdoor cooking area where you can prepare your own meals over steam vents, and an on-site onsen. Ryokan owners take pride in hosting their guests, and at Yanagiya, owner Eiko Hashimoto was kind enough to take me on a morning walk to show me sights otherwise hidden among the winding cobbled streets.

Okamotoya is another charming ryokan. On the hillside in Beppu, it has a view across to Beppu Myoban Bridge arching over the bay. Sliding shoji screens separated my room from the corridor, and inside the tatami flooring was sparsely decorated with little more than a chabudai dining table and a futon that's whipped out before bed. That night, I enjoyed a multi-course kaiseki dinner of famed Oita wagyu, a series of dishes carefully prepared with a focus on ingredients harvested from the surrounding area and ocean, and Beppu's signature pudding, steamed crème caramel. After

dinner, my gracious host Nobuko Iwase showed me how to create an ikebana floral arrangement, and I was quietly chuffed that my efforts were deemed worthy of being displayed in the corridor. Having been treated to all sorts of local delicacies during my stay in Oita, I ended the week on a fun note with an okonomiyaki (savoury pancake) at Bari Bari. Falling into the category of 'B-grade gourmet', which is a thing in Japan, this mom-and-pop eatery epitomises the craft of comfort food and colloquial chat at an appealing price. Sated, I returned to my hotel to repack my carry-on filled with carefully wrapped packages in preparation for an early-morning transit to Fukuoka Airport. The ceramics, bamboo wares and textiles I collected from the artisans' studios I visited will forever be a reminder of the abundant culture Oita has to share.

Alice journeyed to Oita with Japanese travel experts [jtboi.co.nz](http://jtboi.co.nz). Otto e Sette, Beppu: The on-site restaurant at the aforementioned ryokan Yanagiya offers a unique twist on Italian cuisine using all local ingredients.

Hasshin Zushi, Beppu: The type of food experience I've had on my bucket list since watching Jiro Dreams of Sushi. Simple yet exquisite nigiri.

Jigoku Mushi Kobo, Beppu: Grab a ticket from the vending machine, pick up your ready-to steam ingredients and prepare your own meal in one of the outdoor ovens.

Spica, Beppu: A unique design store/gallery where a husband-and-wife duo curate a thoughtful edit of objects, art and fashion.

Sanshoro, Yufuin: A must for its lunchbox meals so delightfully presented, they're a feast for the eyes as well.

Sansou Murata, Yufuin: The best of East and West combine at this high-end ryokan. The interior is super-cool, so even if you're not staying the night, it's well worth visiting for a drink in the bar.

Tamanoyu, Yufuin: This ryokan once provided lodging for zen Buddhist monks, and now you can enjoy the serenity in rooms dotted around a woodland garden.

Mount Yufu, Yufuin: Follow the lead of local hikers and make the four-hour ascent to the peak.

Suzunari Coffee, Usuki: If you're after a real coffee fix, this café roasts their own beans and serves up a good brew.



Kitsuki Castle Town: Check out the old samurai houses, particularly Ohara residence right beside the Suya no Saka cobblestoned slope. Words & photography Alice Lines    Design Unplugged  
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## Oita Travel Guide by Travel Editor / Golf in Japan

Nestled in the Tohoku region of Japan, Yamagata Prefecture is a hidden gem for golfers and travelers alike. Known for its lush landscapes, hot springs, and cultural richness, Yamagata offers a memorable blend of relaxation, adventure, and indulgence. Here's what you need to know to make the most of it.

Nestled in the captivating landscape of northeastern Kyushu, Oita Prefecture beckons travelers with its breathtaking scenery and rich cultural offerings, just a short 90-minute flight from the bustling metropolis of Tokyo. Embraced by majestic mountains, Oita boasts an impressive 70% forest cover, inviting visitors to immerse themselves in Japan's pristine natural beauty. Renowned worldwide for its renowned hot springs, Oita's crown jewel, Beppu, epitomizes opulent indulgence, offering an array of luxurious experiences. Discover an array of mesmerizing locales, each an oasis of relaxation and rejuvenation amidst stunning surroundings. For aficionados of golf, Oita presents a golfer's paradise, boasting an impressive collection of 22 exceptional courses. After a thrilling round, unwind in the tranquility of this serene prefecture and truly relax. Immersed in a tapestry of vibrant history, Oita Prefecture beckons explorers to delve into its culturally significant destinations. For enthusiasts of Japanese heritage, a pilgrimage to Nakatsu, Kitsuki, Usuki, Hiji-machi, Taketa, and Usuki is a must, each bearing the noble vestiges of castles and castle ruins that echo tales of a bygone era. Nakatsu, the birthplace of Fuzukawa Yukichi, a luminary scholar credited as a founding figure of "Modern Japan" and whose visage graces the esteemed 10,000 yen note, stands as a testament to the province's historical significance. Among the hallowed sites that grace Oita's landscape are the venerable Fuki-ji Temple, the venerable Usa Shrine, the exquisite Peacock Buddhist Altar Fitting, and the remarkable Usuki Stone Buddhas. For those seeking communion with nature, the winding hiking trails of Mount Yufu and Mount Kuju promise breathtaking panoramas, while encounters with wildlife at the African Safari Park and the mesmerizing marine life at the Umi-Tamago (Sea Egg) Aquarium offer unforgettable experiences. As the undisputed onsen capital of Japan, Oita presents an irresistible array of hot-spring retreats. Beyond the traditional hot springs, indulge in therapeutic soaks in rejuvenating mud, invigorating sand, or soothing steam baths. With

an abundance of choices, discover the allure of hot springs in Beppu City, Yufu City, Kokonoe Town, Taketa City, and Hita City, each promising a unique and blissful immersion into the art of relaxation. Oita Prefecture pulsates with captivating events all year round, reaching their zenith in February and July, when the region comes alive with vibrant celebrations. For an unforgettable experience, venture to Beppu City in early April to partake in the beloved Beppu Hatto Hot Spring Festival and the enchanting Oka Castle Cherry Blossom Festival. Delve into the province's rich history by immersing yourself in traditional festivities such as the Nakatsu Gion, Hita Gion Festival, Tenjin Festival, the mesmerizing Tsukumi Traditional Fan Dance, and the evocative Onta Folk Pottery Festival. For enthusiasts of Japanese dolls, February heralds a plethora of doll festivals across the prefecture, offering an immersive glimpse into this fascinating art form. In the midst of January, Bungotakada City reverberates with the Horan Enya festival, where local fishermen embark on a symbolic journey to Wakamiya Hachiman, invoking blessings for safety and a fruitful catch. A highlight of this jubilee is the daring spectacle of young men fearlessly plunging into the frigid river to retrieve ceremonial gifts from onlooking spectators. Oita Prefecture boasts a culinary tradition that tantalizes the palate with its unique flavors. Distinguished as the top producer of dried mushrooms in Japan, Oita takes pride in its shiitake mushrooms, renowned for their robust size, rich flavor, and enticing aroma. Equally celebrated is the esteemed Oita Bungo Beef, prized for its exquisite marbling, velvety texture, and unparalleled taste. Savoring seafood in Oita is an experience to relish, with an array of delicacies such as mackerel, blowfish, Shiroshita-Karei (marbled flounder), Hamo (conger pike), Ayu (sweetfish), Japanese spiny lobster, sea bream, oysters, softshell turtles, cutlass fish, tiger prawns, amberjack, and halibut gracing the local cuisine. The province also boasts a diverse array of sake and shochu. Mugi shochu, a homegrown libation, finds favor among locals when paired with a hint of freshly squeezed kabosu citrus. To truly savor Oita's essence, indulge in the comforting staple dish, dango jiru. This savory dumpling soup, crafted from salted flour, taro, vegetables, miso, shiitake mushrooms, and edible burdock, encapsulates the heart and soul of Oita's culinary prowess. Blessed with an ideal climate for grape cultivation, Oita fosters a flourishing vineyard culture, epitomized by the Ajimu Budoshu Koubou, a charming

boutique winery nestled deep within the picturesque Usa countryside. Since its establishment in 1964, this esteemed winery has cultivated a legacy of crafting wines that embody the essence of the region. Proudly offering a repertoire of 22 distinct wine varieties, including chardonnay, sauvignon, and merlot, Ajimu Budoshu Koubou invites enthusiasts to partake in tastings and acquisitions. Their collection extends beyond wines to encompass brandy and fortified wines, each meticulously crafted and available for purchase. Noteworthy among their offerings is the Ajimu Sparkling Wine, undergoing a second fermentation in the bottle, imparting a delightful effervescence and unique character. Renowned for their distinctiveness, these wines stand among the finest in Japan, making for an exceptional souvenir or cherished gift, encapsulating the essence of Oita's viticulture. Oita has some great courses suit every level of golfer and budget, check out a few of our recommended courses as played by our customers: 9. Shiraki Golf Club 8. Oita Country Club Yoshino Course 7. Usuki Country Club 6. Oita Sunny Hill Golf Club 5. Yufu Kogen Golf Club 4. Oita Chuo Golf Club 3. Nakatsu Country Club 2. Amase Onsen Country Club 1. Beppu Golf Club

Tokyo ? The quickest way to get to Oita Prefecture is by plane. From the Tokyo Haneda Airport, it takes 1.5 hours and 2 hours from Tokyo Narita Airport. If you choose to travel by train, the Shikansen (transfer at Kokura) ? Express (Nippo Main Line) route will take you to the prefecture in 6 hours and 30 minutes. Osaka ? There are three ways to get to Oita from Osaka -- by plane, bus and ferry. Air travel, which is the fastest, takes 1 hour, while bus is 10 hours and 30 minutes, and ferry 11 hours and 45 minutes. By subscribing you agree to our privacy policy

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## Tofu adventures in Oita, Japan - Trinidad and Tobago Newsday

PAUL HADDEN From the journal: May, 2019 It's a beautiful spring morning here in Oita, Japan. I am standing in the empty car park of my school, leaning on the cool frame of my little Honda Life, a car so small that it would be banned from the roads back home in Trinidad, and am waiting on my friend to come and pick me up. I have just finished chatting with my family back home, and because of the time difference our nights and days are totally switched and as I am preparing to begin my day, they are getting ready to go to sleep. It's funny how the sounds of the tiny tree frogs in the background always seem to make me homesick. Here, as dawn continues to break and the last of the twinkling stars disappear into the purple sky, it is not the tree frogs, but the sounds of the chirping cicadas that will keep me company. If there was one sound that truly captures the essence of the Japanese summer, it is the cicada. As one of colleagues loudly exclaimed in the staffroom the other day, ?

Natsu toieba, semi da!? which can be taken to mean something like, ?Summer and cicadas sure do go hand in hand!? The scenery in the mountains of Oita, Japan. Photo courtesy Paul Hadden - That I am waiting in this empty car park on a Saturday morning is all due to a spontaneous invitation from one of my work colleagues to join her on a road trip to get, ?some of the best tofu in all of Oita.? Shocked that I had never tried tofu before arriving in Japan, my colleague, Takeshita-san, told me that she knew of a hidden gem up in the mountains on the way to one of Oita's most famous waterfalls (Haraji falls, which is also known as the Niagara falls of Japan) The tofu shop, which apparently is frequented by bikers in the area, is known for their delicious age-tofu (fried-tofu), tofu purin (tofu pudding) as well as hot, fresh tofu donuts. I immediately jumped at the opportunity. A hidden gem of a tofu restaurant in the mountains of Oita, Japan, which is frequented by bikers. - ?Ohayou gozaimasu!? yells out Takeshita-san from her massive four wheel drive Suburu, as she pulls up next to my dinky little Honda Life. ?

Ikimashou ka?? ?Shall we go?? she says, and with a resounding ?Yes!? I hop into her car and off we go to find this hidden gem of a tofu shop. Along the way and throughout all of the winding

mountain paths, Takeshita-san chats to me all about life in Oita, and I try my best to concentrate on what she is saying even though I am completely wrapped up in the magnificent scenery which surrounds us. Here is a wild overwhelming beauty of ancient mountains punctuated with waterfalls, sprawling rice paddies, and roads lined with giant pine trees. Takeshita-san is a biker herself, and has been holding her own as a female biker in a world which is mostly dominated by men, most of whom tend to be a bit rough around the edges. This has never held her back, she explains, and since she was in her early twenties, her trusty motorcycle has taken her all the way from the frozen tip of northern Japan, right to the bottom of Kyushu island. The thought of a tofu restaurant being a meeting point for bikers strikes me as a little odd, but then again I know that there are so many things about my own cultural quirks that strike them as bizarre too. If it's one thing that living abroad teaches you, it's that most things are all about perspective. One man's weird is definitely another's normal. The menu and a fresh batch of tofu. Photo courtesy Paul Hadden - After a few hours (yes, a few hours ? Oita is huge and most outings warrant a road trip) we arrive at the restaurant. A bustling wooden cabin nestled next to a modest Buddhist temple whose car park is chock full of motorcycles. As we walk towards the restaurant, I notice many people filling bottles with water that seems to be sprouting from a large jagged rock right by the entrance. ? Savoury tofu pudding. - Waki-mizu desu!? explains Takeshita-san, ?It's fresh mountain spring-water!? This already bodes well. We join the queue, fill up our thermoses with fresh spring water and then make our way to the entrance. As we reach the kitchen to place our orders I can see several strange looking machines in the background which obviously are the things responsible for transforming the humble soy bean into all the different kinds of tofu treats that this place is known for. We order a few things to share: fried tofu pieces with soy sauce, ginger, and fish flakes, tofu pudding sweetened with kinako, or roasted soybean powder, and of course a dozen warm tofu donuts. All of this we eat with fresh glasses of spring mountain water and hot coffee. We pick up our chopsticks, shout out ? itadakimasu!?, a Japanese phrase said before eating to give thanks for the meal, and dig in to our tofu treats... (to be continued)

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As a former gateway to the West, the seaside town of Oita has many religious and European artifacts as well as a wealth of museums and art galleries. Filled with plenty to see, do and discover, it's the perfect place to explore a different side of Japan. Oita is easily accessed by plane, car or train from all across Japan. Oita can be reached from Tokyo's Haneda Airport in less than two hours and Osaka's Itami Airport in one hour. It is then a one-hour bus ride from the airport into the city. By train, Oita Station is served by the Kyudai, Hohi and Nippo lines, with access to much of Kyushu and wider Japan. With the influence of trading ships from the West and the conversion of a local feudal lord in the 16th century, many people in Oita became Christians. When Japan prohibited the religion in the 17th century, many believers were forced to renounce their faith to avoid execution, or practice their faith in secret. The Oita Christian Martyrs Memorial Park is a tribute to the 200 local people who died as Christian martyrs in the 17th century. The figures remembered here decided they'd rather face execution than denounce their faith. Oita Prefectural Art Museum's 5,000 works include pieces designated Important Cultural Properties of Japan. Dive deep into the world of the local artistic talent, by visiting the Oita Prefectural Art Museum, a modern structure built in 2015 that houses work by artists inspired by the local way of life. Whether you want to unwind while watching fish and other sea creatures or interacting with them in shallow pools, Oita Marine Palace Aquarium "Umitamago" offers something for everyone. There are many performances and interactive sessions where you can watch dolphins, sea lions and other animals in action and find out more about their living environments. Opened as a means to manage the local monkey population and their natural environment, Takasakyama Natural Zoological Garden is a great way of seeing a typical day of the 1,000 wild monkeys. Don't miss feeding time, a daily highlight of the monkey garden. After feeding these fuzzy locals, you can watch them run around, groom each other and sunbathe. Follow one of the park's

walking courses to see the more of the monkeys. \* The information on this page may be subject to change due to COVID-19. out of found this information helpful. Oita City Tourist Association Please Choose Your Language Browse the JNTO site in one of multiple languages

# Ultimate Yufuin Travel Guide: Discovering the Hidden Onsen Gem of Kyushu

Yufuin reminds you of that charming rural countryside vibe you always see in anime. Tucked away in the Oita Prefecture of Kyushu island, Japan lies the quaint and charming little town of Yufuin, known for its gorgeous idyllic vistas, intricate traditional Japanese architecture, and the most famous of all, the soothing and enlightening hot springs (Onsen). Whether it's a weekend getaway or a quick day trip, tourists and locals alike flock to Yufuin to unwind from the chaos of city life. Even if you do not intend on visiting the Onsens, Yufuin still has plenty to offer from the serene Kinrin lake to the charming and Ghibli-esque Floral Village. So let's start exploring and join me in this Yufuin Travel Guide as we venture through this lovely little town.

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A luxury dining train, the Aru Ressha by JR Kyushu. By far the easiest way to get to Yufuin is by train. Assuming you are starting at the city of Fukuoka, board the train at Hakata station on the Yufu line which will bring you directly to Yufuin, from there disembark at Yufuin Station. The journey will take you 2 hours and 15 minutes. It is highly recommended you purchase a JR train pass if you are intending to travel long distances often by train such as from Fukuoka to Yufuin or Fukuoka to Osaka. A JR pass will save you a LOT of money and can be used for all JR trains including the Shinkansen as well as other services like JR busses or JR ferries. There are way too many rail passes to choose from but the ones that are most convenient and apply to Yufuin and the surrounding areas are:

- JR Pass for the whole of Japan - Covers the entirety of Japan
- JR Sanyo-San in-Northern Kyushu Area Pass - Covers the northern/western parts of Kyushu
- JR Kyushu Rail Pass - Covers the entire Kyushu Island

If you are planning on purchasing a pass, be sure to double check which pass is usable in which region as it can be quite confusing. If you have already purchased one of the above rail passes, you will also have access to the Yufuin no Mori Limited Express Train, a famous tourist train built specifically for transporting you to the town of



Yufuin. Note: It is recommended you book your seats for the Yufuin no Mori train in advance, as the tickets sell out quickly. The famous luxury Yufuin no Mori Limited Express train with its distinctive green paint. The Yufuin no Mori Limited Express train runs between Hakata Station and Yufuin Station. The train is very popular among tourists travelling to Yufuin and I would describe it as an attraction in of itself. The train is named after Yufuin (duh!) and it's Mori no Furusato (Forest Hometown) concept. This concept is reflected in the train's decor with the interior being lined with luxurious wooden paneling and large windows providing a scenic and panoramic view of the Kyushu region's towering mountains, calming rivers, and evergreen plains. Another popular luxury train is the Aru Ressha dining train by JR Kyushu which has a Hakata to/from Yufuin. The interior of the Yufuin no Mori train, lounge, seating, and bar. If you have one of the aforementioned Rail passes, you will be able to book a seat free of charge either at the ticket office in Hakata Station, or online via the JR Kyushu Rail Pass Booking website. The timetable of the train is as follows, note that the train from Hakata to Yufuin operates only 3 times a day. \*For the most up to date information visit the [jrkyushu.co.jp](http://jrkyushu.co.jp) \*Note: All of these Ryokans have free private Onsens available for booking! The interior of Ryokan Yuri, the tatami mats are very comfortable. Ryokan Yuri was a pleasant surprise, when walking up to the building I thought I was at the wrong place because it looked like a regular apartment building, however once I stepped inside I was greeted with the kindest and friendliest man ever. Like Japanese people are already a friendly bunch, but this man was like an uncle I never knew I needed. Anyways hotel looks to be a family run business, and it shows (in a good way). The rooms are clean and the atmosphere was charming and pleasant. The breakfast (not included) was delicious and healthy. The price was not too expensive either. If you are looking for a more affordable Ryokan option, Ryokan Yuri is your go to hotel. You can read my review for Ryokan Yuri here: [Ryokan Yuri Review](#) Google Maps Rating: 4.6 / 5 Location: 2968-10 Yufuincho Kawakami, Yufu, Oita 879-5102, Japan Phone: +81 97 784 3128 Pros: Near the train station easy access to main walking street Every room has river and mountain views, the same goes for the dining room Clean rooms with good heating and ac The friendliest staff anywhere, the owners make you feel like you are part of their family. Delicious and healthy traditional Japanese style breakfast Cons: None

that I can think of, perhaps the Ryokan feels more modern and less traditional than you would hope, but that is just a nitpick Yufuin Baien's hot springs has a nice open air design Yufuin Baien is pretty big compared to other Ryokan options and here there is an emphasis on natural beauty. The hotel is surrounded by gorgeous plum and cherry trees as well as offering views of Mount Yufu. I like the addition of free flowing alcohol during the late evening, a perfect way to relax after a long day of exploring the lovely town of Yufuin. Google Maps Rating: 4.5 / 5 Location: 2106-2 Yufuincho Kawakami, Yufu, Oita 879-5102, Japan Phone: +81 97 728 8288 Pros: Family onsen that you can use without booking Free flowing, self-service alcohol drinks at night Traditional hotel design and emphasis on natural beauty The rooms are big and spacious, very clean Cons: Quite far away from the train station and walking street Tell me that that onsen doesn't look cozy Ikkoten is expensive. Like really expensive, but this is due to the immense luxury that this Ryokan provides. The rooms here are large they include an open-air bath for you to relax in. Though if you are planning to stay here, I recommend you plan your trip to Yufuin wisely as this hotel is located a long ways away from the town center, if you stay here you are staying here to escape life and reality to be in the natural wilderness. Which isn't a bad thing as you can bathe your soul in the Zen and tranquil landscape and designs of Ikkoten. Google Maps Rating: 4.4 / 5 Location: 302-7 Yufuincho Kawakami, Yufu, Oita 879-5102, Japan Phone: +81 97 728 8815 Pros: A luxury hot spring inn in Yufuin to enjoy and relax to your heart's content Large and relaxing rooms with an open-air bath Breakfasts and meals are served in a private room Full of Zen and tranquility, nature is the highlight of Ikkoten Cons: Incredibly far from the train station and town center, if you stay here, you are coming to Yufuin to enjoy the nature and escape city/town life Can be incredibly expensive I love the black and white colors of Yawaragi-no-Sato Yadoya, it looks clean and modern Yawaragi-no-Sato Yadoya might have a hard to pronounce name for us gaijins (foreigners) but this Ryokan is superb, with excellent service from the staff and delicious foods for you to try. The hotel is also close to the walking street and various attractions, this is a huge plus. I quite like the aesthetic of this hotel as well, managing to maintain the traditional Japanese charm while also modernizing the design language. The only minus is that this hotel is a little bit far from the train station so I would recommend you find a taxi to

take you to and from here. Google Maps Rating: 4.6 / 5 Location: 2717-5 Yufuincho Kawakami, Yufu, Oita 879-5102, Japan Phone: +81 97 728 2828 Pros: Excellent staff, very friendly, responsive and polite The location is close to the main walking street and attractions such as Kinrin Lake Western and traditional rooms are available for you to choose from Delicious foods that uses high quality ingredients Both private and public onsens are available Cons: A little far from the train station Did you spot that retro sound system? A blend of old and new Yurari Rokumyo is the highest rated Ryokan on this list and it might be the best as well. The whole annex is very beautifully decorated with such intricate detail giving the whole place such a wholesome and comforting vibe. Plus the staff is super friendly and kind. The location is also close to the walking street so it's easy to explore the town of Yufuin. The only downside is that no food is provided, meaning you'll have to find your own food. Google Maps Rating: 4.8 / 5 Location: 3090-1 Yufuincho Kawakami, Yufu, Oita 879-5102, Japan Phone: +81 97 785 2200 Pros: Excellent hospitality from the staff, probably the most fluent English speaker in Yufuin The hotel is very beautifully decorated with incredible attention to detail. Super relaxing and home-y vibe Spacious room but all the amenities such as a living room, toilet, and outdoor onsen and shower area Good location, located near the walking street and the train station Cons: No food is provided, and since the restaurants and shops here close early, it might be difficult to find something to eat The train station looks like a top hat not gonna lie Unfortunately my exploration grinded to a halt as soon as I stepped foot outside of the JR Yufuin train station. Upon my arrival the clouds darkened and heavy rain started pouring. Needless to say, my family and I quickly had to haul ourselves and our luggage to our ryokan. On that note, all of the sunny photos you see are from the second day we were in Yufuin. What I will say though, when I saw the train station from the outside, the town immediately gave off a charming vibe. I feel like this vibe can be felt in every rural Japanese town, but something about Yufuin is just different. The main road of Yufuin is long Directly in front of the main station is a long stretch of road that divides into many other stretches of roads. Exploration proved difficult due to the aforementioned rain but I could spot mainly cafe's and souvenir/snack shops selling local favorites. The main road is not the main shopping highlight of Yufuin however, that title goes to Yunotubo Street which is a little bit further

down the road, You'll know when you're there when you spot B-Speak, a famous cake shop that I will talk about later. You can spot a lot of these shops selling your typical Japanese foods like soba noodles or udon. There are surprisingly not that many restaurants on this road, only a handful of shops selling typical Japanese lunch set menus (Teishoku), although I did spot some Udon, and grilled meat or Yakiniku restaurants. Actually on the subject of Yakiniku, I actually had it for dinner on my first day at Yufuin and you know what? They have HORSE MEAT! No kidding, you can order horse meat like any other regular cuts of marinated meat. Of course, I ordered a serving and honestly? It tastes like beef, I could barely tell the difference. Interesting, if you're feeling adventurous then you can try ordering it. It does feel morally wrong as the next day I saw a horse drawn carriage just casually strolling through the street? Horse meat aside, a restaurant you truly cannot miss is Yufu Mabushi Shin, a clay pot rice restaurant that I will tell you about later in this article. A canal runs through the town, it looks overgrown but that just adds to the charm. You'll definitely notice the nature and greenery while you're here. I couldn't help but to stop every few steps and just admire the gargantuan mountains in the distance and the lush green trees and bushes dotted all around the town. While I was there it was quite foggy so I couldn't get a clear picture of the mountains but hopefully when it's your time to visit the skies will be clear. For you Ghibli fans, this is the place to go to. If the picturesque scenic rural Japanese landscapes didn't already remind you of classic Japanese films like Studio Ghibli's Ponyo or My Neighbor Totoro then surely the Totoro Donguri No Mori will, a souvenir store selling all manner of Studio Ghibli merchandise. The store is hard to miss as it sits near the beginning of Yunotubo Street just past B-Speak. Unfortunately I did not get a chance to enter the store and peruse the wares, but seeing the large crowd gathering in front of the store is already a good indicator of how popular this place is. I don't know why I just like this picture, maybe because of the wholesome couple walking down the street together. The town just has a really cute aesthetic. Although there are many roads and corners to explore, the main activity is centered at the main road and Yunotubo street. But that is not a bad thing as you could easily spend an entire day just walking around, eating, taking photos, shopping, and much more. And with this being a food blog, you bet I spent a lot more time eating

