

We introduce geotourism based on three themes to comprehensively show the attractions of Aso Geopark



#### **Memories of eruptions engraved** in the grand caldera

The world-class caldera is the symbol of Aso Geopark. Unique land features and strata have been formed by considerable volcanic activities over the past 270,000 years and by a great eruption that occurred 90,000 years ago. Visitors will learn about such geographical information as well as influences of the eruption on various places in Japan through geosites.

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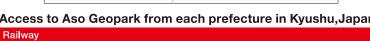
Among the volcanic clusters in the caldera, Nakadake Crater is highlighted because of its repeated and substantial volcanic activities from prehistoric times until the present. We will show you the unique landscape and ecology around Nakadake Crater, and the lives of people who live in symbiosis with the active volcano.

### **OBlessings of the volcanic mountain** and people's lives

People who live side by side with a volcano have explored ways to live in harmony with nature in awe of the volcano, and developed their own culture and lifestyle. And nature has brought them abundant blessings like spring water and hot springs which are commonly found in volcanic regions.

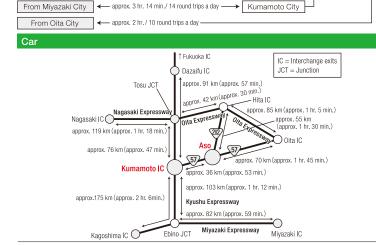






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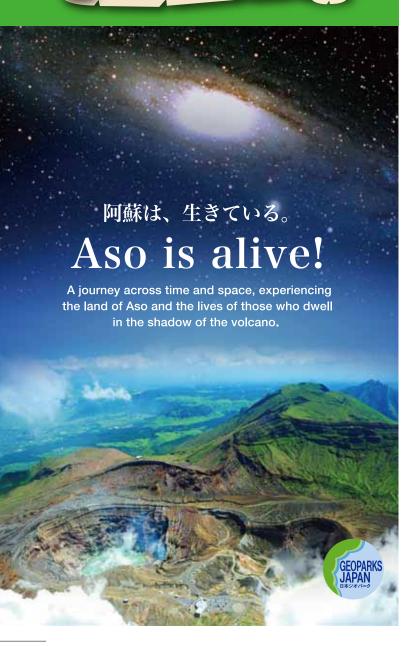
From Fukuoka City ← approx, 1 hr. 44 min./ 100 round trips a day → Kumamoto City

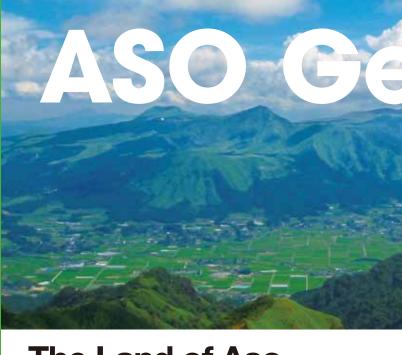




# Geotourism Course map

**Geography created** by the Volcano and **Lives of People** 





## The Land of Aso Volcano and the **Lives of Its People**

The Aso Caldera is situated in central Kyushu, Japan. It is one of the largest calderas in the world, covering a total area of 350 km and measuring 18 km east-west and 25 km north-south in width. In the caldera are the five peaks of Mt. Aso: Mt. Takadake, Mt. Nekodake, Mt. Kijimadake, Mt. Eboshidake, and the still-fuming Mt.Nakadake. There also lie volcanic clusters consisting of various mountains. A plain spreads at the foot of the mountain range from north to south. Surrounding the plain and volcanic clusters, the outer rims form a gently-sloping pyroclastic plateau. This unique geography is formed by the Aso volcano, which has displayed repeated volcanic activities since approximately 270,000 years ago. The major theme of Aso Geopark is to provide visitors

with information about the geological history of the Aso volcano and its relation to the lives of people: how they have enjoyed the bounties of the earth, engaged in their livelihood, and developed a unique culture and landscape.



