

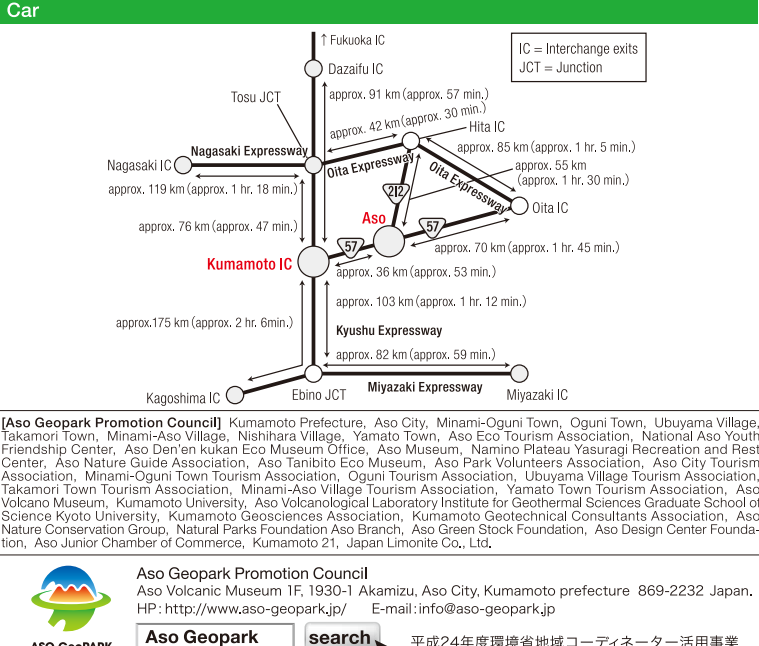
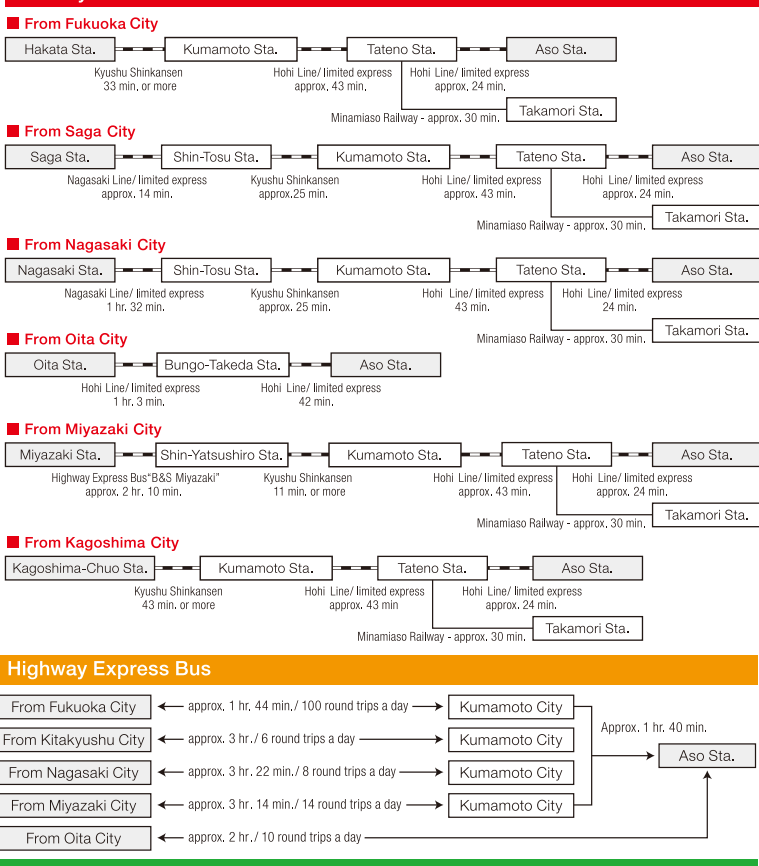
We introduce geotourism based on three themes to comprehensively show the attractions of Aso Geopark

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.

Nakadake Crater: Feeling the breath of the earth
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.

Blessings 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.

