
THE TOMBO

Oita's English Newsletter

January, February, March 2016

Issue 81

♪ Wonderful Kyushu!

When my mother visited me in Kyushu last spring, she told me something surprising: “My guidebook says that Kyushu is the most beautiful of Japan’s islands.” Of course, I already knew that Kyushu was beautiful. What surprised me was that the guidebook also thought so too! When I talk to my friends at home about Japan, they often talk about Tokyo or Kyoto. Some mention Osaka or even Nagano (there was once a UK nature documentary that featured the Nagano onsen monkeys). Sadly, they mostly don’t mention Kyushu, which is a shame because Kyushu is one of my favourite places in Japan! So I was pleased to see that guidebooks seem to finally be realizing that Kyushu is the place to be!

In Oita, we are lucky enough to be close to many wonderful places in Kyushu, making travel around the island relatively convenient. Here are three of my favourite spots (easily accessible from Oita) on this brilliant island that I am lucky to call home.

♪ Mt. Aso (Kumamoto)



Aso Station in Kumamoto Prefecture is located a short and scenic train ride away from Oita City. Once visitors arrive at the charming little station with its delicious café, they can take a bus up to the Aso Volcano Museum. While the museum itself is interesting and informative, the real highlight of the trip are the stunning views of Aso Kujū National Park and the seemingly endless smoke billowing from Mt. Aso, Kumamoto’s ginormous active volcano.

Depending on the volcano’s current conditions, visitors may or may not be able to check out the crater. For me, just seeing the huge plumes of smoke across the beautiful plain was an overwhelming reminder of the power and beauty of nature. I cannot recommend a trip here enough!

And for film fans – Akira Kurosawa’s epic film *Ran* was partially shot among Aso’s beautiful natural scenery.

♪ Ibusuki and Chiran (Kagoshima)



If you love onsen, then Ibusuki in Kagoshima is the perfect place for a relaxing holiday. Ibusuki is located along the coast and prides itself on its wonderful sand baths. It’s a wonderful place to relax, rejuvenate, and enjoy delicious food. A trip to one of its many ryokans would make a perfect weekend getaway.

Chiran is a small, pretty town located in Kagoshima Prefecture and is a short bus ride away from Ibusuki. The town is perfect for anyone with an interest in Japanese history, as it boasts beautiful old-fashioned samurai residences. Visitors can wander around beautifully maintained gardens and soak up the atmosphere of Edo Japan (there aren’t even telegraph poles – to preserve the authentic look!)

Chiran is also home to the Chiran Peace Museum, where visitors can learn about Japanese fighter pilots during the Second World War. --- Continued on page 2.

EXHIBITIONS & SCREENINGS

Date	Description	Place	Admission	Contact #
Jan. 8 th – Feb. 21 st	THE PEOPLE by KISHIN - Kishin Shinoyama Exhibition – The Power of Photography	Oita City Art Museum	¥1000	☎ 097-554-5800
Jan. 16 th – Apr. 3 rd	Themed Exhibition III – “Medieval Artisans of Bungo-Funai”	Oita City Historical Museum	¥200	☎ 097-549-0880
Feb. 5 th – Mar. 31 st	OPAM Collection Exhibition VI	Oita Prefectural Art Museum	¥300	☎ 097-533-4500
Feb. 12 th – Mar. 13 th	Adoring Contemporary Art – Toshioka Collection + Oita Asian Sculpture Exhibition	Oita Prefectural Art Museum	¥500	☎ 097-533-4550

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

Date	Time	Artist/Event	Venue	Cost	Contact #
Jan. 17 th	19:00	The Russian Vaganova Ballet Academy – The Nutcracker	Patria Hita	Prices vary	☎ 0973-25-5000
Jan. 18 th	19:00	One Coin Relay – Wind Quintet Sonorite	iichiko Otonoizumi	¥500	☎ 097-533-4004
Feb. 6 th	12:00	The 10 th Music Revolution	T.O.P.S BittsHall	Please contact venue	☎ 097-533-0467
Feb. 10 th	19:30	Keiko Lee Debut 20th Anniversary “Love XX” Duo Tour	Brick Block	¥6000 +drink	☎ 097-536-4852
Feb. 29 th	19:00	Hiroshi Aoshima’s Chatty Operatic Concert	iichiko Otonoizumi	¥1000	☎ 097-533-4004
Mar. 6 th	15:30	Akira Jimbo One Man Orchestra 2016	Cantaloop II	¥4500 +drink	☎ 097-548-5363
Mar. 26 th	14:00	Wagner’s Der Fließender Holländer	iichiko Grand Theatre	Prices vary	☎ 097-533-4004
Mar. 27 th	14:00	Junior Orchestra	iichiko Grand Theatre	¥1000	☎ 097-533-4004

**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

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

Patria Hita= 1-iichiko Otonoizumi Hall =Oasis Tower 1F Oita City

(Continued from page 1)

♪ Nagasaki City (Nagasaki)



Nagasaki City in western Kyushu is brimming with charm and full of places to see and things to do.

