

THE TOMBO

Oita's English Newsletter

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Issue 75

The 'Non-sen' Guide

When you're just not that into onsen



As I'm sure most TOMBO readers are well aware, Oita Prefecture is widely known for its Onsen, so much so that it is now branded as "Onsen-ken Oita" (literally "*Onsen* Prefecture Oita"). Hot springs are often said to provide a number of health benefits to users from improved blood circulation to beautified skin, and of course people frequently visit them simply to relax and 'let off some steam'.

During my three years in Oita Prefecture I embraced just about every part of my adopted new home. The nature, food and culture were all incredibly enchanting and it is these three aspects, plus the wonderful friends I made during my stay that will draw me back for future visits. However I would like to come clean and share something once and for all: I'm just not that into Onsen. Naturally I can understand some of the appeal, but sadly, they just don't appeal to me.

However I couldn't very well avoid the hot springs forever. Over time I discovered other ways to enjoy and appreciate Onsen. For my fellow comrades who haven't developed a taste for hot springs, or for people who perhaps haven't experienced the following features Oita has to offer, I have written my brief 'Non-sen' Guide.

'Jigoku mushi' Onsen food steaming in Kannawa

As a fan of food and all kinds of cooking I was fascinated when I first heard about these facilities where you can cook your own food in Onsen steam. Naturally you can buy some of the pre-prepared sets of food, but you are also permitted to bring your own goodies along to be steamed, with just a small fee for the steam vent hire. Needless to say, this quickly became my go-to fun activity when I had friends visiting from out of town.

At the Jigokumushi studio in Kannawa near the Beppu Hells you can even steam the food yourself (under close supervision and detailed instruction of the staff). When moving the steaming baskets you have to wear long safety gloves for protection from the hot surfaces, but it is a whole lot of fun getting to do this yourself. Plus they make for some pretty great photo opportunities. If you've done this before and want to go somewhere a little quieter check out Sato no eki which is just a 10-15 minute walk away. Whilst you can't cook the food yourself here, it is always a little more relaxing, particularly with the free *ashi yu* foot bath to soak your feet in and a beautiful view of Beppu Bay to enjoy while you wait.

The 'pièce de résistance' of Onsen steaming is definitely the *Onsen tamago* (hot spring eggs). If you have ever tried an *Onsen tamago* from a convenience store you might be thinking "been there", but I can assure you that they have nothing on an egg that has been freshly steamed in Onsen steam. Many hot springs naturally have a somewhat 'eggy' smell to them due to the sulphur content so it is a really interesting experience to taste a freshly steamed egg infused with this extra 'eggy'. 10/10, would steam again.



Natural 'Suna yu' hot sand baths in Kamegawa

I journeyed to the *suna yu* sand baths for the first time earlier this year when a friend visited from Tokyo. Of course she had heard about Oita's Onsen and suggested we try the sand baths for something a little out of the ordinary. Visitors lie in an allocated space and then have sand that is heated by underground steam heaped over them.

Although the sand bath experience could be compared to immersing yourself in an Onsen, once you are buried in the sand you are only in there for 15 minutes. For me this was the perfect amount of time to relax and enjoy the sound of the ocean at my feet. When the time was up the staff instructed my friend and I how to remove ourselves from our personal sand castles and directed us to the room to rinse off. It was

perfect. We were out before I even had a chance to get antsy and calculate how much longer I had to stay so as not to appear rude.

Before going I had heard from co-workers that it would be quite hot and probably not very fun for people who are a little claustrophobic. However in reality it was an extremely relaxing experience and my friend and I left feeling extremely invigorated. I would recommend visiting in autumn or spring when the temperatures aren't too extreme. It doesn't hurt to get there early in the day when the sand baths are less busy because this means that the staff will also be less busy and might even take a few extra photos for you if you have your camera.

Interestingly, just as the natural hot springs are used to heat the sand, they are also used to sterilise the sand baths between uses. The two sand spaces are alternated and the area not being used gets flooded with hot spring water to cleanse the sand for the next group of bathers. Pretty neat, huh? 10/10, would sand bath again.