Access to Aso Geopark from each prefecture in Kyushu, Japan



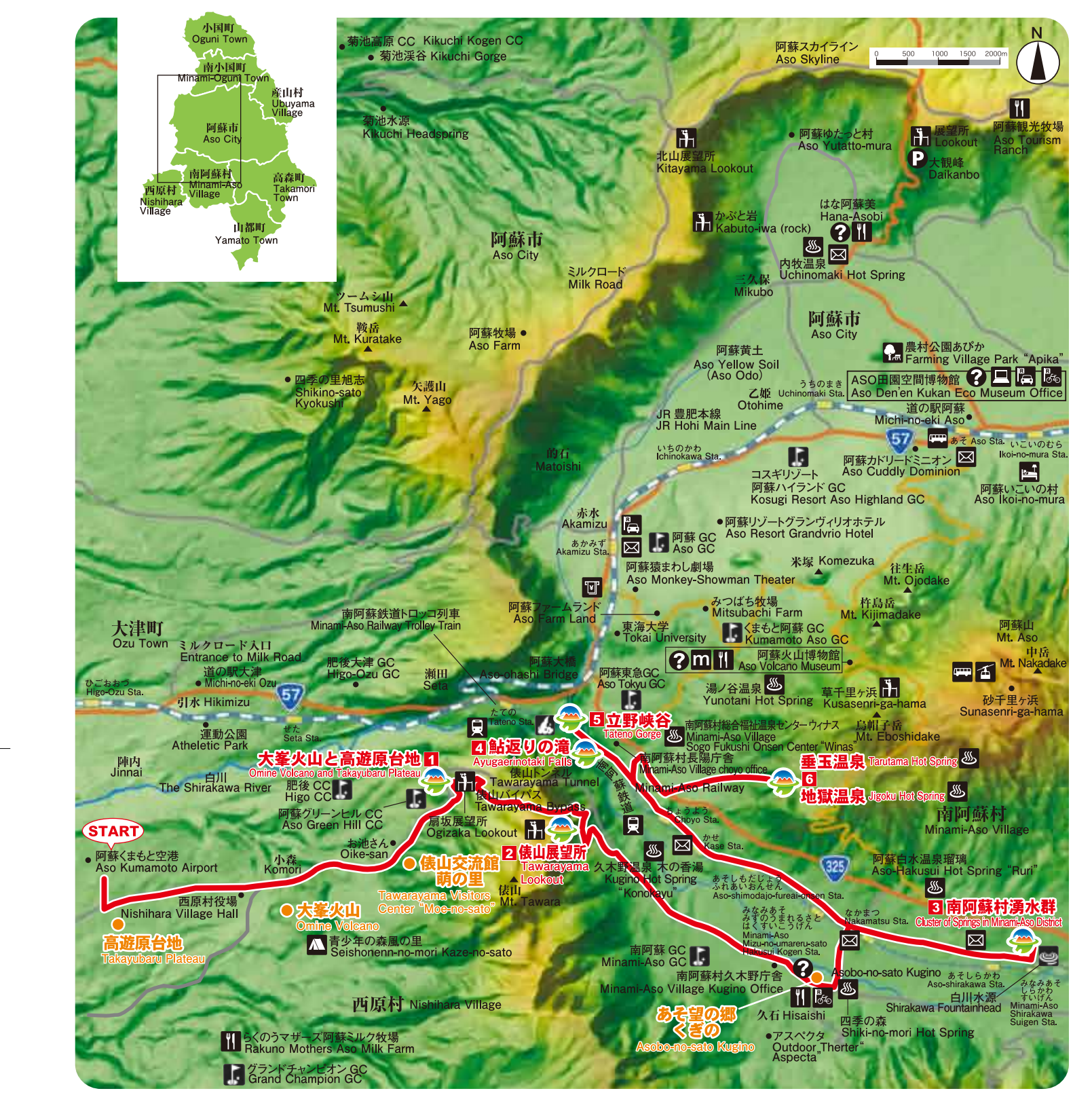
Geotourism Course map
Geography created by the Volcano and Lives of People



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 km² 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.