### ■What is the "Geopark"?

By observing the earth and nature scientifically, we define a place of scientific importance as a geopark, where many valuable and beautiful natural heritages exist such as strata, rocks, topography, volcano, and faults. A geopark values conservation and utilization of geological heritages. It is a place for people to become familiar with "geo" (the earth), learn about its history and mechanisms, and think about its relation to ecology as well as human life through natural heritages including the culture of the people in the area. Geoparks are promoted around the world by the Global Geoparks Network (GGN), which was established in 2004 and is supported by UNESCO.







Comprehensive tourist facility with a grandstand view of the central volcanic cones Asobo-no-sato Kugino

This is a comprehensive facility for tourists, which contains restaurants of local cuisine and shops of local products. You can enjoy the local specialty beef at the restaurant "Akaushi-no-yakata". [TEL] 0967-67-3010

**Delicious food from nature's bounty in Aso** Tawarayama Visitors Center "Moe-no-sato"

This is an experience-based facility for visitors, which is located in Nishihara Village. This is a place to enjoy the delicacies of Aso, where a full array of local products, garden-fresh vegetables, manju (steamed buns), and boxed lunches are available. [TEL] 096-292-2211



### Geography created by the Volcano and Lives of People

Lava and pyroclastic flows generated by eruptions have formed various land features, and people have taken advantage of such features in their livelihood. Through observing the land features in this course, you can witness the wisdom of the lifestyle developed by the local

**START** 

### **Aso Kumamoto Airport**

▼ 25 min. **Omine Volcano and** Nishihara Takayubaru Plateau Village ▼ 10 min.

Minami-Aso Tawarayama Lookout Transportation: private car or rental car Time required: 4~5 hr.

**Omine Volcano and** Takayubaru Plateau (Nishihara Village)



Omine Volcano was formed right before the present huge caldera was made. During the process of volcano formation, a large amount of lava flowed and created a lava plateau, which became Takayubaru Plateau. Today, the highland is used as Aso Kumamoto Airport.

#### Tawarayama Lookout (Minami-Aso Village)



It is a marvelous geopoint that commands a panoramic view of southern Aso. You can observe idvllic rural scenery stretching in the caldera and its unique topography. Emperor Hirohito stood at this spot to have a view of Aso on the occasion of a tree-planting ceremony in 1985.

#### Cluster of Springs in Minami-Aso District (Minami-Aso Village)



Among the headsprings here which boast excellent quality water are Shirakawa Headspring (one of the 'top 100 waters' selected by the Ministry of the Environment), 星 Shioisha Fountainhead, Terasaka

Fountainhead, Yukisawazu Fountainhead, Ikenokawa Fountainhead, Yosidajo-gokenjo-okumiyu, Myojin-ike Pond, and Takezaki Fountainhead. These are considered to be underflow water of the central volcanic cones.



### Ayugaerinotaki Falls (Minami-Aso Village)

This is a 20 m high and 30 m wide waterfall flowing from Shirakawa River in the southern part of the Aso caldera. The stratum that creates the waterfall is composed of basaltic lava, which is considered to have been formed soon after the caldera formation. We can see the riverbed of



the same kind of rock at the upper stream of the waterfall, and a deep gorge downstream.

### **Tateno Gorge**





The only place where there is a gap in the wall of Aso Caldera. The gap is made by faults which runs through the gorge or erosion. The gap had been buried by lava several times, and in such time a lake was formed in the caldera.

# **Jigoku and Tarutama Hot Springs**





The hot spring resorts are located 700 m above sea level on the southwest slope of the central volcanic cluster. Jigoku Hot Spring is located in the explosion crater of Mt. Yomine and has been popular as a therapeutic bath since the Edo Era. The name is said to have come from the existing bare land where nothing grows due to volcanic gas (hellish place). Tarutama Hot Spring has been used by local people since the Tensho Period (1573~1592).