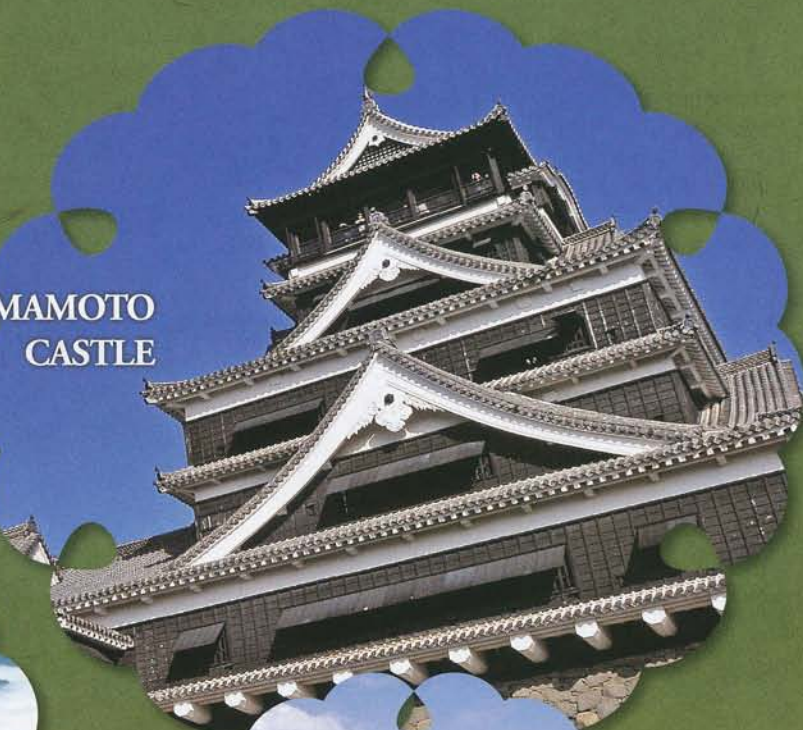


KUMAMOTO | TOURISM GUIDE BOOK



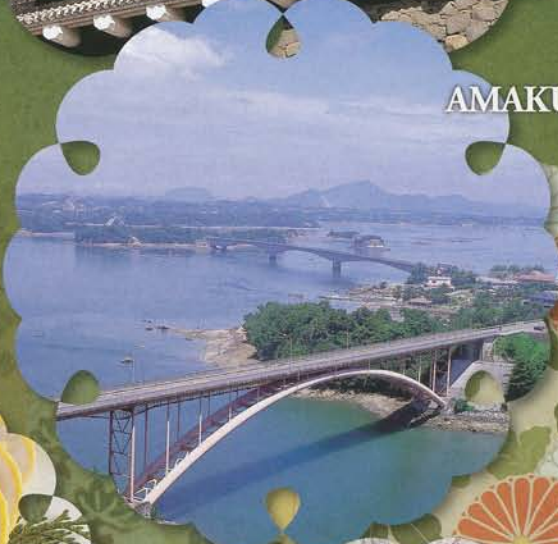
KUMAMOTO
CASTLE



ASO



AMAKUSA



KARASHI
RENKON



SEIWA BUNRAKU



Experiencing Nature

Enraptured with Dynamic Nature

Filled with noteworthy sites, namely Mt. Aso, location of the world's largest caldera, and Amakusa's clear blue sea spreading before you. Follow your curiosity as you explore the area.

[ASO]

The prominent tourist resort of Aso, the land of fire and symbol of Kumamoto, is visited annually by more than 18 million people. The world's largest caldera is found in Kumamoto, where you can relax in the spas, challenge yourself at a variety of sports such as paragliding and hot-air ballooning, or enjoy the many other amusements found at this delightful trove of fun and relaxation.