than shopping. Yufuin is a small town so admittedly there aren't that many things to do. The attractions that are present are mostly themed around nature or the charming little countryside town aesthetic. Honestly, Kinrin lake would've looked better without this building out of the way? Kinrin Lake is a scenic basin that sits at the very end of the Yunotubo walking street surrounded by natural lush flora and fauna. In the early hours of the day, the whole lake will be covered by a thick mist and the atmosphere will be eerily creepy yet beautiful. There sits an elongated building at the far end of the lake which I honestly think kind of ruins the view but that's ok. You have to politely wait your turn before taking a picture at the viewpoint! When I went there were many tourists, all cramming in at one are trying to get a picture. There was even a group of girls that brought a whole setup making TikTok content. I stumbled across an old Chinese lady who I assume travelled alone and she asked me to take a picture of her as she believed I was a photographer due to the camera I was holding. After our little modeling session, she thanked me profusely in multiple languages, from Mandarin, to Japanese, to English. I tried damn hard to take good photos for that auntie, I hope she likes them. The birds atop of this torii gate make this look very ominous Kinrin lake stretches along a walking path that you can take, at the end of the walking path there is a small greenery and park that you can sit and leisure around, toilets are also available for you. At the far end a mini torii gate can be spotted that a lot of visitors missed. Kinrin Lake is a must see attraction in Yufuin particularly if you enjoy nature and scenic views. It's hard to miss as well as you will naturally come across the location while walking along the Yunotubo shopping street. Never have I expected to see a church right in the middle of the rural Japanese countryside The Yufuin Stained Glass Museum is an interesting beast, the building is a church which houses a large collection of stained glass works from all around the world, over 2000 pieces of stained glass artworks! Another fun thing is that the museum offers a workshop for you to make your own stained glass art, the time you'll need is about an hour and a half and the price will be around 3000 - 5000 JYP depending on the size and complexity of your design. You're not allowed to take pictures inside but these look absolutely stunning If you enjoy getting your hands dirty and to express your creativity then the Yufuin Stained Glass Museum is definitely a place you should check out. There is also a gift shop for you to buy

souvenirs or gifts for you or your friends and family. The only downside was that you are not allowed to take photos inside. You can't miss it when there is literally a giant sign that says "Yufuin Floral Village". Entering Yufuin Floral Village feels like you are stepping into a Studio Ghibli film, the village is a collection of souvenir shops and cafes all decorated with beautiful flowers and greenery. The buildings are made out of bricks like in the Three Little Pigs fairy tale, with wooden doors, chimneys, and corrugated iron windows. It's like I've been transported to another country. There are many tight alleys for you to explore and even a small zoo-like area where you can pet animals. The shops here mostly sell random plushies and dolls, I remember there was a shop selling Tom and Jerry merchandise of all things. There is also a building full of cafes and food where you can enjoy traditional Japanese sweets. Even the pond looks completely out of place in Japan. The highlight of Yufuin Floral Village is undoubtedly its garden, it is decorated with a miniature pond and colorful flowers that changes with the season. This area is where a lot of visitors take their photos so it might be crowded. The pond even has ducks floating around enjoying their day. If you are a huge fan of fairytales or classic Ghibli films like My Neighbour Totoro, then the Yufuin Floral Village is right up your alley. Just imagine you on that train seeing the beautiful mountain pass by. While on your way to Yufuin via the Yufuin no Mori train you'll surely spot the towering Mount Yufu. This gorgeous mountain is made up of 2 peaks, the east and west peak. The east peak comes in at 1,584 meters tall while the west peak is 1,538 meters tall. A popular activity here is hiking up the mountain, don't be afraid or intimidated as the trail is actually well maintained. Once you reach the peak you will be rewarded with the stunning view of the town of Yufuin and its surrounding areas. You actually get the choice of which peak to ascend, the east peak is more suitable for beginners and will take about 2 - 3 hours, the west peak on the other hand is more challenging, forcing you to climb your way up and use chains to aid in supporting your trek. If you got time and are looking for an adventure, Mount Yufu is a must see and a must do activity while you are in Yufuin. If you are looking for a tour to ease your planning stresses or just want to take a day trip to try out the onsens, this Beppu Onsen and Yufuin Spa Town One Day Private Trip from Fukuoka will bring you to 2 of Japan's most famous Onsen towns, Beppu and Yufuin. The private tour will bring you to the Hells of Beppu, a

place of scenic beauty where you can enjoy dipping your toes into the various hotsprings, as well as dropping you off at various locations in Yufuin for you to explore. If you book at the link above, you can enjoy the best discounts and prices available, book now to kickstart your hotspring getaway! While Yufuin may be a small town there is no shortage of things to eat. From simple and delicious pastries and cakes, to full on Japanese Yakiniku barbecue. I would advise you to have your dinners early however, as the shops here close pretty early, at about 7-8pm you can already see restaurants and shops closing for the day. You could imagine it was quite a surprise for me when I went looking for dinner after my relaxing late evening onsen bath only to find out that almost every restaurant is already closed. It must be hard to keep track of all those clay pots The most popular restaurant in Yufuin definitely has to be Yufu Mabushi Shin, who are serving deliciously sizzling hot claypot rice to hungry customers for years. There are only 3 items on they are all variations of claypot rice, you get a choice of Beef, Chicken, or Eel. The eating experience is also quite interesting as there is a 3 step method to enjoying your meal. I guarantee you, you might not see it but there is rice underneath that layer of beef I've only had the beef option but it was absolutely delicious, imagine the most tender slice of beef you've ever had, now image the rice beneath soaking up all the delicious meaty juices. I've actually reviewed this place on another blog post, in it I talked in more detail about the eating experience as well as the taste. Yufu Mabushi Shin Details Location: 5-3 Yufuincho Kawakita, Yufu, Oita 879-5114, Japan Phone: +81 97 784 5825 Opening Hours: 10:30?AM - 7:30?PM | Mon - Sun You can read my review for Yufumabushi Shin here: [Yufumabushi Shin Claypot Rice Review](#) So many options to choose from While walking along the busy Yunotsubo market street you'll come across a lone stall selling various types of deep fried patties also known as Japanese Croquettes. While Croquettes can easily be found all over Japan, I don't see any that has the label of 'Gold Ribbon?'. That's right, there was a national competition for the best croquette and apparently this won the gold medal! There are many different types of croquettes to try, the Crab Cream in particular looked very interesting, but personally, I was debating between the Pumpkin and Gold Medal one. Fried golden crispy and absolutely delicious I was skeptical at first but I decided to get the Gold Medal Croquette anyway out of curiosity. When I took that first bite, i'll admit that it was

totally different from what I was expecting. I thought it was going to be like a beef patty or a hamburger steak but no, it was soft, and really creamy. The crunchy outer shell was excellent, hot and fresh, as for the filling, I could taste a strong peppery flavor as well as the potatoes, not much of the beef is present unfortunately. All in all I quite like it, but I wouldn't give this a gold medal sadly. Still good though.

**Yufuin Kinsho Croquettes Details** Location: 1079-8 Yufuincho Kawakami, Yufu, Oita 879-5102, Japan Phone: +81 97 728 8691 Opening Hours: 9:00AM - 5:30PM | Mon - Sun You can already tell just by looking at it, the cake is really light and fluffy Another must try snack (or in this case dessert) to try in Yufuin is their famous roll cakes. A sweet and fluffy egg cake rolled and filled with the most decadent cream you'll ever have. The cake is really fluffy, perhaps maybe too fluffy because as you don't even need to chew, I bet an old person who had lost all their teeth can enjoy this cake. The cake does have a slight eggy flavor to it, not too pungent but you'd know that egg was a main ingredient. The cream was also delightful, airy and fluffy with a slight milky and vanilla taste. This dessert is famous in the area and one such place you must try it at is Milch and B-Speak, these two are cafe's that serve up the best version of this dessert. WARNING! I hate to have to talk negatively about a store especially in Japan where everyone is super kind and are immensely dedicated to their craft. But there is a roll cake shop just a few steps away from the train station, Yufufu Yufuin Ekimae, that is just really bad. The 1.8 star review on Google Maps isn't lying, it's not because the cakes were pastries where bad, no they were actually very delicious, but the service is horrible. The owner is grumpy, rude, and incredibly unfriendly towards foreign visitors. In fact, in all of my experiences of traveling Japan, he was the only rude person I have come across.

**Milch Details** Location: 3015-1 Yufu, Oita 879-5102, Japan Phone: +81 97 728 2800 Opening Hours: 10:30AM - 5:30PM | Mon - Sun

**B-Speak Details** Location: 3040-2 Yufuincho Kawakami, Yufu, Oita 879-5102, Japan Phone: +81 97 728 2166 Opening Hours: 10:00AM - 5:00PM | Mon - Sun

This is the private onsen at Ryokan Yuri, I got this all to myself hehe The onsen experience may not be as simple as you think it is. There are a few steps to follow before dipping your toes into the hot bath. Firstly an Onsen is not meant for cleaning your body, it is meant to relax your soul. The water will be HOT so take a moment to prepare yourself by dipping your toes slowly



into the water. Once you are in only stay for about 10-15 minutes, or until you start sweating. The temperature of the water is around 39°C - 42°C. Warning: Staying in the onsen for too long can cause dehydration and you could even faint in the water. The whole experience is incredibly relaxing and satisfying, you'll feel like every ache and pain in your body slowly healing. There are actually a few benefits to soaking your body in an onsen bath: Increase Blood Circulation: Natural elements and minerals in the water get absorbed into our bodies and increase blood flow. Reduce Stress: A nice hot bath has the obvious effect of reducing stress in your mind and your muscles. Relieve Pain: This is a bit of a cheat, the hot water has a numbing effect on our pain and aching joints. It doesn't really heal them but acts more so as a painkiller. Though that doesn't stop placebo from making you believe that you are fully healed. Treat Skin Problems: If you want beautiful clean skin then the minerals in the onsen will provide you with that, this is also the reason why onsens are popular with local Japanese women. If you are in a private onsen it doesn't really matter if you follow the etiquette or not because no one will ever know, although following onsen etiquettes will significantly improve your enjoyment of the whole experience. If you are in a public onsen however, please follow these etiquettes: Shower before entering: As previously mentioned, the onsen is not for cleaning your body, that's why there is a shower for you located right next to the onsen pool. Here soap, shampoo, and conditioners are provided for you. Take a quick shower to clean your body and avoid polluting the pool with your bodily oils and dirt. No clothing: Onsens are a completely nude affair, baskets will be provided for you to store your clothes and belongings, Onsens are also gender segregated so there is no need to feel embarrassed. Cover tattoos: If you have a tattoo try to cover it up as tattoos in Japan are associated with gangs and criminals and can make fellow onsen goers feel uncomfortable. Be respectful: Keep noise down and avoid splashing the water like you are in the swimming pool, also avoid using your phone or doing anything that can disturb others. Watch the time: Again, as previously mentioned, you should only spend somewhere around 15 minutes in the onsen. Wash your body afterwards: This is optional but highly recommended as you would want to rinse your body clean and shower a little bit with cold water to freshen yourself up from all that sweat. Don't mix hot and cold water: Don't mix the water from the showers into the onsen pool as

this will affect the temperature and ruin the experience for other patrons. Know the towels: Small towels are provided to dry your body but they are not meant for covering your private parts. If you follow these simple onsen rules then you will surely be having a greater experience in enjoying the hot springs. Note: Feel free to edit this itinerary as you wish according to your preferences, this is only a suggestion where I try to cover all the major attractions and things to do so that you can make the most of your time in Yufuin.

**Day 1 Morning (9:00AM - 12:00PM)** Arrive in Yufuin via train at Yufuin Station and check in to your hotel or ryokan. Explore the town of Yufuin from the train station through the Yunotubo walking street. Stop by B-Speak to have a cup of coffee or tea and try out their famous cake roll.

**Afternoon (12:00PM - 5:00PM)** Try out all the various street foods or have lunch at a local restaurant serving traditional Japanese cuisine. Visit Yufuin Floral Village and Kinrin Lake.

**Evening (5:00PM - 8:00PM)** Trek to a scenic viewpoint such as Mount Yufu to watch the sunset. Have dinner at a Yufu Mabushi Shin to try out their famous clay pot rice. Settle down for the night and enjoy the relaxing onsen bath at your hotel or ryokan.

**Day 2 Morning (7:00AM - 12:00PM)** Wake up and enjoy a deliciously healthy traditional Japanese breakfast at your hotel or ryokan.

**Optional:** Enjoy another relaxing onsen bath to start your day. Rent a bike or walk around the town to see the beautiful scenery and experience the serene landscapes of the town.

**Afternoon (12:00PM - 5:00PM)** Visit Yufuin Stained Glass Museum and enjoy the local artwork. Have lunch at a local restaurant serving traditional Japanese cuisine. Shop for souvenirs, snacks, and merchandise to bring back home to your friends, family, or for yourself.

**Evening (5:00PM - 8:00PM)** Catch a train back home.

**Private Day Trip - Beppu Onsen and Yufuin Spa Town** One Day Private Trip from Fukuoka Rickshaw Experience in Yufuin - Enjoy the scenic views while riding a traditional rickshaw

**ARU RESSHA by JR Kyushu** - Luxury dining train from Hakata to Yufuin and vice versa

**Discounted Tickets** - Browse a variety of attractions, tours, and transports all for a great price

**Tourism Information** - All the information you need when traveling in Japan

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## Things to do in Oita 2024 | Pelago by Singapore Airlines

Sign up to enjoy 10% off your first 2 bookings Oita is a picturesque city located on the island of Kyushu, Japan, known for its stunning natural landscapes and rich cultural heritage. The local currency is the Japanese Yen (JPY), which is widely accepted throughout the city. Oita is famous for its hot springs, or 'onsen', which attract visitors seeking relaxation and rejuvenation. The city is also home to beautiful parks, historical sites, and vibrant markets that showcase the region's unique traditions. With its blend of modern amenities and traditional charm, Oita offers a delightful experience for travelers of all kinds. The best time to visit Oita is during the spring (March to May) and autumn (September to November) when the weather is mild and pleasant. Spring brings cherry blossoms that create a breathtaking landscape, while autumn showcases vibrant foliage. Summer can be hot and humid, making outdoor activities less enjoyable. Winter, although cooler, offers a unique charm with fewer crowds and the opportunity to enjoy hot springs. Overall, the transitional seasons provide the most comfortable conditions for exploring the city. Getting around Oita is convenient, with various transportation options available. The city has a reliable bus system that connects major attractions and neighborhoods. For those who prefer a more personal experience, renting a bicycle is a popular choice, allowing travelers to explore at their own pace. Taxis are also readily available, providing a quick and easy way to navigate the city. Additionally, Oita's compact size makes it easy to walk between many attractions. When visiting Oita, it's essential to try the local onsen etiquette to fully enjoy the hot springs experience. Be sure to carry cash, as some smaller establishments may not accept credit cards. Learning a few basic Japanese phrases can enhance your interactions with locals. Don't miss the chance to explore the nearby Beppu, famous for its hot springs and unique 'hells' tour. Lastly, be respectful of local customs and traditions, as this will enrich your travel experience.

**Japan's Forgotten Tourist Destination | Hidden Gems Japan Guide - YouTube**

## Hidden Gems of Osaka | City Unscripted

October 18, 2024 Every twist and turn in Osaka holds a secret. Hey there! I'm Mia, your go-to for all the hidden gems Osaka has to offer Six years and counting! That's the time I've joyfully spent as a resident of this ever-evolving metropolis. If you're planning to visit Osaka for a day trip or longer, you'd know about its famous attractions. But the real charm lies in its hidden corners. Between the delicious bites to eat and the winding alleyways, every twist and turn here holds secrets waiting to be unraveled. My quest for adventure brought me to this city, and every day I uncover non-touristy things that make me feel like I'm discovering Osaka all over again. Dive into this journey with me, and let's explore the lesser-known treasures of my beloved city. While many Osaka tours naturally gravitate towards the iconic landmarks, visitors can find so much more beyond the usual sights. Think Osaka Castle, Universal Studios Japan, and the mesmerizing view from the Umeda Sky Building's Floating Garden Observatory. These spots are definitely bucket-list-worthy and capture the vibrant essence of Japanese culture. However, if you're looking for a more intimate experience, the real enchantment of Osaka shines brightest in its lesser-known corners. Venturing off the beaten track is where you'll uncover the heart and soul of this city. Every narrow lane, every local eatery, every traditional shop tells a story that most tourists might miss out on. To me, these hidden niches are what make Osaka such a great place to explore and live in. With this guide, I aim to share the best things that might not make it to the regular travel brochures but are absolute must-visits for anyone wanting to experience Osaka's authentic charm. When most people think of Japan, they often picture ancient temples juxtaposed against ultra-modern skyscrapers. In the heart of this vibrant contrast stands Osaka, my adopted home. While not born here, the city's iconic structures and those less frequented have shaped my life in so many profound ways. Osaka Castle isn't just another tourist stop—it's a piece of Japan's epic past come to life. Sure, the towering walls and samurai battles are cool, but the hidden temple grounds are where the real magic happens. I've spent hours soaking up local stories from sweet elderly guides, and it made the place feel so much more alive! The first time I stumbled upon this marvel near one of Osaka's bustling train stations, I

was left awestruck. An actual highway slicing through a building! It seemed straight out of a science fiction tale, but it's just another day in Osaka - a city that harmoniously marries the audacious with the efficient. In Osaka's skyline, the Umeda Sky Building might steal the spotlight with its sleek, futuristic design, but it's Tsutenkaku's old-school charm that really hooks you. It may not be the tallest, but at night, when the city lights sparkle, finding a quiet spot up there feels like touching the heart of Osaka. Not every architectural gem gleams in daylight. Venture into the nightlife of Osaka, and the Misono Building awaits. On the surface, it might look like any other building, but step inside, and it's a labyrinth of bars, eateries, and tiny clubs pulsating with life. It embodies the spirit of Osaka - where traditions meet the contemporary, and every corner has a tale. Experience Osaka like a local through the vibrant nooks and crannies I've come to adore. Dive deep into the heartbeats of these neighborhoods, each one echoing tales of culture, food, fun and history. Not far from the busy tracks of the high-speed bullet train, this residential area near Osaka Station offers a breather. A step away from the beaten path, Nakazakicho feels like a nostalgic journey back in time. Vintage shops, artisan boutiques, and cozy cafes line the streets, making it a personal refuge amid Osaka's relentless energy. This famous alley is a treasure trove of secrets waiting to be uncovered. Some of my fondest memories are of indulging in Osaka's delectable street food here, especially crafting my own Okonomiyaki in intimate local cooking classes. Every corner of this neighborhoods tells a story, and it's no wonder visitors are drawn to its allure. When I'm craving some peace and quiet, Tamatsukuri is my go-to spot. It's near beautiful Buddhist temples and calming onsen waters, giving you that perfect mix of zen and tradition. Plus, the oldest temple around has the coolest stories - it's like stepping into a hidden treasure for history buffs and spiritual explorers! A little slice of Korea right in the heart of Japan! Just a quick hop from JR Tenma Station, this lively neighborhood is packed with the mouthwatering smells of sizzling Korean BBQ, vibrant K-pop tunes blasting from every corner, and colorful shops filled with all the latest Korean goodies. It's a feast for your senses! A district echoing the vibes of the Showa era, Shinsekai stands as a testament to Osaka's rich history. It's also where I often direct friends who want to taste the best kushikatsu in town. Just a stone's throw from Tennoji, this area is a little slice of calm in the hustle of the city! With peaceful

parks perfect for a laid-back stroll and the historic Ikutama Shrine surrounded by beautiful Buddhist temples, it's like stepping into a hidden, spiritual oasis right in the heart of it all! Whenever I'm in the mood for some indie tunes or a night out at a trendy bar, these up-and-coming neighborhoods are my absolute favorites. Picture this: old-school Japanese food stalls right next to modern eateries and cool cafés. It's a perfect blend of tradition and fresh, exciting vibes! Here are some of my favorite street food restaurants and spots that offer a true taste of Osaka's heart and history. Just a short walk from Osaka Castle, this bustling alleyway feels like a step back in time. More than the famed Takoyaki, every bite here, from kushikatsu to local specialties, narrates a tale of Osaka's rich history. In a city where Takoyaki is king, this place takes it to another level! They've mastered the art, crafting each ball with a crispy outside, gooey inside, and a burst of flavor that'll blow your mind. Every bite is like a fun, delicious tribute to Osaka's food scene—pure street food magic you won't forget! Tucked away in a cozy corner, these savory pancakes are like a fun, flavorful journey through Osaka's rich food scene! Each bite bursts with generations of culinary magic, blending tradition and creativity. If you're craving something truly special, this hidden gem is a must-try for any foodie! This little mobile stall, usually parked near the buzz of train stations, is dishing out some of the tastiest fried noodles you'll ever try. And forget about basic Cup Noodles—this is next-level street food magic, packed with flavor and a whole lot of yum! Trust me, you're gonna want seconds! Ditch the usual ramen for a day and dive into the comforting embrace of udon at this local haven. This is what Osaka's authentic food scene looks like: no English instructions, just pure, unadulterated Japanese flavors. Their shoyu ramen? A warm, delicious bowl of Japanese history. Note: This spot is only open from Monday to Friday. Hidden away from the bustling city, this cozy spot feels like a secret doorway to old Japan! With the rich aromas of sizzling sukiyaki and shabu-shabu filling the air, every bite is a delicious journey through tradition. It's the kind of place that makes dining an adventure you'll never forget! Welcome to the birthplace of takoyaki, where they keep it old-school with a soy sauce and dashi batter, no mayo or sauce needed! Packed with ginger and green onions, the flavor really pops. It's a clean, savory bite that takes you back to the dish's roots. If you love takoyaki, this is a must-try! An ode to the octopus in all its glory. Whether you're into grilled skewers



or hearty stews, they've got you covered. Dive into the heart of the city's culinary spirit and savor horumon dishes. It's a testament to the adventurous and innovative spirit of Japanese cuisine. As for the craft beer scene? Let me paint a picture: imagine holding a cold beer from a local bar, wandering Osaka's lively streets, and soaking in the nocturnal symphony. Each eatery I've mentioned isn't just about food but an immersive experience, a dance of flavors, history, and local warmth. Tucked just a stone's throw away from bustling Namba, this charming alley transports me to a time when Osaka was just a budding merchant city. The aroma of ramen broth, the sizzle of yakitori, and the inviting warmth of the shops make it a timeless treasure. While Tachibana sees its fair share of visitors, it's the authentic local atmosphere that resonates with me the most. Here, I've spent many nights laughing with friends at izakayas over drinks and being lured by the ever-enticing smell of delicious food. Sure, some parts of this 2.6km stretch buzz with shoppers, but for me, it's all about the food. Rather than shopping bags, I find my hands full of takoyaki, skewers, and other tasty bites as I weave through its length. When the bustle of the daytime business scene fades, Kitashinchi unveils its gastronomic wonders. Nestled between its more renowned restaurants are tiny gems where I've sat shoulder to shoulder with locals, indulging in comfort dishes that are close to my heart. Away from the tourist circuit, Karako is where I go to taste Osaka in its purest form. From the briny freshness of seafood to the sweetness of age-old candies, it's a sensory journey I cherish. In Osaka, the well-trodden paths offer glimmers of the city's soul, but it's in the quiet alleys and hidden markets where I truly connect with its essence. Join me, and let's savor the stories these streets have to tell. Living in a bustling metropolis like Osaka means that every once in a while, I crave a moment of tranquility. While Osaka might dazzle with its neon and skyscrapers, for me, its soul rests in the quiet corners that remain overshadowed by places like Tokyo. Here are the sacred spaces that have touched my heart and where I find solace in the midst of urban cacophony: Tucked away from the hustle and bustle, this hidden gem is one of Japan's oldest shrines. It's not your usual touristy spot, and that's exactly why I love it! Wandering through its peaceful grounds feels like stepping back in time, offering a little slice of ancient Japan right in the city. It's like a secret escape! Founded by Prince Shotoku, this place feels like a journey back in time! Said to be

Japan's first Buddhist temple, it's peaceful and packed with stories that seem to whisper from the walls. Every visit is an adventure, and I never get tired of wandering through its serene, mysterious halls?it's pure magic! This shrine is like a secret in the heart of the city. The myriad fox statues dedicated to the Inari god always intrigue me. It's a quiet corner where I often retreat to for some introspection. We locals call it the "temple of bones," and it's every bit as intriguing as it sounds! Statues made from the ashes of the deceased tell stories of life, love, and legacy. It's eerie, exciting, and unforgettable?a reminder to live boldly, embrace every moment, and leave a lasting impact. Nestled in the lively Namba district, the giant lion's head stage never ceases to astonish me. The shrine is a delightful paradox, encapsulating Osaka's vibrant spirit that melds tradition with the contemporary. These are the places where I often wander off the beaten path, seeking a deeper connection to my beloved Osaka. They're not just tourist spots, but pockets of serenity and history that echo with stories and silences alike. So if you ever find yourself amidst the rush of Osaka's streets, remember there's a spiritual tapestry waiting to be discovered, just around the corner. While most tourists flock to the big-ticket rides, my heart is with the lesser-known attractions. Hidden gems like "Jurassic Park ? The Ride" and "Hello Kitty's Cupcake Dream" that many visitors overlook are my personal favorites. These, coupled with the unexpected street performances off the beaten path, give me a unique USJ experience. It truly is a touch of Hollywood in Osaka. Don't let the name fool you?this is no ordinary waste facility! With its vibrant, quirky design, it turns something as mundane as waste management into a creative masterpiece. Every visit is a reminder of Osaka's ability to reinvent the everyday, showcasing the city's innovative and artistic spirit. The daytime buzz is cool, but at night? The vibe is next level! With the soft, dim lighting and all that stunning marine life, it's like you've been transported to another world. It's this magical underwater oasis right in the middle of Osaka?totally dreamy and something you won't forget! Manga, anime, and electronics galore! But it's the hidden cafes serving traditional Japanese treats that make me linger. They offer a slice of nostalgia in the midst of all that modernity. Amidst the hustle of Amerikamura, I've found solace in the cozy karaoke bars nestled in its alleys. Singing my heart out, from trending hits to age-old Japanese classics, I connect with the city's rhythmic pulse. One of my favorites is "Moonshine",

tucked away in a narrow lane. Its wooden exterior and dimmed lanterns offer an intimate escape. Whether you're up for a thrilling ride at USJ or a serene evening observing marine life, Osaka has an off-the-beaten-path gem waiting just for you. Dive deep, stay curious, and let the city surprise you at every turn. The heart of Osaka isn't just in its bustling centers. It's in the overlooked lanes, quirky boutiques, and hidden arcades where local life thrives. Forget the mainstream shopping destinations; dive into these favorite hidden gems of mine for an authentic shopping experience. Each shop and shopping street tells a unique tale, and here's where I love to spend my time:

