

Kyūshū 九州



Kyūshū has long been Japan's most internationally minded region. Coinciding with the decline of the samurai tradition, young Kyūshū intellectuals of the Meiji Restoration led a reluctant Japan into the modern world. Today the cosmopolitan city of Fukuoka is a major international arrival point. At night, the city's charms come alive – from the packed riverside food stalls to the hip jazz and dance clubs of the Tenjin district. Nearby Nagasaki, Japan's first gateway to the West, continues to lead in the arts and commerce.

To the south, unusual hiking opportunities abound in the rugged mountains of the stunning Kirishima volcano chain. The eerie volcanic landscape of Aso-san awaits hikers and photographers alike, while smouldering Sakurajima looms over the port city of Kagoshima, at times showering the town with fine ash which the residents casually respond to with open umbrellas. With plentiful volcanic ash, Kyūshū also boasts numerous pottery villages, especially around Karatsu and Arita. Coastal Beppu is one of Japan's major hot-spring centres. Further inland, the hot mineral waters of Yufuin and Unzen promise a tranquil dip in a forested getaway setting.

The southern cities of Kagoshima and Miyazaki are known for their balmy climate and for the quality of their *shō-chū*, a popular drink distilled from sweet potatoes and other grains. The Miyazaki region is also the mythical home of the sun goddess Amaretsu, who took refuge on Kyūshū, hiding in a remote cave and plunging the world into darkness. Only after her fellow gods lured her out did light and warmth return to earth and the land of the rising sun.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Join the night owls for beer and *yakitori* at the *yatai* food stalls in **Fukuoka** (opposite)
- Gaze into the calm face of a 1000-year-old stone Buddha in **Usuki** (p727)
- Clamber across lava-fields of active **Sakurajima** (p716) with your ash umbrella
- Take an intimate soak in a Meiji-era *onsen* in **Beppu** (p727)
- Hike among rare azaleas and stunning views in **Kirishima-Yaku National Park** (p706)
- Experience the hospitality of **Nagasaki** (p681), which survived the atomic bomb
- Get covered in hot volcanic sand in **Ibusuki** (p718)
- Check out history at the space-age Kyushu National Museum in **Dazaifu** (p674)
- Drink distilled sweet-potato *shō-chū* in **Kagoshima** (p708)



History

Kyūshū history is synonymous with Japan's most ancient origins. Very recent excavations near Kagoshima suggest that southern Kyūshū was the earliest home to Jōmon culture, which gradually spread north beginning 10,000 years ago.

Japan's centuries-old trade with China and Korea began in Kyūshū. In more recent times, Japan's 'Christian Century' (1549–1650) is notable for tales of secret Christians who, to escape persecution, altered their images of Christ and the Virgin to make them look like Buddhist icons.

In 1868 the Meiji Restoration ended the military shōgunate's policy of isolation, marking the birth of modern Japan. During the ensuing Meiji Era (1868–1912), the rapid rise of industrialisation led to profound social and political change. Saigō Takamori, a revered samurai and early Meiji leader from Kagoshima, is the subject of Ken Watanabe's 2003 film, *The Last Samurai*.

Guns first appeared in Japan in the 16th century, compliments of Portuguese merchants aboard a Chinese ship that was blown off course just south of Kagoshima. The new weapon changed the way feudal armies did battle, effectively ending the samurai tradition across Japan. August 9, 1945, marks the day that Nagasaki, long renowned for its early trade and cultural contacts with the West, became better known as the unfortunate second city to suffer the tragic effects of the atomic bomb.

Climate

Kyūshū, while more southern than much of Japan, has extremes that vary tremendously season to season. In the winter it can be quite cold, near freezing at night, and many of the mountains retain their snowcaps for much of the year. During the rainy season the island is inundated with heavy, often torrential rain. Travellers should bring layers and a waterproof rain shell, as it is often too windy to use an umbrella. Summer is hot and humid, and autumn regularly brings typhoons, along with the surfers who follow.

Getting There & Away

AIR

There are major airports at Fukuoka, Ōita (Beppu), Kitakyūshū, Nagasaki, Kagoshima, Kumamoto and Miyazaki. There are also

flights to islands off the coast of Kyūshū and to the islands southwest of Kagoshima down to Okinawa. The most frequent routes depart from Fukuoka (to Tsushima, Goto, Amakusa and Naha), Nagasaki (to Tsushima, Iki and Goto), Kumamoto (to Amakusa) and Kagoshima (to Tanegashima, Yakushima, Kikaijima, Amamioshima and Tokunoshima).

BOAT

There are numerous sea connections to Kyūshū from Honshū, Shikoku and Okinawa. Local ferry services operate between Kyūshū and islands off the northwest and southern coasts.

TRAIN

The *shinkansen* (bullet train) line from Tokyo and Osaka crosses to Kyūshū from Shimonoseki and ends at Hakata station (Fukuoka).

Getting Around

Major cities in Kyūshū are connected by *tokkyū* (limited express) train services, along with an extensive highway bus system. Major cities and offshore islands are served by several domestic airlines.

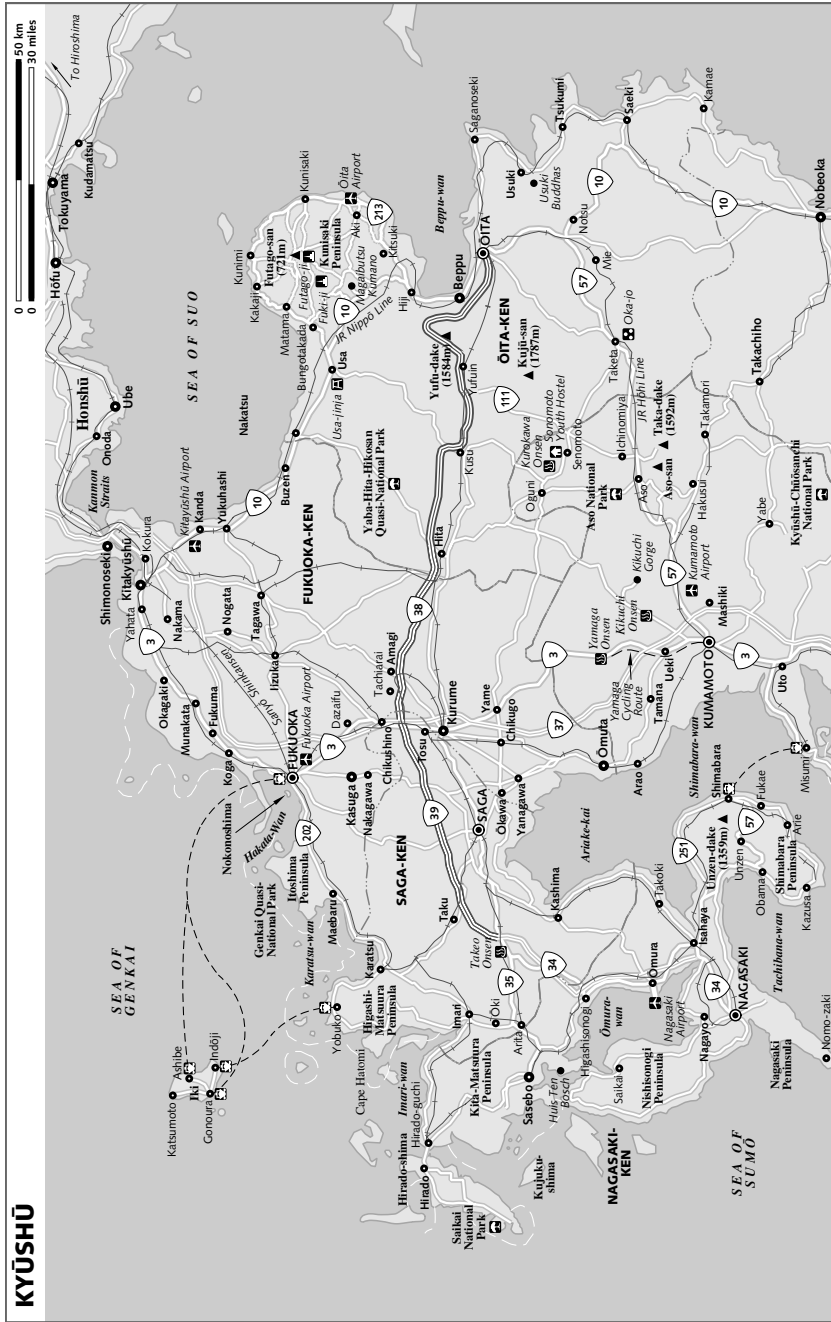
FUKUOKA-KEN 福岡県

The northern prefecture of Fukuoka will be the arrival point for most visitors to Kyūshū, whether they cross over by road or tunnel from Shimonoseki or fly straight into Fukuoka city's international airport. The city of Kitakyūshū (population 1,000,150) is northernmost, but most travellers will want to head directly to less industrialised areas, starting with Fukuoka.

FUKUOKA 福岡・博多

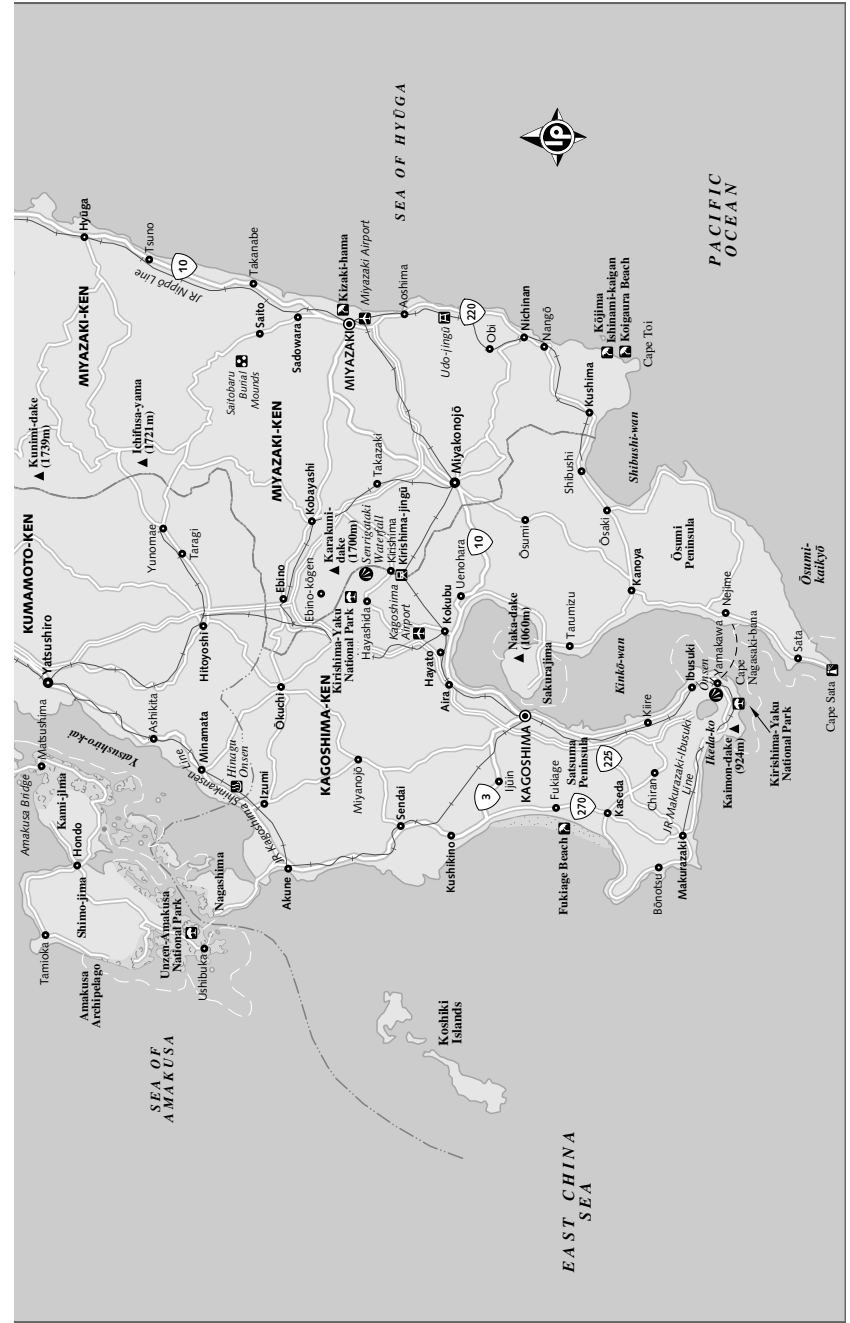
☎ 092 / pop 1,358,765

Fukuoka is the biggest city in Kyūshū, and a rising star in Japanese commerce and tourism. Once upon a time it was two separate towns – the lordly Fukuoka castle town to the west of the river Naka-gawa, and to the east, the common folks' Hakata. When the two merged in 1889, the label Fukuoka was applied to both towns, but subsequent development has mainly been in Hakata and many residents still refer to the town that way. The airport is known as Fukuoka, the train station as Hakata.



KYŪSHŪ

KYŪSHŪ



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Fukuoka has transformed itself over the last decade into one of Japan's most cosmopolitan and internationalised cities. Seoul and Shanghai are among its nearest neighbours. Fukuoka's most recent international aspirations include a bid to host the 2016 Summer Olympics – going up against Tokyo among others. Its attractions are contemporary rather than traditional, but they are still very much worth seeing, modern architecture in particular. Fukuoka is also renowned as a culinary centre and its vibrant nightlife is centred on the Nakasu, Daimyo and Tenjin districts.

Nationally the city is known for its 'Hakata *bijin*' (beautiful women), its feisty and much-loved baseball team the Daiei Hawks, and, most of all, *Hakata rāmen* (Chinese-style egg noodles in broth).

Orientation

JR Hakata station, the transport centre for the city, is surrounded by hotels. Tenjin is the business and shopping centre – its focus is along Watanabe-dōri. Underneath this busy street is Tenjin Chikagai, a crowded underground shopping mall that extends for 400m. The Nishitetsu Tenjin bus centre here is close to the terminus of the private Nishitetsu Ōmuta line.

Separating Hakata to the west and Tenjin to the east is the Naka-gawa, site of the impressive Canal City and the island of Nakasu, the entertainment centre of the city. It's a maze of restaurants, strip clubs, hostess bars, cinemas, designer boutiques, upscale department stores and the famed *yatai* (food stalls).

MAPS

The Fukuoka International Association's **Rainbow Plaza** (☎ 733-2220; www.rainbowfia.or.jp; 8F, IMS Bldg, 1-7-11 Tenjin, Tenjin; ☎ 10am-8pm) sells a detailed English-Japanese map (¥600), and the tourist information desk at JR Hakata station has a free walking map of downtown Fukuoka.

Information

BOOKSHOPS

Junkudō Fukuoka (☎ 738-3322; 1st-4th fl, Media Mall, Tenjin; ☎ 10am-8pm) Massive foreign paperback collection.

Kinokuniya (☎ 721-7755; 6th fl, Tenjin Core, Tenjin; ☎ 10am-8pm) An excellent selection of English-language books can be found here.

Maruzen (☎ 731-9000; 2nd-3rd fl, Fukuoka Bldg, Tenjin; ☎ 10am-8pm) Sells foreign-language titles and language-learning books.

INTERNET ACCESS

Fukuoka has a number of 24-hour cybercafés and wi-fi spots:

Cybac Café (☎ 724-8005; www.cybac.com/infomation/tenjin/index.html in Japanese; 7th-8th fl, Dai 21 Line Bldg, Daimyo 1-15-1; per 30min ¥300; ☎ 24hr) Charges ¥600 for the first hour of internet access and ¥100 for each 15 minutes after. From 1am to 8am, unlimited internet access with reclining chairs costs ¥1980. It's possible to crash (and shower!) here too.

Kinko's Akasaka (☎ 724-7177; 2-12-12 Daimyo); Hakata-ekimae (☎ 473-2677; 2-19-24 Hakata-ekimae; per 10min ¥200; ☎ 24hr); Tenjin (☎ 722-4224; 1-22-7 Imaizumi) **Media Café Popeye** (☎ 283-9393; 8th fl, Spoon Bldg, 5-1-7 Nakasu; per 30min ¥300; ☎ 24hr) Two-computer love seats among other user-friendly innovations.

MEDIA

Broadcasting from Tenjin, Love 76.1FM offers programming in 10 languages. Cross 78.7FM and Free Wave 77.7 have bilingual DJs and entertainment news.

MEDICAL SERVICES

International Clinic Tojin-machi (☎ 717-1000; http://internationalclinic.org; 1-4-6 Jigyo, Chūō-ku) Contact this clinic for general medical services and emergencies. Staff speak English, German, French, Dutch, Chinese and Japanese. From Tenjin subway station, take the Kuko line three stops to Tojin-machi station, go to exit 1, walk up the stairs and continue in the same direction for two blocks.

MONEY

The best way to withdraw cash is via the many postal ATMs at post offices throughout the city.

At Fukuoka airport, there's a **currency exchange counter** (☎ 8.30am-9pm) and a **Citibank ATM** (☎ 6.30am-9.30pm). In Tenjin another Citibank ATM is open 24 hours. Banks around JR Hakata station and Tenjin handle foreign exchange services.

There are more international ATMs on the basement level of Canal City, and in post offices around town.

POST

The central post office, northeast of Tenjin subway station, has full services, plus English-menu ATM machines. Hakata post office is outside JR Hakata station's west exit.

TOURIST INFORMATION

The **tourist information desk** (☎ 473-2518; ground fl, international terminal, Fukuoka airport; ☎ 10am-6pm)

is beside a **reservations desk** (☎ international 483-7007, ☎ domestic 621-6059; ☎ 8am-9.30pm or last flight) that can arrange hotel accommodation and car rentals.

Useful local English-language publications include **Fukuoka Now** (www.fukuoka-now.com), a free monthly 'what's on' guide with up-to-date city maps and features, and *Rainbow*, the Fukuoka International Association's current events cultural newsletter.