Kusasenri (C-1)

A great grassy plain reaching to the northern base of Mt. Eboshi-dake. Stroll the circumference atop a horse which can be rented. The Aso Volcano Museum along with several restaurants are also part of the scenery.



◀ Aso Nakadake Craters (C-1)

A dynamic spectacle, the circumference of which is 4 kilometers, at a depth of 150 meters, and overlooking the seven craters. Lava temperature flowing from the crater reaches up to 1,000 - 1,200°C. Referred to as "The First Crater", this magnificent site pours forth white fuming smoke, continuing its volcanic activity through the years. Lava poured throughout the area has left it an entirely different world of no vegetation.



[AMAKUSA]

Amakusa, home to more than 120 islands in every size, is a picturesque place of scenic beauty facing both the East China Sea and the Shiranui Sea. The area is also popular as a drive course where you can enjoy fresh and abundant marine products, spas, marine sports, fishing and much more.



The West Coast of Amakusa (A-2~A-3)

The west coast of Amakusa displays a landscape of wild, masculine scenery. The mysterious rock scraped by the raging waves of the East China Sea, Jusan-botoke Point where a number of cave mouths are spread out, Jusan-botoke (13-Buddha) Creek, a national designated natural monument are some of the scenic masterpieces. The setting sun sinking into the ocean here is chosen as one of the 100 famous sunsets of Japan.



Dolphin Watching (A-2)

Some 300 wild dolphins live in the seas around Tsushi-shima Island of Amakusa. The dolphins are present all year round, a glimpse of which you can be assured of seeing 40 minutes from shore by boat.



Five Bridges of Amakusa and Amakusa Matsushima Island (B-2)

The Pearl Line, or the Five Bridges of Amakusa, connect main Kyushu with the Amakusa Islands. The picturesque scenery, replicating a miniature landscape garden, of Amakusa Matsushima can be fully enjoyed from the top of these bridges.



[TAMANA/YAMAGA/KIKUCHI]

Various ancient tombs as well as historical spots are scattered throughout the entire district of Kikuchi River. Spas and numerous leisure facilities are also found here.



Ultraman Land (B-1)

Anything about Ultraman can be found at this theme park dedicated to him and his family. (Built in Greenland.)

Greenland (B-1)

Over 80 attractions to ride and enjoy at one of Japan's largest amusement parks. Equipped with drinking, eating and lodging facilities, this facility becomes an excellent place to stay over for a few days!



History Park Kikuchi Castle (B-1)

An ancient mountain castle constructed by the Imperial Court of Yamato with its prestige. Located on the grounds are an octagonal tower, rice granary, ancient buildings that are still standing and excavated tunnels.

Kikuchi Gorge (C-1)

A gorge in the premises of the source of Kikuchi River, pride of all Kyushu as the most beautiful gorge in the region. It is surrounded by virgin forests where trees such as oak, chinquapin, maple, etc., grow luxuriantly. The deep v-shaped valleys display spectacular sights, refreshing to the senses, following a line of waterfalls displayed in various sizes.

[CENTRAL KUMAMOTO]

Kumamoto City, boasting a population of 670,000 people, has prospered as the seat for the prefectural government of Kumamoto. In addition to its modern city appearance, one cannot help but sense the peculiar sentimental atmosphere in the air brought about by the remains found throughout the city of the castle town it once was.



Suizenji Jojuen Park (B-2)

A panoramic Momoyama-type landscape garden, constructed close to 300 years ago by Prince Tadatoshi Hosokawa, a feudal lord. Carp swim in a pond filled with clean spring water. A grassy hill modeled after the old-time fifty-three stages on the Tokaido highway, a mountain fashioned after Mt. Fuji and more artistic works of nature are beautifully arranged here.



Tram Car in Downtown of Kumamoto City (B-2)

The city tram is convenient and fun for taking a tour of Kumamoto City. This particular tram's extraordinarily low floor made its first introduction to Japan here, giving the impression of gliding effortlessly around the city.