Tucked away from the usual tourist spots, this trendy street in Minami Horie is a treasure trove of cool boutiques. You'll find everything from quirky vintage gems to stylish homewares. It's my go-to for uncovering those rare, unique pieces that totally vibe with my style?shopping here is always an adventure! Tucked away in the lively streets of Namba, this is my absolute go-to spot when I want to dive into Osaka's buzzing food scene. It's not just shopping?it's a full-on adventure! Handmade knives, gorgeous Japanese ceramics, and all the coolest stuff for my kitchen. Seriously, I can't resist! A stone's throw from the crowds of Shinsaibashi, this shopping street is an insider secret I cherish. From budget-friendly finds to specialty kitchen supplies shops, it's where locals like me shop. I'm a total music lover, and this place is my little slice of heaven! Tucked away in the heart of Namba, this cozy record shop is my happy place. With rows and rows of vinyl?from smooth jazz to rock legends?it's like a treasure hunt every time, and I'm always discovering something cool! Tucked away in the heart of Shinsaibashi, this place is like a mini escape from the city's buzz! It's not just shopping?it's an adventure! You'll find cool fashion, cozy book nooks, and lush greenery all around. Every corner feels fresh, stylish, and full of surprises. It's a total vibe! When in Amerikamura, I often find myself lost in the aisles of DEEP. A hidden gem for sneaker aficionados, this shop showcases some of the rarest kicks in the city. Each of these shopping streets and shops is more than just a place to spend money. They're where I reconnect with the soul of Osaka and discover stories embedded in every item. So, when in Osaka, shop like a local and uncover the hidden tales that make this city truly special. Living in Osaka as an expat, I often get asked: "Are there a lot of foreigners in Osaka?" My answer? It's a beautiful mix. Over the last few years, I've

noticed a delightful uptick in the number of visitors from around the world, making our vibrant city their home, even if just for a short while. However, when pitted against colossal magnets like Tokyo, we're still a tad under the radar?and honestly, I think it's for the best. Being slightly overshadowed by Tokyo's colossal fame has given Osaka its unique identity. Here, the fusion of cultures feels more intimate. Strolling the streets, it's not uncommon for me to hear a mix of languages, see a blend of traditional and contemporary fashion, or stumble upon restaurants offering dishes inspired by corners of the world I've only dreamt of visiting. But even with this infusion of global influences, Osaka retains its distinct flavor. Foreigners who visit or decide to reside here often tell me they appreciate this balance?the opportunity to experience the true essence of Japan, complemented by pockets of familiarity. It's a place where traditional tea ceremonies coexist harmoniously with expat-run cafes, where ancient temples can be found a stone's throw away from global stores. In essence, while the world has undoubtedly visited and left its mark on Osaka, our heart remains profoundly local. So, for those considering a visit or stay, expect an embrace of both the global and the familiar, wrapped up in the warm, vibrant spirit that is quintessentially Osaka. To me, Osaka isn't just another pin on the world map; it's where my heart truly resides. With every step, be it towards the towering Tsutenkaku or down an unsuspecting alley in Ura Namba, I'm reminded of why I fell in love with this city. It's not about the giant head sculptures, the tallest buildings, or even the most famed tourist spots. No, it's about the undiscovered stories, the hidden shops, and those quiet moments when the city speaks directly to your soul. Over the years, I've come to realize that Osaka's magic isn't just in its landmarks. It's in the aroma that floats from a tucked-away eatery, the faint laughter echoing from a distant bar, and the soft glow of a ferris wheel as the day comes to a close. It's in the way history and the present coalesce at every turn, beckoning the curious to delve deeper. To all those considering a visit, I'd say this: don't merely come to Osaka. Engage with it. Walk its streets, taste its delicacies, shop at its local stores, and immerse in its stories. And if you ever need a companion to discover the best things this city has to offer, know that I am always here, eager to share my treasured spots and memories. So, pack your bags, and as you plan your trip, dream of the adventures we'll embark on together. From the bustling day trips to the serene

moments under the Tsutenkaku Tower, I promise it's a journey you won't forget. I hope you'll follow some of my Osaka travel tips! Hey curious traveler, visiting Osaka soon?

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# Discovering Yufuin Floral Village: A Ghibli-Inspired Journey through Oita, Japan | Japan I can travel

Japan I can travel Embarking on a whimsical adventure to Yufuin Floral Village in Oita, Japan, feels like stepping into a scene from a beloved Ghibli film. Known for its stunning landscapes and enchanting atmosphere, this destination captivates travelers with its extraordinary beauty and charm. Starting from Beppu, a scenic one-hour drive reveals picturesque views reminiscent of *Howl's Moving Castle*. Visitors can soak in the vistas while relishing a cup of coffee, setting the stage for an unforgettable experience. The ride culminates in Yufuin, a quaint town that welcomes guests with the warm hospitality of locals, eager to share the town's treasures. Yufuin Floral Village draws inspiration from the charming streets of the Cotswolds, known as the filming location for Harry Potter movies. Upon arrival, the village unfolds like a fairytale, complete with Kiki's bakery, characterized by delightful treats and unique themes in every shop. The vibrant atmosphere, coupled with the surrounding autumn scenery, adds color to the experience, enticing visitors to savor local snacks like meat buns and Mont Blanc ice cream. Another highlight of the journey is a visit to the Hells of Beppu, famous for its visually striking hot springs. The vivid blue waters of Umi Jigoku, known for their natural beauty, demonstrate the wonder of Japanese onsen culture. Although bathing is prohibited, visitors can appreciate the stunning colors of this unique spot and even take home some mineral-rich water. The trip concludes with a soothing onsen experience at Ebisu Onsen, where relaxation is enhanced by breathtaking views of the ocean and mountains. The charm of Oita and the thrill of culinary discoveries paired with nature's beauty make Yufuin a must-visit destination for travelers seeking a Ghibli-like escape. Travel to Japan |

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## Discover the Hidden Christian History of Japan at Oita's Taketa

Store Sponsored by Tourism Oita When arriving in Taketa city for the first time, the best advice I can give you is "Don't forget to look back." This advice can be applied in several ways, but the first and most obvious is if you arrive by train, don't forget to look back as you exit the station toward Taketa's main street. When you do, you'll find the first of Taketa's many surprises for first-time visitors: a lovely waterfall cascading down a sheer rock face behind the station. Bungo-Taketa station is one of the most picturesque I have seen in Japan. If you start your exploration of this lovely castle town located in the once protective shadow of Oka Castle Ruins from the station (or the parking lot next to the station if you arrive by car), take the main street leading over the bridge and away from the station. About 100 meters further on the right side of the street you will find Misterio, Taketa's Hidden Christian Museum. You might be aware that although Christianity in Japan had a strong start in the 16th century, political influences from both inside and outside of Japan eventually caused Christianity to be outlawed under threat of torture and death. As a result, the 15,000 Christians who once lived in the Taketa area were either persecuted, forced to recant their faith, or as many chose to do, go into hiding. Because of the extreme secrecy required to continue practicing their faith, little history has been recorded about these people. But the researchers behind Misterio, the first museum of its kind in Japan, have sought to uncover those mysteries. Christianity in Taketa flourished in a large part because the samurai clans who ruled Oka Castle were either Christians themselves or sympathetic to those of the Christian faith. Shiga Chikatsugu, who also took the Christian name Don Paulo, was a samurai Lord who once ruled Oka Castle and was a great evangelist of the faith. Even when the Shiga family were persecuted for their faith by the government under Toyotomi, the Nakagawa clan, who took over the castle, were generally sympathetic to the Christian cause and there is some evidence that members of the clan became Christians themselves. While the museum contains a great deal of discovered evidence of hidden Christians in Taketa, the most stunning evidence is found at the Christian Cave Chapel, hidden in the forest beneath the Hirose Shrine. The land containing the cave was once owned by a

high-ranking official of the Nakagawa clan, so the existence of such a place was extremely dangerous for both himself and the Nakagawa clan. The cave was used both to hide Christians who were being sought after and to hold Christian services. A small cross and candleholder are still visible on an altar carved into the stone in the back of the cave. For those interested in learning more about the fascinating history of Taketa's hidden Christians, Misterio produces a map of some of the places of interest so you can take a self-guided tour. If you can plan ahead, it is possible to book a tour guide in advance by calling the museum at 0974-63-3383. Taketa's city officials have a refreshingly progressive take on the future of their city. Instead of tearing down old buildings in favor of modernization, the city has aggressively pursued the path of restoring and reusing historic buildings. Strolling through the city, I found a former warehouse that was now a workshop and showroom for local artisans. An old building selling items made from recycled kimono. A samurai guest house that has been converted into a cafe and gallery space. At the latter, a young woman emerged from the building and encouraged me to "look around the back". There I found a small garden flanked by bamboo. Always look back. Along Bukeyashiki Street, the old samurai quarter, the remains of 13 former samurai residences remain, an odd combination of stone-walled homes with hybrid automobiles in their driveways. The corner building, Taketa Soseikan, houses a collection of armor and Japanese dolls. At the top of a long flight of stone steps, Kanonji Temple and Aizendo Shrine simultaneously offer a panoramic view of the city and a "power spot" to pray for a marriage partner. The future success of Taketa is being built on the hopes that future generations will appreciate the way Taketa values and embraces its historic past. Chikuraku, a festival of bamboo lights that occurs each November, attracts thousands of visitors to see the beauty of this spectacle, but a single annual event will not guarantee the survival of a small town like Taketa. I sit outside of Mugikura, established as a soy sauce brewery well over a century ago, eating soy sauce flavored soft cream, which is much more delicious than it sounds. But Mugikura is not content to rest on its soy sauce roots and has now expanded into coffee and coffee beans. I still purchase some delicious soy sauce to pack into my suitcase to take back to Tokyo. Taketa based businesses like Mugikura are not content to rest on their roots and hope to survive for another generation. They are



reinventing themselves for the future while holding on and giving honor to their historic past. It seems the entire city embraces this philosophy, melding their history with their future. Today, I take another look back at Taketa, at the fond memories of a day spent there. As long as Taketa remains in the memories of those who visit there and we share our fondness of this lovely town with others, I have no doubt future generations will always be able to look back on Taketa. The most convenient way to access Taketa city is by rental car, from Oita Airport or one of the major train stations in Oita Prefecture. From the airport, it is a lovely hour and a half drive to Taketa city. The Hohi Line train from Oita city can get you to Bungo-Taketa station in roughly the same amount of time, but it is easier to access other sights in the area by car. The best way to plan a day in Taketa is to combine it with exploring the amazing Oka Castle ruins, a short walk or drive from Taketa city. Oka Castle was an immense castle that was decommissioned at the demand of the Meiji government at the conclusion of the Edo period but retains awe-inspiring views of nature and its remaining stone foundation. Freelance writer, photographer, and mentor. Japan-based, Oaktown (Oakland, California) born. Freelance writing and photography work includes Lonely Planet, Voyapon, Metropolis Japan, and many regional tourism websites around Japan. <https://www.toddfong.com> Save my name, email, and website in this browser for the next time I comment. I have read and accepted the Privacy Policy

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# Kyushu Travel || Full list Best Fukuoka & Kyushu Travel Spots

Essential resource for anyone travelling to Kyushu island Japan. Fully updated for 2024. Complete list of best Fukuoka and Kyushu travel spots. Ask questions or share your recommendations in the comments section below. Fukuoka Best Places Oita Best Places Kumamoto Best Places Nagasaki Best Places Saga Best Places Miyazaki Best Places Kagoshima Best Places Arriving in Kyushu Travelling around Kyushu Comments and Questions According to many surveys, Kyushu is the island most loved by Japanese travellers. Outside of Japan it is still relatively unknown. Now is the perfect time to visit before the secret gets out. With fewer tourists than Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto, it's the best place to escape the crowds. Visit Kyushu for the food, lively volcanoes, wonderful onsen (natural hot-spring bathing), traditional Japanese inns (ryokan), beautiful nature, pottery towns, local culture and many historic places. Visit Kyushu to rediscover the side of Japan long-lost in the big cities. Note: all photos on this page taken by us (Kyushu Journeys) Kyushu has 7 prefectures (local districts); Fukuoka, Oita, Kumamoto, Nagasaki, Saga, Miyazaki, and Kagoshima. Let's look at the best places in each prefecture so you can decide where to visit and what to do in Kyushu. You'll probably arrive here either at Fukuoka Airport or Hakata Station. Fukuoka is Kyushu's biggest city yet not too big. The population of Fukuoka city is 1.5 million compared to 10 million in Tokyo. Fukuoka city is famous throughout Japan for its food. You can dine in Michelin-starred restaurants, simple street stalls and everything in between. Pro Tip We recommend eating in the 'yatai' food stalls in the evening. It's a great chance to try local dishes and take a stroll along the lively riverside. Fukuoka city has two main areas; Hakata and Tenjin. You can walk from one to the other or take a 5-minute cab/bus/subway ride. Hakata has more eateries and hotels whereas Tenjin is a place to shop. In Hakata you can take a self-guided walking tour of some very historic Buddhist temples. In Tenjin head to Oyafuko Dori for casual dining and trendy nightlife scene. Yanagawa is an hour by train from Fukuoka city. It's a bit too touristy for our liking but taking a gondola ride along the canals is fun. Don't miss Yanagawa's signature eel dish after your gondola ride. Dazaifu is also an hour by train from Fukuoka city. There is an impressive and historic shrine there (Dazaifu Tenmang?) but

it is always incredibly crowded. It's dedicated to the Shinto deity of education and so is popular with students. Don't miss Dazaifu's famous Umegae Mochi rice cakes. Kyushu National Museum is also located in Dazaifu. Itoshima is a summer destination with a nice beach, good surf and feels a bit like Bali or Thailand. There are a couple of well-known sunset viewpoints. Lovers like to take selfies at Couples Rock. It takes less than 30 minutes to reach Kurume by shinkansen from Fukuoka city. Kurume is known as the 'common man's food city'. There are over 100 ramen noodle shops, more yakitori shops per person than anywhere in Japan, and 18 saké breweries along the river. It's one of the best places to see camellia in the whole of Japan. The annual fire festival is wow! Yame is off the rail network but only an hour's drive from Fukuoka city. We love Yame because we love green tea and Japanese tradition. The green tea plantation views are wonderful. Visit one of the local tea shops for drinking and buying best quality green tea. Pro Tip If you visit in May you get the best quality green tea (freshly harvested) and can get hands-on picking tea yourself. There is a traditional craft museum where you can see local craftspeople at work. Ask to see their wonderful puppet theatre too. There is a shop for viewing or purchase of exquisite traditional handmade dolls. We'll meet a green tea Master in Yame on our Kyushu Food Tour in February 2024. Ukiha is an hour by train from Kurume. It's a wonderful place to see Japan as it once was. Wander the old streets and visit traditional shops. There is a famous rice terrace viewpoint and orchards where you can pick your own fruit. The natural hot-spring onsen water is excellent quality. We're big fans of Ukiha (it's best to visit by car). Asakura is 30 minutes drive from Ukiha. Asakura and Ukiha offer similar things to see and do and we enjoy visiting them both. The ruins of Akizuki castle are one of the best cherry blossom viewing spots in Fukuoka Prefecture. Sasaguri is just 20 minutes by train from Fukuoka city but a world away. There are thick cedar forests and a pilgrimage circuit of 88 Buddhist temples. This is a miniature version (50KM) of the more strenuous 88 temple Shikoku Pilgrimage. You can follow our route description and photos if you want to enjoy a half-day walk through the forests of Sasaguri. We also run a yoga retreat in the peaceful surroundings of Sasaguri. The most famous and photogenic inhabitant of Sasaguri is the reclining Buddha of Nanzoin Temple. He's utterly serene and the largest bronze Buddha in the world. Not much

happening here but we live here and we love it! The only thing of note is the Kaho Theater. It's a fine example of a traditional kabuki theater of which very few remain in Japan. We were lucky enough to see a Kabuki performance here and it was utterly enchanting. Performances are held just once a year (or even less often!) so we felt privileged to get the opportunity. I also feel privileged taking my morning walk around rice fields instead of traffic-filled streets. The best onsen in Fukuoka are away from Fukuoka city. There are very few onsen within Fukuoka city and those are very busy city-style ones. Our favourite onsen village in Fukuoka Prefecture is Harazuru Onsen. There are several onsen resorts along the riverbank. As a wonderful bonus, in season you can see the unique spectacle of cormorant fishing. Not familiar with onsen bathing? Our Introduction to Onsen page is a great place to start. Be part of the Kyushu travel community. Ask questions if you're planning a trip. If you've been to Kyushu before (or live here now) share your knowledge, experience and photos so others can benefit. If you love Japan travel, this is the group for you. It's completely free of charge so join now and start planning your next Kyushu holiday. If you want to skip Fukuoka, you can fly into Oita Airport from other parts of Japan. If you arrive by train from Fukuoka (2 hours) there is a wonderful Showa-era onsen just 2-minutes walk from Oita Station. Also within walking distance of Oita Station is Oita Prefectural Art Museum (OPAM). OPAM is most well-known for its wonderful building design. Other than this, you may prefer to skip Oita city and head to the countryside. We love Beppu. It's just 90 minutes drive from our house so we visit often. We visit for the onsen (natural hot-spring baths) and the seafood. There are almost 3,000 hot springs gushing water around town so you'll surely find one you like. We have bathed in simple hot spring baths that cost just ¥100 (less than a dollar) but you can find luxurious ones too. Beppu is also a good choice to find clean but relatively inexpensive accommodation. The Hells of Beppu are its most famous tourist attraction. The Hells (jigoku) are eight different bubbling, boiling pools of various colours. They are too hot to bathe but fun, unique and photogenic. Beppu Hells Pro Tips: Kamado Jigoku is the most fun; Chinoike Jigoku (Blood Pond Hell) is the most colourful; animal lovers may want to avoid Oniyama Jigoku (Crocodile Hell) You can also take a boat from Beppu to visit an early morning fisherman's market. In addition to stuffing yourself with fresh, tasty and inexpensive seafood in

Beppu, don't forget to have your 'onsen egg' and (our favourite) onsen steamed pudding. Yufuin is another very famous onsen resort in Oita. It's in a prettier rural setting than Beppu and is more famous for beef than seafood. Accommodation in Yufuin is mostly ryokan (traditional Japanese inns) and so more expensive than Beppu. From Hakata Station in Fukuoka you can reach Yufuin in 2 hours on the stylish Yufuin no Mori train. Yufuin Pro Tip: Yufuin no Mori is one of Kyushu's most popular trains so we strongly recommend you book in advance. For Kyushu Journeys clients we'll make all required train and bus bookings. Check out our family trip planning service. Yufuin is much-loved by the Japanese so gets very busy at weekends and on public holidays. The main activity in Yufuin is strolling along the high street to pretty Lake Kinrin. The route is lined with boutiques, cafés, restaurants and galleries. If you have a sweet tooth (like we do) you'll be in heaven. You can take the quieter route back along the riverbank to burn off some calories. Even if you don't stay in Yufuin you can take an outdoor onsen bath there enjoying the classic view of Mount Yufu. Kunisaki Peninsula is one the least visited areas of Oita Prefecture but one of our favourites. It has everything we love; nature, history and culture. The main shrine in the area (Usa Jingu) was built in the 8th century and is set in sprawling forested grounds. There are many other temples and temple ruins dating back 1,300 years. The ancient Buddhists longed for serenity so many of these temples are found in mountainous areas and thick forests. Even today they are far from the crowds. Pro Tip It's very difficult to explore the best parts of Kunisaki Peninsula by public transport. Our Kyushu Foodie Tour includes Kunisaki or you can visit by self-drive rental car. You can find Buddhist images carved into rock faces by patient hands a millenia or more ago. The Kunisaki Long Trail is a meandering 134 KM hiking route that follows in the footsteps of ancient monks. If you want to escape the 21st century there is no better place than Kunisaki Peninsula. You will probably visit Usuki to see the wonderful Usuki Stone Buddhas. They are believed to have been carved in the 12th century. Who carved them and why is lost in time. There are 59 statues set in a peaceful park. The Usuki Stone Buddhas are officially designated as a 'National Treasure of Japan'. For lovers of fresh seafood there is no better place than Saiki. Saiki fishing port lands a wider variety of fish (350+ kinds) than anywhere else in Japan. The morning fish auction at Saiki

harbour offers a fascinating glimpse into the fishermen's world (although it isn't officially open to the public). Whenever we visit Saiki we eat an enormous amount of fish and other seafood (and take lots home fresh, frozen and dried). The sushi is exceptional. Between meals you can visit the easternmost point in Kyushu (Tsurumisaki lighthouse) and gaze across to Shikoku island. Aso-Kuju National Park is the scenic heartland of Kyushu. The east part of Aso-Kuju National Park is in Oita Prefecture and the west part is in Kumamoto Prefecture. As you drive around you'll almost certainly see a plume of smoke drifting up from Aso volcano (see Kumamoto section below). Enjoy driving through picturesque rolling hills and vast grasslands. The cows here roam free and the area is famous for its beef and ice cream. There are some wonderful rural onsen in this area and we seldom visit without taking a bath. I think it's our favourite part of Kyushu. Kitsuki is a small town with a historic feel and a tiny little castle. It has some very well-preserved streets so you can tread where fearsome samurai feet once trod. The most popular activity in Kitsuki is renting a kimono and strolling around Instagramming. If you have kids you can keep them quiet for an afternoon with a visit to Harmony Land Theme Park. I've never been and definitely will never go but apparently it's home to Hello Kitty, Cinnamon and My Melody. Hita is our kind of town. You can drift back in time as you wander the streets and visit the traditional shops. Do a tour and tasting in one of the soy sauce or miso shops still using age-old techniques. Don't miss the display of wonderful handmade dolls. The hot spring waters are good quality and many of the onsen are in picturesque locations. Eel is the local specialty dish. We've been to several eel restaurants in Hita and they were all excellent. We even found a man grilling eel at the roadside and took one home for mum. Takatsuka Atago Jizosan is an unusual temple and very photogenic. It features 2,000 Jizo statues (the Guardian Deity of children). You can enjoy Hita without a car because it's just 90 minutes by train from Hakata Station in Fukuoka city. It's worth stopping at Kokonoe just to walk across the bridge (Kokonoe Yume Otsurihasi). It's Japan's highest footbridge above a valley and the views are incredible. It's the perfect place for viewing autumn leaves. Don't go if you're scared of heights. Kokonoe is in the mountains and there is a ski resort nearby. However honestly speaking, if you want to go skiing we suggest you visit Hokkaido instead of Kyushu. Bungo is home to Kyushu's own version of the

Niagara Falls (Harajiri Falls). Unlike the real Niagara Falls you can wander around freely and get right to the edge. When we visited we saw some people taking crazy selfies. Oka castle ruins are also worth a visit. The views are wonderful. This whole area is famed for its autumn colours. Nakatsu is another of our favourite areas. It's very picturesque and we always visit on our Autumn Colours Tour. Yabakei is especially nice. It's another mountainous region so a good place to have a bowl of soba noodles (you probably know already that soba noodles is a traditional mountain food). If you are feeling energetic you can rent a bicycle and pedal around. One of our favourite temples is in Nakatsu. Rakanji Temple is over 700 years old and there are Buddha statues everywhere (3,700 if you count them carefully). It's perched on a cliff top overlooking thick forest. Rakanji Temple is a beautifully peaceful place and (shock, horror!) photography isn't allowed. The best onsen in Oita Prefecture are ?. everywhere! It's one of Japan's top places for onsen and Japanese flock here to bathe. Beppu and Yufuin are the most popular onsen resorts in Oita. Beppu is a cheap and cheerful onsen city. Yufuin is a more high-end rural onsen town. Personally we prefer the quality of water in Beppu. Hita has some wonderful onsen where you can bathe outdoors with scenic views. There are also many small onsen resorts in the Oita countryside. We love some of the onsen resorts around Kokonoe for the spectacular views. There are many, many others. Leave a comment below to share your favourite scenic onsen. The only parts of Oita Prefecture not well supplied with onsen are east in Kunisaki Peninsula and south around Saiki city. Get the latest updates about Japan tourism coronavirus restrictions. Learn about our latest tours and exclusive discounts. If you're serious about visiting Kyushu, this newsletter is for you. You can whizz down to Kumamoto city from Fukuoka in 45 minutes by Shinkansen. If you're in a car it's fun to take the ferry from Nagasaki Prefecture. The pride of Kumamoto city is the castle. It is considered one of the three premier castles in Japan but was badly damaged in the 2016 earthquake. We were lucky enough to visit the castle just before the earthquake and it was grand. The other main attraction in Kumamoto city is the Japanese Garden (Suizenji Jojuen). It doesn't rival the great gardens of Kyoto but it's a pleasant place. You can sip green tea and gaze out over the lake as the feudal lords once did. If you like eating weird things when you travel, try basashi (raw horse-meat sashimi). It's a Kumamoto specialty. Aso volcano is

the largest active volcano in Japan and one of the largest in the world. Amazingly you can stand on the crater rim and peer down into the bubbling lava below. Pro Tip Check before you travel to see the current status of Aso volcanic eruption. At the time of writing (Nov 2021) there is a level 2 eruption warning so the area within 1km from the crater is closed. When we last visited a few months ago there were no restrictions at all. Even when the crater is closed you can usually still get close enough to smell the devilish pong of sulphur and feel the volcanic vibes. Taking a walk around is the nearest you'll get to strolling on the moon. Aso city can be reached by train and the Beppu to Kumamoto railway line is one of the most scenic in Japan. It recently reopened after being closed for years due to earthquake and landslide damage. You can hop off en-route and rent an electric bike to explore Aso area. We were foolish enough to do this in July; it was boiling hot (37°C) and we got completely drenched in a summer rainstorm. Aso shrine is said to be 2,000 years old (not sure if I really believe that) but was badly damaged in the 2016 earthquake. Hitoyoshi is a beautiful area but was absolutely devastated by floods in 2020. We were shocked to see photos of places we had stood the year before flooded to higher than head height! Despite this, it's still a wonderful place to enjoy nature, hot-spring onsen, and drink shochu (Japanese vodka). The locals are proud that their shochu is made from rice. In other parts of Kyushu it's usually made from sweet potato or barley. We visited Hitoyoshi again after the floods. We had fun gathering mushrooms and bamboo shoots from the forest (video here). We were happy to see Hitoyoshi is recovering and we wish them well ? Kikuchi Gorge is a very pretty area. You can take gentle walks here passing by streams and waterfalls. It's a favourite spot for viewing autumn leaves. There are many pleasant onsen ryokan (Japanese inns with natural hot-spring baths) in the Kikuchi Valley. It's somewhere to revive your spirits and take a break from the modern world. Oguni is another nice area to stay in ryokan. Who doesn't love relaxing, eating good food and onsen bathing? Head to Nabegataki Falls to stretch your legs. You can walk behind the wall of water to snap a cool photo. Yamaga Onsen is one of our favourite natural hot-spring baths (though we've got lots of favourites). The water quality is good and the locals have been bathing here for more than 1,000 years. It was tastefully renovated recently keeping the old Edo-period architectural style. Feel the history as you gaze up at the