ACROS Fukuoka (☎ 725-9200; www.acros.or.jp; 2nd fl, cultural centre, 1-1-1 Tenjin, Tenjin; ☎ 10am-7pm, closed 2nd & 4th Mon each month) Has plenty of English-language information on the surrounding prefecture.

Rainbow Plaza (☎ 733-2220; www.rainbowfia.or.jp; 8th fl, IMS Bldg, 1-7-11 Tenjin, Tenjin; ☎ 10am-8pm) The Fukuoka International Association's Rainbow Plaza has free 30-minute internet access, books on Japan, magazines, international newspapers and a notice board for events, accommodation and job ads. Bilingual staff is extremely helpful. **Tourist information desk** (JR Hakata station; ☎ 8am-8pm) Has limited information and maps in English. Ask for the free 'Fukuoka Welcome Card' entitling visitors to discounts at hotels, attractions, shops and restaurants.

TRAVEL AGENCIES

No 1 Travel (☎ 761-9203; www.no1-travel.com/fuk/index.html; 3rd fl, ACROS Fukuoka Bldg, 1-1-1 Tenjin; ☎ 10am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 11am-4.30pm Sat) For cut-rate international airfares and reliable information in English. **NZ Life Tours & Travel** (☎ /fax 751-8670; www.nzlife.tours.com; 1-4-15-103 Yakuin, Chūō-ku) Offers discounted international flights and tours.

Sights & Activities

CANAL CITY キャナルシティ

Sleek, streamlined and photogenic, the curvy-modern six-building shopping mall and entertainment complex **Canal City** (☎ 282-2525; www.canalcity.co.jp) overlooks an artificial canal with a fountain symphony. There are 13 cinema screens, a playhouse, two major hotels and innumerable boutiques, bars and bistros.

Canal City is 500m southeast of the Nakasu-Kawabata subway stop, or you can take one of many city buses to Canal City-mae.

TENJIN 天神

Tenjin has historic Western-style buildings, like the 1910 **Former Prefectural Hall & Official Guest House** (☎ 751-4416; 6-29 Nishinakasu; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun) in Tenjin Chūō-kōen. Copper-turreted **Akarenga Bunka-kan** (Akarenga Cultural Centre; admission free; ☎ 9am-9pm Tue-Sun) has simple historical exhibits and a charming coffee shop.

FUKUOKA ASIAN ART MUSEUM

福岡アジア美術館

This modern, expansive **museum** (☎ 263-1100; http://faam.city.fukuoka.jp; 7th-8th fl, Hakata Riverain, 3-1 Shimokawabata-machi; admission ¥200, special exhibitions from ¥1000; ☎ 10am-8pm Thu-Tue) showcases fine contemporary Asian art and rotating exhibits on the 7th floor. Cutting-edge shows by area artists-in-residence are staged in the 8th-floor gallery. The 7th-floor café next to the museum shop has skyline views out the floor-to-ceiling windows.

HAKATA MACHIYA FURUSATO-KAN

博多町家ふるさと館

This small **folk museum** (☎ 281-7761; www.hakatomachiya.com; 6-10 Reisen-machi; admission ¥200; ☎ 10am-5.30pm) opposite Kushida Shrine recreates a bit of old Japan with restored merchants houses, historic photos and displays of traditional Hakata culture. You can even hear recordings of impenetrable *Hakata-ben* dialect through antique telephones, or try your hand at *Hakata-ori* (traditional weaving for kimono cloth). An English brochure is available, and inexpensive souvenirs for sale in the museum shop.

FUKUOKA REKISHI NO MACHI 大名地区

This **history-theme village** (☎ 806-0505; 545-1 Tokunaga, Nishi-ku, Fukuoka-ken; adult/student ¥600/400; ☎ 10am-5pm) gathers over 30 working potters, weavers and paper makers, plus a souvenir shop to sell their wares. From Tenjin, take the JR train to Kyudai Gakuen toshi station (25 minutes).

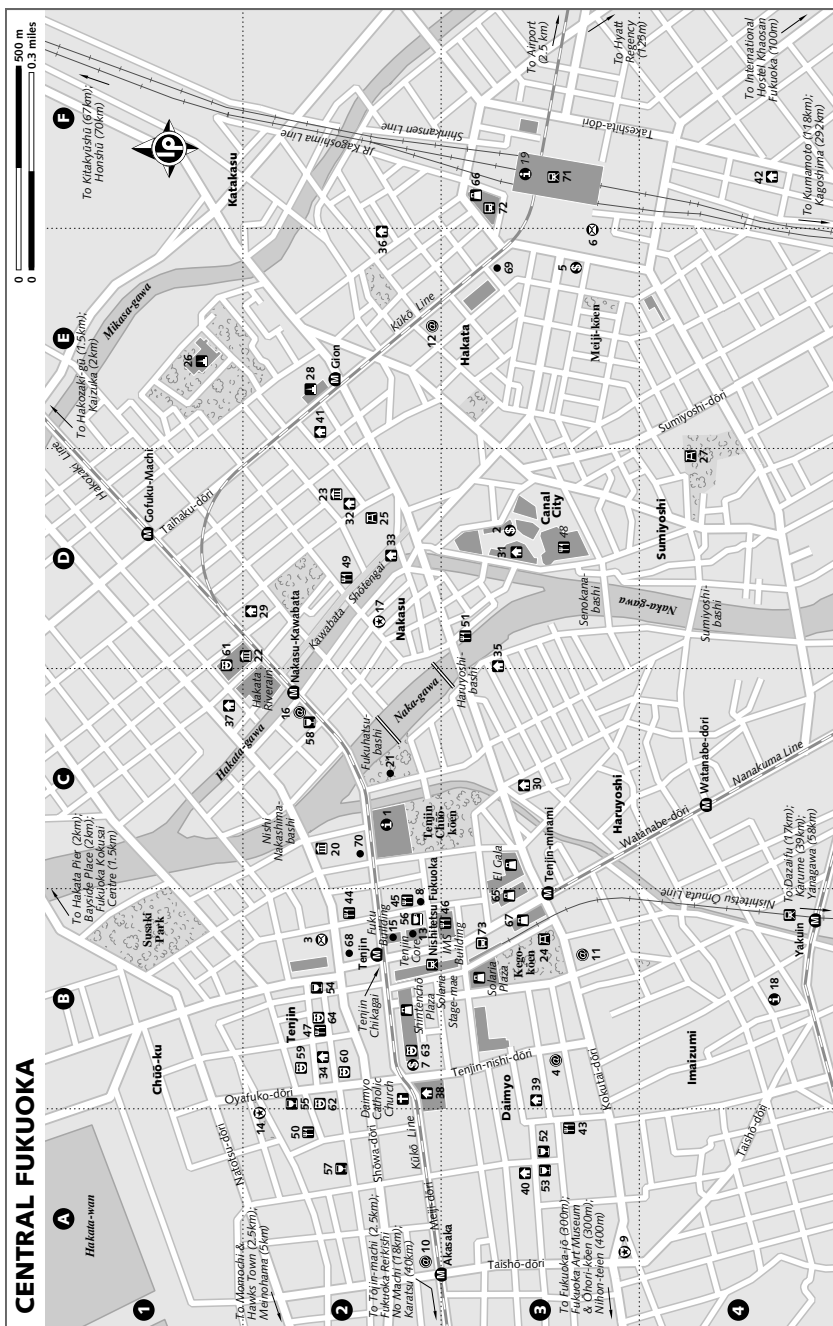
SHRINES & TEMPLES

Tōchō-ji has impressively carved Kannon (goddess of mercy) statues and, upstairs, the largest wooden Buddha in Japan.

Shōfuku-ji is a Zen temple founded in 1195 by Eisai, who introduced Zen and tea to Japan. Don't confuse it with Sōfuku-ji (p685), once the temple of a feudal lord, with one gate taken from the original Fukuoka castle.

Kushida-jinja has displays of Hakata festival floats on the grounds, and a local **history museum** (☎ 291-2951; 1-41 Kamikawabata; admission ¥300; ☎ 10am-4.30pm).

Sumiyoshi-jinja (☎ 262-6665; 2-10-7 Sumiyoshi, Hakata; admission ¥100; ☎ 6am-9pm) is a garden and teahouse built by a Meiji-era merchant, with an intact garden wall, known as Rakusuien.



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FUKUOKA-JŌ & ŌHORI-KŌEN

福岡城・大濠公園
Only the walls of Fukuoka-jō remain in what is now Maizuru-kōen, but the castle's hilltop site provides fine views of the city.

Ōhori-kōen, which is adjacent to the castle grounds, has a traditional (though recently constructed) Japanese garden, **Nihon-tenen** (☎ 741-8377; admission ¥240; ☎ 9am-4.45pm Tue-Sun Sep-May, to 5.45pm Tue-Sun Jun-Aug).

Nearby, the **Fukuoka Art Museum** (☎ 714-6051; www.fukuoka-art-museum.jp/english; 1-6 Ōhori-kōen, Chūō-ku; admission ¥200; ☎ 9:30am-5pm Tue-Sun Sep-May, to 7pm Tue-Sat & to 5pm Sun Jul & Aug) has ancient pottery and Buddhist guardians on one floor, with works by Andy Warhol and Salvador

Dali upstairs, and an interior garden to help soften the transition.

MOMOCHI DISTRICT 百浜
Further out in the west of the city you'll find the 234m-tall **Fukuoka Tower** (☎ 823-0234; www.fukuokatawer.co.jp; admission ¥800; ☎ 9:30am-10pm Apr-Sep, to 9pm Oct-Mar). At 120m, the 4th-floor café **Sky Lounge Refuge** (☎ 833-8255) is a great place to view the city, especially at dusk.

The state-of-the-art **Fukuoka City Museum** (☎ 845-5011; http://museum.city.fukuoka.jp/english/ec/ec_f12.html; 3-1-1 Momochi, Sawara-ku; admission ¥200; ☎ 9:30am-5pm Tue-Sun) displays local history and culture that make it obvious why Kyūshū residents have such fierce pride in their island.

The most precious treasure is an ancient golden snake seal with an inscription proving Japan's historic ties to China.

HAWKS TOWN ホークスタウン

Something of a seafront Canal City, **Hawks Town** (www.hawkstown.com) is set on reclaimed land near Momochi-kōen. This entertainment and shopping complex is also the location of the luxury **JAL Resort Sea Hawk Hotel & Resort** and the giant **Yahoo Dome**, home to the local Daiei Hawks baseball team. The highlight is Sea Hawk's indoor jungle atrium, complete with waterfalls and screeching tropical birdcalls, as well as bird's-eye views of the city.

Hawks Town is less than 1km northwest of Tōjin-machi station. There are frequent direct buses to Yahoo Dome from Tenjin bus station (about 15 minutes).

OFFSHORE ISLANDS

Nokonoshima, famous for its flower fields, is only about 10km in circumference. There's a swimming **beach** and **camping ground** at the northern end of the island. Buses 300 and 301 depart frequently from Nishitetsu Tenjin bus centre (¥360, 20 minutes). Ferries depart from Meinohama Municipal Ferry Terminal, west of the city centre near Meinohama station (¥220, 10 minutes).

Summer sightseeing cruises depart from Bayside Place. Ferries to delightfully rural **Shikanoshima** (志賀島), where fresh seafood restaurants line the harbourside streets, depart every 40 minutes (¥650, 33 minutes). Shikanoshima also has a **fishing shrine** (志賀海神社; ☎ 603-6501) decorated with deer antlers and is famed for its *kyūdō* (Japanese archery) meets, and a popular **beach** about 5km east of the shrine.

Festivals & Events

Hakozaki-gū Tamaseseri (箱崎宮) On 3 January, two groups of young men clad in loincloths raucously chase a wooden ball in the name of good fortune. Near Hakozaki-gū station at Hakozaki-gū shrine.

Hakata Dontaku Matsuri (博多どんたく祭り) On 3 and 4 May, Fukuoka's Meiji-dōri vibrates to the unique percussive shock of *shamoji* (wooden serving spoons for rice) being banged together like castanets, accompanied by *shamisen* (three-stringed instrument). The name Dontaku was added during the Meiji period (late 19th century) from the Dutch word *zontag*, meaning 'holiday'.

Hakata Yamagasa Matsuri (博多山笠祭り) The city's main festival is held from 1 to 15 July. The climax

starts at 4.59am on the 15th, when seven groups of men all converge at Kushida-jinja, just north of Canal City, and then race on a 5km-long course through the city carrying huge *mikoshi* (portable shrines). According to legend, the festival originated after a 13th-century Buddhist priest was carried aloft, sprinkling holy water over victims of a plague.

Kyūshū Bashō sumō tournament (大相撲九州場所) Held at the Fukuoka Kokusai Centre during mid-November, spanning a two-week period. Limited same-day tickets (*tojitsu-ken*; ¥3100 to ¥14,000) are available starting at 8am, and people start lining up at dawn for one of Japan's major sumō events. Good luck.

Sleeping

Fukuoka is a popular city for business and tourism alike, and has dozens of cut-rate business hotels and ryokan along with several unique upscale hotels.

BUDGET

International Hostel Khaosun Fukuoka (☎ 404-6035; www.khaosun-fukuoka.com; 11-34 Hakata-ku; dm ¥1800-2400, s/tw ¥4000/2600; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) This sparkling 19-room hostel is Kyūshū's newest. Rooms are light and comfortable, the share kitchen is well stocked, and there's no curfew.

Hotel New Simple (☎ 411-4311; fax 411-4312; 1-23-11 Hakataekimae; dm/s/tw ¥3000/4200/7140, all incl breakfast; ☎) One of Fukuoka's cheapest places to stay, this is a spotless gem and a 10-minute walk from Hakata station.

Hakata JBB (☎ 263-8300; fax 263-8301; 6-5-1 Reisenmachi, Hakata-ku; s/d ¥4500/6000; ☎) Lace curtains and a lobby fax machine set the homey tone here. It's only a minute's walk from the Folk Museum, and the English-speaking owner provides free coffee all morning.

Amenity Hotel in Hakata (☎ 282-0041; fax 282-0044; 14-25 Kami-Kawabata; r incl light breakfast from ¥4900; ☎) Near the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, its rooms are on the small side but spotless and attractive. There is a helpful English-speaking staff.

Hotel Etwas Tenjin (☎ 737-3233; fax 737-3266; 3-5-18 Fukuokashi, Chūō-ku; s from ¥5145; ☎ ☎ ☎) This smart and simple business hotel is a good budget choice, clean and quiet, even with busy Oyafuko-dōri around the corner.

MIDRANGE

ourpick Ryokan Kashima Honkan (☎ 291-0746; r per person with shared bathroom ¥6000; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) In the Gion district just northeast of Canal City, this wholly unpretentious ryokan is pleasantly faded and has its own enclosed garden – you

expect a Meiji-period novelist to pop up at any moment. A hearty breakfast is available (Western ¥525; Japanese ¥1050). The owner speaks English.

Fukuoka Arty Inn (☎ 724-3511; fax 714-3200; 5-1-20 Watanabe-dōri; s/d from ¥6300/10,500; ☎ ☎ ☎) Look for the English sign high above the building at this charming mid-sized option between bustling Tenjin and the river. The reception staff is unerringly helpful.

Plaza Hotel Tenjin (☎ 752-7600; www.plaza-hotel.net/; 1-9-63 Daimyo, Chūō-ku; s/tw from ¥7140/11,500; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) Like the Daimyo district it occupies, this renovated boutique hotel has it all – style, price and convenience. Dark-wood furnishings and bookshelves give rooms a lived-in feel.

Plaza Hotel Premier (☎ 734-7600; www.plaza-hotel.net/; 1-14-13 Daimyo, Chūō-ku; s/tw from ¥7980/13,125; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) Like its nearby twin, the Plaza Hotel Tenjin, the Premier is classy and good value. Both service and amenities match much pricier hotels.

Hotel Twins Momochi (☎ 852-4800; fax 845-8637; 1-7-4 Momochihama, Sawara-ku; s/d from ¥8000/10,080; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) Near Yahoo Dome, the Momochi is refreshingly different and good value. Spacious designer rooms have a spare, modernist feel, plus king-sized beds. Guests share kitchenettes and coin laundry.

TOP END

Hotel Il Palazzo (☎ 716-3333; www.ilpalazzo.jp in Japanese; 3-13-1 Haruyoshi, Chūō-ku; s/d/Japanese ste from ¥15,015/25,410/57,750; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) One of Fukuoka's most stylish hotels, this Italianate gem is worth a look even if you stay elsewhere. It's striking on the outside, and curvy and shadowy inside.

Hyatt Regency (ハイアット・リージェンシー; ☎ 412-1234; www.hyattregencyfukuoka.co.jp; 2-14-1 Hakataeki Higashi, Hakata-ku; s/tw/ste from ¥19,635/28,875/69,300; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) A five-minute walk from Hakata station brings you to another of Fukuoka's architectural showpieces, with the postmodern theme extending to spacious, well-appointed rooms and lounges.

Grand Hyatt Fukuoka (☎ 282-1234, 0120-51-2343; <http://fukuoka.grand.hyatt.com>; 1-2-82 Sumiyoshi; s/d from ¥28,000/42,000, Japanese-style ste ¥92,000; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎; wi-fi) This bustling luxury property seems to anchor Canal City, with a rooftop garden and modern rooms that combine hi-tech amenities with *shōgi* (sliding rice-paper screens) touches.

ourpick WiththeStyle (☎ 433-3900; www.withthestyle.com; 1-9-18 Kakataeki-minami; d/ste from ¥31,185/63,525; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) This designer boutique hotel manages to be swank and intimate at the same time. Reserve one of its 16 rooms and you're in for a treat. There's an excellent sushi restaurant and lively bar scene as well.

Also recommended:

Hakata Riverside Hotel (☎ 291-1455, 0120-20-8102; s/tw from ¥4200/8000; ☎) Choose one of the four rooms overlooking the river.

Nishitetsu Grand Hotel (☎ 781-0711; www.grand-h.jp; 6-60 Daimyo, 2chome, Chūō-ku; s/tw/ste from ¥13,860/25,410/57,750; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) Fukuoka's oldest luxury hotel.

