

How to use the Map

Locations are indicated next to each name.
Find the location you are looking for in the frame at the cross-point of the horizontal numerals and vertical letters.
(Example) Location : Kusasenri (Row 1 - Column C)

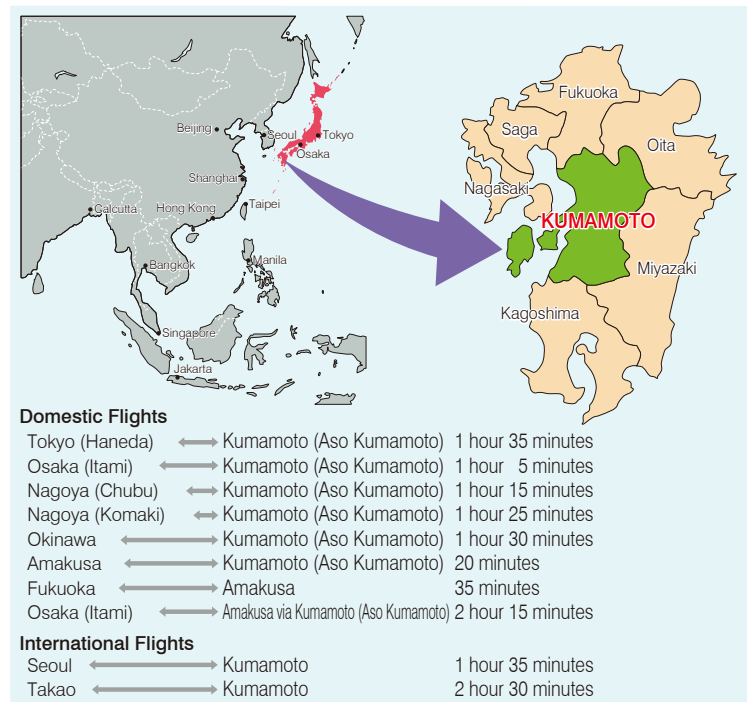
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KUMAMOTO TOURISM GUIDE BOOK



ASO

SEIWA
BUNRAKU

AMAKUSA

KUMAMOTO
CASTLE



Experiencing Nature

Fall in Love with Dynamic Nature



[ASO]

Called “The Land of Fire” and considered the symbol of Kumamoto, Aso is a prominent tourist resort visited annually by more than 18 million people. One of the world’s largest calderas can be found here, as well as an abundance of ways to have fun, including relaxing in hot springs or experiencing outdoor sports such as paragliding or hot-air ballooning.



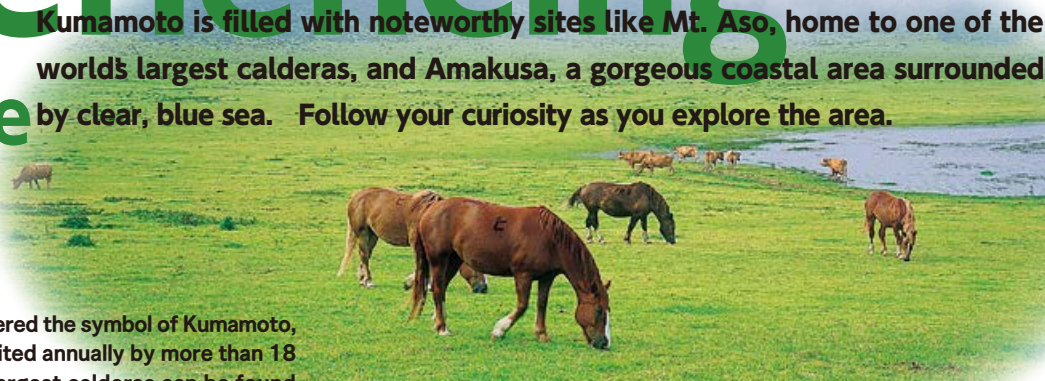
Aso Nakadake Crater (C-1)

This dynamic spectacle is 4 kilometers around and 150 meters deep. Temperatures of the lava flowing from the crater can reach 1,000 to 1,200°C. Also known as “The First Crater”, this magnificent volcanic site emits clouds of hazy white smoke. Countless years of regular volcanic activity has left it a mysterious landscape completely devoid of vegetation.



Kusasenri (C-1)

This great grassy plain stretches to the northern base of Mt. Eboshidake. Stroll along the circumference on foot, or rent one of our horses. The Aso Volcano Museum is located here, along with several restaurants.



[AMAKUSA]

Amakusa, home to more than 120 islands of every size, is a picturesque place of scenic beauty facing both the East China Sea and Shiranui Sea. Popular as a driving course, this area lets you enjoy fresh and abundant marine products, as well as hot springs, fishing, marine sports, and much more.