1950's retro advertisements from your bath. Find wild and remote countryside in Takamori. Some of the roads become lanes as they get narrower and narrower. You can really feel as if you are driving in wilderness. The cows graze freely not fenced in fields. There is a great dengaku restaurant in Takamori that we love to visit. It's such fun to barbecue your own meat, veggies and river fish at your table (just as the samurai once did). Minamiaso is another wonderfully scenic area. It's home to Aso Volcano, huge sweeping grasslands and the purest mountain springs. In spring visit our favourite cherry blossom tree ([video here](#)). Kurokawa Onsen is a delightful onsen (hot-spring) village. It has around 30 upscale traditional Japanese inns (ryokan) all with onsen baths. Kurokawa Onsen is especially famous for outdoor onsen bathing. Relax up to your neck in toasty and healing onsen waters with trees overhanging and birds tweeting all around. Of course all the ryokan have indoor baths too. Many also have "family baths" so you can bathe in private with your loved ones. You will be served wonderful kaiseki dinners and lavish breakfasts. Take time to stroll around the pretty village too. You can read about our stay at Kurokawa Onsen (and some photos) in the write up our Oita and Kumamoto road trip. It's quite difficult to differentiate many of the areas around central Kyushu in Oita and Kumamoto prefectures. As you pass from one to the other you wouldn't notice (except for the road signs). It's the heartland of Kyushu's most amazing countryside. The scenery is wonderful and there are too many hot-spring resorts to mention. Make sure to try the yummy soft cream and meat-lovers rave about the grass-reared beef. The best onsen in Kumamoto are in the Aso countryside and south around Hitoyoshi. Both areas have onsen with quality water in beautifully scenic locations. Our favourite "muddy hot spring" is in Kumamoto Prefecture although not everybody enjoys this kind of bathing. We are also big fans of Yamaga Onsen for the quality of water and retro style. Another great area in Kumamoto Prefecture for hot-spring bathing is around the towns of Oguni and Minamioguni. These towns are north of Aso-Kuju National Park but share the same beautiful scenery. You have probably guessed by now that we are fans of rural onsen. However if you find yourself in Kumamoto city there are many nice onsen there too. It takes two hours from Fukuoka to Nagasaki by car or train. There is no Shinkansen line yet but one will open soon. Nagasaki city is definitely most famous for the Atomic Bomb Museum. Visiting the Atomic

Bomb Museum and the nearby Peace Park is a poignant experience. You may also want to visit Urakami Cathedral. It stood only 500 meters from where the bomb was dropped and was almost completely destroyed. For a more cheery experience head to Huis Ten Bosch. It's interesting to see a fake Amsterdam in the heart of Kyushu and the gardens are beautiful. When you get hungry in Nagasaki take a stroll around bustling Chinatown. To explore Nagasaki's colonial history visit Dejima and the Dutch Slope. In the evening take the Nagasaki Ropeway to see one of Japan's very best night views. Nagasaki is a fun and lively city and it's worth spending a day or two exploring by tram. For a unique experience take a boat ride to Battleship Island (Gunkanjima or Hashima Island). As the name suggests it looks like a battleship and was featured in a James Bond movie (Skyfall). You can't always land on the island itself but you can get some great photos. Omura Park covers the remains of a ruined castle. Approximately 2,000 cherry trees burst into bloom in Omura Park, officially one of Japan's 100 'Famous Cherry Blossom-viewing Sites'. In the right season you can find an amazing 300,000 iris flowers. Shimabara is far down south of Nagasaki Prefecture. If you take the ferry from Kumamoto you'll arrive in Shimabara. The castle is very photogenic with good ocean views but the interior is mostly modern concrete. There are some old samurai houses you can visit. Although there isn't much to see inside the houses you get a feel for history with the old houses and old streets around them. Shimabara is known as the 'city of the swimming carps' and you can easily spot the big colourful fish swimming in the small crystal-clear roadside canals. Our favourite place in Shimabara is Shimabara Hibari Sanka Park (although there isn't much information in English on the web about it). Depending on when you visit you can see cherry blossom blooming amongst rape blossoms, poppies, cosmos and sunflower. It's wonderful both in spring and autumn. The Unzen Hells is a unique and very photogenic landscape of boiling, bubbling volcanic pools with plumes of steam rising all around. You may want to pay your respects at the small cross erected in memory of the Christians martyred there in the 1600's. You can read about this in Shusaku Endo's novel 'Silence' or watch Martin Scorsese's film. For a bird's eye view of the area head up Unzen Ropeway. The views are especially pretty in spring and autumn. The Unzen area was buried in a dramatic mudslide (after a volcanic eruption) 30 years ago. Visit the

Unzen Disaster Memorial Hall to see the remains of houses buried up to their roofs. You can also visit the nearby elementary school abandoned after the eruption. Look out for the signboard there with a dramatic photo of the last kid to escape. You can see him sprinting out of the school as a huge cloud 100's of meters high looms behind him. We like Unzen and always have an onsen egg while we are there. The Goto Islands are reached by flight or ferry from Nagasaki or Fukuoka. Once there, you'll need to take ferries to travel around the different islands. The Goto Islands are most famous as the home of the 'hidden Christian' churches (see below). Goto is also a nice place to visit in summer for the good beaches and unspoilt nature. At any time of the year the seafood is exceptional. Tsushima island lies halfway between Japan and Korea. I've never been to Tsushima but I mention it because my Japanese teacher is from there and she says it's very nice. Youngsters may recognise it from the video game Ghost of Tsushima. Iki Island is a popular summer retreat for residents of Fukuoka and Nagasaki. Enjoy rugged nature, gorgeous beaches and the best sea urchin in Japan. Iki island is can be visited any time of year but is only popular in summer. You can find the 'hidden Christian' sites of Nagasaki on the mainland and also the outer islands. These sites bear unique testimony to the hidden Christians of Nagasaki. They secretly worshipped throughout terrible persecution in the 1600s. Read the book or watch the movie 'Silence' to learn more about Nagasaki's hidden christian history. Many of the churches still remain and some of them are very small, pretty and unique. The best onsen in Nagasaki are in the south around Unzen and Obama. This is an active volcanic area and where we find volcanoes we usually find natural hot-springs too. Although the onsen in Nagasaki Prefecture aren't as scenic as Oita or Kumamoto, the water quality is excellent. We stayed in an onsen hotel in Unzen and were lucky enough to have a private hot-spring bath in our room. The water was silky white, which is always a sign of powerful water. Obama not only has a cool name, it also has the longest footbath in Japan in addition to regular onsen baths. For lovers of nature, head north to Iki Island to enjoy great onsen on this wonderfully peaceful island. Unfortunately, Nagasaki city itself isn't an onsen area. This doesn't matter really because there are so many other activities in Nagasaki. Honestly speaking, there isn't much to see in Saga City. Saga Shrine is large and photogenic and is very conveniently located in

the heart of the city. You can also visit Saga Castle and the castle museum. Cultured travellers will enjoy Saga Prefectural Art Museum. The Saga International Balloon Festival is an internationally famous hot-air balloon festival. We enjoyed our visit a lot even though we aren't balloon enthusiasts. It's wonderful to witness 100's of huge balloons soaring across the planes at dawn. It's also fun to see the themed balloons (Star Wars for example) and night-time finale of 'dancing balloons'. Karatsu is one of our favourite cities in north Kyushu. Its most striking feature is the castle. Karatsu Castle looks wonderful from the outside and has displays of samurai armour and local pottery inside. Karatsu pottery is a much rougher style than in the nearby town of Arita but very highly regarded. As with all seaside towns in Japan, you can enjoy some great sushi in Karatsu. For best viewpoint head to Karatsu Observatory as the sun goes down. Experience spectacular views of the ocean and the 'one-million-tree' pine forest below. Yobuko is a quiet fishing village on the coast north of Karatsu. Its most famous dish is Yobuko Squid (squid sashimi). Some visitors are uncomfortable seeing the squid wriggling around on the dish as it is served. Other visitors see this as a sign of freshness and quality. Yobuko Morning Market is very well-known although you may be disappointed. Although the fishing harbour is very pretty the market itself is probably smaller and less lively than you expect. Kashima City is home to the very famous and photogenic Y'toku Inari Shrine. In recent years it has become very popular with Thai visitors as a Thai movie and TV drama were both filmed here. Kashima is also famous as the town with the largest tidal difference in Japan. When the tide is out the ocean can barely be seen in the distance. Visitors love to photograph the red torii gates stretching from the shore to the sea. For a taste of times gone by stroll along the well-preserved Sake Breweries Street. If you love seafood, don't leave Kashima without trying the local specialty of Takezaki crab. Arita and Imari are the two towns most strongly-associated with pottery and porcelain production in Kyushu. You can visit kilns, workshops and a clay mine, and browse the many different pottery shops. At a very reasonable price you can buy a genuine and quality hand-made souvenir. The bright and modern Kyushu Ceramic Museum shows the rich history of local production. Visit the back lanes of Arita (near the old cemetery) to see where pottery production first began 400 years ago. Arita Porcelain Park is a pottery-themed recreation of a

traditional German village. The Arita spring fair is Japan's biggest pottery fair. If you like mingling with one million other visitors, this is the pottery fair for you. Arita & Karatsu Roadtrip: Meeting the incredible craftsmen of two of the most popular Kyushu pottery villages Mifuneyama Rakuen is a vast and semi-wild Japanese Garden. Huge numbers of visitors flock here from all around Japan for the garden's seasonal delights. With more than 2,000 cherry trees the garden is a blaze of colour in spring. The autumn foliage colours are also wonderful with a very popular evening light-up spectacle. The psychedelic electric light displays of Teamlab are popular (although we were underwhelmed). Daikozenji Temple is probably the best autumn leaves spot in Saga Prefecture. It's included on our Autumn Colours (Fall Foliage) Tour. It is also unmissable in spring as 50,000 azaleas gayly bloom. Take the chance to spend an hour or two strolling the thickly forested grounds of this 1,300 year-old temple. Takeo City has been a natural hot-spring bathing resort for 1,300 years. The quality of the water is consistently excellent and also very hot. I bathed in one bath here that was 46°C (115°F)! Don't worry, you can choose a cooler bath if you prefer. The old courtyard, historic buildings and traditional bathhouses are all still in good condition. Takeo is an excellent destination for people (like us) who hunt the best quality onsen water and love to explore the old-style streets. To get further back in history visit the giant camphor tree in Takeo Shrine, estimated to be 3,000 years old. Return to the 21st century with a visit to Takeo's spectacular and very modern-looking library. Ureshino is famous for green tea and onsen hot-spring bathing. As with Takeo (see above) Ureshino has a long history as a hot-spring bathing resort. You can also taste and buy some of the best quality Japanese tea and visit a tea production factory. We joined a green tea making class in Ureshino and picked up some very helpful tips. In Ureshino we enjoy buying our tea directly from the producer (farm to pot). Takeo Onsen & Ureshino Roadtrip Report: Green tea and natural hot-spring onsen off the beaten path Yoshinogari Historical Park recreates an ancient settlement amongst a 2,000 year-old archaeological site. It's a vast area to explore and has some interesting exhibits in the field. It's depressing to see that even 2,000 years ago humans were killing each other for wealth and power. The terraced rice fields of Hamanoura offer an iconic Asian photo. Just make sure to be there at the right time of year (April) and at the right time of day (sundown).

The Village of the Secret Kilns (Okawachiyama) lay hidden away in the mountains for centuries. The feudal lords wanted to protect the valuable secret of porcelain production. Now you can wander around freely and rummage through Aladdin's Caves of hand-painted treasures. The best onsen in Saga are in Ureshino and Takeo. Samurai soldiers soothed their weary bones in this area over 1,000 years ago. You are unlikely to meet samurai there these days, though their modern equivalent (weary salarymen) still follow this tradition. My hottest ever onsen (46°C / 115°F) was in Takeo. If you don't enjoy being boiled like a lobster there are more moderate temperature baths too. Find more details and photos in our Takeo Onsen & Ureshino road trip report. You can also find onsen in Karatsu however we certainly recommend Ureshino and Takeo due to the excellent quality of water and wide choice of baths. After bathing here you'll notice your skin become silky smooth. Be part of the Kyushu travel community. Ask questions if you're planning a trip. If you've been to Kyushu before (or live here now) share your knowledge, experience and photos so others can benefit. If you love Japan travel, this is the group for you. It's completely free of charge so join now and start planning your next Kyushu holiday. Miyazaki city isn't a top tourist spot and most visitors will just be passing through. Surfers visit in summer. You can take a stroll to enjoy the natural scenery of Heiwadai Park with its iconic Peace Tower and weird clay statues. Miyazaki Shrine is claimed to be 2,600 years old (but I guess it isn't really so old). It's a serene Shinto shrine in lush tropical grounds with rows of red torii gates and a majestic grand avenue. After visiting the shrine you can pop into the next door Miyazaki Prefectural Museum of Nature and History. Youngsters may prefer to visit the Miyazaki Science Center. It houses one of the world's largest planetariums and a lifesize model of the Apollo 11 Moon Lander. Aoshima Island is a picturesque little island just offshore from Miyazaki City. If you google 'Aoshima Island' you will probably read about all the cats running wild. Unfortunately for cat-lovers, that is a different Aoshima Island far from Kyushu. You'll visit Aoshima Island in Kyushu for its beautiful beach, curious rock formation and wildly fresh seafood. Don't forget to explore inland too. Head through the jungle and find the quaint Aoshima Shrine in the centre of the island. Although the waters around Aoshima are gentle, you can find some surfing breaks on the mainland nearby. There are some glitzy resort hotels catering to the sun-loving

tourists. Udo Shrine is further south from Miyazaki city past Aoshima. The coastal views are excellent and its very hot. The shrine is in a dramatic coastal location, very picturesque and is fun to visit. Try your hand throwing small balls from the cave into a marked target on the rock below. Women throw with the right hand, men with their left, and winners earn themselves good fortune. Udo Shrine (so they say) helps with fertility, childbirth and a happy marriage so is popular with young couples. Takachiho is Miyazaki Prefecture's most popular destination (our clients love it). For this reason, Takachiho gets incredibly busy at certain times. It's off the rail network so you'll need to drive or go by bus. The whole area is wonderfully picturesque with thick forest, rivers and farming land all around. Takachiho Gorge is the highlight attraction. It's a steep dramatic river gorge with a waterfall crashing over. Walk along the side of the gorge or hire a rowing boat for a memorable adventure. Amano Iwato Shrine is an important shrine for the Japanese with its origin steeped in myth. Head down from there for a pretty walk to the holy riverside cave. The most spectacular view in Takachiho is of the 'Sea of Clouds'. It isn't guaranteed however, you have to get up horribly early and it's usually only seen in autumn. Takachiho Shrine is an incredible 1,900 years old. Visit in the evening to experience the tragic comic masked Kagura dance. For a fun lunch in Takachiho try the local specialty of somen noodles served whizzing down a long bamboo shoot. Gokase Highland Ski Resort is open from December to March for skiing and snowboarding. We hope global warming doesn't mess up their business plans. Kojima Island lies in the far south of Miyazaki Prefecture. Curiously, the resident monkeys wash their potatoes before eating and stand on two legs like humans. Very civilized and definitely worth an Insta moment. The best onsen in Miyazaki are scattered around the prefecture. Although Miyazaki isn't famous for hot spring bathing, there are many good quality onsen here. Shima Onsen is popular and has the oldest wooden bathhouse in Japan (built 1691). It is also believed to be an inspiration for some scenes from the massive worldwide movie hit Spirited Away. Other onsen to visit in Miyazaki include Yunomoto Onsen. It claims to be one of the most carbonated (fizzy) springs in Japan. I must note however that when I bathed in Nagayu Onsen in Oita Prefecture I noticed they make the same claim! For a silky bath you can visit Yamagiri. To enjoy the health-giving properties of a heavily mineralised onsen head to

Kannogo Onsen. The great thing about onsen in Miyazaki is that they are likely to be less crowded than other more famous hot spring resorts in Kyushu. Get the latest updates about Japan tourism coronavirus restrictions. Learn about our latest tours and exclusive discounts. If you're serious about visiting Kyushu, this newsletter is for you. Kagoshima city has some interesting visitor attractions and is worth a visit. It takes only 1.5 hours by bullet train to reach Kagoshima (in the far south of Kyushu) from Fukuoka (in the far north). Once you arrive in Kagoshima it's fun and convenient to use the local tram system. The first place you will probably visit will be Sengan-en. It's the best Japanese Garden in Kyushu and offers great views across to Sakurajima volcano. Another impressive viewpoint is the observatory in Shiroyama Park. Enjoy it in the late afternoon sun or stay for the night view. For shopping and evening dining head to the Tenmonkan area of Kagoshima City. Sakurajima is Japan's most active volcano. It regularly sprinkles ash over the inhabitants of Kagoshima city and occasionally produces spectacular fire shows. Although accessible by road, you will probably find it most convenient to visit Sakurajima by ferry. Once there, take a sightseeing bus around the eerie landscape and get some up-close shots of the volcano. Sakurajima is only a few kilometers from Kagoshima city so it's easy to visit while sightseeing that area. Chiran was a major kamikaze base in WW2. Of the 1,000+ kamikaze pilots killed during the war, almost half were from Chiran. The Chiran Peace Museum explores the short lives and sadly futile deaths of these kamikaze pilots. I've never been and don't plan to visit. I'm sure it will be a miserable experience. For a more traditional Japanese experience explore the well-preserved samurai district of Chiran. Ibusuki is the spiritual home of hot-sand bathing in Japan. Apparently it's both healthy and relaxing getting buried up to your neck in damp, black steaming sand (I enjoyed it). A quirky place to visit around Ibusuki is Nishi-Oyama Station. It's Japan's most southerly train station, enchantingly cute and with a stunning view of Sakurajima volcano. With more than half a million flowers and lovely coastal views, Kagoshima Flower Park is also worth a visit. You can travel from Kagoshima to Ibusuki on the handsome sightseeing train JR Kyushu Ibusuki no Tamatebako. Kirishima is a glorious area of natural beauty north of Kagoshima. You can travel there in style on the JR Kyushu Hayato no Kaze sightseeing train (Update April 2022: Hayato no Kaze train discontinued). Discover



mist-covered forests and invigorating trails. Treat yourself to the finest views and fresh mountain air. Indulge in the Japanese pastime of forest bathing. Don't go to Kirishima for sightseeing; just go to relax and renew. The Izumi Observation Center is Japan's top crane wintering grounds. Over 10,000 cranes winter here as they migrate from Siberia. We sometimes get contacted by bird-watchers wanting us to arrange their visit. You need to be tough because the best time to see the cranes is at dawn, in winter, when it's freezing cold. Tanegashima Space Center is said to be the most beautiful rocket-launch site in the world. It's at the very southern tip of Kyushu, surrounded by blue waters and white sand beaches. Enjoy a guided tour of the largest rocket-launch complex in Japan and learn all about space travel. Amami Oshima Island is a sub-tropical island 380 km from Kagoshima. Visit Amami Oshima island for pristine beaches, thick mangrove forests and clear blue ocean. Compare the culture and cuisine of Amami Oshima to that of the Kyushu mainland. In our modern age of jet travel, Amami Oshima is just 2.5 hours from Tokyo or 1 hour from Kagoshima. If you have time to kill you can take the 12-hour ferry! I'm curious to visit because the scuba diving is highly rated (my previous business was a scuba diving centre in Indonesia). Yakushima Island is home to some of Japan's most ancient forests. The ancient J'mon Sugi is believed to be one of the oldest trees in the world. Visitors are attracted to Yakushima island by the thick cedar forests and abundant wildlife. There are numerous hiking trails suitable for all levels. Shiratani Unsuikyo Ravine is the most popular hike on the island. It's enchantingly beautiful and was inspiration for the Studio Ghibli animation Princess Mononoke. It's also possible to go scuba diving around Yakushima. Yakushima is wild and beautiful and has become increasingly popular in recent years. Be warned though, it rains like hell. You can fly to Yakushima from Kagoshima in less than an hour. The best onsen in Kagoshima are found in Kagoshima city, Kirishima and Ibusuki. If you head south to Yakushima Island you can find some wonderful onsen there too. With more than 2,700 hot springs in Kagoshima Prefecture you are definitely spoilt for choice. It's fun to take an outdoor bath (rotenburo) in Kagoshima with a view of Sakurajima volcano smoking in the distance. Kirishima offers a much greener bathing experience with an abundance of thick natural forest. After enjoying the local pastime of 'forest bathing' you can jump into a toasty bath for hot spring bathing.

Personally, I can hardly think of a better way to spend a day. Ibusuki city is most well-known for hot sand bathing. It's not as weird as it sounds; I've tried it and loved it! Of course, in addition to hot sand bathing, there are many excellent regular hot spring onsen baths. Along with Oita Prefecture and Kumamoto Prefecture, Kagoshima is one of Kyushu's most popular onsen destinations. Enjoy!

Do you have any questions? Been to Kyushu before and want to share your recommendation, tips or advice? Leave your comment or question in the comments section below.

Fukuoka city (the main city on Kyushu) is a major transport hub. Many airlines fly into Fukuoka International Airport (airport code: FUK) including Singapore Airlines, Korean Air, Cathay Pacific and Thai Airways. Discover which flights are flying into Fukuoka on this page on Fukuoka Airport website. You will need to write the name and address of your first hotel on the arrival card. Remember to carry that information with you on the plane (not packed in your check-in luggage).

**Customs Inspection** It is not unusual to have your bags checked on arrival at Fukuoka airport by humans or sniffer dogs. Meat, plants and vegetables are not allowed. Japan is also more strict than many countries about medicines. Even Vicks inhalers are banned! Check our Japan Travel Tips page for more detailed information. Many airlines fly into Fukuoka Airport from other parts of Japan including several budget options. From Tokyo to Fukuoka takes around 1.5 hours by plane. From Osaka to Fukuoka takes 1 hour by plane. You can fly from from Kyoto to Fukuoka via Osaka Airport. You may prefer to fly to a different Kyushu airport (instead of Fukuoka) to start your travel adventure. Many of our clients fly directly from Tokyo or Osaka to Oita, Kumamoto or Kagoshima airports. Fukuoka airport is in a super-convenient location. It takes just 5 minutes by subway to reach Hakata Station (in the center of Fukuoka) from Fukuoka Airport. Taxis take 15 minutes and cost around ¥2,000. **Pro Tip** Fukuoka airport subway station is at the domestic terminal. If you fly into the international terminal (overseas flight) you will first need to take the free shuttle bus from the international terminal to the domestic terminal (15 minutes). You can then take the subway (5 minutes) from the domestic terminal to Hakata Station. If it's too much hassle to take the shuttle bus with all your luggage, just take a taxi directly from the international terminal into Fukuoka city. You can also take the airport bus from the international terminal into Fukuoka if you prefer. The international terminal at Fukuoka Airport is very

small so it's easy to find the airport bus stop. Details of Fukuoka Airport buses can be found on this page of the Fukuoka Airport website. You can take the bullet train (shinkansen) to Fukuoka from all parts of Japan. From Tokyo to Fukuoka takes around 5 hours by train. From Osaka to Fukuoka takes 2.5 hours by train. From Kyoto to Fukuoka takes 3 hours by train. All shinkansen arrive at Hakata Station, which is the main railway station in Fukuoka. From Hakata Station you can continue by shinkansen onto Kumamoto (45 minutes) or Kagoshima in the south of Kyushu (1.5 hours). Travelling around Kyushu by rental car is the most popular option for our clients. However driving into Kyushu from other parts of Japan is tiresome. It takes around 8 hours to drive from Osaka to Tokyo. From Tokyo to Fukuoka takes two days drive! We suggest you fly or take the train to Kyushu from other parts of Japan and then rent a car when you arrive in Kyushu. There are four options for travelling around Kyushu; Let's look at each option in more detail. Travelling independently (without a guide) in a self-drive rental car is a very popular way to travel around Kyushu. Here in Kyushu the roads are good, we drive on the left (apologies to our American and European friends) and I seldom see a traffic jam. For Kyushu Journeys clients we will arrange a car with English GPS (SatNav) and include easy to input numerical mapcodes for all sightseeing spots, restaurants and hotels along the route. We include Google map links as a backup too! This is how we love to travel ourselves. You can take a look at some of the many road trips we have taken ourselves; Takeo Onsen & Ureshino: Green tea and natural hot-spring onsen off the beaten path Arita & Karatsu: Meeting the incredible craftsmen of two of the most popular Kyushu pottery villages Oita & Kumamoto: Bubbling Hells, a quaint fishing port, and one of Kyushu's most colourful shrines. Take a look at our private family trip planning service if you want us to plan your Kyushu road trip. Read our FAQ about driving in Japan to decide if self-driving is right for you. Japan's rail system is excellent so travelling by train is another popular option for visiting Kyushu. You can take the bus when the railway line doesn't reach your destination. For example Takachiho, one of the most popular places in Kyushu, is off the railway network. You will probably also need to take some short taxi rides too. For example to travel from the nearest station to your hotel. Luckily taxis are plentiful in Japan. You can find them waiting at most railways stations. Read our FAQ and see how much it costs to take a taxi in Fukuoka. We

often plan train and bus adventures for our clients. We do all the itinerary planning, hotel bookings if required and detailed timetable research. It's all part of our private family trip planning service. You just need to turn up at the station on time! We also advise about which rail pass to buy to get the best-value trip. JR Kyushu offers some great bargains for overseas visitors. Who doesn't want to relax on the shinkansen (bullet train) as the Kyushu countryside whizzes by? Hiring a private driver in Kyushu is only for the comfortably wealthy. You can expect to pay around ¥50,000+ (\$500+) a day for a standard 4-seater taxi. Also please note it's almost impossible to find drivers who speak English. Contact us if you want us to arrange a private driver in Kyushu for you. In this case we will discuss the route and timings with the driver in advance. We will also be available on the day by phone or WhatsApp to help with any language communication problems. Joining a package group tour is the easiest way to travel. You just need to book, arrive and enjoy! You will be travelling on a private tour bus escorted by English-speaking tour leader. You usually pay an all-inclusive price except for international flights. Here at Kyushu Journeys we offers small-group intimate tours with maximum 12 participants per tour. Here are the package tours currently open for booking: Kyushu Autumn Tour (November 2023) Kyushu Foodie Tour (January 2024) Kyushu Cherry Blossom Tour (March 2024) We can also arrange private escorted package tours just for you, your friends and family. Contact us for details.