[YATSUSHIRO / MINAMATA] [KUMA]

Enjoy to your heart's content the feeling and sports of the ocean, mountain and river. Join the throngs who make their way here in the fall to view the spectacular sight of scarlet-tinged leaves.



Utase-bune (B-3)

A type of trawnet fishing seen in the Sea of Shiranui. This particular method of fishing which completely depends on the winds and waves is familiar amongst the locals for carrying on the area's poetic charm through the ages to the present. Tourists can also take part in a specially set-up *Utase-bune*.

► Kuma River

Rapid Shooting (B-3)

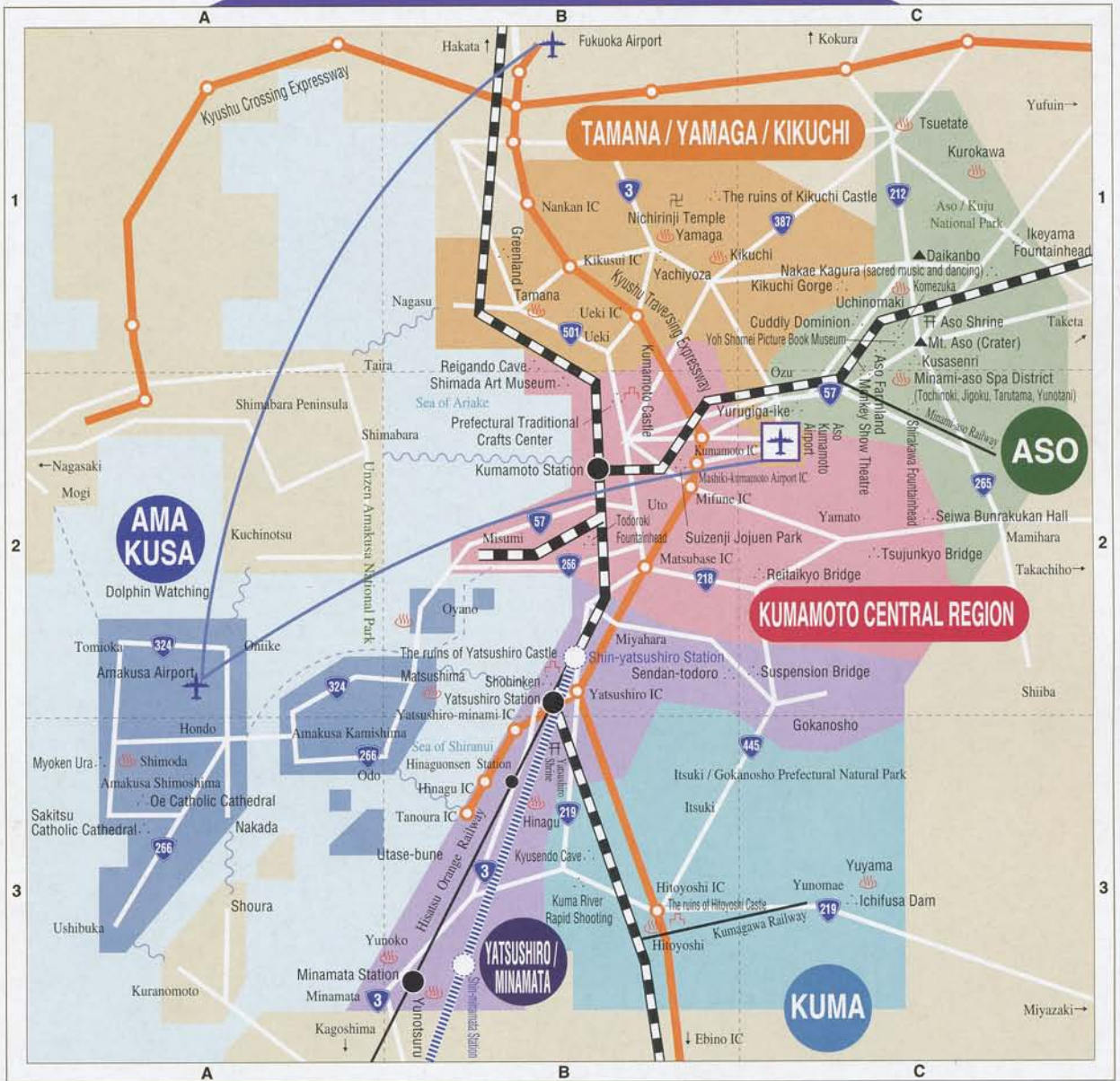
A thrilling boat ride traveling downstream for a distance of 19 kilometers on the rapid currents of Kuma River, one of the fastest flowing rivers in Japan.