Hotel Okura (☎ 262-1111; www.fuk.hotelokura.co.jp/english; 3-2 Shimokawabata-machi; s/d/ste from ¥19,950/25,200/84,000; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) Handsome and upscale, adjacent to the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum.

Eating

To the vast majority of Japanese, Hakata means *rāmen*. In particular it means *tonkotsu-rāmen*, noodles in a distinctive, whitish broth made from pork bones. The telephone book lists hundreds of *rāmen* shops; discovering your own *rāmen* shop is all part of the fun. And there are even more *yatai* (food stalls on wheels, complete with portable kitchen and stools, drinks and chatty cooks) that are not listed.

The majority of the *yatai* are along the riverbanks in Nakasu and in front of Canal City and on the streets around Tenjin station, especially where Oyafuko-dōri meets Shōwa-dōri. Most open as dusk approaches; poke your nose in a few until you see what you like.

West (☎ 281-0560; 1-8 Kawabata Shōtengai; dishes ¥400-760) Near the Hakata-gawa, this is a steamy noodle shop with excellent tempura.

Hakata Ippudo Ramen (☎ 738-7061; 1-13-13 Tenjin, Chūō-ku; gyōza ¥400, *rāmen* bowls ¥500-750; ☎ 11am-2am; E) Look for the big red lantern at the entrance to this cosy and bustling *rāmen* shop, one of several branches in town. The English menu boasts of Hakata-style *gyōza* (dumplings), traditionally made small so dainty Hakata women would not have to suffer the indignity of opening their mouths too wide to eat them.

Ichiran (Chūō-ku; ☎ 736-5272; 1-10-25 Tenjin; *rāmen* bowls ¥600-980; ☎ 24hr; E); *Rāmen Stadium* (5F, Canal City) Customers here eat at individual cubicles, and fill out forms requesting precisely how they want their noodles prepared. Flavour strength, fat content, noodle tenderness, 'secret sauce'

and garlic content can all be regulated. Many branches of this famous Chūō-ku noodle shop can be found around town, including at Rāmen Stadium, where noodle lovers queue to slurp bowls of soup prepared in famous styles hailing from Hokkaidō all the way to southern Kyūshū.

Nazuki (☎ 715-1516; Beans Bldg, 1-8-40 Maizuru; dishes from ¥650; ☎ lunch & dinner) This snappy Oyafuko-dōri eatery makes excellent cold Korean *rāmen* and fried rice bowls.

If you fancy eating something other than *rāmen*, the following places may well hit the spot.

Pik's Coffee Shop (☎ 781-0246; 2-18 Tenjin, 3 Chūō-ku; meals from ¥500-900; ☎ 4pm-3am Mon-Fri, 6pm-3am Sat; E) For bacon and eggs with a uniquely Japanese spin, head for this retro-'50s diner where the music and the menu are straight out of Kansas City, but the cook and clientele are local. Plus root beer and free coffee refills.

Yamasaki (☎ 762-6668; 1-8-11 Chestnut Bldg; meals around ¥1750; ☎ lunch & dinner) Just off busy Oyafuko-dōri, this traditional eatery serves up excellent fish, salads and *teishoku* (set meals). Grilled *sanma* (mackerel) or *netsuke* (red snapper), a salad and beer will cost you about ¥1750. There's no English sign; look for the small 'Chestnut' signboard. A picture menu is available.

CHINA (☎ 282-1234; 1st fl Grand Hyatt Hotel, Canal City; dim sum ¥2800; ☎ lunch) A Cantonese banquet hall offering all-you-can-eat dim sum.

The **IMS building** (1-7-11 Tenjin, Chūō-ku) in Tenjin has prime skyline views from its 12th- and 13th-floor restaurants, including **No No Budo** (☎ 714-1441; buffet ¥1575/2100; ☎ lunch & dinner), a busy 'all-you-can-eat' buffet, with fresh fish and meat dishes, noodles, salads, soups and desserts.

Nearby is **Pietro Corte** (☎ 733-2065; pasta & salad bar from ¥900) and, with beer on tap, **Kirin Sow-Sow Grill** (☎ 733-2073; seafood plates ¥350-1800); **Mrs Elizabeth Muffin** (☎ 733-2083; pastries from ¥150) in the basement food court sells sweet muffins with free coffee refills!

Drinking

The weekend starts on Thursday night in party-friendly Fukuoka. Most of the city's clubs, bars and pubs stay open until at least 3am. Pick a spot, hang out there for a good part of the evening and you're sure to make a friend or two. The main drag of Oyafuko-dōri roughly translates as 'street of unruly children' –

DAIMYO DISTRICT 大名地区

The narrow streets and lanes of the Daimyo district are home to many of Fukuoka's newest bars and eateries, and perfect for a late meal and a drink. **Bar Garasu** (☎ 712-8251; 1-12-28 Daimyo, Chūō-ku) draws a hip, hole-in-the-wall crowd, while nearby **Alohana** (☎ 724-0111; Donpa Bldg, 1-11-4 Daimyo, Chūō-ku) serves up Hawaiian-Japanese fusion plates, and the elegant **Bar Oscar** (☎ 7721-5352; 6th fl 1-10-29 Daimyo), named for jazz luminary Oscar Peterson, appeals to the swank Fukuoka set.

named for the old *Juku*, or cram schools, that once lined the road.

Off Broadway (☎ 724-5383; 2nd fl Beans Bldg) Close to the action with a bit of its own as well, overlooking busy Oyafuko-dōri. There's a full bar, pizza, R&B, salsa and hip-hop DJs, plus live music on weekends.

Uprising (☎ 716-6364; 2nd fl 1-3-4 Maizuru, Chūō-ku) A popular backstreet bar reflecting the personality of its Ghanaian owner, Hector. Mellow music with a reggae beat and good drinks make this place a pleasure.

Bōkairō (望海楼; ☎ 844-8000; 35th fl, Sea Hawk Hotel & Resort) Upscale neo-Chinese cocktail lounge in Fukuoka's seaside Momochi district, with lipstick red plush lounge seats and stellar night views. Cocktails start at ¥1000.

Van Beeru (☎ 282-9191; 5-2-3 Nakasu, Hakata-ku; draught mugs from ¥300; ☎ 6pm-6am) Just over the bridge on Nakasu island, this lively pub brags of over 1000 beers. Free popcorn and decent pub food.

Seattle's Best Coffee (☎ 737-3232; 1-11-1 Tenjin, Chūō-ku; wi-fi) Opposite Junkudō bookstore, SBC offers the usual coffee and sweets, plus free wi-fi.

International Bar (☎ 714-2179; 4th fl Urashima Bldg, 3-1-13 Tenjin) Free karaoke on Tuesdays is a treat at Fukuoka's first international bar.

Entertainment CLUBS

Nakasu Island is one of the most popular entertainment districts in Japan, but you need to go with a Japanese regular unless you're prepared to spend a fortune. Tenjin, and especially Oyafuko-dōri, are a better bet for a night on the town. Generally clubs have a weekend cover charge of ¥1000 to ¥3000, usually with a free drink or two.

Juke Joint (☎ 762-5596; 1-9-23 Maizuru, Chūō-ku) Customers can select the tunes at this unusual and intimate lounge. The music ranges from jazz and reggae to rock, blues and funk. Good drinks from ¥500, plus spicy seafood gumbo; owner Ko Matsumoto led a local relief fund for Hurricane Katrina victims.

Dark Room (☎ 725-2989; 8th fl Bacchus-kan; ☎ 6pm-2am) This hip urban rock bar offers darts, pool, dancing and Iron Butterfly vibes – along with a great sound system and killer *quesadillas*. In summer, check out the rooftop patio.

Voodoo Lounge (☎ 732-4662; 3rd fl, Tenjin Centre Bldg; 9pm-3am) Chilled-out and spacious, Voodoo is known for good live bands and DJs most nights, quality drinks at the long wooden bar and ¥100 beer on Thursday nights from 9pm to 10pm.

Sam & Dave (☎ 713-2223; www.samanddave.jp; 3rd fl, West Side Bldg, Tenjin Nishidōri) Named for the '60s soul duo, this roomy lounge with strobes, red neon and dancing throbs with hip-hop and R&B. On weekends, it's a meat market for 20-somethings.

Club Lab-Z Remix (☎ 711-1004; 6th fl, Okabe Bldg, 3-6-12 Tenjin, Chūō-ku) This small and sophisticated R&B club on Oyafuko-dōri grooves till the wee hours.

KABUKI

Hakata-za (☎ 263-5555; 2-1 Shimokawabata-machi, Hakata-ku; admission ¥5000-18,600) Fans of classical kabuki (stylised Japanese theatre) will swoon over this 1500-seat state-of-the-art theatre, above Nakasu-Kawabata subway stop. Actors enter and exit the stage via the raised *hanamichi* pathway through the audience.

Shopping

Clay *Hakata Ningyō* (Hakata dolls) depicting women, children, samurai and geisha are a popular Fukuoka craft. Hakata obi, the silk sashes worn with a kimono, are another local product. Try the Mitsukoshi or Daimaru department stores in Tenjin (see p667).

Hundred Yen Shop (4th fl Hakata station bus terminal; ☎ 10am-10pm) For last-minute bargain gift shopping, head for this sprawling shop opposite JR Hakata station.

Shopping, or at least window shopping, in Tenjin's high-rise and underground labyrinthine complexes is a popular Fukuoka pastime. Packed along a sparkling three-block section of Tenjin's Watanabi-dōri, **Tenjin Core** (☎ 721-7755), **Mitsukoshi** (☎ 724-3111), **Daimaru** (☎ 712-8181), **Solaria Plaza** (☎ 733-7004), subterra-

nean **Tenjin Chikagai** (☎ 721-8436) and **IMS building** (☎ 733-2001) are all favourite spots. The latter gets bonus points for a rooftop terrace, open 11am to 9pm, weather permitting.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Fukuoka is a major international gateway with flights to and from many major cities in Japan and Asia. Domestic flights go to Tokyo (¥27,900, 1½ hours, Haneda airport/Narita International Airport 45/4hour flights daily). Other domestic routes include Osaka (¥16,200, one hour, six flights daily) and Okinawa (Naha, ¥20,300, 1½ hours, 12 flights daily). ANA and JAL are the two most common carriers, and both have offices here.

Japan's only independent cut-rate carrier, **Skymark** (☎ 736-3131, in Tokyo 03-3433-7026) flies to Tokyo's Haneda airport (¥15,000, nine flights daily).

BOAT

Ferry services from Hakata connect to Okinawa and other islands off Kyūshū. An international high-speed hydrofoil service run by JR Kyūshū called **Biitoru** (say 'beetle'; ☎ in Japan 092-281-2315, in Korea 051-442-6111; www.jrbeetle.co.jp/english) connects Fukuoka with Busan in Korea (¥13,000, three hours, four daily). The **Camellia line** (☎ in Japan 092-262-2323, in Korea 051-466-7799; www.camellia-line.co.jp in Japanese & Korean) has a regular ferry service from Fukuoka to Busan (¥9000, six hours, daily at noon). In Fukuoka, the Beetle and the Camellia depart from Fukuoka Port International Terminal via bus 11, 19 or 50 from JR Hakata station (¥220), or bus 80 from Tenjin (Solaria Stage-mae; ¥180). From Busan, both the Beetle (Won 9000, three hours, four daily) and the Camellia (Won 80,000, overnight) depart from the International Ferry Port, approximately 200m from Jungang-dong subway station.

BUS

Long-distance buses (☎ English information 733-3333) depart from the Kōtsū bus centre near JR Hakata station and also from the Tenjin bus centre. Destinations include Tokyo (¥15,000, 14½ hours), Osaka (¥10,000, 9½ hours), Nagoya (¥10,500, 11 hours) and many other places around Kyūshū.

TRAIN

JR Hakata station (☎ English information 471-8111, JR English info-line 03-3423-0111) is the western terminus

of the 1175km-long Tokyo–Osaka–Hakata *shinkansen*. There are services to/from Tokyo (¥21,720, five to six hours), Osaka (¥14,590, 2½ to three hours) and Hiroshima (¥8700, 1½ hours). Prices are slightly higher for the Nozomi *shinkansen*.

JR lines also fan out from Hakata to other parts of Kyūshū. The Nippō line runs through Beppu and Miyazaki; the Kagoshima line runs through Hakata, Kumamoto and Kagoshima; and both the Nagasaki and Sasebo lines run from Hakata to Saga and Sasebo or to Nagasaki. The newest *shinkansen* line in Kyūshū runs from Shin-Yatsushiro to Kagoshima (¥6350, one hour); eventually it will extend up to Hakata. You can also travel by subway and JR train to Karatsu and continue from there to Nagasaki by train.

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Fukuoka airport is conveniently close to the city centre. The airport has three domestic terminals and an international terminal, all connected by a free shuttle bus.

The subway from the domestic terminals takes just five minutes to reach JR Hakata station (¥250) and 11 minutes to Tenjin (¥250). Buses run frequently between JR Hakata station and the international terminal.

Airport taxis cost around ¥1600 to Tenjin/Hakata.

BUS

City bus services operate from the Kōtsū bus centre in Hakata and the Tenjin bus centre. Nishitetsu buses have a flat ¥100 rate for city-centre rides.

From stand E opposite JR Hakata station at the Kōtsū bus centre, bus 11 or 19 goes to Hakata Pier International Terminal (¥220), while bus 47 or 48 reaches Bayside Place for ferries to islands.

SUBWAY

There are three subway lines in Fukuoka. The Kūkō (airport) line runs from Fukuoka domestic airport terminal to Meinohama station via Hakata, Nakasu-Kawabata and Tenjin stations. The Hakozaki line runs from Nakasu-Kawabata station to Kaizuka. The Nanakuma line runs from Tenjin-minami to Hashimoto. Fares around town start at ¥200; a one-day pass costs adult/child six to 11 ¥600/300. Trains run from 5.30am to 12.25am.

DAZAIFU 太宰府

☎ 092 / pop 66,308

Dazaifu, once the governmental centre of Kyūshū, is an amiable place for a day visit. Japan's newest national museum, a beautiful cluster of temples and a shrine make Dazaifu a rewarding day trip from Fukuoka. The **tourist information office** (☎ 925-1880; ☎ 9am-5.30pm) at Nishitetsu-Dazaifu station has helpful staff and an excellent English-language brochure map that details outlying ruins, temples and minor sights.

Sights

KYŪSHŪ NATIONAL MUSEUM

九州国立博物館

Japan's fourth national museum (☎ 918-2807; www.kyuhaku.com/eng/; 4-7-2 Ishizaka, Dazaifu City; adult/student ¥420/210; ☎ 9.30am-5pm, closed Mon) opened in 2005, the country's first since 1900. This stunningly modern structure in the tranquil hills of Dazaifu resembles a massive space station for the arts. Highlights include a fascinating Silk Road exhibit, stone carvings of AD 1st-century women with spears on horseback and a delicate 13th-century oil-spot *tenmoku* tea bowl. Free self-guided audio tours and HD video theatre.

TENMAN-GŪ 天満宮

Poet and scholar Sugawara-no-Michizane was a distinguished figure in the Kyoto court until he fell foul of political intrigue and was exiled to distant Dazaifu, where he died two years later. Subsequent disasters that struck Kyoto were blamed on his unfair dismissal and he became deified as Tenman Tenjin, the god of culture and scholars. **Tenman-gū** (☎ 922-8225; www.dazaifutenmangu.or.jp; 4-7-1 Saifu), his shrine and burial place, attracts countless visitors, among them students in hope of passing their college entrance exams. The *honden* (main hall) was rebuilt in 1591.

Behind the shrine is the **Kankō Historical Museum** (菅公歴史館; admission ¥200; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Wed-Mon) with dioramas showing events in Tenjin's life. The **treasure house** (宝物殿; admission ¥300; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Tue-Sun) has artefacts connected with his life and the shrine.

Every other month the shrine hosts an *omoshiro-ichi* (literally 'interesting market'), a giant flea market selling everything from antique kimonos to Mickey Mouse telephones. Dates vary, so check with tourist information at the station.

KŌMYŌZEN-JI 光明禪寺

Secreted away inside this small **temple** (☎ 922-4053; admission by donation ¥200; ☎ 9am-4.30pm) is an exquisite jewel of a Zen garden. It's a peaceful contrast to the crowds at the nearby shrine. It's on the southern edge of Dazaifu.

OTHER SIGHTS

The **Kyūshū Historical Museum** (九州歴史資料館; ☎ 923-0404; admission free; ☎ 9am-4pm Tue-Sun) is not far beyond Kōmyōzen-ji (above), with items mostly from the Stone Age to the Middle Ages.

Hidden out among the rice fields, **Kaidan-in** (戒壇院) dates from 761 and was one of the most important ordination monasteries in Japan. Adjacent **Kanzeon-ji** (観世音寺; ☎ 922-1811) dates from AD 746 but only the great bell, said to be the oldest in Japan, remains from the original construction. Its **treasure hall** (宝蔵; admission ¥500; ☎ 9am-4.30pm) has an impressive collection of statuary, most of it wood, dating from the 10th to 12th centuries. Many of the items show Indian or Tibetan influence.

Dazaifu Exhibition Hall (大宰府展示館; ☎ 922-7811; admission ¥150; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Tue-Sun) displays finds from local archaeological excavations. Nearby are the **Tofurō ruins** (都府楼), foundations of the ancient government buildings. **Enoki-sha** (榎社) is where Sugawara-no-Michizane died. His body was transported from here to its burial place, now Tenman-gū, on the ox cart that appears in so many local depictions.

Eating

O Cha Cha (お茶々; ☎ 929-0626; ☎ 11am-6pm) For a perfect sweet snack of *He-ko-yaki* (crepes with sesame and black sugar; ¥500) or *mochi* (pounded rice made into cakes and eaten at festive occasions), and of course *ma-cha* (traditional green tea) or freshly ground coffee made to order. It's located towards Lawsons.