During the *sakoku* period when Japan was closed off to the wider world, it was Dejima Island in Nagasaki that welcomed foreign trade. Nagasaki has been strongly influenced by its history as a port city, and visitors can see this international influence, particularly when it comes to Nagasaki’s architecture and cuisine. For example, Castella sponge cake, Nagasaki’s delicious culinary speciality, was in fact introduced to Japan from Portugal! And the so-called “Spectacle Bridge” was built in the 1600s in the Chinese style.



As well as being an historical port city, Nagasaki suffered the devastating effects of the atomic bomb in 1945. For those interested in learning about this event, the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum is a moving and informative museum that explores the events of that terrible day and its enduring legacy. Nagasaki is also home to a beautiful Peace Park, where visitors can quietly reflect on the events of that day and observe memorial statues from around the world.

Nagasaki is not only a city of historical note, but is also a beautiful city. I recommend taking an evening to travel up Mount Inasa using the cable car service. From there, you can see a stunning view of Nagasaki, glittering like a jewel in the darkness.

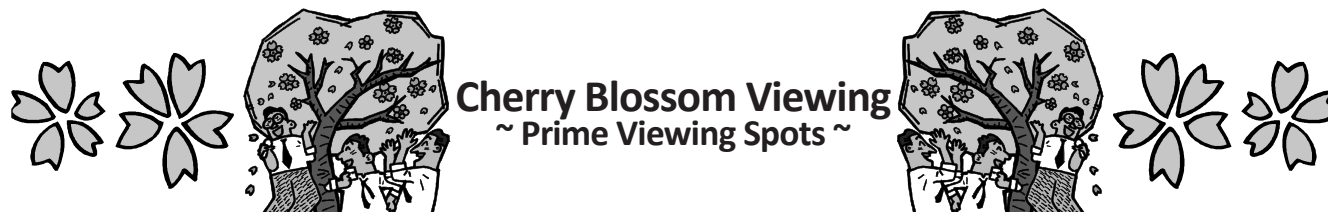
Festivals and Events

Date	Event Description	Location	Contact #
~ Mar. 31 st	'Burari-hito-tsumami' – Enjoy eating and drinking Taketa's food and drink! You buy 3 tickets for 300 yen (1 ticket = 100 yen). This will be a big chance to find something special among Taketa's local snacks or drinks.	Taketa City Various locations	☎ 0974-63-0585
~ Jan. 3 rd	Free hot spring entrance - 7 Municipal Hot Springs - Takegawara Onsen (except the sand bath), Tanoyu Onsen, Furosen, Kaimonji Onsen, Nageshi Onsen, Hamada Onsen, and Hamawaki Onsen - will have free entry!	Beppu City Various locations	☎ 0977-21-1129
Jan. 1 st	First sunrise of the new year - The Beppu ropeway to Tsurumi-dake will open at 4:00AM giving visitors the chance to make their first sunrise of the year a memorable one. Come along and enjoy the beautiful view.	Beppu City Tsurumi-dake	☎ 0977-22-2277
Jan. 1 st	Usa Shrine New Year visit - Every year around half a million people visit Usa Shrine on this day to pray for good fortune and for things such as the health of their family, business prosperity, road safety, and success in their studies.	Usa City Usa Shrine	☎ 0978-37-0001
Jan. 2 nd	New Year Shonai Kagura - This will be the first Shonai Kagura performance of the New Year	Yufu City Shonai-Machi	☎ 097-582-1111
Jan. 10 th	Houran-Enya Boat Festival - Vibrantly decorated boats float down Katsura River accompanied by traditional flute and drum music, dancing and more! This is a very colourful, lively event.	Bungotakada City Ebisu Bridge ~ Katsura Bridge	☎ 0978-22-3100
Jan. 16 th Feb. 20 th Mar. 19 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
Jan. 30 th ~ Feb. 7 th	Oita Fugu Festa - Selected famous fugu (blowfish) restaurants throughout Oita City will be offering discounts on fugu cuisine so that everyone can taste the deliciousness of fugu.	Oita City Participating restaurants	☎ 097-537-5764
Feb. 7 th	The 65th Beppu Oita Mainichi Marathon - Well known as a stepping stone for marathon newcomers. Held alongside the Beppu coast, come along to cheer on the runners (if you're not already competing!).	Oita City Umitamago Aquarium ~ Oita Athletic Stadium	☎ 093-511-1119
Feb. 14 th ~ Mar. 6 th	Yoshino Japanese Plum Blossom Festival - During this festival there will be events such as kagura and taiko performances amongst the some 450 plum blossom trees.	Oita City Yoshino bai-en	☎ 097-597-1000
Feb. 21 st ~ Mar. 20 th	Hita Ōyama Japanese Plum Blossom Festival - The Ōkubo and Furuya plum blossom parks will hold events such as outdoor tea ceremonies, poem-reading meetings and blossom viewing walks.	Hita City Ōyama-machi	☎ 0973-52-3101
Mar. 1 st	Tsujibasha opening - This day marks the beginning of spring in Yufuin, when the horse drawn carriages recommence operations. A ceremony will be held	Yufu City JR Yufuin station	☎ 0977-85-4464
Mar. 5 th	'Magatama' bead-making workshop - A hands on event for children and parents to enjoy. Participation fee is 200yen (Incl. admission fee), reservations necessary.	Oita City History Museum	☎ 097-549-0880