◀ Scarlet-tinged Leaves of Gokanoshō (B-3)

Gokanoshō is still considered an unexplored region to this day. The sheer mountains displaying their autumn tints is a site well-worth seeing.

ACCESS MAP

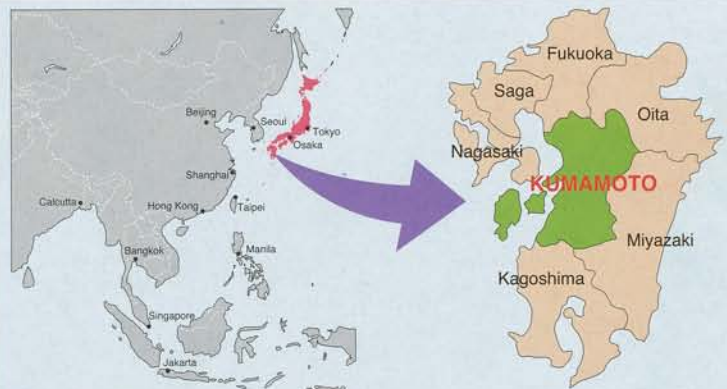


Legend — National Highway — Expressway — JR — Sea Route — Aviation — Shinkansen

How to Use the Map

Locations are indicated next to each name. Find the location you are looking for in the frame at the horizontal numeric and vertical alphabetic cross-point.

(Example) Location: Kusasenri (Line C - Column 1)



Kumamoto Prefectural Gov. Tourism & International Exchange Division

TEL : +81-96-333-2334
 FAX : +81-96-381-3343
 URL : <http://kumanago.jp/>

Kumamoto Prefectural Tourist Federation
 TEL : +81-96-382-2660
 FAX : +81-96-382-2663

Domestic Flights

Tokyo (Haneda)	→ Kumamoto (Aso Kumamoto)	1 hour 35 minutes (16 flights/day)
Osaka (Itami)	→ Kumamoto (Aso Kumamoto)	1 hour 05 minutes (8 flights/day)
Nagoya (Chubu)	→ Kumamoto (Aso Kumamoto)	1 hour 15 minutes (4 flights/day)
Nagoya (Komaki)	→ Kumamoto (Aso Kumamoto)	1 hour 25 minutes (1 flight/day)
Okinawa	→ Kumamoto (Aso Kumamoto)	1 hour 30 minutes (1 flight/day)
Amakusa	→ Kumamoto (Aso Kumamoto)	20 minutes (1 flight/day)
Fukuoka	→ Amakusa	35 minutes (3 flights/day)
Mt. Fuji Shizuoka	→ Kumamoto (Aso Kumamoto)	(1 flight/day)
Kobe	→ Kumamoto (Aso Kumamoto)	(1 flight/day)

International Flights

Seoul	→ Kumamoto	1 hour 35 min (3 flights/week)
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HISTORY

Certain things remain unchanged.

Dramas equal to the amount of history are present. Encounters to stir up romance, products of history that have remained in Kumamoto to fascinate all who visit.

