

# 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.*

January 2017 No. 08



## **New Year's Greetings to Everyone Connected to Oita Around the World** Yuhiro Hirose, Director of the Oita Prefecture Planning Promotion Department

I'd like to wish everyone a happy new year.

This past April, the Kumamoto Earthquakes physically damaged several sightseeing spots, and false rumors about the effects of the earthquakes damaged other sightseeing spots as well. The number of tourists dropped severely for a period of time, but, as a result of activities like tourism campaigns and Kyushu Reconstruction discounts, tourist numbers began to rise again in September. Reconstruction within the prefecture is continuing steadily.

During this time period, the second chapter of the "SynFlow" Oita's promotional video series, "Let's Go SynFlow Team!" was also released. Oita jumped from #32 to #15 in the nationwide prefectural attractiveness rankings, and our prefecture saw the highest jump in rank of any prefecture on the list. Among other happy news, there was Oita Trinita's victory in the J3 league and reinstatement to the J2 league in one year as well as the registration of "Yama, Hoko, Yatai Float Festivals", including the "Hita Gion Festival Floats", as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritages.

Next year we'll host the National Cultural Festival and the National Disabled Craft and Culture Festival. Two years from now we'll host the Rugby World Cup here in this prefecture. In preparation for the large number of foreign visitors Oita will receive, we'll continue to actively promote Oita's charms to the world.

We ask for your continued support as we develop our hometown.

On that note, in addition to this year being wonderful for everyone, I also hope that everyone remains in good health and full of vitality.



## **Oita Airport's Goes From Foot Bath to Yuzu Citrus Bath**

**The foot baths available at Oita Airport** have water transported daily from Beppu, use only water fresh from the source, and are located in a tub made of Japanese cypress. On the winter solstice on January 21<sup>st</sup>, the foot bath will have yuzu citrus from Innai (in Usa), the biggest yuzu producing town in Oita, floating in it. Approximately 40 individual yuzu will be used, so tourists can enjoy an invigorating fragrance as they experience the foot bath.



# *A Wintertime View of Yufuin*

**When people think of Oita**, the first images that spring to mind are the famous hot springs city Beppu and also Yufuin, an incredibly popular tourist town located an hour's train ride from Oita City. Everything about Yufuin is charming. The streets are lined with small, adorable shops. It's hard to walk longer than a few seconds without smelling something delicious. Even convenience stores have muted some of their more garish colors in favor of more stylish and attractive ones.

Yufu City Hall is a short walk from the station, and we spoke with Mr. Shono, of the Yufu City Yufuin Promotion Department, and Mr. Fujiwara, of the Yufuin Regional Promotion Office, who told us a variety of interesting information. For example, the most popular month to visit Yufuin is March. Tourism traffic is incredibly strong for March, April, and May and only begins to fade in June. But don't let that dissuade you from visiting outside of those months. Yufuin is beautiful and popular in all seasons.

Yufuin is a must-see destination for fashionable young couples from all over the world. The most popular home country for non-Japanese tourists is South Korea. The appeals of Yufuin vary from hot springs in the colder months, shopping, activities like canyoneering, and sports such as cycling. Instead of being known for one thing, Yufuin has a variety of activities, foods, and shops to choose from.

So what is the difference between Beppu and Yufuin? The two cities are located fairly close to one another, and both pride themselves on their hot springs. The unique nature of Yufuin's hot springs lies in the striking blue color of the hot spring water. When it comes to the ladies' choice in hot springs, Yufuin is the clear winner.

Yufuin has many resources available to English-speaking tourists. We received a bicycle map of the area printed in English and biked from the station to the lake. The station hosts a Rent-a-Cycle service where you can take a leisurely ride on an electric-powered bicycle and enjoy the scenery with the wind in your hair. It is one of many ways, including carriage ride, by which you can enjoy Yufuin.

If you do only one thing in Yufuin, you must see Lake Kinrin. It's a popular photo destination, and the scenery is spectacular. The view of the mist rising off of the lake is a particular favorite.



**Bicycling**



**Lake Kinrin**

# Top 10 Prefectural Government Stories 2016



## The Kumamoto Earthquake ~ Natural Disasters Hit Onsen Capital Oita.

Repeated natural disasters struck the region, including the Kumamoto Earthquake, droughts, typhoons, and eruptions of Mt. Aso.

## All Routes on the East Kyushu Expressway Open

A highway that encircles Kyushu was created, as well as a strategic council to establish it as the gateway to Eastern Kyushu.



## “UIJ” Turns Increase ~ Breaking the trend of regional population decline

In 2015, the amount of people moving to Oita reached a record high of 454. On a national ranking of rural locations people would like to live in, Usa City and Bungo-Takada City were number 3.



## A Safe Oita, focusing on three key fields.

Aiming to be the best in Japan in three fields: Satisfaction in child rearing, life-expectancy, and employment rates for people with disabilities.



## Kick-off of the Oita Creative Industry

Oita is working hard to achieve creation of new vitality and strengthening of competitive power.



## Advancements in the Creation of “Consumer Centric” Products

There has been energy in the agricultural, forestry, and fisheries markets.



## Start of the “Educational Prefecture Oita” Creation Plan

Children in Oita are continuing to persevere and refusing to lose to the earthquake. For example, primary school children continue to have the top academic level in Kyushu, and athletically middle school pupils are making great efforts and both male and female primary and middle school pupils are reaching the top level in Kyushu.

## The theme of the National Cultural Festival and the National Disabled Craft and Culture Festival was “the Big Oita Tea Party.”

The concept for the National Cultural Festival and the National Disabled Craft and Culture Festival was decided upon and a kick-off event was held.



## Oita Trinita wins the J3 and Returns to the J2 League.

As well as Oita Trinita’s success in football, 10,514 people gathered in Oita Bank Dome to watch a Japan Rugby Top League match.



## A Serious Start to Oita’s Beautification Strategy

For example, the Aso-Kuju National Park is selected as a model enterprise for Japan’s National Park Full Enjoyment Project.



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## Editors’ Note

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Welcome to the new year!  
Out with the old and in with the new, there’s  
a lot to look forward to in Oita in 2017, and  
we are excited for the new experiences that  
await us.



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