

HISTORY, NATURE AND GOURMET FOOD IN OITA: A 2-DAY TRIP FROM KYOTO



When you go on a trip, do you prefer outdoor activities, sightseeing or relaxing? In Oita Prefecture, Kyushu, you can satisfy all of these needs. Mainly known for its numerous hot springs, Oita also boasts many other places of interest that you can combine into an unforgettable trip. This 48-hour itinerary will take you to a lesser-known part of Oita Prefecture where you will find ancient relics, breathtaking nature and soothing hot springs. Visit the mysterious stone Buddhas, explore the dreamy landscapes of the Tadewara Wetlands, and soak in a bath with natural bubbles. All while enjoying some excellent sushi and Wagyu beef.

Getting to Oita

From Kyoto Prefecture's Itami Airport it takes about 1 hour by plane to Oita Airport.

DAY 1

Ancient Statues of Buddha

Visit the castle town of Usuki. Here are the Sekibutsu, over 60 statues of Buddha carved directly in the volcanic stone walls. After touring the statues, head to Usuki Castle and the Nioza Rekishi no Michi. This area around the castle features ancient streets lined with shops selling local treats and souvenirs.

How to get there: From Oita Airport take the limousine bus to Oita station and a train to Usuki Station. Total travel time: about 2 hours.

Experience a Local Food Market

For some fresh fish, head over to Saiki city. The Sendo Ichiban Market sells delicious sushi and sashimi that you can eat on the spot, along with other local products. For a more filling lunch, Kamehachi Sushi will delight you with some masterfully prepared sushi pieces. Here you can also try gomadashi udon, a local specialty.

How to get there: From Usuki Station it's a 30-minute train ride to Saiki Station.

Bathe with the Hot Spring Flowers

End the day in relaxation at the Kuju Kogenso hotel, where you can soak in hot springs surrounded by the mountains. The hot spring water here has a unique milky hue and contains mineral deposits called yu no hana (hot spring flowers).

How to get there: The Kuju Kogenso hotel is about a 1 hour and 40 minutes taxi drive from Saiki Station.

Alternatively, take a train from Saiki Station to Oita Station, then to Bungo–Taketa Station. From here it's a 30–minute taxi ride to the hotel. Total travel time: approx. 3 hours.

DAY 2

Walk Through the Wetlands

The Kuju Mountains are home to the Tadewara Wetlands. This dreamy landscape boasts great hiking opportunities. The wooden boardwalks traversing the wetlands offer different hiking trails.

How to get there: The Tadewara Wetlands are about a 30–minute taxi ride from the Kuju Kogenso hotel.

Reward Your Fatigue with Some Wagyu Beef

After a walk through the beautiful mountain landscape, make your way to Bebenko. This farm restaurant makes delicious Bungo beef, a wagyu beef brand from Oita Prefecture.

How to get there: Bebenko is about an 8–minute taxi ride from the Tadewara Wetlands.

Drink the Clearest Water

Oike spring is hidden inside a lush forest. The water has a beautiful blue color and a fresh and clean taste. Many people travel here with bottles and containers to take some home.

How to get there: Oike spring is about a 14–minute taxi ride from Bebenko.

End the Trip in a Tranquil Hot Spring Town

Not far from the Kuju mountains is Nagayu Onsen. This peaceful hot spring town features some unique baths. Try soaking in the naturally carbonated water of Lamune Onsen and watch hundreds of bubbles cover your skin.

How to get there: Nagayu Onsen is about a 20–minute taxi ride from Oike spring.

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