Geothermal energy production in Kokonoe

Lastly, residents in Oita are actually benefiting from the underground hot springs in the electricity they use. Oita Prefecture has the highest rate of self-sufficient power production in the country. This is comprised of wind, hydro and solar energy production, but a portion of this renewable energy comes from geothermal power. Back in 2012 I was able to take a tour of the Hachobaru Geothermal

Power Plant in Kokonoe-Machi with a group of local residents. Until then I wasn't actually aware that there was a difference in the geothermal energy used for power production and hot springs. The underground energy used in the production of electricity comes from much deeper underground than the steam in hot springs and cannot be reached without extensive drilling. Onsen on the other hand are heated by steam that is much closer to the earth's surface, and in places such as Beppu there is no shortage of this steam.

At full capacity the Hachobaru Plant has the potential to provide power to approximately 200,000 households. Whilst this only represents a small portion of the population of Oita it is still a stable, renewable source of energy. Yes perhaps it's a little bit of a stretch to claim this as a way to enjoy Onsen but I think it's something pretty cool to keep in mind. As a resident

of Onsen-ken Oita for three years, even though I didn't visit any hot springs, I found other ways to enjoy this incredible natural resource. Plus they were great talking points when I struggled to answer the "which *Onsen* do you like the best??" questions.

Farewell from the editor

Being the editor of The TOMBO for three years gave me extra incentive to keep tabs on things to do and see in the prefecture,

and also gave me the opportunity to meet and speak with many Japanese and international residents I might not have otherwise met. It was a fun and rewarding experience that I will never forget. Thanks for reading.

----Nicole



Message from the new editor

Mina-san, hajimemashite! My name is Miriam Starling (Miri) and I will be taking over from Nicole as the editor of The TOMBO. I come from the United Kingdom and am working in Oita City as a Coordinator for International Relations at the Prefectural Office. I am really looking forward to getting to know Oita and interacting with the people who live here, so if you see me around be sure to say hello (I will be the red-faced British person trying to cope with Oita's hot climate)! I'm still learning the ropes around here (this is my first time as an editor and it will be a learning process!), so please bear with me while I try to follow in Nicole's footsteps.

To give a little bit of background information about myself, I'm originally from London and I graduated from Oxford University in 2013 with a degree in Oriental Studies – Japanese. I have lived in Japan twice before, once for four months as an exchange student at Kwansei Gakuin University in Hyogo Prefecture, and then once again for one year as a Monbukagakusho Japanese Studies Student at Ochanomizu University in Tokyo. During my time in Tokyo, I was fortunate enough to be able to visit Kyushu (I went to Kagoshima and Nagasaki) and I am very excited to be back. I love *onsen*, and so I was ecstatic to find out that I would be working in Oita, land of *onsen*. My interests include running, animals/nature, reading novels, and watching films. I am particularly looking forward to visiting Oita City's famous Cinema 5. My favourite Japanese director is Kore-eda Hirokazu, but during my time here I really want to expand my (very limited) knowledge of Japanese cinema and discover some new favourites. I also love Japanese food, so of course I definitely want to try *toriten* and *jigoku-mushi*!

I can't wait to get involved with the Oita community and to get to know both Japanese and international residents here. *Kore kara yoroshiku onegaishimasu!*



EXHIBITIONS & SCREENINGS

Date	Description	Place	Admission	Contact #
Jul. 15 th – Sept. 23 rd	Art Wonderland 2014- summer collection of artworks giving children the change to appreciate art in a fun environment	Oita Art Museum	¥300	☎ 097-554-5800
Oct. 17 th – Nov. 24 th	'Warring States of Kyushu' special exhibition- a collection of works on the long Warring States period, unprecedented in Japanese history	Oita Prefectural Museum of History	¥310	☎ 0978-37-2100

Oita Art Museum= Oita-Shi Bijutsukan 大分市美術館 Oita Prefectural Museum of History= 大分県立歴史博物館

Most Museums and Centers are closed on Monday, or Tuesday if Monday is a public holiday. Student admissions vary, highest cost shown.



