





Looking for adventure? How about exploring Kuju?

Towering peaks, volcanic terrain, and pristine landscapes make Kuju an exciting playground for outdoor enthusiasts. This mountain range boasts multiple summits, including Mount Nakadake, the highest peak in Kyushu. At the foot of these mountains, soothing hot springs offer the perfect place to unwind. Whether you're conquering a summit, trekking through vast grasslands, or soaking in the natural springs, Kuju promises a raw and unforgettable experience.





SCENT OF GRASSLANDS, BREATH OF VOLCANOES

Aso-Kuju National Park is one of the Japan's 35 designated national parks. Established on December 4, 1934, this vast protected area spans 76,289 hectares, stretching from one of the largest volcanoes in the world—Mount Aso in Kumamoto Prefecture—to the magnificent Kuju Range and the striking twin volcanoes of Mount Yufu and Mount Tsurumi in Oita Prefecture.

Volcanic activity has left its mark on the Kuju Mountain Range, crafting a landscape of striking contrasts. To the north and south of the range are the Kuju and Handa Plateaus, which are expansive grasslands shaped by ash from past eruptions. The region also features numerous land depressions and abundant springs, giving rise to remarkable wetlands, such as Tadewara Marsh and Bogatsuru Marsh. The striking contrast that these towering volcanoes, sweeping grasslands, and serene wetlands create is truly awe-inspiring.





GEOLOGICAL HIGHLIGHTS



THE MAIN PEAKS

The Kuju Mountain Range is splendid as you make it to the highest point on Kyushu. Here are the main peaks.

Mount Kuju (1,787 m)

Mount Nakadake (1,791 m) - Kyushu's highest peak

Mount Inaboshi (1,774 m)

Mount Hossho (1,762 m)

Mount Mimata (1,745 m)

Mount Taisen (1,786 m) - famous for autumn foliage

Mount Kitataisen (1,706 m)

Mount Hijjidake (1,643 m) - famous for Miyama Kirishima azalea . .

olossoms

TADEWARA MARSH

Tadewara Marsh is approximately 38 hectares in area at an elevation of about 1,000 meters above sea level. It is believed to have been created through volcanic activity around 15,000 to 6,300 years ago. Tadewara Marsh is one of Japan's largest transitional moors, formed by marsh sediment and pebbles from the Shiramizu River that runs through the marshland. There is a great deal of peat moss, and also rare flora and fauna, which led the area to be recognized as a "Wetland of International Importance" under the Ramsar Convention in 2005.





BOGATSURU MARSH

Surrounded by mountain peaks, Bogatsuru Marsh is located almost in the center of the Kuju Mountain Range at an elevation of about 1,201 meters above sea level. The high altitude of the marsh gives rise to a unique wetland environment inhabited by rare grasses and plants, endemic aquatic insects, and wild birds. Bogatsuru is considered a "Wetland of International Importance" under the Ramsar Convention. Numerous conservation activities have been undertaken by scientists and trained volunteers, including controlled burnings and elimination of non-native species.

OIKE SPRING

Oike Spring is located at the foot of Mt. Kurodake in the Kuju Range. Mt. Kurodake is covered entirely in native forest. Several walking paths have been maintained in the area around Oike Spring for you to enjoy the perfect forest-bathing experience. It is here that you can see spring water gushing up at a rate of 14 tons a minute. The spring water is clear blue and stays at 12°C all year round. This water's reputation draws visitors from near and far, many making the journey with containers in hand to collect and savor the spring water's refreshing taste at home.



CULTURE



Each spring, the grasslands of the Kuju region are burned in a practice called "noyaki," carried out by locals for over a thousand years. This controlled burning prevents the land from becoming forested, preserving pastures and silver grass fields, while promoting the growth of native plants and maintaining the region's unique landscape. The tradition is upheld by local experts, and volunteers as young as high school students, who learn to carry on this important practice.

NATURE

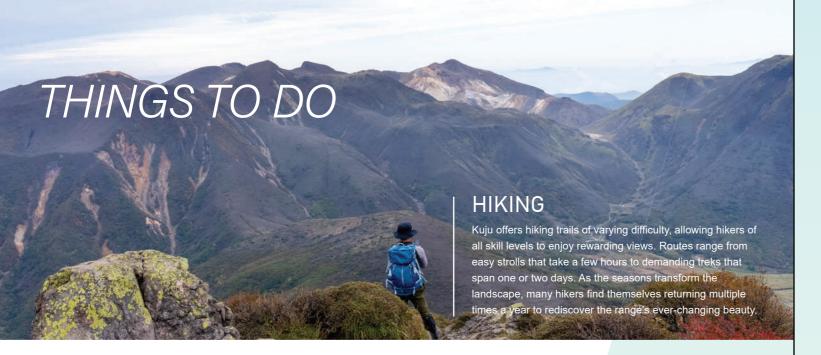
This region boasts a rich and diverse ecosystem, where visitors can observe a vibrant array of plants and wildlife that change with the seasons. Among them is higotai (Echinops setifer), a rare and endangered species that blooms in striking azure blue during August and September. This remarkable flower has existed since the Ice Age, making its conservation even more crucial. To safeguard the region's precious natural heritage, local communities are actively engaged in conservation efforts, ensuring that the area's beauty and biodiversity continue to thrive for generations to come.







