

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 Shunro Hori <hori-syunro@pref.oita.lg.jp>, the Head of the International Policy Division in the Oita Prefecture Planning Promotion Department

To all those with ties to Oita Prefecture, those who studied abroad in Oita in the past, those who came for work or inspections, and to those who have an interest in Oita, from this point onward, we will be delivering you the the best of Oita's news each month. We want to prioritize our network with you, and we ask for your cooperation in strengthening this connection.

Visitors from Overseas

Tourism in Oita Prefecture during Golden Week 2016 was affected by the recent earthquakes, with the amount of visitors to tourist facilities down 52.6% compared to last year, and the amount of overnight visitors down by 64.7%. But Oita was able to promote its vitality and charms through the arrival of a cruise ship and a foreign study group to the prefecture in May, as well as through visits from the European media and the Singapore Visit Japan ambassador.



Taiwanese High Schoolers Visit a Local High School

Sixteen students from Taiwan's Juang Jing Vocational High School visited Hita Mikuma Prefectural Senior High School, experienced a cooking class, and, as they received a welcome performance from the Hita Mikuma Guitar & Mandolin Club, relations between the groups flourished.



Three Cruise Ships Have Docked

A large cruise ship weighing 108,865 tons called "Golden Princess" has docked in Beppu. A total of 2,152 people from 24 different countries and regions, including Hong Kong, Taiwan, Thailand, and the U.S., were aboard. Roughly 1,500 people in 40 buses went sightseeing in Beppu and Yufu City. Afterwards, a ship weighing 69,130 tons called "Legend of the Seas" as well as a ship from Asia's largest passenger ship class weighing 137,276 tons called "Voyager of the Seas" also docked and welcomed a large number of tourists.

Inns and Hotels in Beppu City and Yufu City (as of 30th May)

Of the 112 institutions affiliated with the Beppu Ryokan & Hotel Association, 111 are currently operating.

Of the 91 institutions affiliated with the Yufuin Onsen Ryokan Association, 82 are currently operating. Information taken from the Tourism Oita homepage:

<http://www.visit-oita.jp/news/detail/43>
<http://www.visit-oita.jp/news/detail/42>



A History Lesson from Oita Prefecture

During the Second World War, the Usa region was home to a Naval Air Base, and many young men went to Usa to train as pilots. On a sunny day in May, I took a trip to the Usa Peace Museum to find out more about the history of the area during the war.

The museum is a small building nestled in the scenic countryside. It houses many objects owned and used by the pilots during the war, as well as displaying information and videos. Most strikingly, the museum is home to a full-scale model

of a Mitsubishi A6M “Zero” fighter plane, used in the film “The Eternal Zero” (2013).

Despite its modest size, the museum is fascinating and informative, and the staff were eager to answer any questions that I had. But the museum provides more than just facts and figures. Although

I have read history books and seen many films about pilots during the war, the personal objects displayed in the museum brought home to me how the war had affected the lives of so many citizens of Oita. Particularly, seeing the sheer size of a “Zero” plane, and sitting in a mock-up of the cockpit (it was very cramped!) was a very different experience to watching a film or reading a book.

The Usa Peace Museum is a wonderful resource for anyone who wants to learn more the history of Oita Prefecture during the war, as well as a fun day out for aviation enthusiasts.



Fighter plane model at the Usa Peace Museum

I’ve only been to Hiji once, so this month I decided to return to Hiji in order to visit Hiji

Castle. Hiji Castle was originally constructed in the Edo period and was later restored in the Heisei period. According to words from a very friendly guide, the Meiji government passed an order decreeing the destruction of castles. Before she told me this, I had no idea that this was the reason why castle remains are so much more common than castles.

Enter into the northeast turret of the castle ruins and you will come across a small museum. If you gaze out of the thin spaces that make up the castle’s windows, you can tell if an enemy is drawing near, just as in olden days. Therefore, there was no chance of a surprise attack. This was probably a useful feature in the time after the Warring States period. Currently, part of the former castle grounds is now an elementary school, and, as elementary school students are typically not enemies, this feature is probably no longer important.

However, not everything changes. Beyond the elementary school, you can still see the natural beauty of Beppu Bay, the same as always.



Beppu Bay from the Hiji Castle Ruins

The 18th Beppu Argerich Music Festival a Great Success!

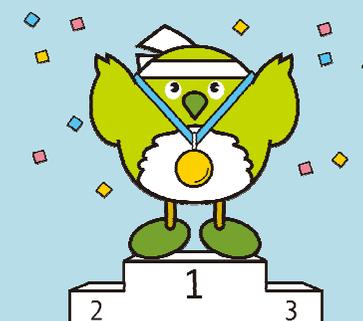
The 18th Beppu Argerich Music Festival was held from the 1st to the 26th of May. While there had been some doubts as to whether the festival would go ahead due to the earthquakes in Kumamoto, this year many people attended the festival, which centered around visiting festival general manager Argerich and the idea that “music can provide the spirit with tranquility.” The theme of this year’s festival was “Peace and Music,” and the festival programme was filled with a wide-variety of performances such as a performance from the Hiroshima Symphony Orchestra, the first co-performance in Japan of Argerich and Vadim Repin (violinist), and a special concert at “Shiiki presents Argerich’s Haus,” which was built last year. Furthermore, Her Majesty the Empress attended Kioi Sinfonietta’s Tokyo Opera City Performance, which was a great honour to the festival.

Even though this year’s festival has finished, there are plans to continue to hold concerts at “Shiiki presents Argerich’s Haus,” featuring distinguished musicians from Japan and abroad, which we hope you can look forward to.

For more information, please go to ■ <http://www.argerich-mf.jp/haus/>



Performance in Tokyo on May 17



New Records for Asia & Japan Set in Japan Para Athletics

At the 27th Japan Para Athletics Championship, athlete Maya Nakanishi (Prefectural Disabled Track Association), whose hometown is Shonai of Yufu City, created a new top record for Asia at 5 m 51 cm and seized a victory in the running long jump (T44). Furthermore, athlete Chika Sakamoto (Prefectural Disabled Track Association) broke records in Japan in the women’s shot-put (F55 / 3 km) at 4 m 39 cm as well as discus (F55 / 1 km) at 4 m 8 cm. Jun Hiromichi (Puma Japan), a resident of Oita City, earned victories in both the men’s 100 m and 400 m (T53).

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Editors’ Note

We are very excited to be publishing the first English language edition of What’s Up, OITA! and we hope for everyone’s continued support as we challenge ourselves to create and translate more content.

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