Hiyori (日和; ☎ 929-0626; teishoku sets from ¥1300; ☎ lunch & dinner) Near the station and temple grounds, Hiyori offers excellent food and gracious service. Dinner reservations recommended. To find Hiyori, exit the station and cross the street to Lawson's, and walk 30m to the right. No English sign, but look for traditional wooden front and landscaping. Some English is spoken, plus a picture menu.

Getting There & Around

The private Nishitetsu line connects Tenjin in Fukuoka (p673) with Dazaifu (¥390, 25

minutes), but a change of trains at Nishitetsu-Futsukaichi station is required.

Bicycles can be rented (per three hours/day ¥300/500) at Nishitetsu Dazaifu station.

FUTSUKAICHI ONSEN 二日市温泉

☎ 092

About 300m south of JR Futsukaichi station, this small, unassuming *onsen* (mineral hot spring) town has public baths grouped together in the old main street. Favoured by traditionalists, **Gozen-yu** (御前湯; ☎ 928-1126; admission ¥200; ☎ 9am-9pm, closed 1st & 3rd Wed each month) is the most characteristic. From JR Futsukaichi station, cross back over the tracks, then follow the road under the torii (shrine gate) and across the stream.

TACHIARAI 大刀洗

☎ 0942

Even locals don't know about **Tachiarai Heiwa Kinenkan** (太刀洗平和記念館; ☎ 23-1227; admission ¥500; ☎ 9.30am-5pm), a tiny memorial museum established by ex-aviators and residents of Tachiarai, a small farmland village near Ogōri. The museum commemorates Japanese killed in WWII, including kamikaze pilots and Tachiarai locals who died when USAF B-29s bombed the military air base on 27 March 1945.

It's a strangely affecting place, with wartime memorabilia and a Japanese fighter plane, retrieved from nearby Hakata Bay where it crashed in 1942. Little is labelled in English.

KURUME 久留米

☎ 0942

The town of Kurume, south of Dazaifu, is noted for its crafts, including splash-dyed indigo textiles, paper making, lacquerware and bamboo work. Its rubber industry is responsible for *jika-tabi*, the floppy split-toed boots worn by labourers all over Japan, as well as for Bridgestone tyres.

Narita-san (成田山; ☎ 21-7500; ☎ 7am-5pm), a branch of the more famous temple outside Tokyo (see p229), is the town's biggest attraction, both literally and metaphorically speaking. Its 62m-high statue of the goddess of mercy, Kannon, stands beside a miniaturised replica of Borobudur. Inside the statue you can climb up past Buddhist treasures and religious dioramas right into the divine forehead.

Ishibashi Museum of Art (石橋美術館; ☎ 39-1131; www.ishibashi-museum.gr.jp; adult/child ¥500/300;

☎ 10am-5pm, closed Mon) boasts an excellent private collection of Asian and Western art assembled by the founder of Bridgestone, who felt strongly that art should always be publicly accessible rather than being hidden away. The museum is 1km from the Nishitetsu-Kurume station.

Going to Kurume from Fukuoka takes 30 minutes, either on the JR Kagoshima line or the private Nishitetsu line (¥600).

SAGA-KEN 佐賀県

KARATSU 唐津

☎ 0955 / pop 132,330

One of Japan's world-renowned pottery towns, Karatsu is a must-see for *yakimono* (pottery or ceramic ware) fans. Already a well-known pottery town, Karatsu's Korean influences elevated it from useful ceramic ware to art. Karatsu-made vessels are some of the finest in Japan. Not surprisingly, they are also some of the priciest: a small *sakazuki* (sake cup) can easily go for ¥20,000, a modest vase for ¥5,000,000. Even if you're not in the market

for a piece to add to your collection, meandering about the exquisite gardens and displays is a wonderful way to spend an afternoon. At JR Karatsu station, the **tourist information office** (☎ 72-4963; ☎ 9am-6pm) has a good English-language map booklet. Staff can book accommodation, but little English is spoken.

Sights & Activities

A modern reconstruction, **Karatsu-jō** (☎ 72-5697; admission ¥400; ☎ 9am-5pm) is picturesquely perched on a hill overlooking the sea. Inside are antique ceramics, samurai armour and archaeological displays.

Karatsu-jinja (☎ 72-2264) is a scenic shrine in the centre of the city, near the **Hikiyama Festival Float Exhibition Hall** (☎ 72-8278; admission ¥300), which contains the 14 floats used in the Karatsu Kunchi Matsuri (opposite). Designs include the Aka-jishi (Red Lion), samurai helmets, a dragon and a chicken.

Around town there are a number of **kilns and studios** where you can see local potters at work, and there are also ceramic shops along the street between Karatsu train station and the town centre. The most famous kiln-gallery

is that of **Nakazato Tarōemon** (☎ 72-8171; admission free). It's about 350m southeast of Karatsu station. Other inviting galleries are nearby, and you can feel free to peep into the well-manicured gardens. Most potters feel strongly that their art is not only a work in itself, but that it is a part of the surroundings. The gallery owners try hard to display their wares as attractively as possible – and with photos, it's best to ask permission before you shoot. Many also offer a complimentary tea service.

Just next to Karatsu station, **Karatsu Ware Festival Exhibition Hall** (☎ 73-4888; 2nd fl, Arupino Bldg) not only gives a taste of what the area's potters are producing, but also provides local contact information. Many of the items on display are for sale from ¥500.

A bicycle track cuts through the pine trees planted behind the 5km-long Niji-no Matsubara Beach Hotel. Each morning there is a busy **asa-ichi** (morning market) at the west end of the beach, from dawn until 9am.

For **surfing**, head to the middle of the beach where Karatsu catches good swells in late summer, especially around typhoon season. Karatsu's resident Rastafarian, Nishimura Eiji, knows all about it and his efficient little **Surf Camp shop** (☎ 72-1207) opposite the beach has boards and diving gear, along with a camper trailer (see right).

Festivals & Events

Doyō-yoichi (観光案内所; night market) On four consecutive Saturdays in late July and early August; held in the town centre with much singing and dancing.

Karatsu Kunchi Matsuri (唐津くunchi祭り) Taking place from 2 to 4 November, this spectacular festival dates from 1592.

Sleeping & Eating

Surf Camp shop (☎ 72-1207; per person ¥1000) Has a funky camper trailer opposite the beach with five lumpy bunk beds and free use of the leopard-skin TV.

Business Hotel SOLA (☎ 72-3003; www.hotel-sola.com in Japanese; s incl breakfast ¥4900; P ☎ ☎) This attractive and modern business hotel offers single rooms only. The generous breakfast buffet is a plus.

ourpick Niji-no-Matsubara Hotel (☎ 73-9111, 0120-73-9100; fax 75-9991; s/d/tw ¥5000/8400/10,500, Japanese-style r ¥15,000; P ☎ ☎ ☎) You can't get much closer to the ocean than at this well-managed budget gem a short bus (¥160) or taxi (¥900) ride from Karatsu station. Single rooms have ocean views, though twin rooms face inland. A full breakfast buffet runs to ¥900.

Kiage (☎ 73-8080; ☎ lunch & dinner) Next to the ticket turnstile at Karatsu station, Kiage serves up tasty noodles, *gyōza* and other hearty station fare. A generous pork *rāmen* and fried rice combo costs ¥750 (picture menu).

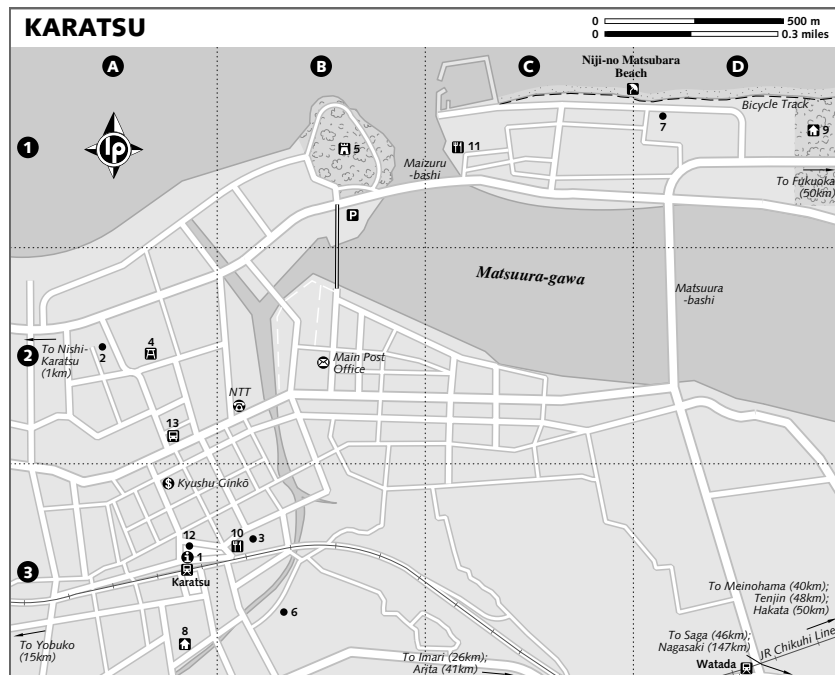
Mambō (☎ 75-1881; dishes ¥500-2000; ☎ lunch & dinner) Pick up a bento box for the train, or sit down for squid *shūmai teishoku* (set meal; ¥1500) at this Karatsu station eatery.

Kawashima Tōfu (☎ 72-2423; www.zarudofu.co.jp in Japanese; set meals ¥1500-2500; ☎ 8am & noon only, by reservation) Close by the station, Kawashima Tōfu has been making fresh bean curd since the Edo period. *Zaru-dōfu*, its speciality, is scooped like ice cream and served with set meals on *Karatsu-yaki* plates (see p678).

Early risers can check out the *asa-ichi* nearby the water for seafood and other delicacies.

Getting There & Around

From Fukuoka (p663), take the Kūkō subway line from Hakata or Tenjin to the end of the line at Meinohama, then change to the JR Chikuhui line to reach Karatsu (¥1110, 80 minutes). From Karatsu to Nagasaki (¥2830, 2½ hours) take the JR Karatsu line to Saga, and the JR Nagasaki line from there.



INFORMATION

Arupino Building アルピノ - ビル(see 3)
Tourist Information Office 旅行案内所1 A3

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Hikiyama Festival Float Exhibition
Hall 曳山展示場2 A2
Karatsu Ware Federation Exhibition
Hall アルピノ3 B3
Karatsu-jinja 唐津神社4 A2
Karatsu-jō 唐津城5 B1
Nakazato Tarōemon 中里太郎右衛門楽6 B3
Surf Camp Shop サーフキャンプショップ7 D1

SLEEPING

Business Hotel SOLA ビジネスホテル街8 A3
Niji-no-Matsubara Beach Hotel
虹ノ松原ビーチホテル9 D1
Surf Camp Shop サーフキャンプショップ(see 7)

EATING

Kawashima Tōfu 川島豆腐10 B3
Kiage きあげ(see 1)
Mambō マンボ(see 1)
Morning Market 朝市11 C1

TRANSPORT

Eki-mae Rent-a-Car 駅前レンタカー12 A3
Otemachi Bus Centre 大手町バスセンター13 A2

From the **Ōtemachi bus centre** (☎ 73-7511), highway buses depart for Fukuoka (¥1000, 70 minutes) and Nagasaki (¥2400, two hours).

Tourists are able to borrow bicycles for free from the **Arupino** (☎ 75-5155) building. For excursions around Saga-ken, **Eki-mae Rent-a-Car** (☎ 74-6204) is located in front of Karatsu station, with half- and full-day rentals.

HIGASHI-MATSUURA PENINSULA 東松浦半島

Karatsu is at the base of Higashi-Matsuura Peninsula, with its dramatic coastline, dotted at night with the flickering lights of fishing boats heading out to sea. During the day, a string of dramatic sea caves are evidence of the pounding waves rolling in from the Sea of Genkai.

Yobuko 呼子

A busy fishing port with a wonderful **morning market** for fish and produce; the main action is over by 8am. A series of modern wooden ryokan, charging from around ¥9500 per person (including meals), lines a narrow lane alongside the waterfront; rooms look straight out onto the bay. Prices drop 10% on weekdays. Squid sashimi and tempura are the local delicacies. Shōwa buses run from Karatsu to Yobuko (¥730, 30 minutes).

Nagoya-jō 名護屋城

En route to Cape Hatomi, buses stop at this now-ruined **castle** (admission ¥100), from which Toyotomi Hideyoshi launched his unsuccessful invasions of Korea. Look for the model of the castle in its glory days. Excellent views over the ruins are available from inside the

prefectural museum (名護屋城博物館; ☎ 0955-82-4905; admission free; ☎ 9am-6pm), which holds everything from Buddhas to fishing boats. Highlights include a 14th-century scroll painting of Kannon, and Toyotomi's lavishly embroidered overcoat.

IMARI 伊万里

☎ 0955 / pop 58,900

Although Imari is the name commonly associated with pottery from this area, the pottery is actually produced outside town. At JR Kurume station, check with the friendly English-speaking staff at **Imari City Information** (☎ 23-3479; ☎ 8.30am-6pm) for local maps and tips.

Ōkawachiyama (大川内山), where 20 pottery kilns operate today, is a 20-minute bus ride from Imari (¥150). Buses are frequent from Monday to Friday, but do not run on weekends. Arrive by midday to allow time for exploring. The **bridge** entering Ōkawachiyama is spectacularly decorated with shards of *Imari-yaki* and large vases. The bus stops right near the bridge and the village is on the surrounding hillsides on both sides of the river. At the bottom of the hill where the village begins is **Kataoka Tsurutarō Kōgeikan** (片岡鶴太郎工芸館; ☎ 22-3080; admission ¥300) gallery, an austere structure dedicated to the intense work of potter-genius Sawada Chitōjin, whose name means 'pottery-crazy person'. Uphill, **Nabeshima Hanyō-kōen** (鍋島藩窯公園; ☎ 23-1111) shows the techniques and living conditions of feudal-era potters.

Inside a narrow shopping arcade near the train station, **Akira Kurosawa Memorial Satellite Studio** (黒澤明記念館サテライトスタジオ;

☎ 22-9630; admission ¥500; ☎ 9am-5.30pm, closed 2nd & 4th Mon each month) has little English labelling, but it matters not to fans of one of cinema's greatest visionaries. Explore three floors of film memorabilia and directors' sketches of the legendary filmmaker and glimpse behind-the-scenes documentaries and rare outtakes from masterpieces like *Rashomon* (1950) and *Shichinin no Samurai* (Seven Samurai; 1954), which show continuously. There is also a lunch and wine bar.

Karatsu is connected with Imari (*futsū*, ¥630, 50 minutes) by the JR Chikuhi line. Local buses to Ōkawachiyama depart hourly from the main bus terminal, a few blocks west of the train station, where you can also catch direct buses to Fukuoka (¥2150, two hours).

ARITA 有田

☎ 0955 / pop 21,570

Kaolin clay was discovered here in 1615 by Ri Sampei, a naturalised Korean potter, enabling the manufacture of fine porcelain in Japan for the first time. By the mid-17th century it was being exported to Europe. The **tourist information desk** (☎ 42-4052; www.arita.or.jp/index_e.html; ☎ 9am-5pm) inside Arita train station can help orient visitors with maps and bus schedules.

An annual **pottery fair** is held from 29 April to 5 May.

Shops line the main street leading out from the station towards the **Kyūshū Ceramics Museum** (九州陶磁文化館; ☎ 43-3681; admission free; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Tue-Sun), a converted warehouse well worth a visit for its fine overview of the development of ceramic arts in Kyūshū. Pottery connoisseurs are sure to find the modest **Imaemon Gallery** (今衛門ギャラリー; ☎ 42-5550; admission ¥300; ☎ 9.30am-4.30pm Tue-Sun), **Kakiemon Kiln** (柿右衛門窯; ☎ 43-2267; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm) and **Genemon Kiln** (源衛門窯; ☎ 42-4164; admission free; ☎ 8am-5.30pm Mon-Sat) interesting, and there are dozens of other workshops to visit.

For the full treatment, join the Japanese package tours at **Arita Porcelain Park** (有田ポーセリンパーク; ☎ 41-0030; adult/student ¥1000/500; ☎ 10am-5pm Mar-Nov, to 4pm Dec-Feb), a 10-minute bus ride (¥150) from the train station, or shop for **Fukagawa porcelain** at **China on the Park** (チャイナオンザパーク; ☎ 46-3900; ☎ 9am-5.30pm) gallery 5km west of town on Rte 202, where you can watch the firing process.

A taxi from Arita train station costs about ¥1000. An Arita bus (¥150, four daily from

9.30am) can take you to the clay mines as well. Walk back to the station from the mines, about an hour's stroll if the many galleries don't tempt you. Along the way, note the house walls in some of the back streets: leftover pottery was often used in bricks and some of the older buildings show this quite well.

A short hop east of Arita, **Takeo Onsen** (武雄温泉) is a modern hot-springs town. The traditional baths are said to have refreshed the armies of Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Look for the lacquered Chinese-style gate, which was built without nails.

Takeo Onsen Youth Hostel (武雄温泉ユースホステル; ☎ 0954-22-2490; fax 0954-20-1208; dm member/nonmember incl breakfast ¥3300/4300) is a good option, but the last bus to the hostel (¥250, seven minutes) leaves Takeo Onsen station at 4pm.

From outside JR Arita station, private Matsuura-tetsudō trains depart for Imari (¥400, 25 minutes). JR *tokkyū* trains between Hakata (Fukuoka) and Sasebo stop at Arita, and also Takeo Onsen. Takeo Onsen is also connected to Arita by local trains (¥270, 20 minutes). Around town, community bus routes (¥150) cover most sights, departing hourly from Arita station. Rental bicycles are only ¥300 per day, at the train station.

NORTHWEST ISLANDS

Five large and many smaller islands lie to the northwest of Kyūshū and are accessible from Fukuoka, Sasebo and Nagasaki, but reaching them is not cheap. These are strictly islands for those who want to get far away from it all. Some are part of Saga-ken, but all of those below are part of Nagasaki-ken.

