

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

As we enter the new fiscal year, the International ONSEN Summit and the MUSIC FESTIVAL Argerich's Meeting Point in Beppu will be held in May. Argerich's Meeting Point will have its 20 year anniversary, and a performance is scheduled in Rome, Italy. In the fall, the National Cultural Festival and the Art and Culture Festival for Persons with Disabilities will be held. Moreover, the Oita Prefectural Association of Brazil will have its 65th anniversary ceremony, and Taiwan will host the World Flora Exposition. In line with this, we anticipate more groups will visit Oita. I hope to bring all of you plenty of information this year as well.

Now Introducing... Events Related to the International ONSEN Summit

General audiences can enjoy the atmosphere of the "International ONSEN ♪ Summit – OITA Prefecture, JAPAN" held in Beppu from May 25th to the 27th through related events which are scheduled as follows. Be sure to participate!!

International ONSEN Tourism Product Exhibition

There will be specialty goods sold, food and drink, and tourism promotion exhibitions at each booth from countries participating in the Summit as well as domestic organizations participating in the Summit. Stage events are also scheduled.

Date/Time: Sat., May 26th – Sun., May 27th 11:00 am – 5:00 pm *Admission is free

Location: B-Con Plaza Convention Hall (12-1 Yamanotecho Beppu-shi)

ONSEN & Gastronomy Walking

"Eat (or drink)" the delicious foods and saké unique to ONSEN sites, "explore" the rich nature and historical culture of the region, and "soak" in ONSEN with "ONSEN Gastronomy Walking," which will take place in two locations (Beppu City and Nakatsu City) during the Summit.

	<u>ONSEN Gastronomy Walking in Beppu</u>	<u>ONSEN Gastronomy Walking in Nakatsu</u>
Date/Time	Sat., May 26 th	Sun., May 27 th
Location	Myoban Onsen - Kannawa Onsen (A route for enjoying Beppu exclusive foods and landscapes, like Jigoku Mushi)	Area around Aonodomon Honyabakei (A route for enjoying the food, nature, and historical culture of Japan Heritage site Yabakei)
Participation Fee	¥3,000	¥3,800
Participants	200 (prior application required)	200 (prior application required)
Inquiries	Beppu City Tourism Division (0977-21-1128) or Search for "ONSEN & Gastronomy Walking in Beppu"	Nakatsu Yabakei Tourism Association (0979-64-6565) or Search for "ONSEN & Gastronomy Walking in Yabakei Sightseeing"

Kitsuki: Castles, Dolls, and History

Kitsuki is probably most well-known amongst tourists for its kimono rental experience. You can don a kimono and walk around the castle town where samurai formerly resided. I've done the kimono experience once before (it was delightful!), but I wanted to return and see what else I could experience in Kitsuki on foot.

Most of Kitsuki's charms stem from the main street that leads to the ruins of Kitsuki Castle, known as "Shounin no Machi." This street is packed with cute shops selling local, traditional, or otherwise unique goods. There are slopes on either side of it leading upward to former samurai residences and some other attractions.

In conjunction with hina matsuri, the city of Kitsuki sponsored a "Hina Meguri" tour, where visitors could look at many different hina doll exhibitions across the city. Most of these tour locations were in walking distance from the main strip.

Each attraction included on the Hina Meguri had a hina doll exhibition, but, even without the exhibition, each attraction still had other merits.



Shounin no Machi

For example, I visited the former residence of politician Sadayoshi Hitotsumatsu.

In addition to viewing the annual doll exhibition, entry also included a tour of the residence. The residence was built in 1929 but opened to the public for viewing in 2005. The residence is sophisticated as well as incredibly large, with 300 tatami mats in 15 rooms. It has several interesting features, but the most interesting is probably its glass. Namely, the glass that was used during construction in 1929 can no longer be purchased and no glassmaker alive can reproduce it in this day and age. Its wrap around sliding storm shutter is notable for being made entirely from this glass.



(Left) - The hina exhibition at the Sadayoshi Hitotsumatsu residence uses all real materials for their hina display.

(Right) - Statue of Sadayoshi Hitotsumatsu

I also visited the Kitsuki Castle Town Museum, which was very informative in regards to the history of Kitsuki. For example, I learned that Kitsuki Castle was torn down during the Edo Period while Nakatsu Castle was able to remain because Kitsuki was smaller in comparison to Nakatsu, and it was therefore thought that Kitsuki was the less necessary of the two. I also learned that the samurai who lived in Kitsuki lived closer to the castle the higher up in status they were, and, naturally, the more elite warriors had bigger houses. Another thing I found interesting was that, during the Edo Period, there was a large gate constructed at the entrance to the city, and there was a nightly curfew that began at eight.

Despite the shops and apartments that have been added to the city, the streets of Kitsuki's Castle Town haven't changed much since the Edo Period. I think this is what gives Kitsuki its charm.



An old-fashioned x-ray machine at the Sano family residence.



Hina display at Yotokuji Temple



A sleepy cat at Kitsuki Retro Hall



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Editor's Note

In many of the tourist sites in Kitsuki, there's a koto (and a simple song composition) provided for tourists to play. I can't say I hit all (or any) of the right notes, but it was good fun nonetheless!