Hi, Does it snow in Kyushu at the end of December? Will driving be difficult during this period? Hi Alan, Snowfall depends on the region and altitude, but generally the roads are well-maintained and there is little snow in coastal regions. Of course drive carefully and be aware of ice in the more rural/high altitude areas, but overall you shouldn't be worried. Amazing resource for smaller areas in Kyushu.. exactly what I was looking for. Thank you! I'm planning to Kyushu this end of April or early of May Hi Linda, the weather is usually nice at that time of year but please note it is Golden Week in Japan. This means peak travel season so many hotels get full quickly and prices increase. If you can change your dates it may be better. Feel free to email [email protected] for more info, cheers, Simon Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked \*

Name Email Comment \* Notify me of followup comments via e-mail (you can opt-out later) ? Kyushu island Japan Autumn Tour Brochure 2023. Full details, price, photos and

FAQ [download here](#). Cost-effective Kyushu cherry blossom guided tour. Best spots, great wonderful, wonderful nature. Details [here](#). The best Kyushu dishes and exclusive culinary experiences. Waiting list open for 2024. Kyushu Journeys aims to encourage travellers to visit our beloved island of Kyushu. We want to help you escape the tourist trail and find the real Japan. We're Kyushu's biggest fans and we love to share what we know. T +81-90-8354-1194

E [email protected]

O 09:00~17:00

# OITA - EXPERIENCE THE QUINTESSENTIAL | KYUSHU x TOKYO (JAPAN)

After being exposed to the charm of Japanese food through the Kappabashi Dougu Street and Sushi cooking class, take a trip to old-line Prefecture, Oita. You can spend calm and peaceful time at Usa Jingu and Onsenkyou (spa resort) and feel real significance of Japan. Official

Tokyo Travel Guide <https://www.gotokyo.org/en/Local> government official website

<https://www.discover-oita.com/> Sydney Airport ANA Examine the directions from your country

ANA international flight? The ANA Flight from Sydney to Tokyo was on time. The in-flight service was good and prompt, providing two options for dinner. For the in-flight entertainment, there were some English movies and TV shows and I enjoyed them. Narita International Airport Narita Express Tokyo Metropolitan Area Kappabashi Kitchenware Town more Kappabashi Kitchenware Town? Kappabashi Kitchenware town was very interesting, we were able to see different styles of plates, knives, and woks in the area? which were surprisingly cheap! We spoke at length to someone at a knife store, who explained how knives were made in a similar manner to how Samurai swords were made and the different uses for all the different styles of knives. Kappabashi Kitchenware Town? Kappabashi is one of the best places in Tokyo to window shop and learn about traditional Japanese dining culture, with all sorts of cooking utensils and crockery for sale. Some of the highlights you'll find along the store-lined street include plastic food samples, engraved knives and custom-made pots and pans. One of the places to stop and photograph during your stroll around the neighbourhood is the golden kappa statue. Train 30 minutes Sushi making experience (Hassan) more RECOMMENDED DESTINATIONS Sushi-making experience (Hassan)? The Sushi making experience at Hassan was by far my favourite experience of the day! We had a lot of fun and laughs with the Sushi Master chef, who taught us how to make two different kind of sushi? wrapped seaweed sushi rolls and traditional sushi. We were also provided with a short history of sushi in Japan and at the end, we were provided with certificates to show that we completed the sushi making experience, as well as a small souvenir from the chef. The best part was being able to eat all of the yummy sushi we made

with the chef. Sushi-making experience (Hassan)?The highlight here is the hands-on sushi-making experience led by a professional sushi chef, who teaches you how to make your own makizushi rolls and nigiri sushi. By the end of the short lesson, you'll be able to eat your own sushi creations, along with a number of other tasty Japanese dishes. The sushi-making skills and trade-industry tips and techniques you'll pick up during the lesson will help you to recreate some amazing sushi for friends when you return home, and you'll also receive a personalised 'graduation certificate' signed by the chef himself, as a memento of the experience.

Train 25 minutes Ameyoko (Shopping Street) more

Ameyoko is a shopping street full of life now and in the old days and also a well-known spot for visitors to feel and experience the local atmosphere. In addition to fresh food and candy, it also has shops offering clothes, shoes, bags, and even cosmetics. The good-humored vendors of each shop are firm supporters of face-to-face interaction. 'Ameya Yokochō' is the official name for Ameyoko and it became a famous market spot after World War II. Ameyoko (Shopping street)?Ameyoko was an interesting area to walk through. We learned about its history and found out that this is a unique area in Tokyo where you can buy things after haggling. There was plenty to see here, including fresh foods from fish and fruit, clothing and a very large (and old) candy store. Dinner at Tsujigahana (Ueno location)?Dinner at Tsujigahana in Ueno location was delicious; we ordered a number of different items from the menu as well as tried sake and Japanese whiskey. We had our fill of more sashimi (after plenty at lunch), along with a salad and a few hot dishes of steak and pork with veggies. Ameyoko (Shopping Street)?Ameya Yokochō, or 'Ameyoko' as it's affectionately known, is a popular destination for tourists, who come to soak up the lively market-style atmosphere while strolling through the narrow stall-lined streets. There are plenty of vendors selling everything from snacks, sweets, and fresh produce to clothing, accessories and souvenirs, and staff hold up signs while shouting out limited-time sale announcements to passersby. Dinner at Tsujigahana (Ueno location)?One of the surprising things about dining out in Tokyo is the fact that you can find hidden gems tucked away inside random buildings on floors high above eye-level from the street. Tsujigahana is one of these hidden gems, accessed by an elevator that whisks you away from a busy street and up into a beautiful traditional dining area. Here you can dine in private rooms,

choosing a la carte or from the course menu, with pork and vegetables steamed in bamboo boxes being one of the must-try specialties. Tokyo Metropolitan Area Haneda Airport ANA (ANA Expericence JAPAN Fare)      Show details ANA Domestic flight?The ANA flight to Oita was very good?we were provided with hot drinks of tea and coffee. Due to the length of flight no in-flight entertainment was provided. The flight was fairly short and very pleasant. ANA Domestic flight?Flying with ANA is so smooth and easy. The flight from Tokyo to Oita is about 90 minutes, and it?s a comfortable way to travel from the mainland to the southern island of Kyushu, where Oita is located.Even flying within Japan, free drinks are served and free Wi-Fi is also available on some flights.(Routes and aircraft are limited) Oita Airportmore Oita Airport?I was very surprised to find out how easy it was to navigate Oita airport; we got off the plane and within 1-2 minutes, we arrived in the baggage collection area, and our bags came out very quickly. We received a large welcome at the Oita airport with a large banner welcoming us to Oita! Oita Airport ?Oita Airport is a delightfully small and stress-free terminal that introduces you to the wonders of Japan?s ?onsen prefecture? from the minute you step off the plane.There?s a foot bath filled with local hot spring water, a giant faux hot tub for visitors to sit in, and a huge plate of sushi sitting on the revolving conveyor belt where you pick up your luggage! Bus30 minutes 10 minutes by foot Kitsukimore Kitsuki Castle Town?While in Kitsuki Castle town, we dressed in kimonos and then wandered around the city taking photos. Our first stop was at Vinegar Shop Slope which was named after a vinegar shop at the bottom of the slope, when it was built?now there is a miso store at the bottom of the slope. From there, we visited the Ohara family home (an old style samurai home) which the city of Oita purchased and turned into a museum of sorts. It took them over 3 years to rebuild the home after it had aged and many things had needed to be replaced. Lunch at Wakaeya?Wakaeya restaurant is very famous in Oita and has also been visited by the Emperor of Japan. We got to meet the 16th generation owner and found out that the secret sauce they use on their popular fish dish is passed down from father to son. Their popular fish dish is also served on Japan's 7-star luxury train every weekend. They pour green tea over rice and sea bream, leave the lid on for 3 seconds, and then you may eat it. Kitsuki Castle Town?Kitsuki Castle Town is a beautiful place to explore, and if you



have time, stop by the Warakuan kimono store to get dressed by ladies who can style you in traditional dress in minutes. Strolling through the residence in kimono makes you feel like you've stepped back in time to the Edo period. Some of the picturesque locations here include the beautiful 'Vinegar Slope', which is so pretty it's been used in historical films and television dramas, and a number of beautifully preserved samurai residences. Lunch at Wakaeya? Wakaeya is a special gem that's been serving the same prized tai chazuke dish for more than 300 years. The delicious sesame sauce flavoured red snapper and rice dish is known locally as 'Ureshino', after a feudal lord tried it at Wakaeya centuries ago and uttered the words 'Ureshino' (lit. 'I'm so happy'). Tasting a dish with such history behind it is an incredibly special experience, especially once you learn that the restaurant is still being run by the same family, with the 16th generation currently overseeing operations to ensure that the culinary history is preserved.

Beppu City Traditional Bamboo Crafts Center? This was a nice stop on the tour which showcased local bamboo crafts in a fun and engaging manner. The intricate designs and large works created with bamboo were all amazing to look at, while the interactive woven bell-making course was a lot of fun and easy for both adults and children to take part in. The bamboo bell ball makes for a great souvenir afterwards, and there are plenty of gorgeous objects to purchase in the attached gift shop as well!

10 minutes by foot Bus 11 minutes Train (JR) 90 minutes Yufuin Hot Spring

more Yufuin Hotel Shuhokan Dinner at Accommodation? We enjoyed dinner at the restaurant of the hotel we stayed at. We ate everything from shabu shabu to sashimi and a few other local dishes. They were kind enough to deliver dessert to our rooms. The atmosphere of the restaurant was very comfortable and the staff were very friendly and helpful.

Yufuin Onsen (Yufuin Hotel Shuhokan)? In Yufu City, it has around 1,000 hot spring (onsen) sources. The city was developed as a hot spring resort and the onsen there are said to help various ailments and injuries while also providing relaxation. Bathing in onsen in Yufu City provides a new way of having fun and relaxation in Japan. You can see why onsen are very important in Japanese culture.

Dinner at Accommodation? Dinner at Yufuin Hotel Shuhokan contained a delicious array of local delicacies, served in a brightly lit communal dining room with views out to the surrounding countryside. Each dish was beautifully prepared and presented on

plates and bowls adorned with seasonal motifs, enhancing the dining experience. Yufuin Onsen (Yufuin Hotel Shuhokan)?I felt the history of Yufuin Hotel Shuhokan from this building. There was a nice view from the hotel room. Some rooms offer the view of Mt. Yufudake. You will be able to relax in the public bath. They also have a footbath in the garden, and it is an easy way to enjoy Japanese onsen culture. Yufuin Hotel Shuhokan Lake Kinrin?Lake Kinrin is one of Yufuin?s top sightseeing spots. There were beautiful reflections of the surrounding mountains and buildings in the crystal-clear still water of the lake, and I was amazed. The lake supports a lot of wildlife, including carp, and the area is overflowing with the charm of nature. Also, because the water temperature is relatively high all year, you may see a fantastic scene when steam rises from the lake surface on early winter mornings. Lunch at Ginsushi?We enjoyed lunch at Ginsushi in a private room; the staff were so lovely and brought each dish explaining what it was and why it was special to the area. We had "Hitan sushi" which comes with veggies and fruit (instead of fish) such as tomato, onion, cabbage, fig, and mushroom?all of which are sourced locally as Hita is a mountain area and not very close to the sea so fish is more expensive. We also enjoyed some sashimi sushi. Mameda Town walking tour ?We did a walking tour of the Mameda area, where we looked through shops that sold souvenirs, Japanese shoes (geta), and items made out of kimono clothing. After walking through the main streets, we went to the plum sake brewery Oyama for a quick tasting of some sake, which to me tasted like a mix of white wine and vodka and warms your chest like whiskey. Ontayaki no Sato?Here we visited the pottery museum where we learned that the people of the village were initially half farmers and half pottery makers. After finding out how popular their pottery become, 10 households in the village started to make their own pottery, using different methods, and continue to do so. We visited a number of houses with small shops attached and were shown how the clay is collected, stored and the whole process of how it goes from the mountain and made into household items. Lake Kinrin?Lake Kinrin was a lovely pocket of nature teeming with fish and wildlife, thanks to the hot springs that bubble up through the lake bed, creating an ideal spa-like environment. A short stroll takes you all around the lake, making it a beautiful, serene place to stop and breathe the fresh mountain air. Hita Gion Yamaboko hall?The Hita Gion Yamaboko hall is a site

that's well worth a visit as it contains some of the largest and most impressive festival floats you'll find in all of Japan. These floats are paraded around the streets once a year for the annual Hita Gion festival in late July, and for the remainder of the year they're housed here for people from around Japan to admire. Gazing up at the huge floats and discovering all their intricate details makes for an awe-inspiring experience.

Lunch at Ginsushi? If you want to eat like a local, Ginsushi is the place to go. The homely, family-run eatery specialises in Hitan sushi, which uses fruit and vegetables as toppings for sushi instead of the usual raw fish. Meals here offer a surprising array of different tastes and textures, all of which are delicious and beautifully presented and prepared. Vegetarians and meat-eaters alike are sure to be incredibly impressed by the delicious meat-free morsels on offer!

Mameda walking tour? Walking around the beautiful Mameda district is a wonderful way to spend an afternoon, as it has a traditional, laid-back atmosphere and a variety of small stores and eateries to pop in and out of as you explore the narrow streets. This is the best place to pick up a pair of locally made geta sandals, with a huge selection of styles available, and you can find the largest cedar geta in all of Japan!

Ontayaki no Sato? One of the highlights of the tour, this tiny, tranquil pottery village and its brilliant soundscape—one of the 100 best Soundscapes of Japan—will leave a lasting impression on you long after you've returned home. The sound of the water-powered wooden clay-crushing devices and the charm of the local families that sell their beautiful wares make this a must-visit spot.

Ukiha Bekkan Shinshiyo Dinner at Accommodation? We were treated to a Japanese course dinner which provide 9 dishes included sashimi, a local fish dish, egg custard, beef, and vegetables that we were able to fry ourselves and many many other dishes—we left very happy and full!

Accommodation (Ukiha Bekkan Shinshiyo)? Our stay at Ukiha Bekkan Shinshiyo in Amazase Onsen was lovely, check-in was very quick and our rooms were very comfortable. We were able to enjoy our own private hot spring bath on the balcony overlooking the river below. It was a lovely way to end a busy day of sightseeing by relaxing in the bath while listening to the river below.

Dinner at Accommodation? One of the best things about staying at a ryokan inn is the meals, which come in feast-like proportions, featuring fresh local ingredients and beautiful seasonal embellishments. Ukiha Bekkan Shinshiyo knows how to treat their guests to stunning meals, served in private rooms with

gorgeous views and attentive staff to help guide you through each course. Accommodation (Ukiha Bekkan Shinshiyo)?Ukiha Bekkan Shinshiyo in Amagase Onsen is a quiet haven with an inn-like atmosphere that makes you feel instantly at home. The staff are incredibly attentive and helpful, and they go out of their way to ensure that your stay is comfortable and pleasant. The rooms are clean and modern, and some even come with their own rotenburo hot spring outdoor baths on an attached terrace where you can relax and gaze out at the surrounding scenery. Ukiha Bekkan Shinshiyo Takkiri Valley?Our visit to Takkiri Valley was by far the best way to start our day, we wandered down a beautiful walkway next to a shallow river bed, which goes on for about 2 km. We stopped at around the 1.3 km mark and took our socks and shoes off and were able to walk in the river, the water lapping at our ankles. It was so peaceful and relaxing! Train (JR)120 minutes Bus7 minutes Lunch at Shozan?Lunch at Shozan was incredible, we enjoyed a local USA specialty of crispy fried chicken, salad, dumplings, and miso soup. This was by far my favourite meal throughout this trip; the chicken was so tender and juicy. Lunch at Shozan?Shozan is such a good restaurant that locals line up to dine here, where the specialty is Usa City?s regional delicacy, fried chicken. Their round, ball-like chicken pieces are so crispy and juicy you?ll be wanting to eat them every day, and adults and children alike will fall in love with them, as they?re easy to eat, come served in generous portion sizes, and can be ordered as part of a set with rice, salad, tea, and miso soup. Usa Jingu Shrinemore RECOMMENDED DESTINATIONS Usa Jingu Shirine?The visit to Usa Jingu shrine was really interesting. We were provided with audio guides to try out, and I found that we could listen to guidance about the places we were. They would be perfect for self-guided tours. The scenery was a mixture of green shrubs, trees, and then specks of red from the branches and main shrines. It was really interesting to learn about the history and the intertwining of religious history among Buddhism and Shinto. Futago-ji Temple?The entrance to Futago-ji temple features the same protective statues as they have at Oita airport?the Nio Guardians are there to protect and ensure you have a good, safe trip. This is a temple blessed by nature, with associated buildings surrounded by many trees. We were able to meet a monk here, which is unusual as not many other temples offer such interactions with visitors. Usa Jingu Shrine?Usa Jingu contains a wide variety of sacred

sites, and visitors can get a deeper understanding of each site on the shrine grounds with a fun-to-use interactive audio guide that comes with multi-language options. This is how you'll learn about things like *meoto iwa*, two flat stones on the steps leading to the main shrine. Partners who hold hands whilst standing side-by-side on the stones are said to receive happiness. Futago-ji Temple? This ancient temple enhances your sense of adventure and deepens your connection with the sacred atmosphere of the site. It's a stunning place to explore, and the English-language guide map is very helpful so you can walk through the grounds on your own. Bus 65 minutes Oita Airport ANA (ANA Japan Explorer Pass) [Show details](#) Haneda Airport This trip to Tokyo and Oita was up there as one of my all-time favourite trips! I feel so blessed to be given an opportunity to visit a lesser known area of Japan and will forever have fond memories of all the experiences. I was able to see so many cool new sights and enjoyed a lot of fresh fish, sashimi and sushi! This tour is a great introduction to two very different sides of Japan, allowing you to gain a greater understanding of city life and country living through hands-on activities and visits to renowned sites. Every stop makes for a truly memorable experience! I was able to enjoy new sights of Tokyo, that I did see on my last trip here, as well as different side to Tokyo? you'll have to read on to find out more about the sights I saw. Oita prefecture is not a very well-known area to Australian travellers but I hope this report will give some insight to my trip to both Tokyo and Oita and I hope it excites you enough to visit. I can't wait to come back to Japan again! Travelling, going to the gym and spending time with my husband This is my 3rd time to Japan This tour takes you from the busy streets of Tokyo to the picturesque mountains of Oita, Japan's No.1 *onsen* prefecture.? A terrific tour for those who love nature walks, onsen hot springs, traditional scenery, local food and drink, and historic shrines and temples. Travel, photography, taiko, kyudo Living in Japan for 10 years [Back to Top](#) This website introduces Tokyo, Japan's most well-known tourist destination, plus the travelogues and routes detailing the spectacular nature, one of Japan's best hot springs, and good food that can be enjoyed in Kyushu. Some of the photos provided by AFLO The rates posted on this site are subject to change. For the most up-to-date information, please check the facilities (transportation facilities) on the website, etc.

## The best 7 things to do while you travel to Oita | GoWithGuide

Close Things To Do Share Oita Prefecture in Kyushu is surrounded by mountains and sea and would make an excellent place for relaxation and light sightseeing. Beppu is one of the most famous areas in Japan to enjoy natural hot spring baths. Festivals throughout the year, and interesting wildlife, Oita is a great place to spend a day or two. We have selected seven of the best things to do while you travel to Oita: Beppu Park is simply beautiful. Great views of the sea beyond and the mountains in the distance, and an array of lush greenery. If it is too hot, you can take in the shelter of the bamboo forest. There are many seasonal flowers growing here, an amazing stream, and one hundred year old pine trees. A beautiful place to go for a picnic on the perfectly cut lawns, or great for a nice leisurely walk. Admission: Free Global Tower is the symbol for one of the largest most advanced conference facilities in Western Japan. After entering, you ride the elevator 100 meters to the top. Taking those first few steps out of the lift leads onto the upper observation deck. You will be instinctively given a feeling that there is nothing below you. The platform hangs in mid-air. You can enjoy a lovely 360-degree panoramic view of Beppu and the ocean beyond, before heading down a staircase encased with glass. The staircase literally floats in the sky between the upper and lower observation decks. As you cross it, it might take you a while to find your feet. The view from Global Tower is breathtaking. You can see the other famous tower in the distance, Beppu Tower, but the view from Global Tower is perhaps more enjoyable. On a clear day, everything is visible from the mountains to the sea. Admission: ¥300 This is the very first summer festival held in Oita Prefecture every year. It is famous for rice cakes and merchants selling hand made dolls, pictures, and other unique works. Unfortunately for me, when I visited Nagahama Shrine Summer Festival, summer was probably the wrong word to have used. I visited during a typhoon, and with it brought heavy rain to Oita. There were markets stalls selling various foods spread all along the side of the road. I found the main ceremony in full swing; around fifty people dressed in purple clothing carrying portable shrines. People banging drums and playing flutes. Spirit levels were quite high, in spite of the weather. After following the procession for a good twenty minutes, I became soaking

wet, which was of course, no fault of the festival. It was great to see that despite the weather, everyone was enjoying the festival and doing their best to put on a great performance. I would recommend visiting this festival on a clear day, to really get the most out of the atmosphere.

**Admission: Free** The entrance to Mount Takasaki Monkey Land National Park is at the bottom of a mountain. The mountain is 628 meters high, and the monkeys are about halfway up. At the top of the stairs, there are wild monkeys wandering around all over the place. A sign says, "If you look into their eyes, they will perceive this as a threat and they will attack." Not looking into their eyes is actually harder than you might think. At Monkey Park there are Japanese monkeys everywhere. Just over 1200 monkeys, to be almost exact. They will wander around by your feet in a park free from any cages. If you are lucky enough to arrive just before feeding time, you will get to experience the monkeys screaming because they know this and want their food. Usually, a crate of food is brought out and the screams will get even more intense. From every direction monkeys will run toward the food. The member of staff carries a makeshift wheelbarrow carrying a crate of food, and runs away from all of the monkeys. They will chase after him, each jumping into the crate to grab food before jumping out again, satisfied. It is a spectacle absolutely worth seeing. After collecting their lunch, the monkeys will try to find their own little private spots to enjoy their food. Perhaps even sitting down right next to your foot as they munch on miscellaneous vegetables, or devour their meal whilst swinging back and forth on a swing. **Admission: ¥510**

**Oita Marine Palace Aquarium** Umitamago is located across from the monkey park, so that these two attractions can easily be enjoyed on the same day. After paying to enter the amazing aquarium, your ticket and nice brochure will tell you that, "The friendly aquarium welcomes you!" Indeed, it really is a most welcoming experience. Inside, the aquarium is massive. Animals living there include seals, otters, dolphins, penguins, sharks, sea lions, frogs, sea turtles, walruses, and various other fish. There are dolphins on show too, and stingrays that you can touch with your hand. A great place to go as a family, as there are plenty of hands-on activities to enjoy for children and families alike.

**Admission: ¥1950** One of my personal favourite sights in Oita is the east coast of the Kunisaki Peninsula, a huge footpath that stretches between Beppu and the city of Oita. The aquarium and

monkey park are also along this route, so if the weather is nice, and you don't fancy taking public transport, it is a great route to take on your way to either of these attractions. It makes for a perfect cycling or running track, because it is one straight smooth path with no interlocking roads or intersections. I often cycled this route before sunset, admiring the waves of the ocean and the beautiful twilight sky. Along the way, you can find a strange attraction in the shape of an old landlocked boat, converted into a play park. There are slides, tunnels, ladders, and a climbing frame. There is also a weird rope ladder that leads into the hull below. A perfect place to bring the children, or a great place to relax on a romantic evening. Admission: Free

Beppu is a place famous for its many hot spring baths. Perhaps the most famous of those is Kannawa Onsen, but if you don't have the time to visit, then there are plenty of others to enjoy. Sand baths, outdoor bathing, and multiple different varieties of geothermal healing can be found here. Even Beppu Station boasts its very own (albeit small) Onsen, specifically for hands. Most hotels or hostels here also offer their own Onsen services, foot baths, and other varieties, so if you are looking for a good soak in sulphuric water, you won't have to travel far. Check how is an onsen in the following video. Admission: Various

Travel to a foreign country is hard. Lot of things to do in a short period of time. Lot of things to discovered, to know and to be surprised. A different to language to do all the daily things and more. The weight of regreting to visit a place instead of other or getting lost and also lost the day. Surprises about the time required to visit a place. You will want to have someone that knows the place to help you. For this, we recommend you to hire a private guide from GoWithGuide. He will help you with all these problems and also will make the trip in your own way. You can go at the places that better fits your interest and also make it in your own time because all the tours are private and customized. And also, with trustful and professionals guides because all of them are selected by our team for being well-capable. So, you might be thinking, okay, it will be probably cost a lot. No. The price is affordable and certainly worths the value since you have sent a lot to go other country and want to make the most of it. You can hire private guides and talk with him to make it according to your own interests or join a tour and customize it. Check some recommended tours that we selected for you. Beppu Tour in Oita Kuju Yamanami Highway Tour in Oita Yufuin Tour in



Oita Hot Springs and A Natural Monkey Mountain Park Or, if you want to explore outside Oita:  
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# Shidaka Lake: A Guide to One of Beppu's Best Hidden Gems

2020/06/25

Beppu, Boating, Camping, Cherry Blossoms, Fishing, Great View, Lake, Mount, Nature, Park, Shidaka, Swan, Tsurumi, Yufu Not far from the city center of Beppu, mountains and forests await the footsteps of adventurous travelers. Many magnificent sights and natural wonders can be found here such as Mount Tsurumi, Mount Yufu, and a myriad of swamps and valleys. In this same area, Lake Shidaka stretches across the land with its glimmering water. At an altitude of 600m, this quiet location proves itself time and time again as one of Beppu's most spectacular hidden gems.