The West Coast of Amakusa (A-2 ~ A-3)

The west coast of Amakusa offers a panorama of wild, rugged scenery. These natural masterpieces include Jusan-botoke Creek (“Thirteen-Buddha Creek”), a nationally-designated natural monument, Jusan-botoke Point, a collection of open caves, and other striking rock formations carved by the raging waves of the East China Sea. The view of the sun sinking into the ocean here has been chosen as one of “The 100 Famous Sunsets of Japan” .



Dolphin Watching (A-2)

Some 200 wild dolphins live in the seas surrounding Tsushishima Island in Amakusa. These fantastic creatures are present year-round, so a 40-minute boat ride can assuredly offer you a glimpse of them.



Five Bridges of Amakusa and Amakusa Matsushima Island (B-2)

These bridges, also known as “The Pearl Line” , connect the Amakusa Islands with mainland Kyushu. The picturesque scenery of Amakusa Matsushima Island, which replicates a miniature landscape garden, can be fully enjoyed from above these bridges.

[TAMANA/YAMAGA/KIKUCHI]

Various ancient tombs and other historical spots are scattered throughout the entire Kikuchi River area. Hot springs and numerous leisure facilities can also be enjoyed here.



Greenland (B-1)

One of Japan’s largest amusement parks, Greenland has over 80 attractions to ride and enjoy. Equipped with facilities for eating, drinking, and lodging, this entertainment complex can be an excellent place to stay for a few days!

Iris-viewing at Takaseura River (B-1)

Every year from late May to mid-June, spectators flock to the green banks of the Takaseura River in the center of Tamana City to enjoy the beauty of roughly 66,000 iris flowers.



Kikuchi Gorge (C-1)

Located in the area of the Kikuchi River source, this gorge is proudly regarded as the most beautiful in all of Kyushu. It is surrounded by lushly-growing virgin forests of oak, chinquapin, maple, and more. Following the river as it spills into waterfalls of various sizes, these deep, v-shaped valleys display spectacular sights that will refresh your senses.

Kikuchi Castle History Park (B-1)

The classical Imperial Court of Yamato used its prestige to construct this mountain castle. Here you can find the ancient buildings that still remain, including an octagonal tower and rice granary, as well as excavated tunnels.

[CENTRAL KUMAMOTO]

Boasting a population of 730,000 people, Kumamoto City has prospered as the seat of government of Kumamoto Prefecture. Although the city has a modern urban appearance, the historical remains found throughout its streets give it a unique atmosphere that will remind you of its days as a castle town centuries ago.



Suizenji Jojuen Park (B-2)

A panoramic Momoyama-type landscape garden, this park was constructed around 375 years ago by Prince Hosokawa Tadatoshi, a feudal lord. In addition to carp swimming in a pond of spring water, you can see beautifully-arranged artistic works of nature here, including a mountain fashioned after Mt. Fuji and a grassy hill modeled after the fifty-three stages on the classical Tokaido highway.



Tram Car in Downtown Kumamoto City (B-2)

For taking a tour of Kumamoto City, the city tram is convenient and fun. Kumamoto was the first city in Japan to have a tram with such an extraordinarily low floor, which gives off the impression of gliding effortlessly around the city.

[YATSUSHIRO/MINAMATA]

Do you prefer the ocean, the river, or the mountains? Here in the southern part of Kumamoto Prefecture, you can fully enjoy the activities and atmosphere of all three outdoor destinations.



Utasebune (B-3)

A type of trawl net fishing seen in the Shiranui Sea, this particular method of fishing is completely dependent on the winds and waves. These white-sailed ships are familiar amongst locals for carrying the poetic charm of the area through the ages to the present. Tourists can also participate in a specially-arranged utasebune tour.

[KUMA]

Here in Kuma you can enjoy the refined atmosphere of ravines surrounded by the mountainous regions of Kyushu. This area is also famous for its role in the legend surrounding the fall of the Taira clan.



Kuma River Rapid Shooting (B-3)

This is a thrilling 19-kilometer boat ride downstream on the rapid currents of the Kuma River, one of the fastest flowing rivers in Japan.



Scarlet-tinged Leaves of Gokanoshio (B-3)

Gokanoshio is still considered an unexplored region to this day. The steep mountains displaying their autumn colors is a sight well-worth seeing.



HISTORY



Some Things Never Change...

Kumamoto is full of pieces of history, equally ancient and exciting, that fascinate all who visit. Every time you see them, they will stir up your heart.



Kumamoto Castle (B-2)

Bustling with numerous tourists throughout the year, Kumamoto Castle is considered to be one of the three most famed castles in Japan. It was constructed in 1607 by Kato Kiyomasa, who spent 7 long years to complete it. One of its famous features is the musha-gaeshi, special walls designed to prevent ninjas or external enemies from invading the castle during times of war. Boasting a circumference of 12 kilometers, the extensive castle grounds feature moats that utilize natural rivers to surround the castle, and long splendid stone walls that have remained standing to this day.