Hina Doll Exhibitions

The Hina doll festival is a yearly tradition beginning in mid-February and continuing until mid-March. Families display Hina dolls to celebrate Girl's Day on March 3rd. Displays feature a number of tiers, and each doll represents a different figure from the Emperor and Empress, to court ladies and samurai.

Date	Event Description	Location	Contact #
Feb. 5 th ~ Mar. 21 st	Usuki Hina-meguri - Hina dolls will be displayed at various locations throughout the city.	Usuki City Various locations	☎ 0972-64-7130
Feb. 13 th ~ Mar. 13 th	Kitsuki Hina-meguri - Hina dolls will be displayed at various locations throughout the city. And the hina dolls that were owned by a feudal lord will be displayed at Historical Museum.	Kitsuki City Various locations	☎ 0978-63-0100
Feb. 15 th ~ Mar. 31 st	Hita Hina Doll festival - Families in Mameda-Machi and Kuma-Machi will display their hina dolls to the public.	Hita City Mameda, Kuma	☎ 0973-23-3111
Feb. 28 th ~ Mar. 13 th	Castle town Nakatsu Hina Doll festival - Various events will be held to coincide with the local hina doll displays.	Nakatsu City Various locations	☎ 0979-22-3060



In Oita Prefecture, cherry blossoms (*sakura*) begin blooming from late March, and the blossoms generally last until early to mid-April. Below is a short list of some well-known cherry blossom viewing spots in Oita Prefecture. These spots are ideal for enjoying your own little hanami (cherry blossom viewing) party with friends, food and drinks.

City	Location	Blossom period	Address/directions	Number of trees	Contact #
Beppu City	Beppu Park 別府公園	Late March ~ Early April	15 minutes by car from Oita IC 5 minutes by bus from JR Beppu station	100	☎ 0977-21-1111
Beppu City	Mt. Ogi Sakura Garden 扇山さくらの園	Early April	5 minutes by car from Beppu IC 20 minutes by bus from JR Beppu station	6000	☎ 0977-21-1111
Kunisaki City	Aki Dam Park 安岐ダム公園	Early ~ Mid April	30 minutes by car from JR Kitsuki station 20 minutes by car from Oita Kukodouro Aki IC	3000	☎ 0978-72-5168
Nakatsu City	Nakatsu-kita Park 中津北 (二の丸) 公園	Late March ~ Early April	15 minutes on foot from JR Nakatsu station	150	☎ 0979-22-1111
Oita City	Heiwa-shimin Park 平和市民公園	Late March ~ Mid April	15 minutes by bus from JR Oita station (to 'Hanazuru' bus stop) 20 minutes by car from Oita IC	650	☎ 097-558-8135
Taketa City	Oka Castle Ruins 岡城跡	Early April	20 minutes on foot from JR Bungo Taketa station	1500	☎ 0974-63-0585
Usa City	Usa Shrine 宇佐神宮	Early April	10 minutes by bus from JR Usa station	1200	☎ 0978-37-0001
Usuki City	Usuki Castle 臼杵城跡	Late March ~ Early April	10 minutes on foot from JR Usuki station	1000	☎ 0972-64-7130
Tsukumi City	Youra Peninsula 四浦半島	Mid-February - Early March	25 minutes by car from Tsukumi IC	3700	☎ 0972-82-9521