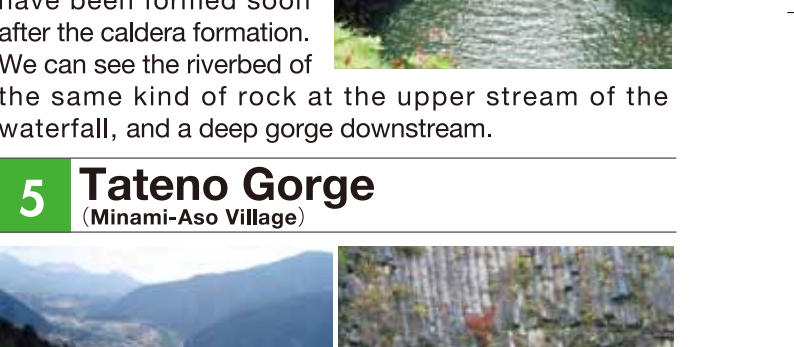
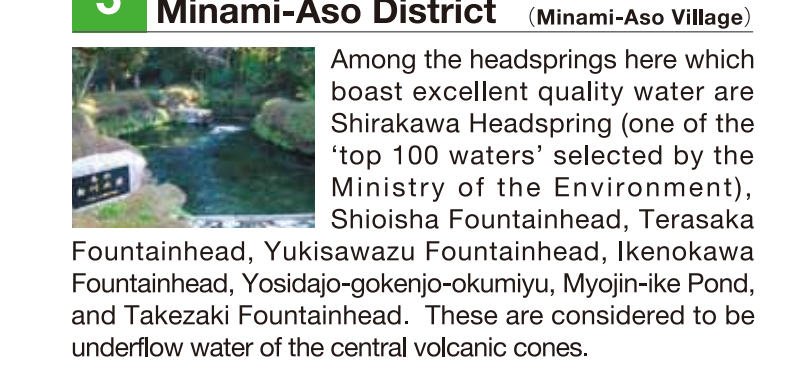
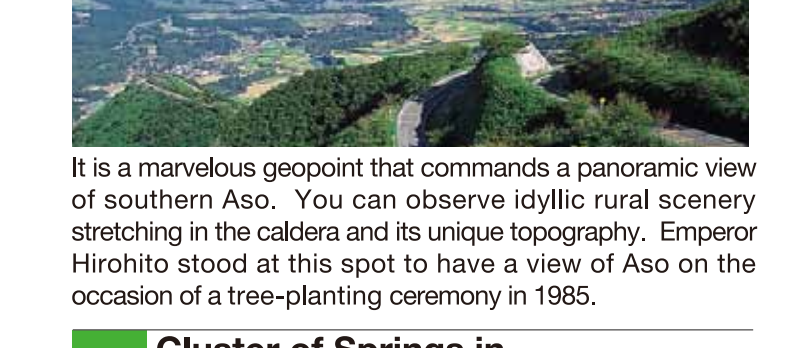
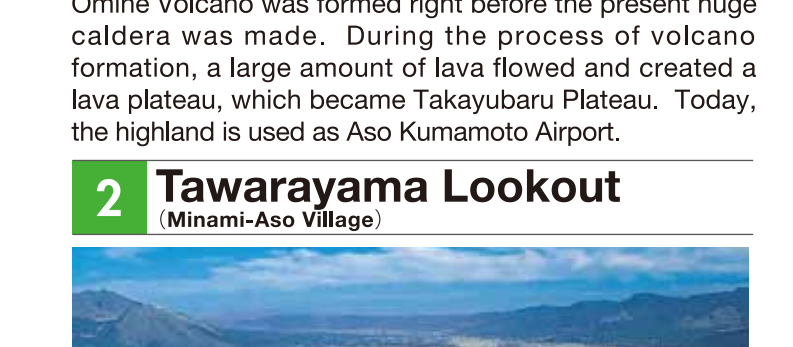
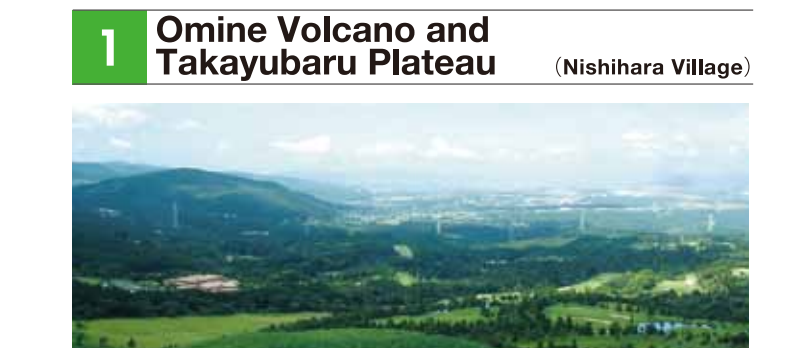
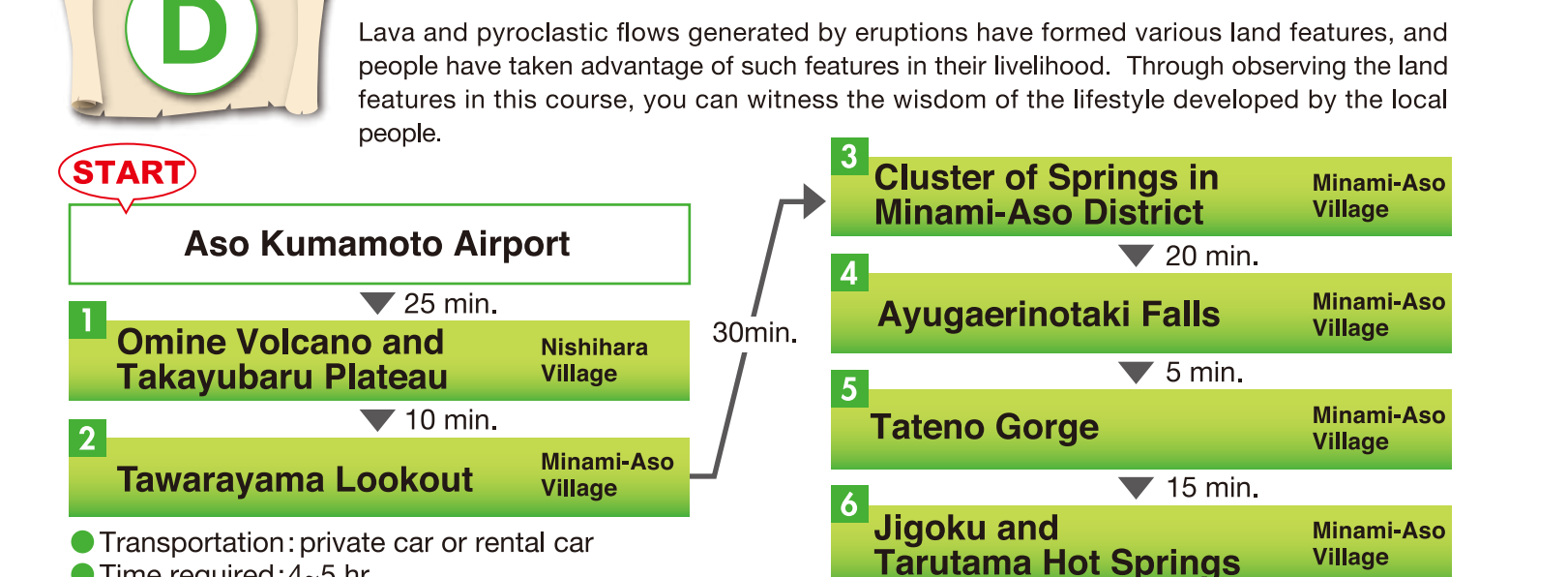
Legend

案内所 Information	ロープウェイ Ropeway	温泉 Hot Spring	博物館/美術館 Museum	水 Spring	滝 Waterfall	JR 国鉄本線 JR Hoho Line
パソコン PC Facilities	駐車場 Parking	ゴルフ場 Golf Course	ホテル/宿泊施設 Hotel / Accommodation	史跡 Historic Site	公園 Park	南阿蘇鉄道 Minami Aso Railway Line
鉄道/鉄道駅 Railway / Railway Station	レンタカー レンタカー Car Rental	郵便局 Post Office	展望地 Viewpoint	キャンプ場 Camp Site	神社 Shrine	ジオパークコース Geotourism Course
バス/バスのりば Bus / Bus Stop						

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



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.

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.

It is a marvelous geopoint that commands a panoramic view of southern Aso. You can observe idyllic 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.

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 Tencho Period (1573~1592).