STAGE & MUSIC EVENTS

Sept.	Time	Artist/Event	Venue	Cost	Contact #
9 th	18:30	Nijyugo Genso- Koto performance by Tomoya Nakai	iichiko Otonoizumi	¥500	☎ 097-533-4004
18 th	18:30	Tsukemen Kyushu Tour 2014	iichiko Otonoizumi	¥4,500	☎ 097-553-2509
20 th	13:00 &17:30	Matsutake Kabuki group performance	iichiko Grand Theatre	¥3,000 - ¥7,000	☎ 097-533-4004
21 st	19:00	Yonbo 40th Anniversary concert in Oita	Brick Block	¥4,500 +drink	☎ 097-536-4852
28 th	15:00	Tasty Concert Vol. 4- Orchestra ensemble Kanazawa perform in Oita	iichiko Otonoizumi	¥5,000 - ¥7,000	☎ 050-5880-2004
28 th	16:30	Crazy Ken Band Spark Show 2014	T.O.P.S BittsHall	¥6,500 +drink	☎ 097-533-0467
Oct..	Time	Artist/Event	Venue	Cost	Contact #
13 th	17:30	Tomomi Kahara Concert Tour 2014 "Memories"	Patria Hita	¥6,800	☎ 0973-25-5000
24 th	18:30	Johnman jirou no yume- family musical by the Shiki Theatre Company	ichiko Grand Theatre	¥2,000 - ¥4,000	☎ 097-533-4004
25 th	16:00	T.O.P.S 25th Anniversary Scamble Fes.	T.O.P.S BittsHall	¥3,500 +drink	☎ 097-533-0467

**Ticket prices range from student to most expensive general admission. Prices shown otherwise indicate price for purchase on the day of the event, they may be cheaper if purchased in advance. "w/ drink" prices include a drink, "+drink" prices require the additional purchase of a drink. Times shown indicate start times, doors usually open 30 minutes beforehand.

