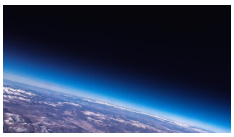
The Oita Tourism Desk celebrates its third year in London

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Media:





















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What do you imagine when you think of Oita? Perhaps you remember the 2019 Rugby World Cup, when tens of thousands of British fans made Japanese friends for a lifetime? Perhaps you know it better as the best hot spring resort in the world.

Those are both wonderful details – but there's far more to Oita than friendly locals and fantastic onsen! From stunning natural beauty and sensational sightseeing spots to fascinating cultural experiences, there's so much to see and do in this historic part of western Japan. We would love to share all of Oita's wonders with you. Three years ago now, Tourism Oita set up a dedicated tourist desk in London with just this goal in mind, and it's still going strong.

In March, we held a lunch seminar to present this plucky prefecture to British travel agencies and the media, with great success. Now that coronavirus regulations have begun to wind down, we aim to provide yet more useful information – we hope that everyone can experience the unique charms of Oita after so long without overseas holidays!

Kawazu cherry blossoms on the Youra Peninsula

There are many famous cherry blossom spots that everyone should visit when they come to Japan. Tsukumi City is one such spot in Oita, where more than 5,000 cherry blossom trees of the early-flowering Kawazu variety been planted since 2005. Characterised by their deep pink colour, Kawazu cherry blossoms come into bloom between early and mid February. We particularly love the trees which bloom all along the Youra Peninsula coast, which contrast so beautiful against the azure blues of the sea and sky.

Even better, Kawazu blossoms are the perfect way to see cherry blossoms outside the high season – most of the blossom trees around the rest of Japan come into bloom from mid-March to early May, and the hotels often book up years ahead of time!

Discover food culture in Usuki – the UNESCO-certified creative city

Usuki, in the north-east of Oita, is famous for two things: the ancient stone Buddhas carved into the hills nearby, and delicious soy sauce! In recognition of the latter, Usuki has been certified by UNESCO as a "Creative City of Gastronomy", in particular for its innovations in organic farming, fermentation and brewing. All sorts of tangy Japanese treats are made here alongside that fragrant soy sauce, including tasty miso and fabulous sake.

Unusually for Japan, the local council even produces its own kind of ripe and fertile compost as a by-product of all this fermentation, which it shares with the producers in the area. This vibrant soil-making environment is doing wonders for local efforts in sustainability, and the whole city is now focusing on truly green production efforts.

Culture City of East Asia 2022

Oita Prefecture has been selected as Japan's City of Culture in East Asia for 2022, part of a trilateral cultural exchange between Japan, China and South Korea. Each of the three nations selects one of their cities every year, aiming to boost cultural integration and understanding amongst their citizens.

Oita itself has always had a unique culture even for the rest of Japan, and a particular willingness to accept and blend with other peoples – including early adoption of Buddhism when it first came to Japan, as well as Christianity, which was introduced in the 16th century. Oita City now aims to foster a cosmopolitan 21st century culture to revitalize the whole region and lay deep cultural roots all over.

What's more, Oita will be bursting with great things to see and do throughout 2022, including concerts, talks, art exhibitions and festivals.

Asia's first horizontal spaceport

Oita Airport in Kunisaki City is within easy reach of the tourist hubs of Beppu and Yufuin (which happen

to be the world's leading hot spring resorts!). And in the very near future it will also become the first horizontal spaceport in Asia, acting as a takeoff-and-landing site for rocket-mounted airplanes – perhaps even from this year! Expectations are high that it will become a major base for the burgeoning space industry – and it may not be long before we can hop on a jet off the planet from Oita!

USUKI
UNESCO CREATIVE CITY OF GASTRONOMY

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