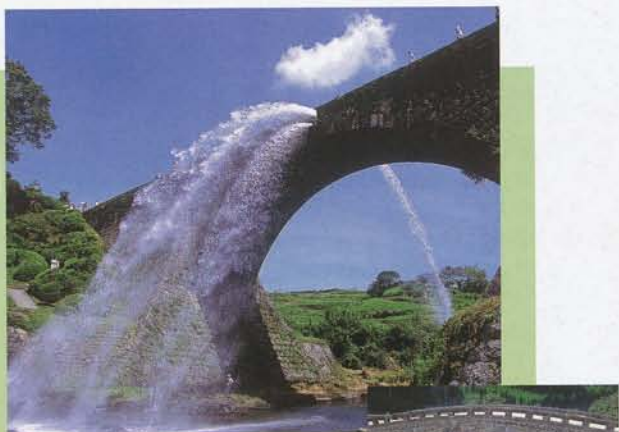


Kumamoto Castle (B-2)

Kumamoto Castle is considered to be one of the three most famed castles in Japan, bustling with numerous tourists throughout the year. It was constructed by Kato Kiyomasa in 1607 who spent 7 long years to complete it. One of its famous features is the *Musha-gaeshi*, a device invented to prevent ninjas or external enemies from invading the castle during times of war. Moats surrounding the castle utilize natural rivers, and the long walls and splendid stone walls have remained standing to this day on these extensive premises with a circumference of 12 kilometers.

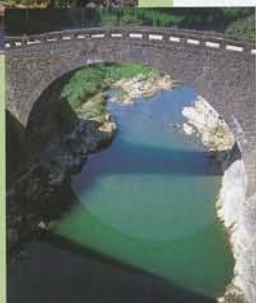
Miyamoto Musashi and the Reigando Cave (B-1)

Miyamoto Musashi, a great swordsman, is famous for his duel on Island Ganryu against Sasaki Kojiro. He came to Kumamoto at the invitation of Prince Hosokawa Tadatoshi and spent 5 years here during the sunset of his life. He is said to have been proficient in ink paintings, tea ceremonies and the world of Zen, and wrote his *Gorin-no-sho*, The Book of Five Rings, in Reigando Cave.



Tsujunkyo Bridge (C-2)

Tsujunkyo Bridge is Japan's largest waterway bridge constructed in 1854 by Futa Yasunosuke, chief headman of the village of Yabe, at his own expense in order to convey water to the Shiraito plateau which was suffering a famine due to lack of water. Three water conduits, run through the center of 20 meter high bridge, pumping up the water from the lower ground to higher, utilizing the counter-siphon principle. Water discharged from the central part of the bridge is overwhelming.



Reitaikyo Bridge (C-2)

A stone bridge constructed in 1847, among Japan's largest single arched bridges.

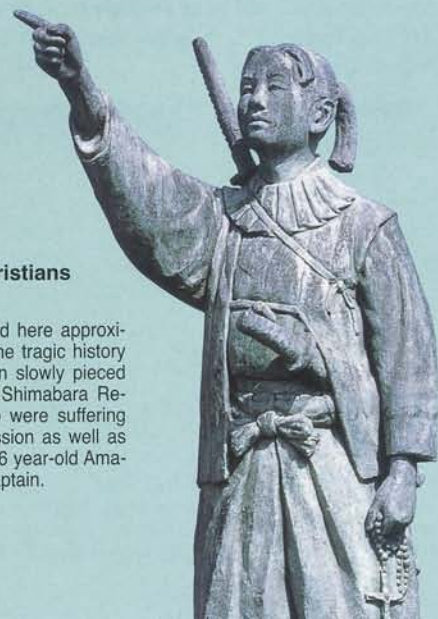


Sakitsu Catholic Cathedral (A-3)

This is a gothic style church built in a fishing village located on the calm sea. The floor of the inside of the church is covered with tatami mats. The altar area was the site where a merciless loyalty test using a plate with a crucifix was enforced in the period when Christianity was prohibited. In addition, the scenery around the church has been selected as one of "the best hundred beaches of Japan".