Lakeside Relaxation at the Foot of Awe-Inspiring Mount Yufu and Mount Tsurumi Across a green plateau on the outskirts of Beppu, Lake Shidaka is a peaceful pocket of nature with an abundance of natural features. There are no buildings, no noisiness ? just the tranquility of the outdoors. With epic Mount Yufu and Mount Tsurumi looming closeby, it is the perfect place for families and couples to relax in a breathtaking setting. This scenic spot has been a secret gem amongst Beppu locals for a long time, and only in recent years has it started to see more tourists. Admire the Season's Beautiful Colours While Strolling Along the Banks It's not just the peaceful atmosphere that makes Lake Shidaka special; the sights, too, are spectacular. As the seasons change, so does the vibrant scenery. A promenade winds along the shore, allowing visitors to walk beneath the trees with their ever-changing colours. People of all ages will enjoy strolling along the water. In springtime, cherry blossoms bloom around the lake. This brings a delightful splash of pink to the beautiful landscape. As visitors stroll down a pathway lined with bright pink trees, Japan's most enchanting colours are in full view. For this reason, Lake Shidaka is a very popular attraction in the spring. Its natural beauty continues to evolve over the course of the year. In the summer, sunlight paints the area golden and the joyful chirping of birds can be heard in the trees. On hot days in Oita, it offers a quiet respite with cooler temperatures and soft breezes. And when autumn comes, the colours of Lake Shidaka flare into bright reds, crimsons, oranges, and yellows ? another season where visitors come in droves to gaze in awe. Lake Shidaka sees its lowest number of visitors in the winter, but it still remains a

must-see location during the coldest months of the year. In fact, to take full advantage of Beppu's marvelous blessings, we advise following up your winter stroll with a dip in one of Beppu's famous onsens! Fun Outdoor Activities for All Travelers to Enjoy Lake Shidaka is not just a must-see location for leisurely strolls and walks, it's also a brilliant place to take part in outdoor activities. Visitors can use the rowing boats, swan boats, rental bicycles, and even barbecue grills scattered across the area. For those who want to maximise their time by this lovely lake, rest assured that the surrounding grounds are an open campsite. Visitors are welcome to set up camp at a spot of their choosing and spend the night. There's nothing like waking up to this heavenly view! For a change of pace, fishing can also be enjoyed at Lake Shidaka between the months of December and March. Excellent Access from Beppu City Lake Shidaka feels so tranquil and remote that, at first, one thinks it has to be far away from civilisation. Fortunately, this is not so. Lake Shidaka is easy to access and is only a 15-minute drive from the Beppu Interchange (via Prefectural Road 11). And for those taking public transportation, the journey is only 30 minutes by bus from Beppu Station. Whether you intend to take a half-day trip or stay overnight, one thing is for sure: Lake Shidaka should not be missed! See Another Side of Beppu at Lake Shidaka Beppu is renowned for its abundance of hot springs, but its beauty does not end there. Reminiscent of the highlands of Europe, Lake Shidaka allows travelers to see a greener side of this hot spring town. Pay a visit to this hidden patch of nature and experience all that Beppu has to offer. Comments are closed. Private time with a special person ?Room service included? Enjoy our Oita Seki (Aji) mackerel A special anniversary spent in luxury Beppu-shi, Shinbeppu 4 kumi,Oita, Japan 874-0834

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## 10 amazing things to do in Oita, Japan! - fromJapan

fromJapan MENU Aug 27, 2020 Oita Prefecture is located at the northeast of Kyushu region, bordered by Fukuoka, Kumamoto, and Miyazaki prefectures. Known for its incredible hot spring sources, the prefecture is often called "Onsen Prefecture", for having the two most visited onsen towns in Japan: Beppu and Yufuin. Although the prefecture is best known for its onsen towns, it has a lot of things to offer for those looking for hidden gems. From a number of scenic towns and cities to other unique spots known for their Buddhist arts and historical architectures, the prefecture is brimming in culture and exciting places to visit! How to get there Recommended sightseeing spots in Oita: Oita's best local treats: Oita is accessible by airplanes from major airports, including Haneda (95 minutes), Narita (115 minutes), Nagoya (70 minutes), and Itami (60 minutes). You can also take the JR Limited Express from JR Hakata Station (Fukuoka) to visit the prefecture, or also take the highway bus operated by Nishitetsu from Fukuoka Airport International Terminal to Beppu Kitahama. Although Oita is relatively far from Tokyo, this one prefecture of Kyushu Island is worth visiting for its adorable sightseeing spots, unspoiled countryside sceneries, and delicious local treats. Here are our picks for the best things to do in Oita, Japan! Beppu Hells Tour, or Jigoku Meguri (?????), is perhaps one of the most popular attractions in Beppu. Attracting more than hundred thousands of visitors from all over Japan and from abroad, the hot springs included in Beppu Hells Tour are not the regular hot springs where you bathe yourself. These hot springs are more for viewing rather than bathing, as their temperatures are much higher than the ordinary onsen. There are seven hells in total; five of them are located in the Kannawa district, and two of them are in the Shibaseki district. Business hours: 8:00 ~ 17:00 Open throughout the year Ticket booklet (valid for 2 days): adults (age 15 and above) 2000 yen; children (age 6-14) 1000 yen Google MAP Website (in Japanese) Beppu Beach Sand Bath is a sand onsen located along the coast of Beppu, where you bathe in hot sand instead of in hot water. Unlike hot springs, you bury your whole body in hot sand with just your face poking out, and you'll sweat after 15 minutes bathing in the sand. Famous for its various health benefits, the Beppu Beach Sand Bath is believed to improve stiff muscles or joints, relieve chronic

muscle or joint pains, stabilize high blood pressure, reduce stress, and improve poor blood circulation. Business hours: March to November 8:30 ? 18:00 (last entry is at 17:00); December to February 9:00 ? 17:00 (last entry is at 16:00) Closed on the fourth Wednesday of each month (if a public holiday falls on a Thursday, it will close on the next day) Admissions: 1050 yen Access: about a 15-minutes bus ride from JR Beppu Station Google MAP Website (in Japanese) Looking for something cute? How about visiting the Takasakiyama Monkey Park to see its adorable monkeys? Opened in 1952, Takasakiyama Monkey Park is located at the foot of Mt. Takasaki, and is apparently one of the world's largest monkey parks as it occupies approximately 1500 wild Japanese macaques. These monkeys eat as they are fed, run around, play, or just sit in the sun while grooming each other. Although the monkeys look tame, you should never touch or feed these monkeys, and eye contact should be avoided as the monkeys might attack randomly. Business hours: 9:00 ? 17:00 (last entry is at 16:30) Open throughout the year Admissions: adults (age 15 and above) 520 yen; children (age 6 -14) 260 yen; free admission for age 6 and under Google MAP Website Suchart Boonyavech / Shutterstock.com Yunotsubo Street connects JR Yufuin Station and Lake Kinrin, and it's located at the foot of Mt. Yufu-dake. Lined with souvenir stores selling Oita's local specialties, and eateries offering Oita's local treats, this street is always packed with tourists visiting from other prefectures and other countries. Suchart Boonyavech / Shutterstock.com One of the most interesting spots to visit is the Yunotsubo Alley, a small alley filled with stores offering seasonal desserts and snacks, local craftwork, and accessories. Business hour varies by each store, but most close early (17:00 or 18:00) Open throughout the year Google MAP Lake Kinrin is located in Yufuin, an onsen city of Oita, and is famous for its mystical morning mists, which are created when water welling up from hot and cold springs mix during cold seasons. Located just a 25-minute walk from JR Yufuin Station, there are many onsen, restaurants, and cafes to explore on the lake's shores. When you visit Lake Kinrin, don't miss the art museums along the main road between Yufuin and the lake, and also the small shrine at the lake's southern end! Access: about a 25-minute walk from JR Yufuin Station Google MAP Website (in Japanese) Suchart Boonyavech / Shutterstock.com Need a break from reality? How about visiting Yufuin Floral Village to enjoy its

fairytale-like vibes? Inspired by the Cotswold region of England, where the famous movie ?Harry Potter? was made, Yufuin Floral Village offers a lot of fun experiences to enjoy. The theme park is lined with many cute and petite stores, where you can pet animals like cats and owls, or shop for cute souvenirs and gifts. Some of the most popular stores are ?Kiki?s Bakery?, which is modeled after Ghibli?s ?Kiki?s Delivery Service?, and ?The Rabbit?, a shop selling Peter Rabbit goods. Yufuin Floral Village offers a truly lovely sight, and you?ll definitely enjoy strolling around this English garden-style wonderland! Business hours: 9:00 ? 18:00 (last entry is at 17:30) Open throughout the year Access: about a 5-minute taxi ride or a 15-minute walk from JR Yufuin Station Google MAP Website (in Japanese) Located about 15 kilometers east of Kurokawa Onsen, Kuju Flower Park is a marvelous and attractive park that has about 3 million plants of more than 500 different varieties. The park is very spacious; it covers 49 acres of land with various flower species, including lavender, salvia, blueberries, pink moss, tulips, sunflowers, and poppies. On sunny days, you can enjoy lovely views of colorful flowers with the Kuju Mountain Range in the backdrop. Business hours: March to November 8:30 ? 17:30 (last entry at 17:00) Closed during winter (December to February) Admissions: adults (age 15 and above) 1300 yen; children (age 5 -14) 500 yen Access: about a 60-minute drive from Oita City Google MAP Website (in Japanese) English pamphlet Usa Shrine is located at the foot of the Kunisaki Peninsula and was built in the 8th Century. Known as the head shrine of thousands of Hachiman shrines across Japan, the shrine had a big influence on the Kunisaki Peninsula?s culture. The shrine holds a large compound that includes an upper shrine complex, a lower shrine complex, a treasure hall, a couple of ponds, and several secondary shrine buildings. The upper shrine complex is located at the top of a hill and has three main halls dedicated to Hachiman (the God of archery and war), to his mother (Empress Jingu), and to his wife (Hime Okami). The lower shrine complex at the foot of the hill also features three main halls dedicated to the same deities. Business hours: April to September 5:30 ? 19:00; October to March 6:00 ? 19:00 Access: about a 10-minute bus ride or a 10-minute taxi ride from JR Usa Station Google MAP Website (in Japanese) Looking for a peaceful hidden spot? Head to Yamaura area of Kusu-machi to see Jion Falls; a 30-meter high two-tiered waterfall that is famous for its breathtaking view and clear

water. Unlike other waterfalls, Jion Falls has a walking track around it, so the waterfall is easily accessible and also wheelchair friendly. Google MAP The Usuki Stone Buddhas are located about 5km southwest of Usuki's city center, and they are the only stone Buddhas in Japan to be designated as national treasures. Unlike most Buddha statues in Japan, which are usually made of wood or metal, Usuki Stone Buddhas are statues of various Buddhas sculpted into a cliff. These beautiful and marvelous stone Buddhas were built around the late Heian Period (794 ? 1185), using the workable and soft volcanic rock from the nearby Mt. Aso. Business hours: April to September 6:00 ? 19:00; October to March 6:00 ? 18:00 Admissions: adults (age 15 & above) 550 yen; children (age 6 ? 14) 270 yen Access: about a-15 minute taxi ride or a 20-minute bus ride from JR Usuki Station Google MAP Website Public transportation guide (PDF) Located in the Kyushu region, Oita is blessed with locally grown fish, meat, and vegetables. From the famous Toriten to the underrated Bungo beef, wherever you go, scrumptious local treats await in Oita. Here are our picks for the best food to try when visiting Oita! Toriten is a chicken tempura and perhaps the most famous local treat of Oita Prefecture. Made by deep-frying large chunks of chicken battered in tempura coating, Toriten is famous for its crunchy texture and juicy flavor. Widely available through the prefecture, make sure to try these yummy treats when visiting Oita! Ryukyu is one of the most famous local specialties of Oita, and it's usually served as a side dish or on a bed of rice. Made by marinating sliced fresh fish meat with soy sauce, sake (rice wine), and sesame, fish like yellowtail, mackerel, and horse mackerel are usually used to make Ryukyu. Jigoku-mushi (????, hell steaming) is a traditional cooking method used in Kannawa neighborhood in Beppu to cook the food. Cooked using only the steam produced from the hot spring, jigoku-mushi is also known as one of the healthiest cooking methods in Japan as no oil is used during the process. Seasonal vegetables and locally caught seafood are steamed in special steaming baskets made of bamboo to prevent the flavor from escaping. Since the mineral-laden steam brings out the true flavors of the food, the ingredients of jigoku-mushi usually use light seasonings, or sometimes no seasonings at all. Have you ever heard of tori meshi before? Tori meshi is one the most popular local specialties of Oita Prefecture and perhaps one of the most famous comfort foods in the prefecture. Literally means "chicken rice", tori

meshi is a rice cooked together with chicken and burdock, then seasoned with soy sauce, cooking sake (rice wine), and sugar. Japan is famous for its melting and juicy wagyu (Japanese beef), and Bungo beef (???), Bungogyu) is a high-end kuroge wagyu (Japanese black cattle) brand originating from Oita Prefecture. Known for its rich taste and high unsaturated fat content, Bungo beef is usually served in the form of a steak, shabu shabu (Japanese hotpot), or yakiniku (Japanese barbecue). One of the best places to try Bungo beef is in Beppu, a popular hot spring town in Oita Prefecture. Now that you have an idea of how many incredible destinations are in Oita, all you have to do is plan your itinerary to enjoy unforgettable experiences in Oita!

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# Oita Castle Ruin Park?THE GATE?Japan Travel Magazine: Find Tourism & Travel Info

THE GATE Oita Castle Ruin Park locates right by the Oita Castle's castle keep area. Also known as Funai Castle, the castle was built in 1579 for feudal lord Takenaka Shigetoshi, who ruled the area. The park is known for its over 70 cherry blossom trees that blossom every April. During cherry blossoms season, the castle lights up to create an ethereal view. Basic Information Access SHARE!

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What is Tanabata, Japan's Star Festival? 3 Tanabata Festivals to Visit! Behold the dreamy kingdom of cats at Kichijoji Petit Mura (village) Hitachi Seaside Park's Autumn Kochia Fields make a Vast Red Carpet Ueno Zoo: Meet Pandas, Polar Bears & Capybaras at Tokyo's Oldest Zoo! Oita < Hita / Yaba Say Hello to 3,600 Buddha statues at Rakanji Temple!

Rakanji Temple locates in the city of Nakatsu in Oita prefecture. It rests on the rocky Mount Rakan, and the view of and from the temple is breathtaking. Climb your way up the mountain, or take a lift for easier access. Shrines & Temples Hot Springs like Hell? Exploring the 'Hells of Beppu' in Oita Walking Yufuin, Oita's Retro Hot Spring Town: Where to Eat, Shop & Bathe Take a ¥100 Bath at

Takegawara Onsen in Beppu Hot Springs like Hell? Exploring the 'Hells of Beppu' in Oita Walking Yufuin, Oita's Retro Hot Spring Town: Where to Eat, Shop & Bathe Take a ¥100 Bath at Takegawara Onsen in Beppu EDITORS' PICKS Japan's Top 3 Fireworks: Omagari, Tsuchiura, & Nagaoka Firework Festivals Explore Togakushi's Five Shrines in Nagano's Woods Photogenic Factory Night Views at Yokkaichi Industrial Complex: 4 Must-see Views Guide to Asakusa & Sensoji Temple! Exploring Tokyo's Old-town Charm Revisiting Tokyo Tower! Events, Sights & Things to do at the Tokyo Icon 5 Edo-Period Old Towns: Traditional Post Town Sceneries of the Nakasendo Road POPULAR TAGS LATEST ARTICLES Tokyo Samurai Stage Fighting: Japanese Minds in the Art of Tate Sword-Fighting ? Shimanami Sea Route ? 17 sightseeing spots! the recommended model course. Manju Buns for Saitama Souvenirs! We Asked the Locals for some Hidden Gems Discover Nostalgic Scenes! Railroad Journey Through Gunma & Tochigi Discover Unique Hot Springs in Kagoshima along the East China Sea Coast Meet the Rabbit Herd of Japan's Rabbit Island, Okunoshima! ARTICLE RANKING 5 Edo-Period Old Towns: Traditional Post Town Sceneries of the Nakasendo Road What is Hakone's Traditional Craft: Yosegi Zaiku? 2 Places to buy them in Tokyo! What is Tanabata, Japan's Star Festival? 3 Tanabata Festivals to Visit! Behold the dreamy kingdom of cats at Kichijoji Petit Mura (village) Hitachi Seaside Park's Autumn Kochia Fields make a Vast Red Carpet Ueno Zoo: Meet Pandas, Polar Bears & Capybaras at Tokyo's Oldest Zoo! ARTICLE SPOT THE GATE OFFICIAL SNS FOLLOW ME No part of this site may be reproduced without our written permission. ©2022 Roseau Pensant Inc. All rights reserved.

## Off the Beaten Path in Japan - 35 Incredible Hidden Gems

Home / Destinations / Japan / 35 Destinations Off the Beaten Path in Japan By James Davies in Japan Guides. If you're planning to visit the land of the rising sun then there is much to explore off the beaten path in Japan. For many first time visitors, Japan's major cities, such as Tokyo and Kyoto, are often the first places that people want to see. However, if you're making a return trip to Japan, or if you want to avoid the crowds, you might be looking for new ideas and different parts of the country to explore. That's where our guide to off the beaten path Japan comes in. Starting in Hokkaido, our guide to off the beaten path Japan runs from north to south, ending in the southern region of Kyushu. Our guide to some of the lesser travelled areas of Japan takes a detour off the tourist trail based on our own travels far and wide to towns, cities and regions right across the country. We explain how to get to each destination by train from the nearest major city, such as Tokyo or Kyoto. Where applicable we've also included if you can fly to the destination. Japan has numerous airports and internal flights can be pretty cheap At the end of the article we go into much greater detail about how to travel across Japan (you can skip ahead to that part [here](#)). We also look at whether you need a Japan Rail Pass or not, or if a regional rail pass might be a better option. But for now, let's explore some of the best destinations off the beaten path in Japan. Sat on the north eastern coast of Hokkaido is the small city of Abashiri. By far Abashiri's main attraction are the huge drifting ice floes that gather in the nearby Sea of Okhotsk each year in the height of winter. Formed by the freezing Siberian winds that blow across the sea, the ice floes drift all the way from the coast of eastern Russia. From January to March each year, you can take a cruise on one of the ice-breaking ships that sail through the incredible seascape formed by this huge patchwork of compacted ice. Back on dry land, Abashiri also home to a number of interesting local museums. The Abashiri Prison Museum features a number of the historic former prison buildings that were once located throughout Hokkaido. You can learn more about the drift ice that forms off the coast of Abashiri at the nearby Okhotsk Ryuhyo Museum, while the Hokkaido Museum of Northern People features an excellent display of artefacts and information about the various indigenous peoples who

live in some of the world's most remote northerly communities. How to Get to Abashiri: ? By air: The easiest way to get to Abashiri is by plane. The nearest airport to Abashiri is Memanbetsu Airport which is around 40 minutes away by bus. ? There are daily flights to Memanbetsu Airport from Tokyo and Sapporo. ?? Find the best prices for flights to Memanbetsu with Skyscanner here. ? By train: It's around a 6 hour train journey from Sapporo Station to Abashiri JR Station. This route is covered by the Japan Rail Pass. Right on the southern tip of Hokkaido, Hakodate is one of the most unique cities in Japan. The city's Motomachi area is lined with beautiful historic buildings that were built by the Western merchants and traders who settled here after Japan opened to international trade in 1854. Among them are the spectacular Old Public Hall of Hakodate Ward and the elegant Former Hakodate Branch Office of Hokkaido Government. Nearby are a cluster of historic churches, including the Russian Orthodox Church, the Protestant St John's Church and the Catholic Church of Hakodate. On the opposite side of the city, Goryokaku, a star-shaped former military fort, is now a beautiful public park and a beautiful spot for cherry blossom viewing in the spring. You'll find some of the very best seafood in Japan at Hakodate Morning Market, while the Kanamori red brick warehouses in Hakodate harbour are now home to countless shops, food stalls, restaurants and even a rambunctious beer hall. Plus there are incredible views across the city from the observatory at the peak of Mount Hakodate, reached via the Hakodate Ropeway, especially when the city is lit up at night. ? Read More: The Perfect Hakodate Itinerary How to Get to Hakodate: ? By train: Take the Shinkansen to Shin-Hakodate Hokuto Station, then a local train to Hakodate Station ? this journey is covered by the Japan Rail Pass ? By air: There are direct flights to Hakodate Airport from Tokyo Haneda, Nagoya or Osaka airports. ?? Search for flights to Hakodate here. Located at the very top of Japan's main island of Honshu, Aomori is perhaps most famous for the Nebuta Matsuri festival that takes place every year across the first week of August. The highlight of Aomori's Nebuta Matsuri festival are the stunning illuminated floats that are paraded through the city's streets during the festival, accompanied by teams of taiko drummers and musicians. If you can't make it to Aomori in the first week of August then you can see a large collection of floats used in previous festivals at the Nebuta Museum WA RASSE. The museum also charts the history of the

festival, as well as revealing how the floats are made. Another of the city's other main attractions is the Aomori Museum of Art, a vast building that showcases a wide range of modern art by contemporary artists, most famous for Yoshitomo Nara's eight and a half metre tall Aomori Dog. Nearby is the Sannai Maruyama Special Historical Site, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Sannai Maruyama is an archeological site that features nearly 2000 artefacts that were discovered here in the 1990s, some of which are nearly 6,000 years old.

**How to Get To Aomori:**

- By train: Take the Shinkansen to Shin-Aomori Station, then a local train to Aomori Station ? journey is covered by the Japan Rail Pass
- By air: There are also direct flights to Aomori Airport from Tokyo Haneda, Nagoya, Osaka, Kobe and Sapporo airports ?? Find the best deals on flights to Aomori here.

Hirosaki is a historic city that's around 40 minutes by train from Aomori. The city's main draw is Hirosaki Castle. First built in 1611, the surviving castle is considered to be one of Japan's 12 original castles (most of the castles in Japan are replicas of long-destroyed castles that didn't survive the end of the Edo era). The castle's grounds have been transformed into Hirosaki Park, which features over 2,500 cherry blossom trees, making the park one of the most popular hanami spots in all of Japan. Opposite the castle is Tsugaru-han Neputa Village. Here there are many of the beautifully decorated floats, kites and drums that are used in local festivals on display. The centre also has a beautiful traditional Japanese garden too. Hirosaki also has a number of well maintained former samurai houses in the streets surrounding Hirosaki Castle. Open to the public and free to enter, the houses are a fascinating insight into how Hirosaki's high-ranking samurai would have lived during the rule of the Tsugara clan.

**How to Get to Hirosaki:**

- By train: Take the JR Ou Line to Hirosaki Station from either Aomori or Akita stations ? this journey is covered by the Japan Rail Pass

Kakunodate is another town rich in samurai history. Kakunodate's former samurai district features some of the best preserved examples of Edo period houses still standing in Japan today. Several streets of beautifully preserved historic houses lie at the heart of the town, most of which are open to the public. Among the many historic houses that can be visited, the Aoyagi Samurai House is one of the largest in Kakunodate and features an extensive collection of samurai memorabilia. An impressive array of battle armour and weaponry is also displayed throughout the home's various

buildings. Kakunodate is also a great place to eat. Be sure to try oyakodon with an extra helping of Inaniwa udon noodles, two local specialities, at Sakura no Sato on Bukeyashiki Street. Pick up some local pickles and soy sauce at Ando Soy Sauce and Miso Brewery, located inside a grand old shop that is worth calling into just to admire the stunning interiors. Beside samurai, Kakunodate is also another town famous for its cherry blossom trees. The picturesque samurai district's streets are filled with weeping beautiful cherry blossom trees, while hundreds of cherry blossom trees also stretch along the town's Hinokinai River.

How to Get to Kakunodate: ? By train: Take the Shinkansen to Kakunodate Station on the Akita Shinkansen line ? this journey is covered by the Japan Rail Pass Matsushima is a beautiful town overlooking Miyagi's coast about half an hour from the city of Sendai. The historic town is famous for its bay and the collection of pine tree covered islands that connect to the mainland by picturesque red bridges. Two of the islands, Fukuurajima and Oshima, feature gentle walking paths and offer wonderful views of Matsushima bay. In the town, Godaido Temple is connected to the main town by a series of short bridges, while there are more beautiful views of the sea from the historic Kanrantei tea house just next door, which is famous for its spectacularly decorated sliding doors. There are several boat tours of Matsushima Bay every day, which offer a closer look at many of the islands dotted around the coastline. There are also several temples in Matsushima that are also well worth exploring. Entsuin Temple is set amongst beautifully manicured gardens, while just next door Zuiganji Temple features room after room of beautifully decorated sliding doors with a range of natural motifs. If you get peckish, Matsushima is also a great place to try one of Miyagi prefecture's local delicacies, grilled beef tongue.