VENUES

Brick Block= 5-7-5 Ikushi, Oita City

Cantaloop II=3-2-30 Miyako-Machi

Nakayama Dai 5 Building 6F Oita City

iichiko Grand Theatre= Oasis Tower 1F Oita City

iichiko Otonoizumi=Oasis Tower 1F Oita City

Kagura Kaikan= 810 Kiyokawa, Bungo Ono City

T.O.P.S BittsHall.= Ikushi 5-783, Oita City

Patria Hita= 1-8-11 Sanbonmatsu, Hita City

Festivals and Events

Date	Event Description	Location	Contact #
Sep. 6 th	Kudatama and Marudama bead-making workshop - A great hands on event for parents and children. Come along and experience making traditional beads. Participation fee ¥260, reservations necessary.	Oita CityHistory Museum	☎ 097-549-0880
Sep. 9 th	Free hot springs entrance - September 9 th is Kokonoe area's designated hot spring day and designated facilities marked with posters will give free entrance to bathers!	Kokonoe-machi	☎ 0973-73-5505
Sep. 13 th ~ 14 th	The Ajimu Fair "Wine Festival 2014" - various events such as Ajimu wine sampling, and bazaar. You can have your fill of Bungo Beef, wine and more for autumn which is the season for good food.	Usa City Ajimu Area	☎ 0978-44-1111 ☎ 0978-44-0381
Sep. 14 th	The 20th Kohshita Dam Festival - After the opening ceremony, there will be various events from food eating contests to canoeing, plus fireworks.	Usa City Innai-machi	☎ 0978-42-5111
Sep. 14 th	The 31st Taketa Takigino - For this event, a special aquatic stage is set up and several Noh plays are showed. The fire flames wavering on the surface of the Inaba River under the stage take the audience into a subtle and profound world. Shuttle bus service (free of charge) from JR Bungotaketa Station.	Taketa CityCastle town	☎ 0974-63-0585
Sep. 20 th	Kimono Appreciation Day - held on the third Saturday of each month, with special offers and discounts for on kimono rental and professional photography.	Kitsuki City Jouka-machi	☎ 0978-63-0100
Sep. 20 th	Uki Uki Flea Market - come take a look through the stalls of clothes, books and more. You might just find some bargains. 11:30~15:00	Oita City Oasis Tower 1st Floor	☎ 097-538-7411
Sep. 21 st	Kappa Festival - a traditional festival spanning over 300 years. Young boys perform songs and dance to pray for the Autumn harvest.	Nakatsu City Yabakei area	☎ 0979-54-3111
Sep. 21 st ~ 25 th	Ohara Shrine Festival - Vendors line the street leading to Ohara Hachiman Shrine at the shine's biggest festival of the year.	Hita City Ohara Shrine	☎ 0973-23-8951
Oct. 11 th	Magatama' bead-making workshop - A hands on event for children and parents to enjoy. Participation fee is ¥200, reservations necessary.	Oita City History Museum	☎ 097-549-0880
Oct. 11 th	Rice field exploration - an outdoor exploration activity for children to learn about what sort of creatures live in and around our rice fields. Participation ¥500, reservations appreciated (bring clothes and shoes suitable for outdoors).	Kokonoe Town Kuju Shizen Gakkou	☎ 0973-73-0001
Oct. 12 th	Beppu Yukemuri Health Walk Rally/Marathon - This event will take place at lake Shidaka and Lake Kagurame in Beppu (inquire for more details).	Beppu City Lake Shidaka	☎ 0977-21-1128
Oct. 12 th ~ Nov. 3 rd	Sanko Cosmos Garden - 12.5 million cosmoses are in bloom, approx. 13ha of the foot of Hachimenzan mountain. Places change every year; this year Naritsune, Sanko-shimo-taguchi district will transform into a pink and white carpet. Shuttle bus service (free of charge) from JR Nakatsu Station on Sundays.	Nakatsu City Sanko Area	☎ 0979-43-2050
Oct. 12 th	Tashibu-no-shou Shukakusai (Tashibu Manor Harvest Festival) - A year tradition that has continued for many year. Come harvest rice and chat with the locals at Tashibuno Manor farming village (date subject to change).	Bungo Takada City Kozaki area	☎ 0978-22-3100
Oct. 12 th ~ 13 th	The 7th Karaage Festival - Here you can eat all kinds of Karaage!	Nakatsu City AEON Mall Sanko	☎ 0979-27-0786
Oct. 13 th	Beef Eating and Screaming Contest - Yes, you read it right! Come eat beef raised in Yufuin and scream to your heart's content, or just enjoy watching others do so (held at Namiyanagi no bokujoyou).	Yufu City Yufuin Kawakami	☎ 0977-85-4464
Oct. 13 th	Uki Uki Flea Market - come take a look through the stalls of clothes, books and more. You might just find some bargains. 11:30~15:00	Oita City Oasis Tower 1st Floor	☎ 097-538-7411
Oct. 18 th ~ 19 th	Beppu Agriculture and Forestry Festival - An event promoting local goods at Beppu Park. Here you can enjoy local products, wood working and workshops.	Beppu City Beppu Park	☎ 097-506-3544
Oct. 18 th	Kimono Appreciation Day - A monthly event where visitors can try on rental kimonos, have their photos taken, and receive discounts at nearby facilities if they are wearing kimono.	Kitsuki-City Jouka-machi	☎ 0978-63-0100
Oct. 19 th	Beppu Dance Festa - This contest will showcase talented dancers competing for the grand prize (to be held in Beppu Park in conjunction with another local produce promotional event).	Beppu City Beppu Park	☎ 0977-24-2828
Oct. 19 th	Oita Dialect Uncovered! Speech Contest - A comedic contest for linguistic contortionistsat Chuo Community Center. Come along to test out your Oita-ben comprehension (reservations necessary).	Bungo Takada City Chuo Kominkan	☎ 0978-22-3100
Oct. 19 th	The 9th Road of Xavier Walking Festival - walking event to explore the road which Christian Missionary Francisco Xavier walked in 1551 to go to Bungo-Funai via Yamaguchi.	Hiji Town Chuo Kominkan	☎ 0977-73-3158
Oct. 25 th ~ 26 th	Beppu Fisheries Festival - This event aims to local seafood produce. Held at Kamegawa Port, here you can enjoy lots of local cuisine.	Beppu City Kamegawa Port	☎ 097-532-6611

What's Going On?

From the Plaza

Free Legal Consultations

The Oita International Plaza is holding free legal consultations on **Sep. 17th & Oct. 15th** from **13:00-16:00**.