Amakusa Shiro and Christians (A-2 ~ A-3)

The Christian culture bloomed here approximately 400 years ago, and the tragic history of secret Christians has been slowly pieced together. The Amakusa and Shimabara Revolt began with farmers who were suffering from heavy taxation, suppression as well as crop failures, appointed the 16 year-old Amakusa Shiro as their general captain.



Festivals

Feel the excitement.



◀ Aso Fire Festival (C-1)

This festival signals the coming of spring to Kumamoto as desolate winter fields are set ablaze to hasten the budding of wild grass and exterminate mites. The festival climaxes with the *hifuri* ritual, where countless fires of all sizes are brandished to celebrate the marriage of the gods on the grounds of the Aso Shrine. The festival is held every March.



▲ Yamaga Lantern Festival (B-1)

Women place lanterns made from only Japanese paper and paste on their heads and dance in traditional costumes. Held every year on August 15th and 16th, this Kumamoto summer festival is well known throughout Japan.



◀ Yatsushiro Myoken Festival (B-2)

Originating about 320 years ago, this festival features a dancing "turtle-snake" with the head of a snake and the body of a turtle and is one of the three great festivals of Kyushu. It is held on each year on November 23.

Tradition

Experience the romance of antiquity.



▲ Seiwa Bunraku (C-2)

"Bunraku" is the famous Japanese puppet theater. The Seiwa Bunraku is a form of agricultural folk art passed down in Yamato Town (former Seiwa Village). This Bunraku is thought to have been brought to this area between 1848 and 1853.

▼ Nakae Iwato Kagura (C-1)

The Nakae Iwato Kagura contains elements of the Ise, Izumo, and Takachiho styles of Shinto dance, as well as ancient court music and dance.



Cultural Facilities

Retracing our history.



▲ Prefectural Traditional Crafts Center (B-2)

A wide selection of traditional crafts items, such as bamboo crafts, ceramics, woodwork, metalwork toys and music instruments are displayed here. Erected with the goal of preserving traditional crafts and finding new paths for their development and use, the center displays works from throughout the prefecture, handling sales and custom orders. Special exhibitions are held periodically.

► Shimada Museum (B-2)

The Shimada Museum offers exhibits of historical objects relating to Musashi Miyamoto and other artwork.



▲ Yachiyoza Theater (B-1)

Built in 1910, this small theater for kabuki performances provides an authentic taste of Edo Period traditions and has been designated a national important cultural property. A five-year repair project has restored the theater to its appearance at the time of its golden age.

ONSEN (HOT SPRINGS)

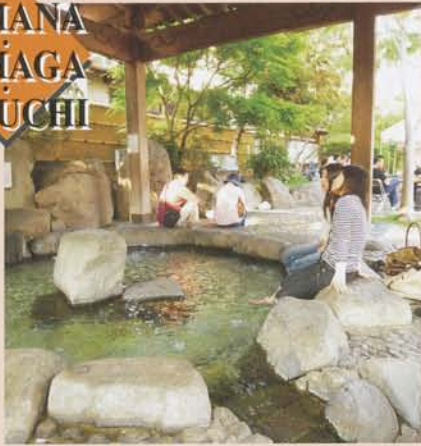
Immersed in Luxurious Time

The abundant volume of subsurface water in Kumamoto causes high quality hot springs to spout out in scattered places within the prefecture. There are many open-air baths, acquiring wide-spread popularity as natural remedy areas that still bear a rustic appearance.

CELEBRATED WATERS

Onsen

TAMANA YAMAGA KIKUCHI



◀ Yamaga Onsen (B-1)

According to history, This onsen is said to have been discovered approximately 800 years ago when deer were found healing their wounds in the mountain at the nearby marshes. The water is abundant and a little alkaline, containing radium, transparent and mild to the skin. Foot baths are set up as well for those who prefer a short visit.