How to Get to Matsushima: ? By train: Take the JR Senseki Line to Matsushimakaigan Station from Sendai Station ? covered by the Japan Rail Pass The city of Yamagata is perhaps most famous as the gateway to Yamadera Temple, one of the most impressive temple complexes in Japan. Just 20 minutes by train from Yamagata Station, Yamadera is a sprawling collection of temples spread across a mountain ? Yamadera literally means 'mountain temple' in Japanese. Over 1,000 steps lead to the temple buildings at the top of Yamadera, which has attracted pilgrims for centuries. The steps lead through glorious forests, passing by countless stone statues of deities. The hike is

particularly special in autumn, when the forest's trees turn a kaleidoscopic range of yellows, oranges and reds. Though Yamadera is the main attraction there's plenty to enjoy in the lively city of Yamagata too. In the centre of the city there are several beautiful Western-style public buildings that date from the early 20th century. Bunshokan, the grand former prefectural office built in an English neo-Renaissance style in 1916, is now a museum and open to the public free of charge. The grounds of what was once Yamagata Castle is now the grounds of Kajo Park. Some of the castle's walls and its former moat skirt the edge of the park. Inside Kajo Park is the pale pink Old Saiseikan Hospital Building, a fascinating early Japanese hospital with a unique circular design. The nearby Yamagata Museum of Art has an excellent collection of artworks by big-hitters such as Van Gogh, Monet, Renoir and Degas amongst others.

How to Get to Yamagata: ? By train: Take the Yamagata Shinkansen from Tokyo Station to Yamagata Station ? journey covered by the Japan Rail Pass ? By air: There are direct flights to Yamagata Airport from Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, and Sapporo ?? Find the best prices on flights to Yamagata [here](#)

The city of Aizuwakamatsu has plenty to explore for those looking to go off the beaten path in Japan. At the centre of Aizuwakamatsu is Tsurugajo, the city's castle, a replica of the original castle that was rebuilt in 1965. Inside Tsurugajo is a museum about the history of the castle, and there are fantastic views of the city and Mount Bandai from the top of the tower. Oyakuen, a small Japanese garden near the castle, is a beautiful spot to relax with a cup of matcha tea whilst admiring the gorgeous view. Aizuwakamatsu's main street, Nanoka-machi Street, is lined with a beautiful range of historic Edo-period and Showa-era buildings. Sake lovers should stop in at either Suehiro Sake Brewery or Miyaizumi Sake Brewery where you can taste and buy some of the award-winning local nihonshu. On the edge of the city is Sazae Temple, one of the most unique temples in Japan. Sazae Temple was built in 1796 and features a double helix staircase. The only wooden double-helix in the world, Sazaedo is a fascinating structure. The ingenious layout of the temple means that those ascending to the top of the tower don't pass those who are coming down.

How to Get to Aizuwakamatsu: ? By train: Take the Shinkansen from Tokyo to Koriyama Station, then a local train on the JR Ban-Etsusai line to Aizuwakamatsu Station ? this journey covered by the Japan Rail Pass

The historic town of

Ouchijuku is a popular day trip from Aizuwakamatsu. Ouchijuku was one of many post towns found along highways that connected Tokyo to other parts of Japan. Post towns emerged along those routes as somewhere travellers could get something to eat and a place to stay overnight. Ouchijuku is a faithfully preserved example of an Edo-era post town. All signs of modernity have been hidden, with electricity cables and air conditioning units kept out of sight. Historic thatched-roof buildings line both sides of the town's main street, which are home to numerous shops and restaurants, while the town's former inn is now the Ouchijuku Town Museum. From the top end of the town is the famous view of Ouchijuku's main street, where the thatched roofed houses can be seen lined up in a row. Don't miss the local delicacy of negi soba, which can be enjoyed at a number of the town's restaurants. Negi soba is made of delicious locally-made buckwheat soba noodles served in a broth and eaten using a large leek instead of chopsticks.

**How to Get to Ouchijuku:** ? The easiest way to visit Ouchijuku is on a day trip from Aizuwakamatsu, first by train via the Aizu Line from Aizuwakamatsu Station to Yunokamionsen Station, followed by a bus to Ouchijuku. ? This journey is not covered by the Japan Rail Pass. Despite only being a couple of hours from Tokyo by Shinkansen, Niigata is often overlooked as a destination as many people prefer to head south from Tokyo towards Kyoto. Looking out on the Sea of Japan, there's plenty to see in Niigata to fill a couple of days, mostly centred around the Shinano River. Inside the towering Bandajima Skyscraper is Niigata Bandaijima Art Museum, which hosts a number of exhibitions by contemporary artists throughout the year. As well as the art, don't miss the spectacular views from the observation deck on the tower's 55th floor. On the opposite side of the Shinano River is a collection of historic old port buildings, one of which is now the Niigata City History Museum. Niigata is famous for the high quality of its rice and good rice makes incredible sake. The whole region is known for producing some of the best sakes in Japan, many of which you can try at Ponshukan inside Niigata Station. Here over 100 different types of locally produced sake can be sampled from the dispensing machines located inside the Ponshukan store. For ¥500 you get five tokens and a small cup to refill with a serving of the sakes of your choice.

**How to Get to Niigata:** ? By train: From Tokyo via the Joetsu Shinkansen to Niigata Station ? covered by the Japan Rail Pass ? By plane: direct flights to



Niigata Airport from Tokyo Narita Airport, Osaka, Nagoya, Sapporo, Kobe, Fukuoka and Okinawa.

?? Find the best price on flights to Niigata Airport here

Tucked away from the Sea of Japan by Wakasa Bay, Tsuruga blends natural scenery with plenty of local history. Facing Wakasa Bay in the west of Tsuruga is Kehi no Matsubara, a gorgeous area of pine trees with a long sandy beach that has been declared a Nationally-Designated Site of Scenic Beauty. In the centre of Tsuruga is Kehi Jingu Shrine, famous for its 11 metre-high wooden torii gate, one of the largest in Japan. Some of Tsuruga port's former industrial buildings have been repurposed and given a new lease of life. Two former red brick warehouses now house a variety of shops and restaurants, as well as a huge diorama of the city of Tsuruga as it would have looked in the early 20th century. Located nearby is the Port of Humanity Tsuruga Museum, dedicated to the memory of Chiune Sugihara and his actions during World War Two. As Japan's vice-consul to Lithuania in 1940, Sugihara defied orders and issued thousands of Japanese visas to Jews looking to escape eastern Europe. Many of the Jews fleeing persecution with the help of Sugihara's visas landed in Tsuruga when reaching Japan.

How to Get to Tsuruga: ? By train: The limited express Thunderbird train takes less than an hour to get to Tsuruga Station from Kyoto Station and is covered by the Japan Rail Pass. Once the seat of one of the most powerful samurai clans in Japan, Kanazawa is rich in culture and history. The prominence that came from being a wealthy samurai town can still be seen throughout Kanazawa today. Historic districts such as Higashi Chaya and Nagamachi are lined with plenty of Edo period charm, including traditional samurai houses and teahouses where guests can still be entertained by geisha. At the centre of the town is the reconstructed Kanazawa Castle. The castle's grounds are filled with plum blossoms which burst into colour in the spring. Opposite the castle is Kenrokuen, considered to be the finest and most beautiful Japanese garden in the country. For a colourful dose of modernity, head to the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art for a diverse and often interactive hit of modern art. Meanwhile, don't miss Kanazawa's Omicho market for some of the finest and freshest seafood in town.

How to Get to Kanazawa: ? By train: There are direct trains on the Hokuriku Shinkansen service from Tokyo Station to Kanazawa Station. The journey takes just under two hours and is covered by the Japan Rail Pass

Much like Kanazawa, Matsumoto is another

historic former samurai town. The city is dominated by the towering black Matsumoto Castle, which is another of Japan's 12 original castles. Alongside Himeji Castle, Matsumoto Castle is probably the finest example of all of Japan's surviving castles. Nearby, the picturesque district of Nakamachi also retains an air of the Edo period. Nakamachi's streets are lined with historic storehouses and buildings that today are home to numerous shops, cafes, and restaurants. Just across the Metobe River, the narrow shopping street of Nawate-dori, meaning "Frog Street", is the perfect place to pick up some local souvenirs. Meanwhile the Matsumoto City Museum of Art celebrates the work of the city's most famous descendent, Yayoi Kusama. Alongside exhibitions of other Japanese artists, there are several of Kusama's most famous works, including the Yellow Pumpkins most commonly associated with Japan's art island of Naoshima.

How to Get to Matsumoto: ? By train: Take the the JR Azusa Limited Express from Tokyo's Shinjuku Station to Matsumoto Station. This route is covered by the Japan Rail Pass. If you really want to go off the beaten track in Japan then there are plenty of great places to go hiking throughout the country. One of the best places to hike is Kamikochi, a mountainous valley in the Japanese Alps in Nagano. Located inside the Chubu-Sangaku National Park, Kamikochi features several hiking trails that follow the crystal clear Azusa River for several kilometres through spectacular woods and forests. At the heart of Kamikochi is the Kappabashi Bridge, where you can find a handful of excellent hotels and ryokans that offer half-board stays. Kamikochi is perfect for those looking for a relaxing return to nature or for experienced hikers looking for a more strenuous challenge. The trails that follow along both sides of the river are mostly flat and easy to navigate. Venture further, however, and there are much more difficult multi-day treks that reach as far as the peaks of the nearby Mount Hotaka and Mount Yari. Wherever you hike in Kamikochi, always remember to keep an eye out for monkeys and especially for bears. ? See Also: The Complete Guide to Hiking in Kamikochi

How to Get to Kamikochi: ? The easiest way to reach Kamikochi from Tokyo is by bus from Tokyo's Shinjuku Expressway Bus Terminal. The journey takes just under 5 hours. There are also direct buses to Kamikochi from Osaka and Kyoto. For more information see bus timetables here.? There are also direct buses to Kamikochi from Nagano and Matsumoto that take around 2 hours. Kusatsu Onsen is a historic

onsen town tucked away in the far west of Gunma Prefecture. The volcanic mineral hot spring waters that flow through Kusatsu are said to bring many health benefits. Several hotels operate public and private onsen throughout the town, which has seen visitors come to bathe in its restorative waters for centuries. In the heart of the Kusatsu is Yubatake, a large, man-made geothermal pool which collects and draws the region's hot spring water into the town. Either side of Yubatake there are public foot baths that are free to use. You can see traditional performances that show how the steaming hot mountain waters were originally cooled so that they were safe to bathe in inside Kusatsu Onsen Netsunoyu. Blanketed in snow in the winter, there are plenty of restaurants and food stands to keep you well fed in Kusatsu, particularly along narrow Sainokawara Street to the west of Yubatake. The same winding street leads to Sainokawara Park, where walking paths pass by streams and rock pools of hot spring waters. At the far end of the park is Sainokawara Open-air Bath, an open air onsen surrounded by trees.

How to Get to Kusatsu Onsen: ? Kusatsu Onsen can be reached by a combination of train and bus. ? The easiest route from Tokyo is to take a JR Kusatsu limited express service from Ueno Station to Naganohara Kusatsu-guchi Station. This is covered by the Japan Rail Pass. ? From Naganohara Kusatsu-guchi Station it's around a half an hour bus journey to Kusatsu Onsen Bus Terminal. More details can be found [here](#).

The capital of Tochigi Prefecture, Utsunomiya is perhaps most famous for its gyoza. There are countless restaurants in the city that dish up a dazzling variety of delicious dumplings. If you're looking for the best gyoza as you wander off the beaten path in Japan, then Utsunomiya is the place to come. There's more to Utsunomiya than just gyoza however. Right in the centre of the city you'll find Utsunomiya Futarayama Shrine, whose entrance is marked by an enormous wooden torii gate and a long, steep staircase. On the edge of the city is Oya History Museum, an enormous and deep network of former caves that were once mined for the local Oya stone. Nearby is Oya Temple, which is built into the side of a cliff. The temple is over 1200 years old, and is believed to have been established by Kobo Daisho, the founder of a school of Buddhism called Shingon Buddhism (more on him later). Inside the temple is a relief carving on the cliff-face of Kannon, the Goddess of Mercy. Said to have been carved in 810, this is believed to be the oldest stone carving of Buddha in Japan.

Just a few steps away and just as impressive is a 27 metre tall statue of Heiwa Kannon. How to Get to Utsonomiya: ? By train: Utsonomiya Station is around 50 minutes from Tokyo Station via Shinkansen, a journey covered by the Japan Rail Pass. Mito is less than an hour and a half from Tokyo by train. Mito's most famous attraction is Kairakuen Garden, said to be one of the three best landscaped gardens in all of Japan. Kairakuen was opened as a public park in 1841 and is famous for the 3,000 plum trees that fill the garden that come into bloom each spring. Besides plum trees Kairakuen also features a peaceful bamboo grove and enormous ancient giant cedar trees. Opposite Kairakuen Garden, overlooking Senba Lake, is the Museum of Modern Art, which holds regular exhibitions by Japanese contemporary artists. In the centre of the Mito is Kodokan, a former school for the children of local samurai that is now open to the public. The school was opened in the same year as Kairakuen and is now set amongst a peaceful garden that's also filled with plum trees. Mito is also conveniently located for access to another of Ibaraki's most famous attractions, Hitachi Seaside Park. Overlooking the Ibaraki coastline, Hitachi Seaside Park is famous for its sloping flower fields that turn a variety of vibrant colours at different times of the year. In spring the park's nemophila are a sea of blue, and by autumn the kokia bushes slowly turn from green to a deep red, creating a magnificent natural landscape. How to Get to Mito: ? By train: Limited Express trains from Tokyo Station reach Mito Station in around 1 hour and 20 minutes. This journey is covered by the Japan Rail Pass. It may seem odd to describe the second largest city in Japan as off the beaten track. Yet Yokohama is frequently overlooked, especially as a day trip from Tokyo, with people tending to visit the likes of Kamakura or Nikko instead. Only half an hour from Tokyo by train, Yokohama is the perfect day trip from the capital, though there is plenty to keep you busy for several days if you decide to stay longer. Yokohama is one of Japan's most cosmopolitan cities. Not only is Yokohama home to the largest Chinatown in Japan, there are several beautiful old Western-style houses to explore in the historic Yamate region of the city. Most of Yokohama's main sights are located in and around the port area. The Red Brick Warehouses, once part of an industrialised port, have been converted into a grand retail space, with a variety of shops and restaurants. A short walk away, Yamashita Park is a wonderful place to relax, with rose gardens and a frequent flower

displays held throughout the year. Yokohama is also perfect if you're travelling with kids (or if you're just young at heart). Here you can watch the 18 metre tall Gundam robot take a walk at the Gundam Factory. You can also ride the giant ferris wheel and all manner of rides at Yokohama Cosmoworld and even create your own flavour of instant noodles at The Cup Noodle Museum.

**How to Get To Yokohama:** ? By train: Yokohama Station is around 30 minutes from the centre of Tokyo on the Ueno-Tokyo metro line or the Yokosuka metro line. Both lines are covered by the Japan Rail Pass.

Atami is an onsen town located at the top of the beautiful Izu Peninsula. Built into the steep slopes that descend down to Sagami Bay, Atami is famous for the huge fireworks festival that takes place several times a year. Some of the most spectacular views of Atami's bay can be seen from the MOA Museum of Art. Positioned high on top of the city, the museum features a vast collection of Japanese and Asian art, all housed inside a stunning building. Just outside Atami Station are two shotengai, the covered shopping streets that can be found in cities throughout Japan. These are a great place to buy some local souvenirs as well as try local specialities ? don't miss the satsuma-age, or fried fishcakes, from Maruten on Heiwa-dori. Another reason to visit Atami is to explore the stunning Jogasaki coast on the Izu Peninsula. From Atami Station take the Ito Line train that trickles south along the rocky shoreline to Jogasaki Kaigan Station. A short walk away are numerous trails of volcanic rock that lead along the Jogasaki coast. A great place for diving, there are also a handful of unexpected museums in the area too, including the New York Lamp Museum & Flower Garden and the Izu Teddy Bear Museum.

**How to Get to Atami and the Izu Peninsula:** ? By train: From Tokyo, Atami Station is only 45 minutes away on the Tokaido-Sanyo Shinkansen, which is covered by the Japan Rail Pass. ? The Jogasaki coast can be reached from Atami Station on the luxury Odoriko Line and the regular Ito Line, both of which are covered by the Japan Rail Pass.

Nagahama is a small city situated on the north-east side of Lake Biwa. The city's biggest attraction are the picturesque old streets around Kurokabe Square, a warren of well preserved Edo-era shops, cafes and restaurants. Nagahama is also famous for its locally produced glass, and there are numerous shops selling glass souvenirs and ornaments throughout the town. Nagahama is also home to a number of historic temples, including the grand Daitsu-ji Temple. Entered via an

imposing entrance gate, inside Daitsu-ji Temple are several beautifully decorated rooms with painted sliding doors and a magnificent main hall. The Hikiyama Museum features an excellent exhibition about the annual festival that takes place at the nearby Hachiman-gu Shrine. The festival is famous for the kabuki plays that are performed by local children. There are more breathtaking interiors at Keiunkan, a magnificent Japanese villa that dates from the late 19th century that is open to the public. There are also lovely views of Lake Shiga from the reconstructed Nagahama Castle. If you get thirsty, call in to Nagahama Distillery to try some of the locally produced craft beers and whiskies.

How to Get to Nagahama: ? By train: Direct trains from Kyoto Station reach Nagahama Station in just over an hour on the Tokaido-Sanyo line, covered by the JR Rail Pass. Omichachiman is another small city near Lake Biwa with a charming old town. Most of the city's highlights can be found in the Shinmachi region, whose streets are lined with wonderful old houses that nod to Omihachiman's prosperity as a post town during the Edo period. Also dotted around the town are several historic Western-inspired buildings, most notably the striking Haku'un-kan, or White Cloud building, that was originally built to be a school. You can take a pleasant boat ride along the narrow Hachiman-bori canal that threads through the old town. Nearby you'll find Himure Hachimangu, an ancient and atmospheric temple known for its annual festivals. A ropeway just beyond Himure Hachimangu temple leads to the observatory at the top of Hachimanyama, where there are fantastic views of the city. Don't leave town without trying delicious omi wagyu beef, a regional speciality comparable with (and just as delicious as) the more famous Kobe beef.

How to Get to Omihachiman: ? By train: Omihachiman Station is just 35 minutes from Kyoto Station on the Tokaido-Sanyo line, which is again covered by the Japan Rail Pass. Located on the Shima Peninsula, the city of Ise is home to what is considered to be the most important Shinto shrine in Japan, Ise Grand Shrine. The Ise Grand Shrine actually consists of two different sites, known as the Inner Shrine and the Outer Shrine, which are around six kilometres apart from each other. Ise Grand Shrine is dedicated to the goddess of the sun, the most important deity in the Shinto religion, and the whole shrine complex is considered to be one of the most venerated sites in Japan. The entrance to Ise's Outer Shrine is just a five minute walk from the city's main Ise-shi Station. Ise's

Inner Shrine is on the southern outskirts of the city and reached via Okage Yokocho, a beautiful network of Edo-era shops and restaurants. Close to Ise in Futami-ura is another of Japan's most famous religious sites, Futamiokitama Shrine. Facing the sea, Futamiokitama Shrine is most famous for its two wedded rocks, called Meoto-Iwa in Japanese, which are joined together by a sacred rope called a shimenawa. Nearby is Hinjitsukan, a beautiful former guesthouse built in 1898 that has been designated an Important Cultural Property.

How to Get There: ? By train: Ise's main train station is Ise Station which has direct trains to Nagoya Station. ? The fastest service from Nagoya to Ise Station is the Kintetsu Limited Express which is not covered by the Japan Rail Pass. The journey on the Rapid Mie line takes a little longer but is covered by the Japan Rail Pass.

Hidden high amongst the tree-lined mountains of Wakayama Prefecture, the small town of Koyasan is almost the definition of off the beaten path Japan. Arriving by public transport means taking a combination of train, cable car and local bus. Those who do make the trip to Koyasan will find one of the most beautiful towns in Japan. Koyasan is home to countless temples and shrines, thanks to Kobo Daishi, the monk who founded a sect of Buddhism called Shingon-Buddhism in Koyasan in the 8th Century. At the entrance of Koyasan stands a commanding vermilion gate that dates from the 11th century. Throughout the town are several ancient grand temples, including the sprawling Danjo-garan Temple complex and Kongobuji temple. Koyasan has been a place of pilgrimage for centuries, and is part of the Kumano Kodo route, a collection of pilgrim trails that have been awarded UNESCO World Heritage status. At the far end of the town is the breathtaking Okunoin cemetery, where Kobo Daishi is buried, along with over 200,000 others. ? See Also: What to See and Do in Koyasan, Japan's Most Sacred Town

How to Get to Koyasan: ? By train: Koyasan is easiest to reach by train from Osaka's Namba Station. From here take the Nankai-Koya line to Gokurakubashi Station, from where it's a cable car ride to Koyasan Station and then a bus into the centre of the town. This journey is not covered by the Japan Rail Pass. ? The Koyasan World Heritage Ticket includes the cost of return trains to Koyasan from Namba Station, as well as the fare for the cable car and all local buses in Koyasan. More information on the Koyasan World Heritage ticket can be found [here](#). ? By car: Koyasan is perhaps most easily reached by car. The drive to

Koyasan takes in some of the most beautiful and remote areas of off the beaten path Japan. We'd suggest hiring a car in Wakayama city or at Kansai International Airport. It's about an hour's drive to Koyasan from either location. ?? You can find the best prices on hire cars in Japan with Discover Cars here. Only an hour south of Osaka by train, Wakayama is a bustling city that can easily be explored in a day or so. The city's biggest attraction is Wakayama Castle, a reconstruction of the castle that originally stood on the site and was first built in the late 16th century. Today Wakayama Castle houses a museum about its history alongside plenty of displays of ancient artefacts such as samurai armour and traditional weaponry. There are also wonderful views of the city from the top of the castle tower. Elsewhere, the Museum of Modern Art features a number of large scale exhibitions by contemporary artists throughout the year. South of the city centre is Kimii-dera, one of the oldest and most important temples in the city. A steep climb of over 230 steps leads to the temple's main hall, from where there are sensational panoramic views of Wakayama Bay.

How to Get to Wakayama: ? By train: Wakayama is most easily reached from Osaka. From Osaka Station the Osaka Loop Line takes just over an hour to get to Wakayama Station. This is covered by the Japan Rail Pass. Back on the Sea of Japan, Tottori is most famous for its huge sweeping sand dunes. Located on the edge of the city, Tottori's sand dunes are a phenomenal sight, rising and sloping for over nine miles along the shoreline. Next to the dunes is The Sand Museum, a unique exhibition of sand art that is not to be missed. Each year sand artists from all over the world come to the Sand Museum to create phenomenally adventurous and detailed works of art on a specific theme. Though most people visit Tottori for its famous dunes, there's more to enjoy here than just sand. Tottori is also famous for its hot spring waters. There are a number of hotels and ryokans with onsens located in the centre of the city. Next to the ruins of Tottori castle is Jinpukaku Mansion, a grand Western-inspired home built for the head of the local Ikeda clan in 1907. The house was used for the visit of Emperor Taisho whilst he was still prince during his tour of the region. Today, Jinpukaku Mansion is open to the public along with its stylish Japanese gardens.

How to Get to Tottori: ? By train: There are direct trains to Tottori Station from Kyoto and Okayama. These trains use tracks operated by private (non JR) train companies for part of the journey. Because of this Japan Rail



Pass holders will need to pay an extra surcharge to use these trains. The additional fee is around 1,800¥ depending on the train. ? By air: There are direct daily flights between Tottori Airport and Tokyo's Haneda Airport. ?? Find the best deals on flights to Tottori here. Overlooking Lake Shinji in Shimane Prefecture, Matsue is another city that flourished thanks to its connection to a wealthy samurai clan. The city's main attraction is Matsue Castle, another of Japan's 12 original castles. Built in the early 1600s, Matsue Castle has been beautifully preserved and is one of the finest castles in Japan. Boat tours are available of the Kyobashi River that circles that castle and feeds into its moat. Matsue was also the home city of Lafcadio Hearn, the Greek-Irish writer and teacher who moved to Japan in 1890. Hearn's book, *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, was published in 1894 and documented his findings upon his travels around Japan. Hearn's book was one of the earliest accounts of life in Japan by a foreigner, in a country that until recently had been closed to outsiders. Hearn's former house in Matsue, where he lived for 15 months, is now a museum dedicated to his fascinating life and his writing. Well worth a trip out of town is the Adachi Museum of Art, not only for its excellent art collection but also its stunning Japanese garden. How to Get to Matsue: ? By train: Matsue Station can be reached from Tottori Station by San-In Line-Limited Express trains. The journey takes around 1 hour and 20 minutes. The historic district of Bikan in Kurashiki features some of the most picturesque Edo-style streets in all of Japan. Centred around the Kurashiki river, Bikan is lined with classic shophouses and traditional old white and black stone storehouses. A thriving area, today Kurashiki's historic buildings are home to a multitude of shops, cafes and restaurants. Kurashiki, and in particular a small cluster of shops in Bikan called Denim Street, is famous as being the birthplace of Japan's denim industry. The city is renowned throughout the world for the incredibly high quality of the denim that is made here. Several local history museums and art galleries can also be found either side of the Kurashiki River, with the ?hara Museum of Art being the cream of the crop. Amongst the ?hara Museum of Art's collection are works by artists such as Monet, Gauguin, Degas and Cezanne. How to Get to Kurashiki: ? By train: Kurashiki Station is just a 20 minute journey from Okayama Station on the Sanyo Line, which is covered by the Japan Rail Pass. The minuscule town of Nagoro is about as far off Japan's beaten path as it is possible to go.