* * * Rental bicycles * * *

City	Location	Rental Hours	Fee	Number of trees	Contact #
Hita city	Hita City Tourism Association (Next to JR Hita Station)	8:30 – 17:00	200 yen / hour (100 yen / Over 1 hour) 700 yen / day 1,200 yen / 2 days		☎ 0978-72-5168
Nakatsu City	Nakatsu Tourism Information Office (inside JR Nakatsu Station)	9:00 - 13:00 14:00 - 16:50	Free		☎ 0979-23-4511
Oita City	Oita city Rent-a-Cycle Port (Next to JR Oita Station)	7:30 - 19:30	200 yen / day 400 yen / day (power- assisted)	100 12	☎ 097-537-5739
Taketa City	TaketaTourism Information Office (inside JR Bungotaketa Station) TaketaTourism Information Centre	8:30 – 17:00	300 yen / 2 hours (power-assisted)		☎ 0974-63-2638 ☎ 0974-63-0585
Usa City	Usa City Tourism Association (Next to Usa jingu Shrine) 菜々彩畑 (Next to JR Yanagigaura Station) 喫茶蓮華 (Next to JR Usa Station)	8:30 – 17:00 9:30 – 16:00 10:00 – 16:00	300 yen / day		☎ 0978-37-0202 ☎ 0978-38-3211 ☎ 0978-37-2522
Usuki City	Usuki Tourism Information Office (inside JR Usuki Station)	9:00 – 15:00	free	10	☎ 0972-63-2366
Yufu City	Yufuin-Onsen Tourism Association (inside JR Usuki Station)	9:00 – 17:00	250 yen / hour		☎ 0977-84-2446

What's Going On?

From the Plaza

Free Legal Consultations for International Residents

The Oita International Plaza is holding free legal consultations for foreign residents on the *third Wednesday of every month*.

- When: **January 20th, February 17th, and March 16th**
- Time: **13:00-16:00.**
- Consultant: **Sei Ito (Administrative Solicitor)**
- Venue: **Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)**

Free Consultations in Chinese

The Oita International Plaza is holding free consultations in Chinese *every Thursday*.

- When: **Every Thursday.**
- Time: **10:00-13:00**
- Consultant: **Wenyu Kodama**
- Venue: **Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)**

Free Consultations in Tagalog

The Oita International Plaza is holding free consultations in Tagalog on the *first Saturday and third Tuesday of each month*.

- When: **January 2nd, January 19th, February 6th, February 16th, March 5th, and March 15th.**
- Time: **13:00-16:00**
- Consultant: **Rhodora Yoshitake (President of Oita Philippines Friendship Association)**
- Venue: **Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)**

Free Consultations Regarding Immigration, Residency, and Citizenship

The Oita International Plaza is holding free consultations regarding immigration, residency, and citizenship on the *first Sunday of each month*.

- When: **February 7th, and March 6th.**
- Time: **13:00-16:00**
- Languages available: **Japanese and English**
- Interpretation into **languages other than Japanese** and English may be available with a reservation (there are no guarantees). The reservation must be made **2 days prior to the consultation day**.
- Venue: **Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)**

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

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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 18:30-20:30. 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)

Community Classes and Events

Happy Talk

Come practice speaking Japanese with other learners and native speakers. Reservations not required, just show up on the day.

January 23rd 13:00-14:30

February 6th 13:00-14:30

March 26th 13:00-14:30

Please bring your own drink if you like. Participation is FREE.

For more details visit the Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/HappyTalkOita>



♪ Free Foreign Books Giveaway!

Calling all book-worms! Pop along to Oita International Plaza in order to get your hands on some free (yes, free!) foreign language books! There promises to be a great selection ranging from novels to non-fiction.

Date: March 12th (Saturday)

Time: 9:30am – 6:00pm

Place: Oita International Plaza

Enquiries: 097-533-4021

There will be a **maximum of four books per person**.
Please bring your own bag.

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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).

