

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 Mitsuru Tokuno <tokuno-mitsuru@pref.oita.lg.jp>, the Head of the International Policy Division in the Oita Prefecture Planning Promotion Department

People who are not currently living in a region but were otherwise raised there, have a work history there, or some other enduring connection are known as “Kankei Jinko,” or related populations. Oita Prefecture considers the prefectural associations, international students, former residents of the prefectures, and all those who receive “What’s Up, Oita!” to be very valuable “Kankei Jinko.” We will continue to work hard to gather and deliver information so that CIRs, ALTs, international students, and others can contribute to regional vitalization as fans of Oita, even after they return to their home countries.

Introducing the Agricultural, Forestry, and Fishery Products of Oita Exported Around the World!

Oita’s abundant agricultural, forestry, and fishery products are being exported all over the world. Allow us to introduce the primary goods exported, their destinations, and the prefecture’s efforts to promote exports.

The major Oita exports everyone is most familiar with are Hita pears, which are popular gifts during the Mid-Autumn Festival and Lunar New Year (exported to Hong Kong, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore), the “Kanta-kun” high sugar content sweet potato (exported to China, Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore), shiitake mushrooms, which Oita leads the nation in for quality and quantity (exported to Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, Vietnam, Singapore, Australia, and the E.U.), farmed amberjack fish, which Oita ranks second for number bred in the country (exported to the U.S., Canada, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, the E.U.), and Oita Bungo Beef (exported to Macao, Taiwan, Thailand, the U.S.) which shined as the best in Japan at a competition held once every five years.

One part of our export promotion efforts is holding restaurant fairs in America, our biggest export location for beef, and advertising the charms of the prefecture’s foodstuffs, primarily Oita Bungo Beef, via social media. After Taiwan lifted its 16 year ban on imported Japanese beef, we promptly began to export Oita Bungo Beef there and help support specialty shops. After Vietnam lifted its ban on imported pears, we held a Hita Pear Fair at a department store in Ho Chi Minh City and began exporting there in earnest. Additionally, we began exporting Kanta-kun to Malaysia and mikan mandarin oranges to Sakhalin in the Russian Far East as well as taking part in activities to increase the number of locations we export to. Therefore, we believe your chances of seeing a product made in Oita in your region or country are increasing. If you come across one, we’d be delighted if you bought it and supported our export promotion.

<Oita Brand Goods Promotion Division>

The Beppu Experience

Something smells good. Or, rather, everything smells good.

That is the Oita Fragrance Museum is a nutshell. (And if you replace “smells” with “tastes,” you’ve got the gist of Jigoku Mushi Workshop in Kannawa.)

We went on a quest for hands-on experiences in Beppu this month, and our first stop was the Oita Fragrance Museum. It’s about a 10 minute walk from Beppu Daigaku Station and the streets on the way to the museum are filled with university students and cute cafes.

Each floor of the three story museum is filled with information and fragrances. The exhibits do a fantastic job of explaining the history of perfume, the sources of different scents from around the world, and how various cultures used different perfumes throughout history. (We were even able to explore models of rooms in upper class residences from different time periods!)

The exhibits have English titles although the main text is written primarily in Japanese (and occasionally Korean). There are many foreign visitors to the museum, and there are currently plans to increase the multilingual accessibility of the museum. However, you don’t have to know Japanese to enjoy the museum. One of the museum’s selling points is being able to smell perfumes, or their raw materials, as you wander about the museum.

There is an entire room filled with famous fragrances from designers like Chanel, Givenchy, Armani, and Dior. (I think my favorite was “Trésor” by Lancôme.)

After completing a tour of the museum, we attended a workshop to make our own fragrance. The workshop had both an instructor and multilingual reference materials. First, we picked our perfume bottles and labels and took a seat as our instructor explained the composition of perfumes. We chose from a variety of top, middle, and end notes for our perfumes and measured our preferred 30mL blend of perfume into our bottles.



After we finished with the museum, we made the 20 minute walk to the Jigoku Mushi Workshop in Kannawa.

There's a grocery store situated between the museum and the workshop, so we stopped there in order to buy our own food supplies to cook. (Ingredients are also available for purchase, in addition to a general ticket for using the steam, but we wanted to design our own meal.) We purchased onions, Nappa cabbage, pork, bean sprouts, frozen xiao long bao, and a cheesecake to split for dessert.

The Jigoku Mushi Workshop is incredibly popular with tourists. On the one hand, this means multilingual support is plentiful. On the other hand, this also means that long waiting times are not unusual. Fortunately, we were able to secure a table and a spot for steaming after only a twenty minute wait.

The staff diced our vegetables and gave them back to us in a steamer separated according to how long each ingredient would take to cook. A separate staff member explained how to lower the steamer into the steam and gave us a timer set to 30 minutes.

After 7 minutes had passed, our xiao long bao would be ready. We returned once the timer had reached 23 minutes to take it out (again with help from the staff member). As we ate the xiao long bao, we waited another 7 minutes for the bean sprouts, pork, and cabbage to finish cooking. Finally, once all 30 minutes on the timer had expired, we retrieved our onions.

The food was excellent! The steam cooked it thoroughly and the natural flavors of the ingredients shined. Since steaming is such a healthy way to cook food, we didn't even feel guilty as we ate our cheesecake afterward~



Notes: Entry to the Oita Fragrance Museum is ¥500 per adult. The perfume making workshop costs ¥2,200 per person. Large groups should make reservations in advance. Prices at the Jigoku Mushi Workshop vary depending on the size of the pot you use. However, steaming a small sized amount of your own food will cost ¥510 per person.

Editor's Note

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It's mighty cold here in Oita, and the flu is making its rounds again this year. I hope everyone reading this is finding ways to stay warm and stay healthy!