Oita marks an incredible fourth year in London!

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The beautiful western prefecture of Oita is Japan's spa capital. Producing more lovely, revitalising hot-spring water than anywhere else in Japan – perhaps even the world – it's a haven for holidaymakers who want a totally refreshing experience, and makes for a perfect extension to any vacation in Japan.

But beyond its world-class spa culture, Oita is a place of art, history, natural beauty, cuisine and an incredibly friendly welcome. We want to share all of that with you – so to that end, the Oita Prefectural Government set up a dedicated tourist desk in London four years ago, to help the travel industry discover more about this special part of Japan. We're still going strong here in the UK, and we're even growing our presence in France, so please feel free to get in touch in either French or English if you require assistance. And now, here are a few things you should know about our delightful prefecture.

Hot springs in Beppu and Yufuin

Sandwiched between the mountains and the sea on the idyllic western island of Kyushu, Oita Prefecture is best-known for its *onsen* – that's Japanese for hot spring baths. The people of Japan simply love a dip in a naturally warm bath, and Oita pumps out hundreds of millions of litres of mineral-rich healing water every year. It's perfect to treat aches, pains and many other ailments, and there's also an incredible range of beauty and skincare treatments available.

The seaside town of Beppu is one of the larger cities in Oita, and it's a sight to behold. The mountains come very close to the shoreline, and the city is built up into the hills where there's so much geothermal activity that clouds of steam billow out into the air from natural steam vents all around town. Beppu specialises in several styles of onsen, including the unique black sand bath, where you lie flat covered in naturally warm sand to clear your pores and leave you feeling amazing.

Nearby Yufuin, on the other hand, is the beating cultural heart of Oita. This is a pretty town of art galleries, chic cafes and trendy boutiques. It hosts several major art and literature festivals every year, and it's nestled at the foot of Mt Yufu, so it's great for setting off to explore the wilderness. It also has an exquisite onsen culture, and many people will stay here for days, soaking in the atmosphere and the minerals!

Tour de Kyushu

The Tour de Kyushu is a new annual road-bike race, which will be held across the island for the first time in October 2023 as part of the UCI Asia Tour. The race will run through Oita during its third and final stage; the highlight of this section is a high-speed sprint on a descent of 700m before circling around the picturesque centre of the town of Hita.

Farm Stay

We love a Farm Stay – a cosy night spent in the house of a welcoming host family at a range of charming working farms. This style of green tourism is very popular in Japan, and it began over 20 years ago in the city of Usa, right here in Oita Prefecture.

Noson Mimpaku, as it is called here, is an entire holiday philosophy. Visitors stay overnight at the homes of ordinary farmers to experience their authentic lifestyle, attracting the people of all ages and nationalities to animal farms, fisheries, mushroom farms, tofu producers and many more besides. Guests learn about local produce, discover the environment, and even learn to cook delicious meals using fresh-picked ingredients. Oita stands out because it offers visitors unique local experiences – whether that's at the seaside, on the river, in the highlands or even on a remote island. It's the perfect way to find a spiritual home here.

Overnight Osaka Ferry

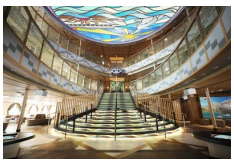
Oita is very accessible from mainland Japan: you can fly into Oita Airport, get a train from Hiroshima to Fukuoka, or travel in luxury on an overnight ferry departing from Osaka or Kobe. This is a fabulous way to travel – and cost-efficient too, as it doubles up as one-night accommodation!

We recommend a cruise back to the mainland on an overnight voyage from Beppu to the lively city of Osaka. You'll spend the night in a spacious deluxe cabin, waking bright and early ahead of the next leg

of your journey, wherever it may lead. Japan's first LNG-fuelled ferry plies this route – dubbed the Sunflower Kurenai, this green cruise ship set sail for the first time this January, and Sunflower Murasaki followed in April 2023.

This has been just a taste of what's on offer in Oita! We at the Oita desk in London would be only too glad to hear from you with any questions or requests, so please feel free to get in touch!







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