▶ Tamana Onsen (B-1)

Enveloped in ancient roman air, this onsen town can be found amongst the numerous decorated ancient tombs scattered around in colorful brightness.



▲ Kikuchi Onsen (B-1)

The water here is the most beautiful in the prefecture, blessed with close proximity to the Kikuchi Gorge. The hot-spring water quality is mel-low and gentle to the skin.

ASO



▲ Kurokawa Onsen (C-1)

The esthetic air of this onsen town leaves you quietly in time and space. You can tour the different onsen by collecting a wooden bill for bathing.



▼ Uchinomaki Onsen (C-1)

Many literary magnates attracted to the magnificent scenery of Aso have made a visit to this onsen. Several fine pieces of literary work and songs have been based on the setting of this land.



HITOYOSHI MINAMATA



◀ Yunoko Onsen (B-3)

An ocean onsen facing the Sea of Shiranui. You can enjoy a variety of open-air baths, such as a spelunk bath, a cave bath, a observatory bath and many more.

▶ Hitoyoshi Onsen (B-3)

There are many headsprings in this district, and at least 20-some public bath houses standing side-by-side in Hitoyoshi City alone.



CELEBRATED WATERS

▶ Shirakawa Fountainhead (C-2)

The fountainhead of Shirakawa, a first-rate river, boasts a water volume of 60 tons per minute. It is one of the 100 celebrated waters of Japan selected by the Environment Ministry.



▶ Ikeyama Fountainhead (C-1)

Located in a mysterious atmosphere surrounded by giant trees older than 200 years. Selected by the Environment Ministry as one of the 100 celebrated waters of Japan.



EATING PLEASURE

Enjoy the Gourmet of Kumamoto.



Higo Beef

Higo Beef comes from Japanese brown cows raised in Kumamoto. The brown cows graze on the tender grass of the plains of Aso from early summer to autumn. This particular beef is now recognized as a low-fat, healthy meat.

Kuma Shochu

Japanese spirits distilled from good quality rice using crystalline underground water of Kuma River. The drink boasts a peculiar flavor and taste, excellent body that doesn't leave behind the bad effects often associated with drinking.



Kumamoto Ramen

A special character of this ramen is its thick soup made from the boiled bones of pigs and chickens, and fat Chinese noodles. Many specialized ramen can be found in Kumamoto town, each of which has developed its own unique taste.



Basashi

Marbled horse meat eaten by dipping it in soy sauce mixed with ginger or garlic, often so tender. It melts on your tongue.



Taipei-en

A dish that can only be found in Kumamoto. This bean-starch vermicelli dish uses a stock made by boiling chicken bones. It's slightly seasoned, chock full of different ingredients, healthy and liked by many.

Karashi Renkon

Lightly fried lotus root stuffed with spicy mustard. The characteristic crisp and pungent tastes assail one's nose as you prepare to dine on this delicacy.



PRODUCTS OF THE DISTRICT

Souvenirs

Higo Zogan

A craft peculiar to Kumamoto with a 400 year tradition. Various patterns are achieved by striking gold and silver into an iron plate. Pendants and tie-pins are popular items.



Hanatebako

A typical hand-painted box made in the Hitoyoshi district, depicting a stylized camellia motif.



Kutami Uchiwa

Fans made of Japanese paper and covered with persimmon varnish retaining an air of the past. Their gracious colors are unique in the Kutami Uchiwa.



Ceramic Art Articles

Numerous kilns in Kumamoto, such as Kodayaki and Shodaiyaki have a long cherished history of producing fine ceramic art pieces. They were financially supported by the Hosokawa Clan.

Yamaga Toro

A traditional object of craftwork produced in Yamaga, a lantern made out of Japanese paper which has been hand-filtered and glue without using wood or metal pieces.