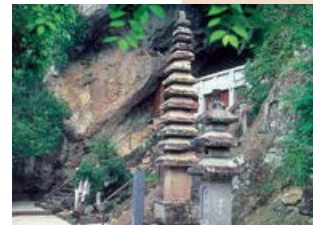


Sakura-no-baba Josaien (B-2)

Located near Kumamoto Castle, Sakura-no-baba Josaien lets visitors experience Kumamoto's history and culture. Inside, the restaurant district of Sakura-no-koji reproduces the castle streets as they were during the Edo period.

Miyamoto Musashi and Reigando Cave (B-1)

Miyamoto Musashi, a great swordsman, is famous for his duel on Ganryu Island against Sasaki Kojiro. He came to Kumamoto at the invitation of Prince Hosokawa Tadatoshi and spent his final five years here. He is said to have been proficient in ink paintings, tea ceremonies and the world of Zen. He wrote his Gorin-no-sho, The Book of Five Rings, in Reigando Cave.



Tsujunkyo Bridge (C-2)

Japan's largest waterway bridge, Tsujunkyo Bridge was constructed in 1854 by Futa Yasunosuke, head of the village of Yabe at the time. Futa built the bridge at his own expense to convey water to the Shiraito Plateau, an area suffering from drought. Three water conduits run through the center of this 20-meter-tall bridge, utilizing the counter-siphon principle to pump the water from lower to higher ground. The view of water being discharged from the central part of the bridge is breathtaking.



Reitaikyo Birdge (C-2)

Constructed in 1847, this stone bridge is among the largest single-arched bridges in Japan.



Sakitsu Catholic Cathedral (A-3)

Built in a fishing village located on the calm sea, this church has a Gothic-style design, but the interior floor is covered with tatami mats. The altar area was the site of merciless loyalty tests using a plate with an image of a crucifix. In addition, the scenery around the church has been selected as one of "The Best Hundred Beaches of Japan".

Amakusa Shiro and Christians (A-2 ~ A-3)

The Christian culture bloomed here approximately 400 years ago, and the tragic history of the secret Christians has been slowly pieced together. The Amakusa and Shimabara Revolt began when farmers suffering from suppression, heavy taxation, and crop failures appointed the 16-year-old Amakusa Shiro as their commander.



Festival

Feel the excitement.



Aso Fire Festival (C-1)

This festival marks the coming of spring to Kumamoto with desolate winter fields being set ablaze to hasten the budding of wild grass and exterminate mites. The festival climaxes with the hifuri ritual, where countless fires of all sizes are brandished to celebrate the marriage of the gods on the grounds of Aso Shrine. The festival is held every March.



Yamaga Lantern Festival (B-1)

Women place lanterns made from nothing but Japanese paper and paste on their heads and dance in traditional costumes. Held every year on August 15th and 16th, this Kumamoto summer festival is well-known throughout Japan.



Yatsushiro Myoken Festival (B-2)

Originating about 320 years ago, this festival features a dancing "turtle-snake" with the head of a snake and the body of a turtle. Held each year on November 23rd, this is considered one of the three greatest festivals of Kyushu.



Seiwa Bunraku (C-2)

"Bunraku" is a famous type of Japanese puppet-theater, and the Seiwa Bunraku is a form of agriculture folk art passed down in Yamato Town (former Seiwa Village). It is thought to have been brought to this area between 1848 and 1853.

Nakae Iwato Kagura (C-1)

The Nakae Iwato Kagura is a traditional dance containing elements of the Ise, Izumo, and Takachiho styles of Shinto dance, as well as ancient court music and dance.



Tradition

Experience the romance of antiquity.

Cultural Facilities

Retracing our history.



Prefectural Traditional Crafts Center (B-2)

A wide selection of traditional craft items are displayed here, such as bamboo crafts, ceramics, woodwork, metalwork toys, and musical instruments. Built with the goal of preserving traditional crafts and finding new paths for their development and use, the center displays works from throughout the prefecture, as well as handling sales and custom orders. Special exhibitions are held periodically.

Shimada Museum (B-2)

The Shimada Museum offers exhibits of historical objects relating to Miyamoto Musashi and other art work.



Yachiyoza Theater (B-1)

Built in 1910, this small theater for kabuki performance provides an authentic taste of Edo Period traditions and has been designated a national important cultural property. A five-year repair project has restored the theater to its appearance at the time of its golden age.