IKI 壱岐

☎ 09204 / pop 32,310

Attractive Iki, an island off Kyūshū's northern coast, has an area of 138 sq km and lies closer to Karatsu than Fukuoka. As well as being home to fine beaches, it's also relatively flat and a decent place for cyclists. Toyotomi Hideyoshi fortified **Gonoura**, the busiest port and a base for exploring the island. **Ondake-jinja**, north of Ashibe, features stone statues dedicated to a half-monkey deity. These eroded figures were carved by a local lord, and were originally intended to bring health to the island's livestock. **Yunomoto Onsen** on the west coast is the island's only hot spring.

KYŪSHŪ POTTERY TOWNS

In mountainous Kyūshū many villages had difficulty growing rice and turned towards other ways to make a living. Easy access to good clay, forests and streams made pottery-making a natural substitute, and a number of superb styles can be found here, many of Korean origin.

Imari and Arita are the major pottery towns of Saga-ken. From the early 17th century pottery was produced in this area using captive Korean potters, experts who were zealously guarded so that the secrets of their craft did not slip out. Pottery from this area, with its brightly coloured glazes, is still highly esteemed in Japan.

- Karatsu (p676): rough and groggy, marked by subtle earth tones; Karatsu-yaki (Karatsu pottery) is particularly prized for use in the tea ceremony (Saga-ken).
- Arita (opposite): a highly decorated porcelain ware, usually with squares of blue, red, green or gold (Saga-ken).
- Imari (above): similar to Arita, highly prized white-and-blue porcelain (Saga-ken).

Other minor sights include burial mounds, Buddhist rock carvings and historic ruins.

The gorgeous little **beach** near Katsumoto on the island's north side also has a camping ground nearby. At the hot springs, the *kokumin-shukusha* (people's lodge) **Ikishima-sō** (彦岐島荘; ☎ 43-0124; r with 2 meals ¥6660) is good value. Cheerful **Tomita-sō** (富田荘; ☎ 47-0011; r with 2 meals ¥5800) is in Gonoura. At Gonoura ferry terminal, the **information desk** (☎ 47-3700) can help book other *minshuku* (Japanese B&B), pension and ryokan accommodation around the island.

ORC Air has flights from Nagasaki to Iki (¥8000, 30 minutes, two daily). Jetfoils run year-round from Hakata to Gonoura or Ashibe (¥4680, 70 minutes, three daily) on Iki. Ordinary car ferry services take twice that long (¥1930, two daily). On Iki, rental cars start at ¥3000 per three hours, costing ¥10,000 for two days. They can be rented at all of the ferry ports. Try friendly **Genkai Kotsū Rent-a-Car** (☎ 44-5658). Bike rental is possible from **Kawabe Motors** (☎ 44-6636; ¥1000), near the ferry terminal; for an extra ¥1000 you can have the bike dropped to you anywhere on the island.

HIRADO-SHIMA 平戸島

☎ 0950 / pop 39,077

Blessed with sunshine and verdant tea fields, Hirado-shima's proximity to the mainland makes it easy – and cheap – to access. The island has interesting historical sights, beckoning white-sand beaches, two noteworthy festivals, and a little-known collection of erotic drawings.

The **tourist information centre** (☎ 22-2015; ☎ 8am-5pm), on the waterfront by the bus terminal, sometimes has English-language brochures and can book accommodation.

The island, close to Sasebo and actually joined to Kyūshū by a toll bridge (¥100) from Hirado-guchi, the nearest train station (a private line, Matsuura Tetsudō), has had an interesting European history. Portuguese ships first landed on Hirado-shima in 1549 and, a year later, St Francis Xavier visited the island (after his expulsion from Kagoshima). It was not until 1584 that the Portuguese formally established a trading post, but they were soon followed by the Dutch and the British. Relations between the British and Dutch became so acrimonious that, in 1618, the Japanese had to restore law and order on the island. In 1621 the British abandoned Hirado-shima

and Japan, and turned their full attention to India.

The main town, Hirado, is small enough to navigate on foot. The **Matsuura Historical Museum** (松浦史料博物館; ☎ 22-2236; admission ¥500; ☎ 8am-5.30pm) is housed in the residence of the Matsuura clan, who ruled the island from the 11th to the 19th centuries. Among the esteemed treasures is **Kanun-tei**, a *chanoyu* (tea-ceremony) house for the unusual *Chinshin-ryū* warrior-style tea ceremony that is still practised on the island today. **Hirado Christian Museum** (平戸切支丹資料館; ☎ 28-0176; admission ¥200; ☎ 8am-5pm Jan-Nov) displays some items relating to the island's history, including a Maria-Kannon statue that the 'hidden Christians' used in place of the Virgin Mary image.

Hirado-jō (平戸城; ☎ 22-2201; admission ¥500; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm) presides over the town, with an enormous number of rebuilt structures. Inside you'll see traditional armour and clothing, and a few artefacts from the hidden Christian era. There are fine views over the islands of the Gotō-rettō from **Cape Shijiki**. About midway down the beautiful west coast of the island, **Neshiko Beach** is a lovely and long stretch of sand, while **Senri-ga-hama** is renowned for windsurfing. **Hotel Ranpu** (ホテル蘭風; ☎ 23-2111), near the beach, rents windsurfing gear.

Jangara Matsuri (ジャンガラ祭り), a folk festival held on 18 August, is particularly colourful. It is quite different from mainland festivals and is reminiscent of Okinawa or Korea. Arrive in Hirado by late morning, if possible, for the afternoon events. From 24 to 27 October, the **Okunchi Matsuri** (おくんち祭り) has dragon and lion dancing at Kam-eoka-jinja.

Over in Hirado-guchi, the closest mainland town, there's a camping ground and a beautiful **youth hostel** (たびら平戸ロコースホステル; ☎ 57-1443; dm ¥3360) with two attractive *rotemburo* (open-air or outdoor baths), one for men facing the sea, and another for women with mountain views. They also make excellent meals on request, and at night you can glimpse the twinkling lights of the squid boats. The kind staff will also pick you up at the station if you call ahead, and may even detour for groceries!

Hirado-guchi (aka Tabira) is accessible by bus from Sasebo (¥1150, 1¼ hours), and by train (¥1190, 1½ hours). Local buses cross

the bridge to Hirado town (¥260, 10 minutes). Express buses (¥1450, 1½ hours) and trains (¥1600, 1½ hours) run from Nagasaki to Sasebo.

GETŌ-RETTŌ 五島列島

The two main islands in the Gotō-rettō group are **Fukue-jima** and **Nakadōri-shima**, but there are three other medium-sized islands plus over 100 small islands and islets. At one time these islands were a refuge for Japanese Christians fleeing the Edo government's anti-Christian repression; today the main attraction is their natural beauty.

Fukue, the fishing port on the island of the same name, is the main town in the group. The town's **Ishida-jō** was rebuilt in the 1860s. There's a street of samurai houses nearby. **Ondake**, about 800m from Fukue, is a coryloid volcano (315m) covered by grass and with an astronomical observatory. **Dozaki Tenshudō** (堂崎天主堂; ☎ 0959-73-0705; admission ¥300; ☎ 9am-4.30pm) has exhibits of artefacts from the 'hidden Christian' era, and is the oldest church in the Gotō islands. It's a 30-minute bus ride from Fukue. The island's most popular **beaches** are on the north central coast.

All Nippon Koku (ANK) has flights to Gotō-Fukue airport from Fukuoka (¥16,350, 35 minutes, three daily). Jetfoils leave Nagasaki for Fukue two to five times daily (¥6630, 1½ hours); regular car ferry services depart three times daily (¥2700, 3½ hours). Bicycles and cars can be rented on Fukue-jima.

NAGASAKI-KEN 長崎県

NAGASAKI 長崎

☎ 095 / pop 451,738

Nagasaki is a vibrant city, but its fate as the second atomic bomb target overshadows its early history of contact with the Portuguese and Dutch. Despite the tragic events of WWII, Nagasaki has a wealth of activities, state-of-the-art museums, delicious food, and natural beauty that rivals far more visited parts of Japan. Schedule at least a few days here to take advantage of all the city has to offer.

History

Nagasaki's role in Japan's emergence as a modern nation is as layered as it is tragic. Starting with the dramatic events of the 'Christian

Century' (1549–1650), Nagasaki became Japan's first gateway to the West, as well as its nearer neighbours in Asia. The arrival of an off-course Chinese ship in 1543, with guns and Portuguese adventurers aboard, signalled the start of Nagasaki's long period as Japan's principal connection with the West.

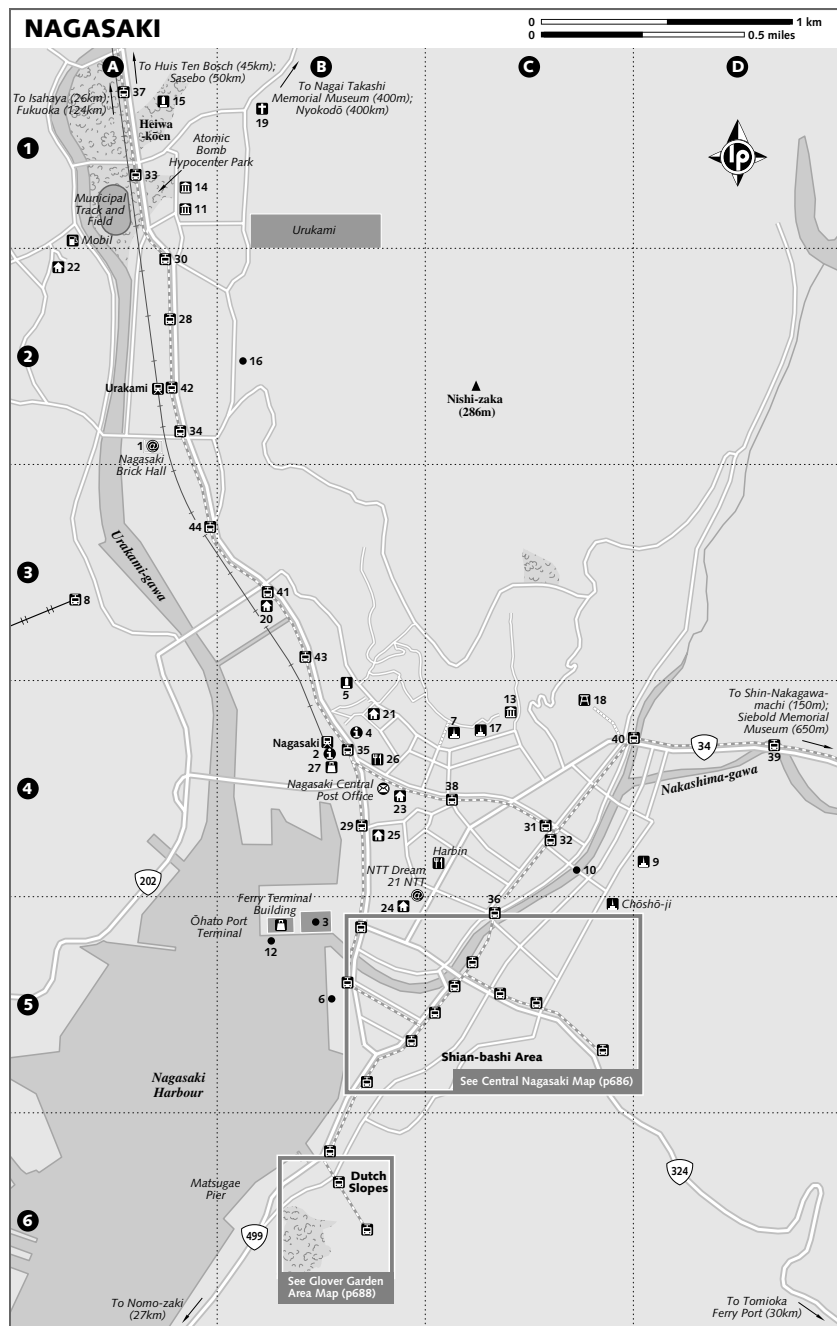
The first visitors were soon followed by the missionary St Francis Xavier in 1560, one of many to follow. Although their visits were brief, these Portuguese contacts were to have far-reaching effects. Among the first Japanese to be converted to Christianity by the visitors was a minor *daimyō* (regional lord), Ōmura Sumitada, in northwestern Kyūshū. Under Ōmura, Nagasaki became the main arrival point for Portuguese trade ships. Although the Portuguese principally acted as intermediaries between China, Korea and Japan, the trade was mutually profitable, and Nagasaki quickly became a fashionable and wealthy city.

However, by 1587 Japanese authorities, who had begun to perceive the growing influence of Christianity as a threat, implemented a policy of persecution, expelling the Jesuits, and in 1597 crucifying 26 European and Japanese Christians. The upstart religion was officially banned in 1614. Catholic Portuguese and Spanish traders were expelled in favour of the Protestant Dutch, who were perceived as being more interested in trade and less in religion.

The final chapter of the 'Christian Century', the Shimabara peasant uprising of 1637–38, led the authorities to forbid any contact with foreigners, and to ban all travel outside Japan. The single exception, however, was the closely watched Dutch enclave on the island of Dejima in Nagasaki harbour. Through this small outpost a trickle of Western science and culture found its way into Japan, and by 1720, Nagasaki had become an important scientific and artistic centre. When Nagasaki reopened to the West in 1859, it quickly re-established itself as a major economic force, particularly in shipbuilding, the industry that made it a target on 9 August 1945 (for details see the boxed text, p684).

Orientation

About 1km south of Nagasaki station, the Hamano-machi arcade and Shian-bashi entertainment area make up Nagasaki's central city area. Nagasaki is relatively compact and it's



quite feasible to walk all the way south to the Dutch slopes and Glover Garden. The atomic bomb hypocentre is in the suburb of Urakami, about 2.5km north of JR Nagasaki station by streetcar (Matsuyama station).

Information

BOOKSHOPS

Kinokuniya (Map p682; ☎ 811-4919; 4th fl, Yume-saito Bldg, 10-1 Motofune-chō) Offers large selection of English and foreign titles, plus CDs, software, DVDs and maps.

INTERNET ACCESS

Chikyū-shimin Hiroba (Map p682; ☎ 842-2002; 2nd fl, Nagasaki Brick Hall; per hr ¥100; ☎ 9am-8pm) Five minutes' walk from Urakami station.

Cybac Café (Map p686; ☎ 818-8050; 3rd-4th fl, Hashimoto Bldg, 2-46 Aburaya-chō; membership fee ¥300, per 15min ¥100; ☎ 24hr) Internet, darts, drinks, foot spa and more.

Internet Café Shin (Map p686; ☎ 822-7824; 5-25 Furukawamachi, Hamano-machi; per 30min ¥210; ☎ 8am-8pm) Chinatown, opposite Minato Park.

Kinko's (Map p682; ☎ 818-2522; Amu Plaza; per 10min ¥210; ☎ 8am-10pm) Next to 18-Bank.

MONEY

All postal savings ATMs accept internationally issued cards, and there's one inside Nagasaki station. Several branches of the 18-Bank handle (slowly!) foreign-currency exchange.

TOURIST INFORMATION

City tourist information centre (Map p682; ☎ 823-3631; Nagasaki station; ☎ 8am-8pm) Can assist with finding accommodation, though little English is spoken.

Nagasaki Prefectural Tourist Information Centre (Map p682; ☎ 828-7875; center@ngs-kenkanren.com; 3-1 Daikoki-machi; ☎ 9am-5.30pm, closed for Nenmatsu Nenshi holiday 27 Dec-3 Jan) Has detailed information on the city and prefecture and extremely helpful English-speaking staff. From the station, cross the pedestrian walkway to enter the prefectural building on the 2nd floor.

Sights

URAKAMI 浦上

Urakami, the hypocentre of the atomic explosion, is today a prosperous, peaceful suburb with modern shops, restaurants, cafés and even a couple of love hotels just a few steps from the hypocentre. Nuclear ruin seems comfortably far away.

Atomic Bomb Hypocenter Park (Map p682) has a smooth, black, square stone column (reminiscent of the monolith from Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*) marking the exact point above which the bomb exploded. Nearby are bomb-blasted relics, including a section of the wall of the Urakami Cathedral. The Matsuyama-machi tram stop on tram routes 1 or 3 is near the site.

INFORMATION

Chikyū-shimin Hiroba

地球市民ひろば.....1 A2

City Tourist Information Centre

長崎市総合観光案内所.....2 B4

Kinko's キンコーズ.....(see 27)

Kinokuniya 紀伊国屋書店.....3 B5

Nagasaki Prefectural

Tourist Information Centre

長崎県観光情報センター.....4 B4

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日本二十六聖人殉教地.....5 B4

Dejima Wharf

福濟寺長崎観音.....7 C4

Inasa-yama Cable Car

稲佐山ロープウェイ.....8 A3

Kanzen-ji 観音寺.....(see 17)

Kōfuku-ji 興福寺.....9 D4

Megane-bashi めがね橋.....10 C4

Museum 博物館.....(see 5)

Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum

長崎原爆資料館.....11 A1

Nagasaki Harbour Cruises

長崎港クルーズ.....12 B5

Nagasaki Museum of History &

Culture 長崎歴史文化博物館.....13 C4

Nagasaki Museum of History &

Folklore

長崎市歴史民俗資料館.....14 A1

Nagasaki Peace Statue

One-Pillar Torii (Sanno Shintō

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Urakami Cathedral 浦上天主堂.....19 B1

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Nagasaki ベストウエスタン

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Fukumatsu Ryokan 福松旅館.....21 B4

Hotel New Nagasaki

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JR Kyūshū Hotel Nagasaki

J R 九州ホテル.....(see 27)

Minshuku Tanpopo

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Nagasaki Ebisu Youth Hostel

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Sakamoto-ya 坂本屋別館.....24 B5

Tōyoko Inn Nagasaki

東横イン長崎駅前.....25 B4

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Amu Plaza アミュプラザ.....27 B4

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大学病院前.....28 A2

Goto-machi 五島町.....29 B4

Hamaguchi-machi 浜口町.....30 A2

Kenel Bus Terminal

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Kōkaidō-mae 公会堂前.....31 C4

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THE ATOMIC EXPLOSION

When the United States Air Force (USAF) B-29 bomber *Bock's Car* set off from Tinian in the Marianas on 9 August 1945 to drop the second atomic bomb on Japan, the target was Kokura (near Kitakyūshū) on the northeastern coast of Kyūshū. Fortunately for Kokura it was a cloudy day and, despite flying over the city three times, the bomber's crew could not sight the target, so a course was set for the secondary target, Nagasaki.