Chestnut tiger butterfly



NATURE WATCHING

The Kuju Mountain Range is a paradise for nature lovers, where each season unveils a rich display of native flora and fauna. Time your visit just right, and you might be lucky enough to spot rare, endangered species in bloom. Be sure to stop by the Chojabaru Visitor Center for useful insights for your observations.





CAMPING

There are several campsites throughout Kuju that will let you sleep out in the middle of nature. Stargazing is amazing in this area. Amenities will vary from campsite to campsite, with options ranging from simple free spots to luxurious glamping experiences. Be mindful that some sites will expect you to bring your own tent and camping gear; also, some that provide rental gear will require advance reservations.

HOT SPRINGS

Thanks to the region's volcanic activity, the Kuju Mountain Range is home to a wealth of natural hot springs. Around the base of the mountains, you will find a variety of accommodations, from hotels and ryokan inns to campsites, many of which offer hot spring baths for overnight guests as well as for day visitors. The hot springs here vary from sulfur springs to sodium sulfate springs, each offering unique therapeutic benefits, making them an ideal way to unwind after a day of hiking or exploring nature.





HORSEBACK RIDING

You can experience horseback riding with an instructor for yourself at several establishments. Seeing the world from the saddle will give you a new angle on the beautiful vistas of the Kuju Mountain Range.

OPEN-AIR THEATER TAO-NO-OKA

The Drum TAO group has spent three decades performing traditional Japanese instruments for audiences all around the world. Here in their hometown, you can see them perform on an open-air stage named "Skyward Stage" with the unbeatable backdrop of the Kuju Mountain Range.



KUJU FLOWER PARK

This spacious 49-acre park features about 3 million flower plants of more than 501 different varieties that bloom one after another for most of the year, except winter. Within the park's grounds there is also a greenhouse which exhibits tropical plants, as well as restaurants serving dishes that feature local produce, and glamping tents for overnight stays.

KUJU FOREST PARK SKIING GROUND

Open during winter, Kuju Forest Park Skiing Ground is great for avoiding the northern crowds. Didn't bring your snow gear? No problem! This resort lets you rent anything you could possibly need. Instructors are also available for a fee upon reservation. And this resort is also the place for many skiing and snowboarding competitions in Kyushu.





HIKING SAFETY

We hope you enjoy the Kuju Mountain Range safely. Many hiking accidents happen due to poor preparation. Be sure to check maps, weather conditions, and the estimated duration of each hiking course, and pack all necessary items. Choose a course that matches your ability. Trailheads have post boxes for hiking registration forms, which help in case of emergencies. You can also register online.





CONSERVATION

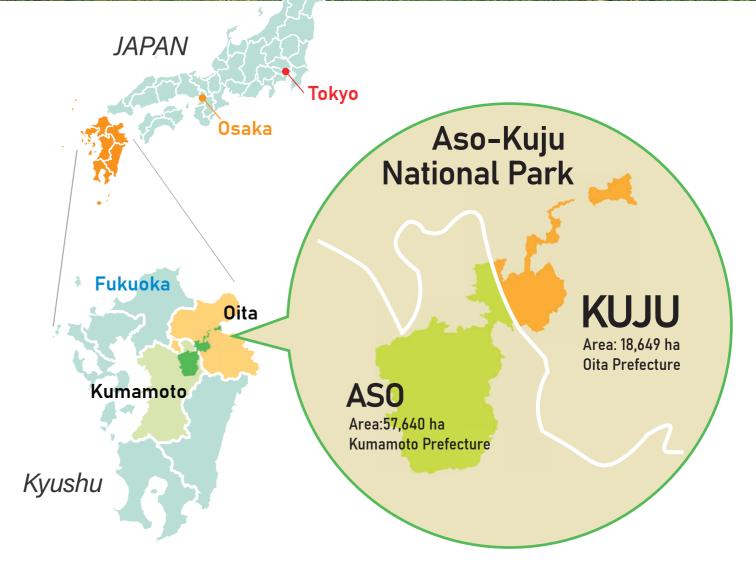
The local community is dedicated to preserving the area for future generations, and you can contribute by following the golden rule: Leave it as you found it. Equip trekking poles with rubber tips to protect trails, stay on designated paths, respect wildlife and plants, handle fire responsibly, and take all trash home.

EXPLORE OITA JAPAN

Oita Prefecture's official tourism channel on VouTube
Video information on various attractions in Oita Prefecture







Access