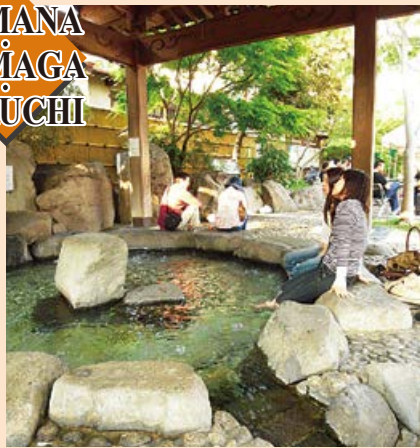
ONSEN (HOT SPRINGS) CELEBRATED WATERS

Immersed in Luxurious Time

The abundant volume of underground water in Kumamoto causes high-quality hot springs to flow out in places all over the prefecture. There are many open-air baths that have become widely popular as areas of natural healing, while still maintaining their rustic appearance.

Onsen

TAMANA
YAMAGA
KIKUCHI



Yamaga Onsen (B-1)

According to history, this onsen is said to have been discovered approximately 800 years ago when deer were found healing their wounds in the marshes of the nearby mountain. The water is abundant and a little alkaline, containing transparent radium that is mild to the skin. Foot baths are set up as well for those who prefer a short visit.



Kikuchi Onsen (B-1)

Blessed with close proximity to Kikuchi Gorge, the water here is mellow and gentle to the skin, and is considered the most beautiful in the prefecture.



Tamana Onsen (B-1)

Wrapped in an ancient romantic atmosphere, this onsen town can be found amongst the many decorated ancient tombs scattered around the bright, colorful scenery.



ASO



Kurokawa Onsen (C-1)

The esthetic air of this onsen town provides you with a serenity that crosses time and space. You can tour different onsen by purchasing a wooden token for bathing.



Uchinomaki Onsen (C-1)

Many literary magnates attracted to the magnificent scenery of Aso have visited this onsen. Several highly-regarded songs and works of literature have been based on this place.



HITOYOSHI
MINAMATA



Yunoko Onsen (B-3)

This ocean onsen faces the Shiranui Sea. You can enjoy a variety of open-air baths, such as a spelunking bath, a cave bath, an observatory bath, and many more.

Hitoyoshi Onsen (B-3)

With many headsprings in this area, there are at least twenty-some public bath houses standing side-by-side in Hitoyoshi City alone.



CELEBRATED WATERS

Shirakawa Fountainhead (C-2)

The fountainhead of Shirakawa, a major river, boasts a water volume of 60 tons per minute. It is one of "The 100 Celebrated Waters of Japan" selected by the Environment Ministry.



Ikeyama Fountainhead (C-1)

Selected by the Environment Ministry as one of "The 100 Celebrated Waters of Japan", these headwaters are surrounded by giant trees that are more than 200 years old, giving the area a dreamlike atmosphere.



EATING PLEASURE

Become a Kumamoto Gourmet



Kumamoto Ramen

This ramen is characterized by its fat Chinese noodles and thick soup made from boiled pig and chicken bones. Many specialized ramen varieties can be found in Kumamoto towns, each of which has developed its own unique flavor.



Higo Beef

Higo Beef comes from Japanese brown cows raised in Kumamoto. These cows graze on the tender grass of the plains of Aso from early summer to autumn. This particular beef is now recognized as a low-fat healthy meat.



Taipi-en

Found only in Kumamoto, this bean-starch vermicelli dish uses a stock made from boiled chicken bones. It is lightly seasoned, chock full of different ingredients, good for your body, and well-liked by many.



Karashi Renkon

This lightly fried lotus root has a characteristically crisp texture. It is filled with spicy mustard that gives it a striking aroma and pungent flavor.



Kuma Shochu

These Japanese spirits are distilled from high-quality rice using the crystal-clear groundwater of the Kuma River. This drink boasts a unique flavor and excellent body, and best of all, it doesn't leave behind a bad hangover.



(Local Cuisine) Seafood, mountain produce, "Dekopon" citrus fruit

Blessed by nature with fruits, vegetables, and the riches of both land and sea, Kumamoto is a treasure trove of food.



PRODUCTS OF THE DISTRICT

Souvenirs

Higo Zogan

With a 400-year tradition, this craft is unique to Kumamoto. Various patterns are created by striking gold and silver into an iron plate. Pendants and tie-pins are popular items.



Hanatebako

A typical hand-painted box made in the Hitoyoshi district, depicting a stylized camellia motif.



Kutami Uchiwa

Made of Japanese paper and covered with persimmon varnish, these fans retain an air of the past. Their elegant colors are unique to Kutami Uchiwa.



Ceramic Artworks

Numerous kilns in Kumamoto, such as Kodayaki and Shodaiyaki, have a long cherished history of producing fine ceramic art pieces. They were financially supported by the Hosokawa clan.



Yamaga Toro

A traditional object of craftwork produced in Yamaga, this lantern is made out of Japanese paper which has been hand-fitted and glued without using wood or metal pieces.