The B-29 arrived over Nagasaki at 10.58am but again visibility was obscured by cloud. When a momentary gap appeared in the cloud cover, the Mitsubishi Arms Factory, not the intended Mitsubishi shipyard, was sighted and became the target. The 4.5-ton 'Fat Man' bomb had an explosive power equivalent to 21 kilotons of TNT, far more than the 13 kilotons of Hiroshima's 'Little Boy'.

The bomb missed its intended target and scored a near-direct hit on the largest Catholic church in Asia (Urakami Cathedral; below). The explosion took place at 11.02am, at an altitude of only 500m, completely devastating the Urakami suburb of northern Nagasaki and killing 75,000 of Nagasaki's 240,000 population. Most victims were women, children and senior citizens, as well as 13,000 conscripted Korean labourers and 200 allied POWs. Another 75,000 people were injured and it is estimated that as many people again have subsequently died as a result of the blast. Everything within a 1km radius of the explosion was destroyed and after the resulting fires, a third of the city was wiped out.

For details of the atomic bomb that devastated Hiroshima, see p457.

The **Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum** (Map p682; ☎ 844-1231; www1.city.nagasaki.nagasaki.jp/na-bomb/museum; 7-8 Hirano-chō; admission ¥200, audio guide rental ¥150; 🕒 8.30am-5pm) exhibits begin with live footage of the bomb blast, then move through the city's destruction and loss of human life. The bent hands of a twisted clock stuck at 11.02 recall the moment when the bomb exploded above the city's neighbourhoods. These riveting exhibits also cover Japan's 15 years of military aggression prior to the war. A depressing, if must-see, experience, made more bearable by the streams of cheerful school kids who visit from all around Kyūshū.

Heiwa-kōen (平和公園; Peace Park) is north of the hypocentre, and is presided over by the **Nagasaki Peace Statue** (Map p682) and includes the Peace Symbol Zone, an unusual sculpture garden with contributions from around the world. An annual antinuclear protest is held at the park on 9 August.

Urakami Cathedral (Map p682; ☎ 844-1777; 1-79 Motoo-machi; 🕒 9am-5pm Tue-Sun), the largest church in the East, was completed in 1914 after three decades, then flattened in three seconds in 1945. The replacement cathedral was completed in 1959.

The courage of Dr Nagai Takashi in the face of overwhelming adversity is the subject of the extraordinary **Nagai Takashi Memorial Museum** (永井隆記念館; ☎ 844-3496; 22-6 Ueno-chō; admission ¥100; 🕒 9am-5pm). Already suffering from

leukaemia, and having lost his wife during the atomic explosion, Dr Nagai devoted himself to the treatment of bomb victims until he died in 1951. Even after he became bedridden, Dr Nagai continued to write prolifically and secure donations for survivors and orphans from the international community. Next door, Dr Nagai's small hut **Nyokodō** (如己堂) is preserved as a memorial.

The **One-Pillar Torii** (Map p682) is southeast of the hypocentre. The blast knocked down one side of the entrance arch to the Sannojinja, but the other pillar is still stands to this day.

Just short walk from the torii you'll find the **Nagasaki Museum of History & Folklore** (Map p682; ☎ 847-9245; admission free; 🕒 9am-4.30pm Tue-Sun), which exhibits antique household items such as fishing lures, dolls, cookware and so on, which otherwise one rarely gets to see. A 'hands on' room allows children of all ages to play around.

NAGASAKI STATION AREA

The **26 Martyrs Memorial** (Map p682) is a memorial wall with reliefs of the 26 Christians crucified in 1597, commemorating a harsh crackdown when six Spanish friars and 20 Japanese were killed. The youngest killed were boys aged 12 and 13. Behind the memorial is a simple **museum** (☎ 822-6000; 7-8 Nishisaka-machi; admission ¥250) with Christianity-related displays.

The memorial is five minutes' walk from JR Nagasaki station.

Fukusai-ji Kannon (Nagasaki Universal Kannon Temple; Map p682; ☎ 823-2663; 2-56 Chikugo-machi; admission ¥200; 🕒 8am-4pm) is in the form of a huge turtle carrying an 18m-high figure of the goddess Kannon on its back. Inside, a Foucault pendulum (demonstrating the rotation of the earth on its axis) hangs from near the top of the hollow statue. Only St Petersburg and Paris have larger examples.

The original temple, Chinese in origin, was built in 1628 but was completely burnt by the A-bomb fire. The replacement was built in 1976. The temple bell tolls at 11.02am daily, the exact time of the explosion (see opposite).

Nearby, the serene gardens of **Shōfuku-ji** (Map p682; ☎ 823-0282; 3-77 Tamazono-machi) temple, not to be confused with Sōfuku-ji (see right), contain an arched stone gate dating from 1657. The main building was reconstructed in 1715 in the ornate Chinese style of the time. The *onigawara* (ogre-covered) wall is particularly interesting, as is the book-burning kiln. There are clear views of Nagasaki port from here.

Just west is another temple, **Kanzen-ji** (Map p682), with one of the biggest camphor (*ku-sunoki*) trees in Nagasaki.

SUWA-JINJA 諏訪神社

Between 7 and 9 October, this enormous **shrine** (Map p682; ☎ 824-0445; 18-15 Kaminishiyama-machi) comes to life with the dragon dance of Kunchi Matsuri (p689), Nagasaki's most important annual celebration. Inside you will find a number of cutesy *komainu* (prayer dogs). Be sure to see the *kappa-komainu* (water-sprite dog, which you pray to by dribbling water on the plate on its head) and the *gan-kake komainu* (turn-table dog). The latter was used by prostitutes, who prayed that storms would arrive soon, forcing the sailors to stay at the port another day.

Suwa-jinja was established in 1625 and its forested hilltop setting is meditative indeed. Tram lines 3, 4 and 5 run to the Suwa-jinjamae stop.

NAGASAKI MUSEUM OF HISTORY & CULTURE 長崎歴史文化博物館

Just east of famous Sōfuku-ji temple you'll find Nagasaki's newest **museum** (☎ 818-8366; www.nmh.jp; 1-1-1 Tateyama; adult/child 6-12/student ¥600/300/400; 🕒 8.30am-7pm, closed 3rd Tue of month). Newly opened in 2005, this handsome struc-

ture focuses on Nagasaki's proud history of overseas exchange, including common items imported on Dutch and Chinese ships, plus a protective deity of navigation. The main gallery is a partial reconstruction of the Edo-period Nagasaki Magistrate's Office which, fittingly enough, controlled trade and diplomacy. There's a free English audio guide (two hours). From Sakuramachi tram stop, it's a five-minute walk.

TERA-MACHI (TEMPLE ROW) 寺町

Between the Shian-bashi entertainment area and the smaller of the city's two rivers, Nakajima-gawa, the justly famous Tera-machi (literally 'temple street') is anchored at either end by Nagasaki's two best-known temples, Sōfuku-ji and Kōfuku-ji, both Chinese in origin. The path connecting them is home to several smaller temples and famous gravesites and makes for a relaxing stroll.

An Ōbaku (the third-largest Zen sect after Rinzai and Sōtō) temple, **Sōfuku-ji** (Map p686; ☎ 823-2645; 7-5 Kajiya-machi; admission ¥300; 🕒 8am-5pm) was built in 1629 by Chinese monk Chaonian. Its red entrance gate (*Daippo-mon*) exemplifies Ming dynasty architecture. Inside the temple you can admire a huge cauldron that was used to prepare food for famine victims in 1681, and a statue of Maso, goddess of the sea, worshipped by early Chinese seafarers.

Continuing north along the path from Sōfuku-ji, steep steps lead up to **Daikō-ji** (Map p686; ☎ 822-2877; 5-74 Kajiya-machi), famous for somehow avoiding fires, even atomic ones, since its founding in 1614. Near the bottom of the road, turn right and take a few steps to **Hosshin-ji bell** (Map p686; ☎ 823-2892; 5-84 Kajiya-machi), which has the oldest temple bell in Nagasaki, cast in 1438. Then climb the stairs to the large Kuroganemochi tree at the entrance to **Daion-ji** (Map p686; ☎ 824-2367; 5-87 Kajiya-machi) and follow the path that heads to the grave of Matsudaira Zushonokami. He had been magistrate of Nagasaki for a year when, in 1808, the British warship HMS *Phaeton* sailed into Nagasaki harbour and seized two Dutch hostages. The British and Dutch were on opposite sides in the Napoleonic War at that time. Unable to oppose the British, Zushonokami capitulated to their demands for supplies, then promptly disembowelled himself.

A short distance further on, turn down the path to **Kōtai-ji** (Map p686; ☎ 823-7211; 1-1 Tera-machi),



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the only temple in Nagasaki with active monks-in-training and a favourite with local artists; it has a notable bell dating from 1702. The final temple along the temple-row walk, **Kōfuku-ji** (Map p682; ☎ 822-1076; 4-32 Tera-machi; admission ¥200; ☎ 6am-6pm), dates from the 1620s and is noted for the Ming architecture of the main hall. Like Sōfuku-ji, it is an Ōbaku Zen temple – and the oldest in Japan.

Megane-bashi めがね橋

Parallel to the temple row is the river, the Nakashima-gawa, which is crossed by a picturesque collection of 10 17th-century stone bridges. At one time, each bridge was the distinct entranceway to a separate temple. The best known is the double-arched **Megane-bashi** (Spectacles Bridge; Map p682), so called because the water and the arches come together to form a reflection in the water, creating a 'spectacles' effect. Six of the 10 bridges, including Megane-bashi, were washed away on 23 July 1982, but restored using the recovered stones.

SHIAN-BASHI AREA 思案橋

The Shian-bashi tram stop marks the site of the bridge over which pleasure-seekers would cross into the Shian-bashi quarter. The bridge's name loosely translates to 'Bridge of Pondering': men might stop here one last time, debating whether to seek a night of pleasure or to return home. The bridge and

the elegant old brothels are long gone but this is still the entertainment area of Nagasaki.

In between the bars, restaurants and clubs, Shian-bashi still has a few reminders of those old days. A walk south from the southern tram stop on Shian-bashi-dōri will bring you to the **Fukusaya Castella Cake Shop** (Map p686; ☎ 821-2938; www.castella.co.jp; 3-1 Funadaiku-machi), in business since 1624, and a must for history buffs and those with a taste for Japanese sweets. Turn left at this junction, pass the police post and you come to the driveway to **Kagetsu** (p691), now an elegant and expensive restaurant, but at one time an even more elegant and expensive brothel.

DEJIMA AREA 出島地区

From the mid-17th century until 1855, the small isolated Dutch trading post of Dejima provided Japan its only peephole to the world outside; the Dutch were cordoned off and only allowed contact with their Japanese trading partners and courtesans. The area around **Dejima Wharf** (Map p682) was the focal point for much of this activity, and has recently been converted into an open-air collection of restaurants, bars, shops and galleries, all facing the bay and well worth a visit.

Dejima Museum 出島資料館

The small **museum** (Map p686; ☎ 822-2207; www1.city.nagasaki.nagasaki.jp/dejima/main.html; 8-21 Dejima; admission ¥300; ☎ 9am-5pm), a cluster of small buildings, has exhibits on the Dutch and other foreign

contact with Nagasaki, and free walking-tour maps of the entire site. Although the island was submerged during 19th-century land-reclamation projects, the trading post, now a national historic site, has been restored.

CHINATOWN AREA 中国街

Theoretically, during Japan's long period of seclusion Chinese traders were just as circumscribed in their movements as the Dutch, but in practice they were relatively free. Only a couple of buildings remain from the old area (Map p686), but Nagasaki still has an energetic Chinese community that has had a great influence on the city's culture, architecture, festivals and cuisine.

GLOVER GARDEN AREA グラバー園周辺 Glover Garden

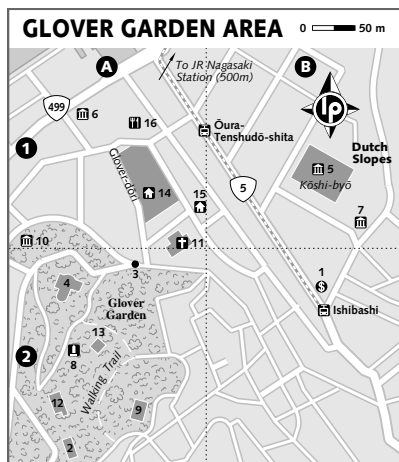
At the southern end of Nagasaki, some former homes of the city's pioneering Meiji period European residents have been reassembled in this hillside **garden** (Map p688; ☎ 822-8223; 8-1 Minami-yamatemachi; adult/student ¥600/300; 🕒 8am-9.30pm 27 Apr-9 Oct, to 6pm 10 Oct-26 April). The series of moving stairways up the hill, along with the koi ponds and fountains, gives it the air of a cultural theme park (ever popular in Japan). The stylish houses are the main draw here, along with the interesting history and superb views across Nagasaki.

The garden takes its name from Thomas Glover (1838-1911), whose arms-importing operations played an important part in the Meiji Restoration; he built the first train line in Japan and he helped establish the country's first modern shipyard.

The best way to explore the hillside garden is to take the walkways to the top and then walk back downhill. At the top of the park is **Mitsubishi No 2 Dock building** with displays about the city's important shipyard. Going down the hill you come to **Walker House**, the **Ringer** and **Alt Houses** and finally **Glover House**. Halfway down the hill, above Glover House, is the renowned **statue** of the Japanese opera singer Miura Tamaki, often referred to as Madame Butterfly. You exit the garden through the **Nagasaki Traditional Performing Arts Museum**, which has a display of dragons and floats used in the colourful Kunchi Matsuri.

Oura Catholic Church 大浦天主堂

Just below Glover Garden is this hilltop **church** (Map p688; ☎ 823-2628; www9.ocn.ne.jp/~oura/in Japa-



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nese; admission ¥300; 🕒 8.30am-5pm). Soon after it opened its doors in 1864 to Nagasaki's foreign community, a group of Japanese arrived to announce that Christianity had been maintained among the Urakami community throughout the 250 years it had been banned. Their timing could not have been worse. Japan was anxious about contacts with the West, and when this news leaked out, thousands of Urakami residents were exiled to other parts of Japan before Christianity was legalised in 1873. The church

is dedicated to the 26 Christians crucified in 1597 (see p681 for more information).

Dutch Slopes オランダ坂

The gently inclined flagstone streets known as the Dutch Slopes (Oranda-zaka; Map p688) were once lined with wooden **Dutch houses**. Several buildings have been beautifully restored and offer glimpses of Japan's early interest in the West. **Koshashin-shiryōkan** (Map p688; ☎ 820-3386; 6-25 Higashi Yamatemachi; combined admission ¥100; 🕒 9am-5pm Tue-Sun) has a collection of vintage photographs (including a rare one of the Meiji-era hero Sakamoto Ryoma), while **Maizō-shiryōkan** has archaeological artefacts. 'Oranda-zaka' comes from the name foreigners were given: Oranda-san, people from Holland.

Other Sights

Behind the jauntily coloured **Kōshi-byō**, a Confucian shrine, the **Historical Museum of China** (Map p688; ☎ 824-4022; 10-36 Ōuramachi; admission ¥525; 🕒 8.30am-5pm) has exhibits on loan from Beijing. The original shrine dates from 1893, but was destroyed in the fires following the A-bomb explosion.

The historic **Hong Kong & Shanghai Bank Nagasaki Branch Museum** (Map p688; ☎ 827-8746; 4-27 Matsugaemachi; admission ¥100; 🕒 9am-5pm) is also worth a peek. It has high ceilings, burnished wood banisters, several displays, and signage in English, French and Chinese.

SIEBOLD MEMORIAL MUSEUM

シーボルト記念館

Near Shin-Nakagawamachi tram stop is the site of **Dr Siebold's house** (☎ 823-0707; www1.city.nagasaki.nagasaki.jp/siebold/; 2-7-40 Narutaki; admission ¥100; 🕒 9am-5pm Tue-Sun), an imposing Western-style structure set in a leafy residential neighbourhood of narrow lanes and flower boxes. The doctor helped introduce Western medicine and scientific learning to Japan between 1823 and 1829, though he was eventually expelled for trying to smuggle Japanese goods. His daughter Ine was one of Japan's first female obstetricians.

INASA-YAMA LOOKOUT 稲左山展望台

From the western side of the harbour, a **cable car** (ropeway; Map p682; ☎ 861-6321; return ¥1200; 🕒 9am-10pm Mar-Nov, to 9pm Dec-Feb) ascends every 20 minutes to the top of 333m-high Inasayama, offering superb views over Nagasaki,

particularly at night. Buses 3 and 4 leave from outside JR Nagasaki station; get off at the Ropeway-mae stop and walk up the stone steps through the grounds of Fuchi-jinja.

Tours

Nagasaki Harbour Cruises (Map p682; ☎ 822-5002; Nagasaki Harbour Terminal Bldg) offers a great way to glimpse picturesque Nagasaki (¥1200, one hour). From 20 July to 31 August, join the one-hour midnight cruise (¥1600), then stroll over to Dejima Wharf for a drink or late bite.

Festivals & Events

Peiron dragon boat races Colourful races introduced by the Chinese in the mid-1600s, and held to appease the god of the sea, still take place in Nagasaki Harbour in late July.