Hidden deep within the Iya Valley in a remote corner of Shikoku's Tokushima Prefecture, Nagoro is little more than an idyllic rural village made famous by one local resident, Tsukimi Ayano, who has populated the town with hundreds of life-size models of former residents. Now known as the Scarecrow Village, Nagoro was once home to around 300 people, but due to the steady decline in Japan's rural population, the town now has less than 30 residents. Tsukimi Ayano created Nagoro's first scarecrow in 2003, and now there are hundreds of scarecrow figures propped up throughout the village. Scarecrow farmers work in the fields, others congregate outside long abandoned houses while another fishes in the Iya River. Meanwhile, hundreds of scarecrows fill the hall of town's former high school. This is one of Japan's more bizarre hidden gems and something that needs to be seen to be believed. There is literally nothing else to do here – there are no shops or restaurants in Nagoro and there's not even a single vending machine – but it is truly one of a kind and a wonderful showcase of one person's ingenuity. How to Get to Nagoro: – Nagoro is so remote that the only way to get to Nagoro is by car. The nearest train station is over an hour away, from which public transport to the town is incredibly sporadic. ?? Find the best prices on hire cars in Japan with Discover Cars here. Matsuyama is another historic city dominated by its castle. Matsuyama Castle is perched high on Mount Katsuyama, with the easiest way to reach it by either a chairlift or cable car. Matsuyama's castle is another of Japan's 12 original castles and is a particularly impressive example of the dedication and detail that went into building the defensive forts. The current castle was built in 1820 to replace an earlier castle which was destroyed after being struck by lightning. As well as the faithful preservation of the building and its interior, there are sensational views of the entire region from the top floor of Matsuyama Castle. Just beneath Matsuyama Castle is another spectacular landmark, Bansuiso, a French-style mansion built in 1922 by Count Hisamatsu, a descendent of the local feudal clan. Perhaps Matsuyama's most famous landmark is Dogo Onsen Honkan, one of the oldest and most beautiful onsen in Japan. Dating from the late 1800s, Dogo Onsen Honkan is often cited as the inspiration for the bathhouse in the Studio Ghibli film Spirited Away. How to Get to Matsuyama: – By train: The JR Shiokaze limited express trains connect Matsuyama Station on Shikoku to Okayama Station on Japan's main island of

Honshu. This journey is covered by the Japan Rail Pass ? By air: There are daily flights between Matsuyama Airport and Tokyo's Narita and Haneda Airports, as well as to destinations further south, such as Fukuoka, Kagoshima and Okinawa. ?? Find the best prices for flights to Matsuyama here. On the opposite side of Shikoku and facing the Pacific Ocean is the city of Kochi. Just like Matsuyama, Kochi also has its own original castle, located right in the heart of the city. Another wonderfully preserved piece of Japanese history, Kochi Castle today houses several exhibits connected to its past. Once again there are tremendous city views from the observation room on the top floor of the castle. In Kochi's bustling city centre, alongside plenty of cafes, bars and restaurants, is Harimaya Bridge. A local landmark, according to folklore the vermilion bridge was the setting of a brief but ultimately doomed romantic encounter between a monk and a merchant's daughter. To the south of the city is Katsurahama beach, a quiet spot protected by pine trees with small picturesque shrines dotted along the shore. How to Get to Kochi: ? By train: Kochi Station can be reached from Okayama Station by train on the Dosan Line limited express train which is covered by the Japan Rail Pass ? By air: There are flights between Kochi Airport and several airports in Japan, including Tokyo's Narita and Haneda airports, as well as Kobe and Fukuoka airports. ?? Find the best prices on flights to Kochi here. Along with a clutch of other nearby towns, Imari is the centre of Japan's porcelain industry. Beautiful porcelain designed and made in nearby Arita were exported all over the world from Imari from the 17th century right throughout the Edo period. For hundreds of years, locally produced porcelain (known as Imari ware) was highly prized in the West for its intricate and detailed designs and bold, rich colours. In Imari, elaborate porcelain tiles, vases and figurines are displayed throughout the city, and even decorate the two main bridges that cross the Imari River. While in Imari it's well worth taking a trip to the nearby town of Arita, where there are several shops selling all kinds of porcelain goods. There's a great collection of Imari ware on display at Kyushu Ceramic Museum. While in Arita, don't miss Sueyama Shrine's beautiful porcelain torii gate. A trip to the small town of Okawachiyama from Imari is a must too. This is where much of the local porcelain has been made for several centuries. There are still several pottery workshops in Okawachiyama today, whose kilns can be spotted on a stroll through the town. How to

Get to Imari: ? By train: Imari Station can be reached from Fukuoka's Meinohama Station on the JR Chikuhi Line. Trains on this line are covered by the Japan Rail Pass. ? Imari Station is also served by trains on the Nishi-Kyushu Line, operated by Matsuura Railway. This line is not covered by the Japan Rail Pass. Nagasaki is a fascinating and fun-loving city with a complex history. Nagasaki was one of the few cities in Japan to allow trade with foreign nations during the country's period of isolation in the Edo era. Evidence of this can be seen on Dejima, the man-made island that was inhabited by Portuguese and then Dutch merchants who were granted permission to trade goods with Japan. In the 16th Century, missionaries from Europe also brought Christianity to Japan via Nagasaki. Two of the city's most famous landmarks are Catholic churches, Oura Church and Urakami Cathedral. Needless to say, the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum is an essential part of any visit to the city, as is the nearby Peace Park and the iconic Peace Statue. Sit overlooking the city inside Glover Garden are a collection of historic Western-style houses that were home to British traders who settled in Nagasaki during the late 19th and early 20th century. The Former Glover House and the Former Ringer House have both been declared Important Cultural Properties and enjoy wonderful views over Nagasaki. The most spellbinding views of the city are reserved for Mount Inasayama Observatory, reached via a cable car from Fuchi Shrine. There are plenty of options for day trips from Nagasaki too. The beautiful Goto Islands can be reached by boat, where many of Nagasaki's early Christian converts fled to escape persecution. As well as breathtaking scenery there are also dozens of once-hidden Christian churches dotted around the islands. You can also visit the infamous island of Hashima, also known as Battleship Island, from Nagasaki. Guided boat trips take you on a tour of the island that was once the most densely populated place on earth. How to Get to Nagasaki: ? By train: Nagasaki Station is served by the Nishi Kyushu Shinkansen which is covered by the Japan Rail Pass ? By air: Nagasaki Airport is located around 25 miles outside of the city centre. There are daily flights between Nagasaki and Tokyo, Osaka, Kobe and other destinations in Japan. ?? Find the best prices on flights to Nagasaki [here](#). Kumamoto is a laid-back city on the western edge of Kyushu. The city's most famous landmark is easily Kumamoto Castle. Many parts of the castle, including the keep, are modern replicas of the original buildings,

but Kumamoto Castle is still regarded as one of the finest in Japan. Some parts of Kumamoto Castle are original, such as the impressive Uto Turret, which was built in 1607. The castle was badly damaged during an earthquake that hit Kumamoto in 2016, repairs from which are still ongoing. Another of Kumamoto's main highlights is Suizenji Koen, a wonderful Japanese garden created by the head of a local samurai clan in the 1600s. The garden replicates the key stops on the old Tokkaido route that connected Tokyo and Kyoto. Amongst the garden's highlights are a replica of Mount Fuji. Kumamoto also has a connection with Lafcadio Hearn – he lived here for four years after living in Matsue. His former home in Kumamoto is also a small museum in the centre of the city, now slightly at odds with the department stores at shopping streets it's now surrounded by.

How to Get to Kumamoto: – By train: Kumamoto Station is served by the Kyushu Shinkansen service, trains on which are covered by the Japan Rail Pass – By air: Aso Kumamoto Airport is located around 12 miles outside the city centre. Buses from the airport run throughout the day, with the journey taking around an hour and costing ¥960. ?? To find the best deals on flights to Kumamoto click [here](#). The city of Beppu in Oita Prefecture is perhaps the most famous onsen resort in Japan. There are over 2,000 hot spring vents located throughout Beppu, with the mountainous Beppu Onsen area the most active in the city. Dozens of plumes of thick white steam can be seen constantly pouring into the sky throughout the area. Beppu's most famous landmarks are by far the seven hells, a collection of picturesque hot-spring ponds which are dotted around the city's Kannawa and Kamegawa regions. These seven hells (or jigoku) vary greatly in appearance, from the blood red Chinoike Jigoku, the milky white Shiraike Jigoku and perhaps the most beautiful of the seven, the bubbling blue waters of Umi Jigoku. Around Beppu Onsen are a number of public foot baths that are free to use. Also, while in Beppu Onsen don't miss the chance to tuck into some hell steam cuisine. At Jigoku Mushi you can steam a selection of ingredients in subterranean ovens powered by Beppu's thermal spring waters. Ingredients ranging from seafood, meat, vegetables to create a range of delicious and healthy freshly steamed dishes. While in Beppu, don't miss the chance to visit the hundreds of adorable wild monkeys at Takasakiyama Monkey Park. Over 1,000 wild monkeys live in the mountains above Beppu. Similar to the Jigokudani Monkey Park in Nagano, the monkeys in

Takasakiyama Monkey Park run free and are encouraged to the area (and away from the city and neighbouring farms) by the promise of regular feedings. Largely ignorant of the human visitors, the monkeys most lounge in the sunshine and groom in groups until the wardens begin feeding time.

How to Get to Beppu: ? By train: Beppu Station can be reached by train from Fukuoka's Hakata Station via the Sonic Nichirin limited express train in just under two hours. ? From Kokura Station in the north of Kyushu the journey takes around 1 hour 20 minutes on the same train, which is covered by the Japan Rail Pass. ? By air: Oita Airport is around 25 miles outside Beppu. Buses between Beppu's city centre and Oita Airport take just under an hour and the journey costs ¥1,500. ?? Find the best deals on flights to Oita Airport on Skyscanner here. The most southerly spot on our list of destinations off the beaten path in Japan is the city of Kagoshima. As the capital of Kagoshima Prefecture, Kagoshima's most prominent landmark is Sakurajima, a giant stratovolcano that towers over the city. Sakurajima is Japan's most active volcano ? thousands of small eruptions take place each year. Once an island, an eruption in 1914 saw Sakurajima become a peninsula. Once the lava flows from that eruption had cooled the island had become forever connecting with the mainland. Despite it's frequent eruptions, around 4,000 people live on Sakurajima, which is a great place to explore. Ferries from Kagoshima port run to Sakurajima 24 hours a day, where you can walk along the volcanic coastline, dip your feet in the free foot bath and greet the island's huge army of stray, friendly cats. Elsewhere, perhaps Kogishima's second most popular tourist attraction is Sengan-en, the former Edo-era home of a powerful feudal lord that is now open to the public, along with its gorgeous Japanese garden. In Ibusuki City, an hour and a half to the south of Kagoshima by train, you can enjoy a truly unique and revitalising experience with a steamy sand bath. Buried up to the neck in geothermally-heated black volcanic sand, sand baths are said to have all kinds of health benefits, including improved blood circulation and the removal of toxins from the body.

How to Get to Kagoshima: ? By train: Kagoshimachuo Station is the most southerly Shinkansen stop in Japan. ? The fastest journey by Shinkansen from Tokyo to Kagoshima (via either the Nozomi and Mizuho Shinkansen trains) is around 7 hours. Do note that these trains can't be used by holders of the Japan Rail Pass. ? Instead, passengers with a Japan Rail Pass will need to take the slightly slower

Hikari and Sakura Shinkansen instead, with a change of train needed at either Osaka or Hakata Station on the way. ? By air: Kagoshima Airport is located around 25 miles north of the city. There are daily flights to Kagoshima from several airports around Japan, including both of Tokyo's international airports. Flights from Tokyo to Kagoshima take around 2 hours. The Kagoshima-Airport Limousine Bus service takes 40 minutes to reach the city centre, with the journey costing ¥1,400. ?? To find the best deals on flights to Kagoshima [click here](#). The most common way to travel across Japan is by train, particularly on the Shinkansen. An experience as much as a form of travel, riding the bullet train in Japan is a fantastic way to explore Japan. However, not many people realise that flying is often a cheaper and a much faster way of travelling longer distances in Japan. Here's everything you need to know about going off the beaten path by train or by plane. Most of the places on our list are served directly by train, often by a combination of a Shinkansen followed by a connecting local train service. The vast majority of train services in Japan are operated by Japan Railways, though there are a number of other private rail companies in Japan. In many of the more remote areas it's common to find train services operated by smaller companies other than JR. Trains operated by these companies are not covered by the Japan Rail Pass, which only includes services run by JR Railways. This means that even if you have a Japan Rail Pass, you might need to buy an extra ticket if you take a train that is operated by a different train company. If you're thinking of taking multiple train journeys to venture to some of the hidden gems featured on our list, then buying a Japan Rail Pass could save you a fair bit of money on train fares. The JR Rail Pass allows travel on all JR trains in Japan over a set period of time. Available only to visitors to Japan, the Japan Rail Pass is available for periods of 7, 14, or 21 consecutive days. Even with the recent price hike that saw the cost of the JR Rail Pass rise by nearly 70%, the pass still offers good value for money when compared to booking several individual tickets. One upside of the increase in prices is that the Japan Rail Pass now also includes the option to travel on the fastest long distance Nozomi and Mizuho bullet trains. However, if you're not planning on travelling by Shinkansen very often, or if you only intend to take a few local train journeys during your trip, then there's no need to buy a Japan Rail Pass. In that case, the cost of the Japan Rail Pass will be much more than the cost

of just a few train journeys. ?? If you're looking to save money on train travel in Japan you can order a 7, 14, or 21 day Japan Rail Pass in advance [here](#). As well as the Japan Rail Pass, there are also a huge range of regional JR passes available. JR's regional passes offer unlimited travel for shorter periods of time on all JR trains within specific regions of Japan. For example, the Kansai-Hiroshima Pass allows travel on Shinkansen and regional trains between destinations such as Kyoto, Osaka, Kobe, Wakayama, Tottori, and Hiroshima. The Hokkaido Rail Pass covers travel on all JR trains in Hokkaido, while the Kyushu Pass covers all trains on the southern island of Kyushu, such as Kagoshima, Kumamoto and Beppu. Similarly, the Tohoku Pass covers all JR trains in Japan's northern Tohoku region. If you're only travelling within a specific area of Japan then a regional rail pass could be a cheaper alternative to the Japan Rail Pass. ?? If you think a Regional JR Pass might be a better option for you, check out all of the available passes [here](#). While everyone loves a bullet train, in many cases it is often quicker and cheaper to travel within Japan by plane. There are hundreds of daily domestic flights across Japan every day. Most cities and regions in Japan have their own airport, and internal flights in Japan are quick and generally very affordable. For example, flights from Tokyo to Nagasaki take just just under 2 hours, compared to over 7 hours by Shinkansen. Depending on when you travel, the same flights can also be as little as ¥7,000 one way per person, compared to around ¥30,000 per person on the Shinkansen. ?? To search for the best deals on flights to destinations across Japan, click [here](#). If you'd prefer to travel by car then Japan is a great place to explore by road. Many of the destinations on our list are certainly easier to explore with your own set of wheels, particularly Koyasan, Nagoro and those on the island of Shikoku. If you plan on hiring a car in Japan you will need an International Driving Permit from your home country. You will need to obtain this before arriving in Japan. ?? There are dozens of car hire companies to choose from with offices throughout Japan. We always use Discover Cars to find the best deals on car hire wherever we travel. Discovery Cars will find the best prices from all of the local car hire companies so that you can compare total costs and find the best vehicle for your trip. If you need somewhere to stay as you travel around Japan's hidden gems then you'll always find great accommodation with a warm welcome wherever you wind up. ?? You can search for all kinds



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## KYOTO & OITA Experiences to Last a Lifetime - ANA

Rethink what you thought you knew about Kyoto and discover Oita, home of hot springs and wild nature escapes. Both regions have amazing hidden depths waiting to be explored ? so what are you waiting for? From Tokyo to Kyoto (approx 1 hr 20mins~) Narita International Airport /Haneda Airport From Tokyo to Oita (95 mins) Haneda Airport Oita Airport via Airport Bus (45 mins) to Beppu City (Beppu Kitahama Bus Stop) If you thought you knew Kyoto, think again. Though the capital city is always worth a visit, travelers who make their way out of the city limits will be rewarded with unique, hidden treasures that most others will never experience. Visit the rolling tea fields in the east, explore the woodlands and nightlife of the west, or bask in the sun at the coast to the north ? Kyoto has all this and more. A trip to Kyoto?s northern coast ? often nicknamed Kyoto by the Sea ? offers a different traditional experience to that of the city. Along the Chirimen Kaido in Yosano, you?ll find the weavers of fine kimono silk that has been sold in Kyoto City for centuries. Stroll along the traditional streets lined with historical buildings that are wonderfully well maintained even today. For lunch, try barazushi, a regional specialty of pressed vinegared rice topped with thinly sliced vegetables, egg, and fish. It?s a colorful mix of ingredients that?s sure to delight a traveling gourmet. Image Courtesy of Mori no Kyoto Head west to Kameoka to experience two different kinds of adventures ? one in the woods and one in the city at night. Known as one of the mistiest cities in the world, Kameoka is close to the Hozu-gawa river (great for rafting) and deep forests, while still being big enough for bar hopping once the day is done. Kyoto Inaka Cycling will guide you through the area, with visits to artisan ateliers and local dineries during the day. At night, make your way to Bar Syushi for some quality craft gins before heading out for a pub crawl around town. A trip to Kyoto?s southeastern area will unveil hills and hills of tea bushes. Wazuka town, together with its neighbor Minami Yamashirumura, grows the majority of the region?s famed Uji tea. It?s the perfect place for green tea lovers. Here you can visit tea farms to pick your own tealeaves, undergo a mini tea-tasting course, and eat meals accented with tea leaves in various forms. Tucked away on the east coast of Japan?s southern island of Kyushu, Oita Prefecture is often unfairly overlooked.

Scratch at the surface to find deep forests, moss-covered temples, and steam that seems to rise from the fiery pits of hell. It's a mostly untouched part of Japan where hot springs run deep and ancient legends stay alive. Enjoy hiking through dark forests and across high mountains through the Sobo-Katamuki-Okue Biosphere Reserve, a burgeoning expanse of approximately 240,000 hectares that protects many rare flowers, trees, and animals – including the curious Japanese serow. With many hiking courses to choose from, ranging from one hour to several days, there is a hiking challenge for beginners and experts alike. Oita's Kunisaki area is home to Rokugo-Manzan, an ancient esoteric mix of Shinto, Buddhism and mountain worship that is still practiced to some extent today. At Futago Temple, located on the Kunisaki peninsula's highest peak Mount Futago, you can see how these spiritual beliefs converge seamlessly. Though the temple is at first glance similar to others in Japan, further exploration of Futago Temple's vast grounds will tell a different story. Both Beppu and Yufuin are world-renowned for their hot springs, offering both private and public baths across the cities. In Beppu you can also experience the seven "hells", a collection of hot springs with mysterious properties. While these are too hot to have a bath in, their beautiful colors and characteristics – ranging from blood red to a milky turquoise – are a fascinating look at nature up close. For a unique take on a hot spring bath, head to Beppu Kaihin Sunayu. Here you'll be buried in sand heated by hot spring water for up to 15 minutes, while you relax and wash the ocean waves lap at the shore. Oita has a slew of activities, nature escapes and cultural experiences to explore, so what are you waiting for? [Opens in a new window.](#) In the case of an external site, it may or may not meet accessibility guidelines. [Close](#) [Book a Flight](#)

## ? A visit to the cutest Ghibli Town in Japan! | Gallery posted by clarissaacindy | Lemon8

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# 4 Days in Oita: A Guide to Exploring Japan's Famous Onsen Region | Tokyo Weekender

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Updated On December 26, 2022 There's a chance you haven't heard of Oita, but the region has captivated Japanese people for hundreds of years. In fact, the prefecture's name reportedly stems from the legendary Emperor Keiko visiting the region and being so taken by its natural beauty that he named it Okita-kuni (the Land of Great/Many Fields). Centuries later, long after "Okita" became "Oita," the land remains the fascinating place it's always been. We spent four days exploring the area to bring you a curated itinerary for the perfect Oita getaway. Our day began with a visit to Awashimasha. Built in 1625, the picturesque shrine by the sea is today dedicated to marriage and love, which is why the surrounding Awashima Park features a monument where couples attach padlocks with their names written on them, much like at Paris' Pont des Arts. After an hour's drive, we arrived at our next destination: the Ajimu Winery, which grows its own grapes to produce authentically Japanese wines and brandies. Besides merlot and chardonnay, the Ajimu Winery also harvests shokoshi, a Japanese grape variety that yields a deliciously spicy, rich wine. We ended our visit with lunch at the nearby Asagiri no Sho restaurant offering a variety of local Kyushu dishes, including toriten (tempura fried chicken), dojo (pond loaches), and suppon (softshell turtle). Hyotan is the only onsen in Japan with three Michelin stars thanks to its indoor and outdoor baths, waterfall hot springs, private family baths that are refilled after each use, and sand baths where guests can bury themselves in warm sand. Equally impressive is the fact that even the showers use water from an underground hot spring (which you can actually drink at the rest area - it tastes a little salty). Sand Baths at Hyotan Hot Springs Beppu is the most famous hot spring resort in Japan with hot water vapors constantly steaming out of utility grates and hovering above the town. Another thing that Beppu is known for is its jigoku (hells): seven gorgeous hot springs meant for viewing rather than bathing. We had time to visit three of them: the Umi Jigoku (sea hell), a beautiful, steamy pond of blue water, Chi no Ike Jigoku (blood lake hell), famous for its red color, and the muddy,

otherworldly Oniishi Bozu Jigoku (devil-stone monk hell). Beppu We finished our day at Yanagiya, a Beppu inn famous for its private hot spring source. Before sampling the baths, we bought ingredients at a supermarket to make jigoku mushi (hell steaming), a local specialty where you steam vegetables, fish, or meat using Beppu's mineral-rich vapors in concrete steam pots. It gives the food a distinctive, delicate taste that you won't soon forget. Jigoku Mushi At the Beppu City Traditional Bamboo Crafts Center, we learned just how versatile bamboo craft can be. From gigantic art pieces to hats, toys, dishes, baskets, bags, plates, jewelry, and even fashionable handbags costing tens of thousands of yen, there seems to be nothing that bamboo cannot become. Having been in business for 45 years, it is no surprise that Kamehachi Sushi blew us away with their expertly prepared shrimp, anago (salt-water eel), tuna, and more. Also on the lunch menu was gomadashi udon, a wonderful local noodle dish traditionally made with eso (lizardfish) mixed with miso and soy sauce, and toriten, which turned out to be some of the best chicken we ever had. Kamehachi Sushi In the castle town of Usuki we had the pleasure of viewing the city's national treasures, the Sekibutsu: over 60 stone Buddhas carved into molten rock faces. Unlike many other Buddha monuments of this kind, the ones in Usuki are fully three-dimensional figures instead of 2D carvings. Although every Stone Buddha is undeniably magnificent, the Furuzono-Sekibutsu depicting the Supreme Buddha of the Cosmos is considered the most important statue and the face of the Usuki Sekibutsu. Sekibutsu After a short drive, we arrived at Nioza Rekishi no Michi, a historic area surrounding Usuki Castle where the oldest store is over 400 years old. Nioza is a great place to purchase some snacks and souvenirs such as miso, sake, kabosu citruses, and even soy sauce-flavored ice-cream. We spent our second night in Oita at the Yasashii Jikan (gentle time) farm lodgings in Sasamuta, where we experienced an authentic piece of rural Japan. We spent the rest of the day talking with our hosts and making yaseuma, a local delicacy of boiled wheat noodles sprinkled with soybean flour and sugar. It made for a delicious dessert after a hearty dinner of fish made over an irori hearth and other Oita specialties. After dinner, our host took us to see the locals training in the martial art of bojutsu (staff fighting) in preparation for festival celebrations held at Sasamuta Shrine. Highly entertaining and recommended! Dinner at the Yasashii Jikan There is a lot

to be learned at the Takakiya Sake Brewery, like how Kyushu locals prefer sweet sake to dry sake. As for the brewery, we were impressed by how many tasks are still done by hand using old methods supplemented with modern technology, which allows the brewery to produce 70,000 bottles of sake a year. Takakiya Brewery Our next stop was the Harajiri Falls, which are 120m wide and 20m high, and often called the Oriental Niagara. Because they are located on a plain, they are easily accessible, allowing you to experience the falls' thundering majesty up close. The best views of Harajiri are undoubtedly from the Takimibashi suspension bridge above the falls. Harajiri Falls After a lunch of torimeshi (a local favorite consisting of rice, chicken and burdock), we were ready for the Oka Castle ruins. The castle was originally built in 1185, but today only the fortifications of this once marvelous structure remain. It's a long stair climb to the castle walls but once you're up there it's all worth it thanks to the gorgeous views and history just leaping at you from the ghost of this grand, battle-hardened castle that once housed over 3,000 people. Continuing our tour of Taketa, we headed to the Lamune Onsen hot springs, which boast bathtubs full of naturally carbonated water. It's quite an experience to dip your body into this water and see tiny, tingling bubbles form all around you. Within walking distance of the onsen there's also the Ganiyu hot spring, located alongside the Seri River. The size of a large-ish bathtub, Ganiyu is completely out in the open, so you'll need a bathing suit for this one. Ganiyu Hot Spring We finished up our day at Kuju Kogenso hotel where we slept soundly in Japanese-style rooms after a dip in the hotel's onsen. The waters there are worth a mention because of their milky color and floating, natural mineral deposits called onsen no hana (hot spring flowers). Walking along a boardwalk through these beautiful, protected marshlands and gazing at the surrounding Kuju mountain range, we felt a deep, quiet peace that stayed with us for the rest of the day. If you're looking for a place of calm, Tadewara Marsh will deliver. For lunch we stopped at Bebenko, a farm restaurant offering Bungo beef, a high-class Oita specialty. It's impossible to describe all the wonderful flavors of barbecued Bungo beef, but suffice to say it was one of the most memorable meals we had on this trip. Bungo beef at Bebenko After lunch, we visited Yufu in search of the Oike spring. After a short walk through some pristine forests, we arrived at the crystal-clear water, which is famed not only for its exquisite hue but also for how

fresh and clean it tastes. Our next stop was Kitsuki Castle and its surrounding town. One of Japan's smallest castles, Kitsuki was originally built in the late 14th century, and the modern structure you see today is a recreation housing a museum where you can take a picture of yourself wearing authentic Japanese armor. Be sure to save time to stroll around the historic streets and visit several samurai residences to see how the warrior class lived, ate, and bathed. Top tip: If you arrive in a rented kimono, you are guaranteed free entrance to some of Kitsuki's historical attractions. Kitsuki Castle Town As our time in Oita came to an end, we decided to relax and enjoy the sunset at Matama Beach. In the evening, as the waters of the Matama shore recede and the sun bathes everything in its deep yellows and reds, the sea and land turn into an otherworldly landscape. It was the best possible way to end our trip to Oita, the hidden gem in the crown of Kyushu. Photographs by Robert Kirsch © Tokyo Weekender All rights reserved. Unauthorized reproduction prohibited. Powered by ENGAWA Co., Ltd.