The Oita Emigration/Immigration Affairs Council also organizes free consultations where emigration/immigration specialists are available to offer advice on a variety of topics from Immigration Bureau paperwork and procedures, to daily life matters. English interpretation available, other languages may be available with reservation two days in advance.

Date/Time: **Sep. 7th & Oct 5th / 13:00 - 16:00**

Venue: the Oita International Plaza

For more information contact the Oita International Plaza.

TEL: 097-533-4021

Free Tagalog Consultations

Date: Saturday **Sep. 6th** & Tuesday **Sep. 16th**

Saturday **Oct. 4th** & Tuesday **Oct 21st**

Time: **13:00-16:00**

Venue: Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)

Consultant: Rhodora Yoshitake

Free Chinese Consultations

Date/Time: **Every Thursday 10:00-13:00**. Place: Oita International Plaza. Consultant: Cui Wenyu (*Dates and times are subject to change. Please contact the Oita International Plaza before coming.) TEL: 097-533-4021

Venue: Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)

Free Health Consultations

The Saiseikai Hita Hospital offers free health consultations and medical examinations at the Oita International Plaza to foreign nationals living in Oita Prefecture.

Date/Time: **Oct. 21st / 14:30 - 15:30**

Venue: Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)

For more information contact: Saiseikai Hita Hospital (*Dates and times are subject to change. Please call in advance to confirm times)

TEL: 0973-24-1100

Japanese Lessons

Himawari Japanese Volunteers

Support for people learning Japanese in order to help them enjoy their lives in Oita, now at three different locations.

Wasada Public Hall Wed. 10:00-11:30

Meiji Akeno Public Hall Wed. 14:00-15:30

Tsurusaki Public Hall Sat. 10:00-11:30

For more information contact Ms. Fukata TEL: 097-527-2614

E-MAIL: nihongo_himawari_oita@yahoo.co.jp

Nihongo Rakuraku-talk

Beppu City Hall offers free Japanese lessons every Monday from 14:00-15:30. For more information contact Mr. Kii in the Beppu International Affairs Division

TEL: 0977-21-6133 E-MAIL: int-ma@city.beppu.oita.jp

Sakura Japanese Class

Come study Japanese with friendly volunteers and teachers in a pleasant atmosphere. Sakura Japanese Class is held every Monday from 10:15-12:00 at the Oita University International House in Nishiki-Machi, Oita City. Classes are free of charge. For more information call Ms. Ohashi

CELL: 090-7866-2486

AIUEO Japanese Lessons

Volunteers offer free Japanese lessons on Tuesday and Friday from 10:20-11:50 at I-NESS near Oasis Tower as well as Thursday nights at Compal Hall from 18:30-20:00. Lessons are also offered in Beppu at the Beppu Foreign Tourist Information Office on Tuesday mornings from 10:00-12:00. For more information contact:

Ms. Miyase CELL: 090-8353-2485 (day lessons)

Ms. Kato TEL: 097-532-5940 (night lessons)

The 2014 International Festa

The 2014 International Festa hosted by the Oita International Plaza will be held on Sunday October 26th from 11AM to 4PM.

This year's Festa will feature a number of stage performances from other countries, workshops where visitors can try their hand at traditional Japanese arts and booths for children to play games and make arts and crafts. Attendance and participation is FREE so come along to the Oasis atrium and join in the fun. We hope to see you there!

Date/Time: **Oct. 26th / 11AM – 4PM**

Venue: iichiko Culture Center (Oasis building) atrium 1F

Contact: The Oita International Plaza 097-533-4021 or in@emo.or.jp



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大分市高砂町2-33 OASISひろば21 (B1F)
☎ 097-533-4021 FAX: 097-533-4052

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Promotion Foundation
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THANK YOU !!

A special thanks to all those who co-operated with us for this issue. Your help was very much appreciated.

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HOURS: Monday-Friday 9:30am-7:00pm

(closed weekends and the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month. We are open on the Saturdays before these Mondays)

Closed national holidays & Dec 29th - Jan 3rd

The International Plaza is located on the basement floor of OASIS Hiroba 21 (iichiko Culture Center).