Shōrō-nagashi On 15 August in this beautiful event, lanternlit floats are carried down to the harbour in honour of one's ancestors. The boats are handcrafted from a variety of items (bamboo, wood, rice stems etc) and vary in size depending on the family or individual. Eventually they are carried out to sea and destroyed by the waves. The best viewpoint is at Ōhato (Map p686).

Kunchi Matsuri Held 7-9 October, an energetic festival that features more Chinese dragons, this time dancing all around the city but especially at Suwa-jinja. The festival is marked by elaborate costumes, fireworks, cymbals, and giant dragon puppets on poles.

Sleeping

Nagasaki has a wide range of accommodation possibilities stretching from the A-bomb site to Glover Garden. Central Nagasaki, convenient for both walking and catching public transport around town, has a number of affordable hotels, ryokan and *minshuku*.

BUDGET

Fukumatsu Ryokan (Map p682; ☎ 823-3769; 4-18 Daikokumachi; r ¥3500; 🕒) A block behind Kenei bus station, this small and friendly budget choice has five rooms, clean and bright, with shared bathroom. Look for the small red oval sign, just opposite a small shrine.

Minshuku Tanpopo (Map p682; ☎ 861-6230; www.tanpopo-group.biz/tanpopo; 21-7 Hoeimachi; s/d/tr with shared bathroom ¥4000/7000/9000; 🕒) Close to JR Urakami station, this smart budget choice and Japanese Inn Group member features common bathrooms with mineral spring waters. Breakfast (¥600) and dinner (¥1500) are optional extras.

Nagasaki Ebisu Youth Hostel (Map p682; ☎ 824-3823; www.5a.biglobe.ne.jp/~urakami; 6-10 Ebisumachi; dm incl/excl meals ¥4300/2500; 🍷) Run by a friendly family with years of experience helping travellers. There are three Japanese-style dorm rooms, and one more with bunk beds. Curfew is 11pm.

Fukumoto Ryokan (Map p686; ☎ 821-0478; 3-8 Dejimamachi; r incl/excl 2 meals ¥6000/4500; 🍷) Located in front of the Matsuda Cars building, this welcoming spot is a cross between a ryokan and a business hotel, with both Japanese-style and Western-style rooms.

MIDRANGE

Nishiki-sō (Map p686; ☎ 826-6371; 1-2-7 Nishikojima; r incl breakfast ¥4000-4500; 🍷) The pick of the pack for charm, this is a creaky old building with 11 rooms, most Japanese style. The helpful staff can direct you around town, and there's an in-house *ofuro* bath and laundry. Check out the massive *kushinoki* (camphor tree) around the corner.

Tredia Hotel Dejima (Map p686; ☎ 826-4176; www.tredia-h.com in Japanese; 1-25 Dejimamachi; s/tw from ¥6100/10,500; 🍷 🍷 🍷) This smart 133-room hotel near the port is just opposite Dejima Museum and good value. Rooms are long and light, and come with wide desks

Toyoko Inn Nagasaki Ekimae (Map p682; ☎ 825-1045; 5-45 Gotōmachi; s/d/tw incl breakfast ¥5460/7560/7560; 🍷 🍷 🍷 (wi-fi)) This popular, well-managed business hotel gets points for small but efficient rooms, service and location between the bay and Nagasaki station.

JR Kyūshū Hotel Nagasaki (Map p682; ☎ 832-8000; fax 832-8001; 1-1 Onoukemachi; s/tw/tr ¥6900/12,600/16,200; 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷) Typical JR value, with small stylish lobby, and unusually large rooms, many overlooking Nagasaki.

our pick Holiday Inn (Map p686; ☎ 828-1234; fax 828-0178; 6-24 Dozamachi; s/d/tw from ¥10,000/14,000/15,000; 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷) Near the Shian-bashi entertainment area on a quiet alleyway, this 88-room inn is easily one of the best value in town. The lobby is cosy and inviting; service, room size and furnishings match far more expensive choices.

TOP END

Best Western Premier Hotel Nagasaki (Map p682; ☎ 821-1111; www.bestwestern.com/premier; 2-26 Takaramachi; s/d/ste from ¥15,000/23,000/45,000; 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷) Nagasaki's most elegant hotel features a black marble lobby, complete with fireplace and grand piano. Rooms are large and handsome,

many with harbour views. Opposite tram stop Takara-machi.

Sakamoto-ya (Map p682; ☎ 826-8210; 2-13 Kanayamachi; r per person with 2 meals from ¥15,750; 🍷) A magnificent old (1890s) and very well-kept ryokan, with traditional touches, a beautiful garden, and only 12 rooms.

Hotel New Nagasaki (Map p682; ☎ 826-8000; www.newnaga.com; s/d/tw from ¥21,700/27,700/30,000; 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷) Next to JR station, this well-regarded hotel sports a massive marble lobby, along with spacious rooms, modern furnishings and satellite TV. All rooms have bay or hillside city views.

Other recommendations:

Sun Road Inn (Map p686; ☎ 821-5039; fax 827-7724; 2-11 Yoriai-Machi; s/tw from ¥5700/9500; 🍷) Good value on quiet street, just past small car park.

Hotel Monterey Nagasaki (Map p688; ☎ 827-7111; nag@hotelmonterey.co.jp; 1-22 Ōuramachi; s/tw from ¥9000/18,000; 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷) Comfy Portuguese-styled hotel with antique lamps to match, near Glover Garden.

ANA Hotel Nagasaki Glover Hill (Map p688; ☎ 818-6601; www.ana-gloverhill.co.jp in Japanese; 1-18 Minami Yamatemachi; s/tw from ¥12,700/23,000; 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷) Renovated upscale complex overlooking Glover Garden.

Eating

Like Yokohama and Kōbe, Nagasaki has the reputation of being a culinary crossroads. The city's diverse influences come together in *ship-poku-ryōri*, a banquet-style offering (the more diners the better) that rolls together Chinese, Japanese and Portuguese influences. *Champon*, the local *rāmen* speciality (inexpensive and very popular) is made with squid, octopus, pork, *kamaboko* (white and pink fish-based patty) and veggies in a white, salt-based broth. *Sara-udon* is the stir-fried equivalent.

Unryūtei (Map p686; ☎ 823-5971; 3-15 Motoshikkui-machi; plate of *gyōza* ¥300; 🍷) dinner) A Nagasaki stand-by tucked away at the end of Shian-bashi Gourmet St, this place only seats six and specialises in cheap and tasty *gyōza* (dumplings), excellent with beer.

Tabititojaya (Map p682; ☎ 822-9916; 6-15 Daikoku-machi; lunch from ¥520; 🍷) breakfast, lunch & dinner; E) This charming and tiny café makes perfect sandwiches, fresh juices and coffee that the regulars drink from pottery cups facing the counter. Look for the word 'coffee' and more cups in the window.

Kairaku-en (Map p686; ☎ 822-4261; 10-16 Shinchi-machi; dishes ¥700-1000) Famed for its *champon* and

sara-udon, this is among the best of several southern Chinese eateries clustered around the Nagasaki Washington Hotel. It's a three-minute walk from Tsuki-machi tram stop, just inside the Chinatown gate.

Shikairō (Map p688; ☎ 822-1296; set meals ¥900-1100) An imposing Chinese-style restaurant near Glover Garden, credited as the creator of *champon*. It has been in operation since 1899.

Yosso (Map p686; ☎ 821-0001; 8-9 Hama-machi; set meals from ¥1050; 🍷) lunch & dinner, closed 2nd & 4th Tue of month; 🍷 (V) 🍷) From the old grandfather clock on the wall to the traditional *chawan-mushi* (egg custard with veggies), Yosso is very Nagasaki – relaxed, welcoming and good value. Look for the string of red lanterns high above the dark-wood exterior.

Ginnabe (Map p686; ☎ 821-8213; 7 Douza-machi; set meals ¥1500; 🍷) lunch & dinner; E) Combining modern and traditional, Ginnabe stands out in Hamano-machi for its style and good value, with generous *teishoku* such as *unagi* (eel; ¥1365) or tempura and sushi (¥1575).

Hamakatsu Shippoku (Map p686; ☎ 826-8321; 6-50 Kajiya-machi; per person around ¥3000) Banquet-style *shippoku*. Last order is at 8.30pm.

Kagetsu (Map p686; ☎ 822-0191; 2-1 Kajiya-machi; set meals ¥5200-15,000; 🍷) lunch & dinner) A *shippoku* restaurant that dates back to 1642 when it was a high-class brothel; today it's a rabbit warren of private and pricy dining rooms and tiny gardens.

Beside JR Nagasaki station, **Amu Plaza** (Map p682; 5th fl; meals from ¥650) has a surprisingly varied restaurant arcade. Follow the lunch crowd to the locally owned **Sushi Katsu** (☎ 808-1501; 5th fl, Amu Plaza; sushi plates from ¥200). Look for white lanterns out front and moving sushi inside. **Daichi no Table** (☎ 818-2388; 5th fl, Amu Plaza; lunch/dinner ¥1200/1500; 🍷) lunch & dinner; 🍷 (V) 🍷) is a busy natural-food all-you-can-eat Japanese buffet featuring sashimi, *champon*, soup and three kinds of rice. Watch the time, too; you're given 90 minutes. **Dragon Deli** (basement, Amu Plaza; items from ¥300) is an import grocery shop selling goodies from all across Asia and the West, and a good place to pick up a gift. A few steps away is a branch of famous **Fukusaya bakery** (☎ 808-2938), which has been making Portuguese pound cake since 1624.

Drinking

Nagasaki's nightlife tends to centre on the narrow lanes of Hamano-machi.

Albert's Diablo (Map p686; 90-4992-3407; 2nd fl, Azuma Bldg, 15-13 Douza-machi; draughts & cocktails from ¥600) Pacific Islander Albert draws a late crowd to this mellow music bar. You'll hear blues, jazz, reggae, plus the occasional TV sporting event.

Moonshine (Map p686; ☎ 823-9186; 2nd fl, Ebisu Bldg, 10-9 Douza-machi; dishes from ¥700, drinks from ¥500) Set above a *rāmen* shop, the menu includes Western, Chinese and Japanese cuisine. After 10pm the long bar starts to fill up; by midnight it's usually packed.

Entertainment

Panic Paradise (Map p686; ☎ 824-6167; basement, Nagatoshokai Bldg, 5-33 Yorozyu-machi; drinks from ¥600) Cool, cosy and friendly, this tight basement bar with open-pipe décor features nightly DJ rock, blues and reggae.

Ayer's Rock (Map p686; ☎ 828-0505; basement, Hananoki Bldg, 6-17 Marya-machi; admission Fri & Sat ¥1500) This cosy basement bar thumps with techno DJs, bongos and beer. Popular with local musicians, it's a good place to scope out the local scene.

Shopping

There are displays of local crafts and products at 3-1 Daikoku-machi, directly opposite JR Nagasaki station on the same floor as the Nagasaki Prefectural Tourist Information Center. You'll also find lots of shops along the busy Hamano-machi shopping arcade. Do your best to ignore Nagasaki's tortoiseshell crafts: turtles still need their shells too.

Getting There & Away

There are flights between Nagasaki and Tokyo (Haneda airport, ¥34,700), Osaka (¥23,000) and Naha (¥25,000, 1½ hours) in Okinawa, plus flights to other Kyūshū cities.

From the Kenei bus station opposite JR Nagasaki station, buses depart for Unzen (¥1900, 1¾ hours), Sasebo (¥1450, 1½ hours), Fukuoka (¥2900, 2¾ hours), Kumamoto (¥3790, three hours) and Beppu (¥4500, 3¾ hours). Night buses for Osaka (¥11,000, 10 hours) leave from both the Kenei bus station and the highway bus station next to the Irie-machi tram stop.

JR lines from Nagasaki head for Sasebo (*kaisoku*, ¥1600, 1¾ hours) or Fukuoka (*tokkyū*, ¥4410, two hours).

There are ferries from a few places around Nagasaki, including Ōhato terminal, south of JR Nagasaki station.

To travel between here and the Amakusa Archipelago, take bus 10 to Mogi port from the South Exit at Nagasaki station (¥160, 30 minutes), then the ferry to Tomioka on Amakusa island (one way ¥1600, 70 minutes).

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Nagasaki's airport is about 40km from the city. Airport buses (¥800, 45 minutes) operate from stand 4 of the Kenei bus station opposite JR Nagasaki station (Map p682). A taxi costs about ¥9000.

BICYCLE

Bicycles can be rented (40% discount for JR Pass holders) from **JR Nagasaki station** (Map p682; ☎ 826-0480) at the Eki Rent-a-Car. Some are even electric powered. Rates are reasonable (per two hours/day ¥500/1500).

BUS

A greater area is covered by buses than by trams (with buses reaching more of the sights directly) but the Japanese script on the bus service is more difficult to decipher than that on the tram service.

TRAM

The best way of getting around Nagasaki is on the easy-to-use tram service. There are four colour-coded routes numbered 1, 3, 4 and 5 (No 2 is for special events). Most stops are signposted in English. It costs ¥100 to travel anywhere in town, but you can only transfer to another line at the Tsuki-machi stop if you have a ¥500 all-day pass for unlimited travel. These passes are available from the shop beside the station information counter, from the Nagasaki Prefectural Tourist Information Center (p683) across the road, or from most hotels. Most trams stop running before 11.30pm.

Around Nagasaki

HUIS TEN BOSCH ハウステンボス

This 'virtual-Holland' **theme park** (☎ 095-627-0526; www.english.huistenbosch.co.jp/index.html; adult/child/student from ¥3200/1000/2000; ☎ 9am-9pm) exemplifies Japan's long fascination with the West. Huis Ten Bosch (house in the forest) often delights Dutch visitors, who are intrigued by the mirror image it presents. The rambling replica of an old Dutch town, complete with horse-drawn carriages and windmills, faces

Hirado island, where a Dutch trading post opened in 1609.

SHIMABARA PENINSULA 島原半島

The most popular route between Nagasaki and Kumamoto is via the hilly roads of Shimabara *hondō* (main route). Local bus services connect with ferries from Shimabara to the Kumamoto coast, and tour buses operating between Nagasaki and Kumamoto explore the peninsula.

It was an uprising on the Shimabara peninsula that led to the suppression of Christianity in Japan and the country's subsequent two centuries of seclusion from the West. The peasant rebels made their final valiant stand against overwhelming odds (37,000 versus 120,000) at Hara-jō, at almost the southern tip of the peninsula. The warlords even chartered a Dutch man-of-war to bombard the hapless rebels, who held out for 80 days before being slaughtered.

On 3 June 1991, the 1500m peak of Unzen-dake erupted after lying dormant for 199 years, taking the lives of 43 journalists and scientists. Over 12,000 people were evacuated from nearby villages before the lava flow reached the outskirts of Shimabara.

UNZEN 雲仙

☎ 0957 / pop 51,100

Unzen is a very active volcanic centre. Home to Japan's first national park (1934), Unzen's woodsy walks and paths are clearly signposted in English and you can explore the town and nearby trails in an afternoon. For town maps and help with accommodation, check with the resourceful **Unzen Tourist Association** (雲仙観光協会; ☎ 73-3434; ☎ 9am-5pm).

The bubbling and spurting *jigoku* (hells; actually boiling mineral hot springs) currently boil nothing more sinister than the popular wayside snack of eggs, known as *onsen tamago*; a few centuries ago the same fate was reserved for 30 stubborn Christian martyrs who were tossed into bubbly Oito Jigoku.

Today you can voluntarily boil yourself at any of the resort's luxury hotels, though budget travellers will likely prefer the three excellent public baths, all within walking distance of the bus station:

Kojigoku (小地獄温泉館; ☎ 73-3273; admission ¥400; ☎ 9am-9pm)

Shin-yu (新湯温泉; ☎ 0957-73-3545; admission ¥100; ☎ 9am-11pm, closed Wed)

Yunosato (湯の里温泉; ☎ 73-2576; admission ¥100; ☎ 9am-10.30pm, closed 10th & 20th each month)

The ultramodern **Unzen Spa House** (雲仙スパハウス; ☎ 73-3131; admission ¥800; ☎ 9am-6pm), next to the Unzen Tourist Association office, even has a glass-blowing workshop (lessons ¥2000 to ¥3000 per 10 to 15 minutes, enough time to make something to break on your way home).

From the town there are popular walks to Kinugasa, Takaiwa-san and Yadake, all situated within the **Unzen-Amakusa National Park**, Japan's oldest national park. The **Unzen Visitors Centre** (雲仙お山の情報館; ☎ 73-3636; ☎ 7am-6pm 10 Apr-2 Nov, 9am-5pm 3 Nov-9 Apr, closed Thu), opposite the Kyūshū Hotel, has excellent displays on flora and fauna and plentiful information in English, especially about hiking trails. Around town, the 1300-year-old temple, **Manmyō-ji** (満明寺; ☎ 73-3422), rebuilt in 1638, and the screeching, geyserlike **Daikyōkan Jigoku** are worth seeing.

Outside town, reached via Nita Pass, is **Fugen-dake** (1359m), part of the Unzen-dake range, with its popular hiking trail. The views of the lava flow from the summit are incredible.

The bus to Nita-tōge parking area, the starting point for the Fugen-dake walk, operates regularly between 9am and 3pm (¥370, 20 minutes) from Unzen's **Shimatetsu bus station** (☎ 74-3131); the last bus back to Unzen leaves the Nita Pass car park at 4.30pm. A **cable car** (ropeway; ☎ 73-3572; ticket each way ¥610; ☎ 8.55am-5.30pm) whisks you in three minutes close to a shrine and the 1333m-high summit of **Myōken-dake**, from where the hike to Fugen-dake via **Kunimi-wakare** takes just under two hours return. You can also walk the 3.5km back from the shrine to Nita via the village and valley of Azami-dani. For a longer excursion (three hours), you can detour to **Kunimi-dake** (1347m). Along the way you can get a good glimpse of Japan's newest mountain, the smoking lava dome of **Mount Heisei Shinzan** (1486m) (literally 'new mountain'), created in November 1990, when Fugen-dake blew its stack.

