

W h a t ' s U p , O I T A !

Bringing the latest from Oita, Japan to all those connected to Oita thriving all across the globe.

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Greetings! from Mitsuru Tokuno <tokuno-mitsuru@pref.oita.lg.jp>, the Head of the International Policy Division in the Oita Prefecture Planning Promotion Department

The torrential rains that hit northern Kyushu in early July caused damage in Oita Prefecture, primarily in the city of Hita. I would like to say thank you for the many sympathetic words and messages we received. As we look towards restoration, I would like to present how our region is actively recovering as well. This month's special feature is the Ghibli exhibition at OPAM. Many visitors from overseas have come to see it. The exhibition will continue until September 3rd, so we encourage you to come to Oita and take a look at it.

July 5 (Wed.) Torrential Rain Causes Disasters in Northern Kyushu

Flooding and landslides occurred back to back in northern Kyushu, including Oita Prefecture, where record breaking torrential rains began on the afternoon of July 5th. The emergency warning system, which began service in August of 2013, saw its first use within the prefecture. Within Oita, particularly in the city of Hita, there was grave damage, including three dead, four injured, and 1,588 fallen buildings. Furthermore, flooding from the Kagetsu River flowed onto the railway bridge of the JR Kyudai Line and made operation impossible (substitute transportation by bus currently in place). Restoration of the bridge was originally scheduled to take up to three years, but according to JR Kyushu, after gaining an understanding of work and safety measures during periods of heavy rain from the nation, all restoration is expected to be complete by the summer of 2018.

As of July 24th, a total of 5,296 volunteers both from inside and outside of the prefecture are aiding in the restoration efforts. Furthermore, Oita has received words of sympathy and encouragement from everyone around the world. We are deeply grateful for these sentiments. We hope to have your continued support as we continue to put our full strength into restoration efforts.

Overseas Oita Prefectural Association Bulletin Board

Yuji Kaida, chairman of the Los Angeles Prefectural Association, told us about a joint event where seven prefectures participated.

On June 18th, a joint picnic was held in Wilson Park in Torrance City with seven prefectures, an increase of one from last year.

The prefectural associations present were Ishikawa, Ibaraki, Gifu, Saga, Tokyo, Tokushima, and Oita. The 120 participants enjoyed a barbecue, played charades, split open watermelons, and played a 120 person game of rock-paper-scissors for a prize.



An Eye for Art in Oita City

There are several different places where you can experience art in Oita City. But the two that probably come to mind first are the Oita City Art Museum and the Oita Prefectural Art Museum.

Of the two, the Oita City Art Museum is older by about 16 years. It was founded in 1999 and is located about a mile from Oita Station. It's accessible on the Oita Canvas Bus (cutely named the Oita Kyan-basu).

Unlike the other museums in Oita City, what immediately stands out about the Oita City Art Museum is its location. It's enshrouded by nature and brilliant, fresh shades of green. I hadn't gone more than a mile from Oita Station, but it feels like I was in a different world altogether.

According to Mr. Osada, director of the Oita City Art Museum, this is not a coincidence. The museum's natural landscape sets it apart from the other city's museums. You can enjoy artwork *and* nature simultaneously.



The Oita City Art Museum does its best to make sure everyone has a pleasant experience. For example, the museum does its best to give children a lifelong enjoyment of the arts. There are always events for families to enjoy during school holidays, and these events are typically free for children who have not yet started high school. There are also a variety of hands-on experiences aimed at children and families that vary depending on the season.

When trying to create the yearly schedule, Mr. Osada says, the museum asks three questions:

One, what can a family enjoy together?

Two, what will introduce artists from Oita (especially young artists)?

Three, what will introduce famous artists in general?

The Oita City Art Museum is also shifting more of its focus onto foreign visitors. Many foreigners who visit Oita do not step foot past Beppu. The museum saw roughly 240,000 visitors in one year, but foreigners made up less than 0.5% of that number. The number of foreign visitors has gradually increased though, and the museum plans to release pamphlets in English,

Korean, and Chinese next year in preparation for the increasing number of international events to be hosted in Oita. Currently, you can see many labels and names of artworks written in English as well as Japanese.

Collection Exhibition Fee: 300 yen (adult), 200 yen (college/high school); Special Exhibition fees may vary.



“Ghibli Expo - From Nausicaä to Marnie - ”

Stellar reviews for this current exhibition

The popular “Ghibli Expo” has been on exhibition at the Oita Prefectural Art Museum since July 7th. It’s been thirty years since the establishment of Studio Ghibli, and close to 3,000 of the precious materials they’ve created are currently on display.

How were Ghibli works produced? How were they released to the world? With a focus on advertisement and publicity materials, like posters and leaflets reminiscent of the age they were published in, a nearly overwhelming number of materials as of yet to be revealed to the public, including production materials and plans, overflow and consume every inch of the exhibition’s free space. From children to adults, this exhibition is required viewing for Ghibli fans.



A corner reproducing the office of Toshio Suzuki, famous producer of Studio Ghibli



An endless number of valuable materials, including promotional materials for movies and goods



From “Nausicaä” to “Marnie,” posters from each era and valuable key animations



A moving replica of the giant airship from “Castle in the Sky”



※All photos shown are from the Oita exhibition © Studio Ghibli

Exhibition Period:

July 7th, 2017 (Fri.) – Sept. 3rd (Sun.)

Opening Hours:

10 AM – 7 PM

(last entry 30 minutes before closing)

* Open until 8 PM on Fri. and Sat.

Venue:

Oita Prefectural Art Museum,
Exhibition Room A

Visit the OPAM website for more details:

<http://www.opam.jp/exhibitions/detail/228>



風の谷のナウシカ © Studio Ghibli・H

Oita has been facing a lot of poor weather lately. The rainy season is over, but it looks as though its only passed its baton to typhoon season. Here’s to staying dry in the rain, steady in the wind, and cool in the heat.

Editor’s Note

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