Sleeping & Eating

Unzen has numerous hotels, *minshuku* and ryokan with nightly rates from around ¥7500, including dinner and brekkie. You can easily

visit as a day-tripper, but staying overnight makes for a refreshing stop between Nagasaki (p608) and Kumamoto (p695). On Saturdays and holidays, expect to pay a surcharge.

Shirakumo-no-ike camping ground (白雲の池キャンプ場; ☎ 73-2642; camp sites from ¥300; ☎ 10 Jul-31 Aug) This picturesque summer camp site next to Shirakumo Pond is about a 600m walk downhill from the post office; tent hire is available (¥500).

Unzen Sky Hotel (雲仙スカイホテル; ☎ 73-3345; fax 73-3349; r per person incl/excl 2 meals from ¥9600/5250; ☎) Between Yusanota public *onsen* and Manmyō-ji, this smart budget option has Japanese-style and Western rooms, and an attractive sulphur *rotemburo*.

Yumoto Hotel (湯元ホテル; ☎ 73-3255; fax 73-2126; r per person with 2 meals/breakfast ¥12,800/8000; ☎ ☒) A hive of activity in the town centre, Unzen's oldest hotel has 70 rooms, a sauna, *rotemburo* and traditional Japanese garden. Anyone can use for free its *ashiyu* (foot bath) outside the front lobby, or the handsome *onsen* for only ¥150.

Unzen Tabi-no-Biru-kan (雲仙旅の麦酒館; ☎ 73-3113; ☎ lunch & dinner; ☎ E) Overlooking woodsy Unzen, this lively local brewpub pours a local favourite, 'Unzen Yuagari Biru' (after-bath beer). It also serves up pizza and a popular beer curry with salad (¥950).

Getting There & Away

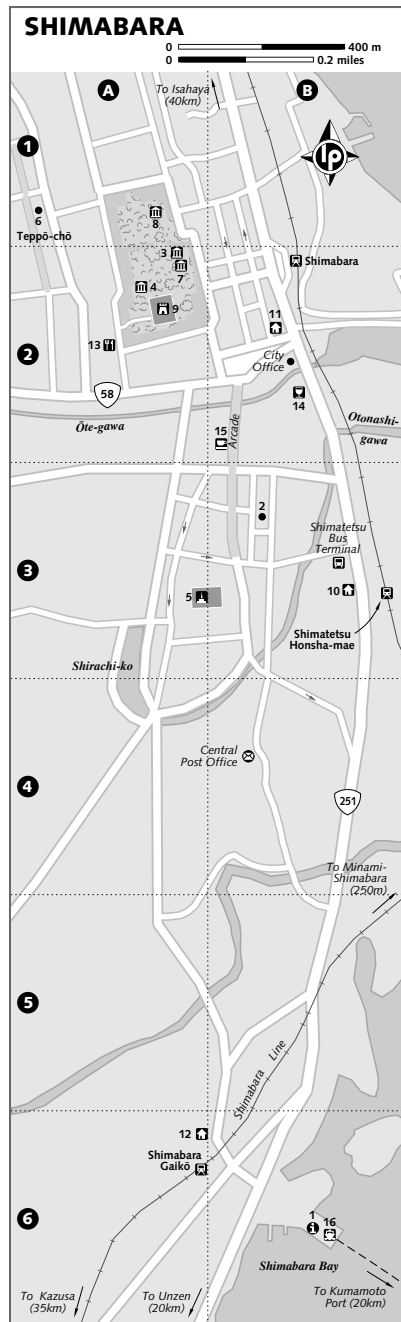
Direct buses between Nagasaki and **Shimatetsu bus station** (☎ 74-3131) in Unzen take almost two hours (¥1900). Buses run more frequently from the town of Isahaya, which is 35 minutes by *kaisoku* train (¥450) from Nagasaki. From Isahaya to Unzen, buses take another 80 minutes (¥1400). Onward buses from Unzen to Shimabara (¥810, 45 minutes) stop at Shimabara's port (p695) and castle before arriving at Shimabara train station.

SHIMABARA 島原

☎ 0957 / pop 50,800

The ferry port to nearby Kumamoto, Shimabara is famous for its clear springs, which first appeared following the 1792 eruption of Mt Unzen.

The **tourist information office** (☎ 62-3986; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm) is on the 1st floor of the port terminal complex (with various shops and the bus station). Shimabara's castle, samurai street and reclining Buddha are the town's main attractions.



Sights

Built between 1618 and 1625, **Shimabara-jō** (☎ 62-4766; 🕒 9am-5pm) played a part in the Shimabara Rebellion and was rebuilt in 1964 during Japan's nationwide spate of castle reconstruction. Walk around its expansive grounds to see carp ponds, tangled gardens, mossy walls and picturesque pines. The **tea-room** features a traditional bark roof.

The castle itself houses a few **museums** (☎ 62-4766; combined admission adult/child ¥520/260; 🕒 9am-5pm). The **Shimabara cultural hall** displays items relating to the Christian uprising, the **Fugen-dake museum** details Fugen-dake's pyrotechnic exploits (including the colossal explosion of 1792 in which 15,000 people died, most from the resulting tsunami) and a third, the **sculpture museum**, is dedicated to the artwork of Seibō Kitamura, who sculpted the Nagasaki Peace Statue. Another small **folk museum** (admission free) is stuffed with antiques from the Edo, Meiji and Shōwa periods.

In the Teppō-chō area, northwest of the castle, is a **buke-yashiki**, or collection of **samurai houses** that line a picturesque street with an unusual feature: a channel in the centre, which once carried water to the households. Three of the houses are open to the public, and a free rest area serves tea and the local traditional sweet. Just south of the town centre, near the Shimatetsu bus station, is a **carp stream** with over 1500 colourful fish and a small park.

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At Kōtō-ji is the rather beautiful **Nehan-zō**, or 'Nirvana Statue'. At 8.6m, it's the longest **reclining Buddha** in Japan.

Festivals & Events

The town **water festival** is held in early August.

Sleeping

There's a variety of inexpensive hotels, *minshuku* and ryokan in the castle area.

Shimabara Youth Hostel (☎ 62-4451; dm HI member/nonmember ¥2850/3450) A short walk north of Shimabara-Gaikō station will lead you to what looks like a misplaced ski chalet. There are both bunk beds and futons.

Business Hotel Chidori (☎ 62-4845; r from ¥4200; 📄 📺) This hotel has clean, bright rooms. Look for the brick façade and white railing above.

Hotel & Spa Hanamizuki (☎ 62-1000; s/tw ¥6000/9800; 📄 📺 📺 📺) This bright and modern 42-room hotel caters to both business travellers and tourists. There is a large modern *ofuro* (traditional Japanese bath), an excellent Japanese breakfast (¥840) and the staff speaks some English.

Eating

Shimabara's best-known dish is *guzōni*, a thick soup made from seafood, veggies, and *mochi* (pounded rice). The soup got its start in 1637 when Amakusa Shirou and his followers took over Shimabara castle and the central government cut off their supply lines. People put anything they could find into clear broth, along with *mochi*, which takes longer to spoil.

Himematsu-ya (☎ 63-7272; meals ¥760-2100; 🕒 10am-8pm; 🍷) serves Shimabara's speciality, *guzōni* (¥1100), and several types of tasty *rāmen* (try *robuke-e soba*). The restaurant is, appropriately enough, in front of Shimabara-jō. There is a picture menu.

Drinking

Shimabara Mizuyashiki (☎ 62-8555; www.mizuyashiki.com in Japanese; admission/tea & sweets free/¥500) This Meiji-era private teahouse and museum features a beautiful Japanese garden and collection of *maneki-neko* (beckoning cat designed to bring prosperity).

Near Shimabara-jō, there's a cluster of good *izakaya* (pubs), among them **Izakaya Unzen** (☎ 64-2708; E) featuring ¥100 skewers, ¥350 beer mugs and *teishoku* sets from ¥700

to ¥1500. Look for the round window with bamboo design.

Getting There & Around

JR trains on the Nagasaki line run from Nagasaki to Isahaya (*kaisoku*, ¥450, 25 minutes), which then connect with the private Shimabara-tetsudō line trains departing hourly to Shimabara (*futsū*, ¥1450, 1¼ hours). Shimabara station is about 350m east of the castle.

Ferries to the Kumamoto coast depart frequently from Shimabara port between 7am and 7pm. There's a jet ferry (adult/child ¥800/400, 30 minutes) and the slower car ferry (adult/child ¥680/340, one hour). All boats are bound for Kumamoto Port, which is a 30-minute bus ride from the city (¥420).

Local buses shuttle between Shimabara station and the ferry terminal (¥100); a taxi is about ¥900. Bikes can also be rented at the ferry terminal and at the train station (per hour ¥150).

KUMAMOTO-KEN 熊本県

KUMAMOTO 熊本

☎ 096 / pop 669,558

Kumamoto, the city that brought you *kobori* (a traditional technique for swimming upright wearing a suit of armour, often to fire arrows at an attacker), has one of Japan's finest reconstructed castles and a magnificent garden. These days it also has an active nightlife, live music, and a variety of restaurants, museums and galleries.

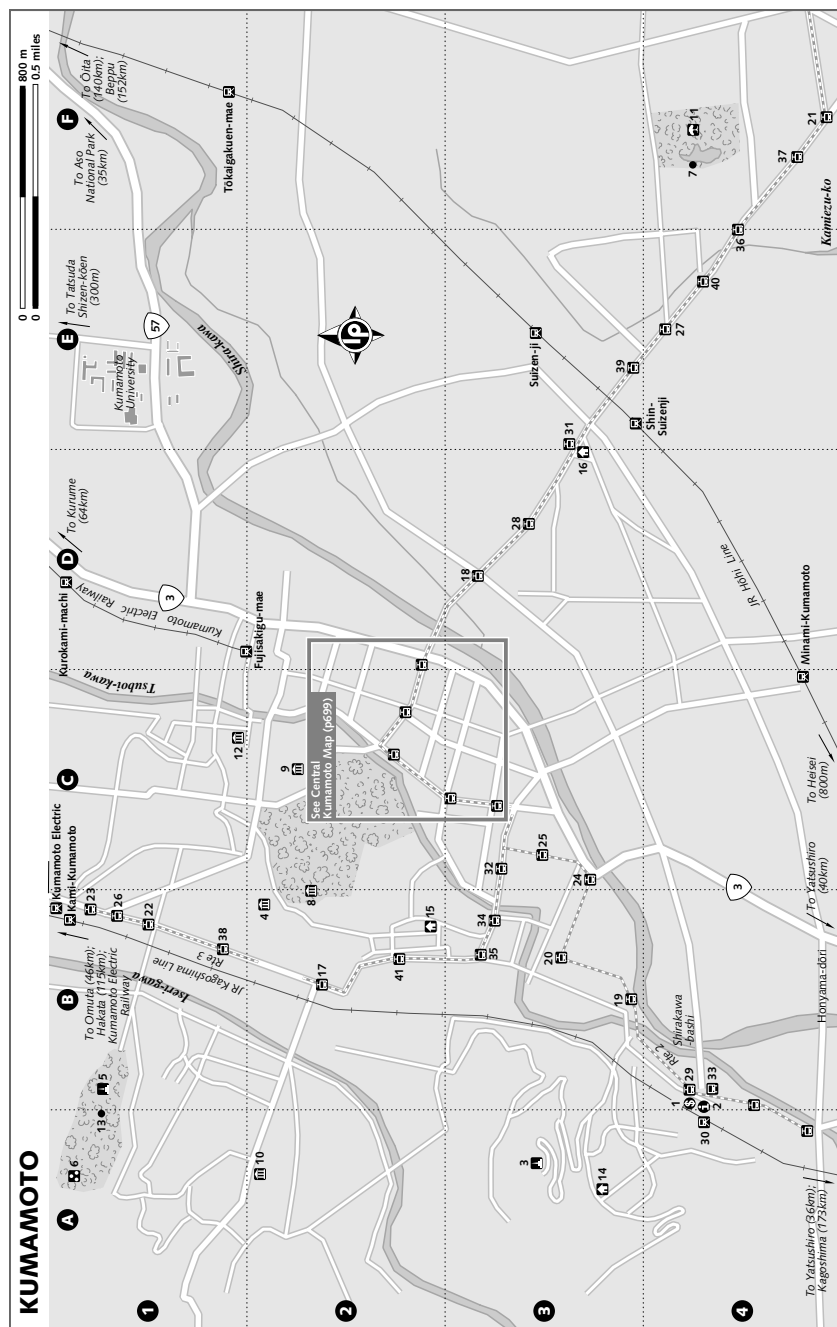
Orientation & Information

The JR Kumamoto station is some distance southwest of Kumamoto's city centre, which is where you'll find banks, hotels, restaurants, the bus centre and the entertainment area, along with the castle and other attractions.

On the northwest side of JR Kumamoto station is a postal ATM. Higo Bank in central Kumamoto has currency-exchange facilities. **Cybac Café** (Map p699; ☎ 24-3189; www.cybac.com; 5th-6th fl, Carino Shimotori, 1-2 Anesi-machi; membership fee/15min ¥300/100; 🕒 24hr) A city-centre location.

Kinokuniya Bookstore (Map p699; ☎ 322-5531; 1-7-18 Shimotori) Stocks foreign-language titles, maps and newspapers.

Kumamoto City International Centre (Map p699; ☎ 359-2020; 4-8 Hanahatachō; 🕒 9am-8pm Mon-Sat, to 7pm Sun & holidays) Has free 30-minute internet use,



CNN news and English-language magazines on the 2nd floor.

Tourist information desk JR Kumamoto station (Map p696; ☎ 352-3743; ☎ 8.30am-7pm); Kumamoto Castle parking area (Map p699; ☎ 322-5060; ☎ 9am-5pm) Has helpful English-speaking assistants.

Sights

KUMAMOTO-JŌ 熊本城

Kumamoto's **castle** (Map p699; ☎ 352-6820; Honmaru; admission ¥500; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm Apr-Oct, to 4.30pm Nov-Mar) dominates the centre of town. The closer you get, the more impenetrable it seems. A free tour (in English, ☎ 322-5900) is available.

Built between 1601 and 1607, Kumamoto-jō was once one of the great castles of feudal Japan. Its architect, Katō Kiyomasa, was a master of castle design and some of his ingenious engineering, including slots for dropping stones and other missiles onto attackers, can be seen in the 19th-century reconstruction.

Nevertheless, in 1877 during the turmoil of the Satsuma Rebellion (a postscript to the Meiji Restoration) the castle was besieged and burnt in one of the final stands made by samurai warriors against the new order. The rebel samurai held out for 50 days before finally being overcome. For more on the rebellion and its leader, Saigō Takamori, see the boxed text, p715.

Beyond the castle is the **Former Hosokawa Gyōbutei** (Map p696; ☎ 352-6522; 3-1 Kyō-machi; admission incl/excl castle ¥640/300; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm Apr-Oct, to 4.30pm Nov-Mar), a spacious samurai villa with

grounds pleasant for wandering. The Hosokawa clan came into being around 1632 and held sway until the Meiji Restoration.

Closer to the main road, the **Kumamoto Prefectural Museum of Art** (Map p696; ☎ 352-2111; 2 Ninomaru; admission ¥260; ☎ 9.30am-4.30pm Tue-Sun, closed 25 Dec-4 Jan) has ancient Buddhist sculptures and modern paintings. **Kumamoto Prefectural Traditional Crafts Centre** (Map p696; ☎ 324-4930; 3-35 Senjō-machi; admission ¥200; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun, closed 28 Dec-4 Jan) has displays of local Higo inlay, Yamaga lanterns, porcelains and woodcarving.

SUIZENJI-KŌEN 水前寺公園

Southeast of the city centre, originating with a temple in 1636, this extensive strolling **garden** (☎ 383-0074; www.suizenji.or.jp/E-index.htm; 8-1 Suizenji-kōen; admission ¥400; ☎ 7.30am-6pm Mar-Nov, 8.30am-5pm Dec-Feb) represents the 53 stations of the Tōkaidō (the old road that linked Tokyo and Kyoto), and the miniature Mt Fuji is instantly recognisable. The 400-year-old **Kokin Denju-no-Ma Teahouse** (Map p696; tea & Hosokawa sweets ¥500-600) was where the young emperor was tutored in poetry at the Kyoto Imperial Palace (the teahouse building was moved here in 1912 and has serene views across the ornamental lake). Turn the other way and you will see somewhat less scenic souvenir stalls.

HONMYŌ-JI 本妙寺

To the northwest of the centre, on the hills sloping up from the river, is the temple and mausoleum of **Katō Kiyomasa** (Map p696), the architect of Kumamoto's great castle. A steep

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		上熊本駅前.....	23 B1	Urusan-machi 蔚山町.....	41 B2

flight of 176 steps leads up to the mausoleum that was designed to be at the same height as the castle's donjon (fortified central tower). There's also a **treasure house** (Map p696; ☎ 354-1411; 4-13-20 Hanazono; admission ¥300; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun) next to the temple with Kiyomasa's crown and other personal items.

WRITERS' HOMES

Right in the centre of town, behind the Tsurya department store, is writer **Lafcadio Hearn's former home** (Map p699; ☎ 354-7842; 2-6 Ansei-machi; admission ¥200; ☎ 9.30am-4.30pm Tue-Sun, closed 29 Dec-3 Jan); he was known to the Japanese as Koizumi Yakumo. Hearn also had a Japanese residence in Matsue (see p489).

The former home of famed Meiji-era novelist Sōseki Natsume is preserved as the **Sōseki Memorial Hall** (Map p696; ☎ 325-9127; 4-22 Tsubo-machi; admission ¥200; ☎ 9.30am-4.30pm Tue-Sun). Sōseki lived here as an English teacher, but only for a few years. (For more on Sōseki, see p64.) Among his classic tales is *Botchan* (1906), which begins 'A great loser have I been ever since a child, having a rash, daring spirit, a spirit I inherited from my ancestors...'

OTHER SIGHTS

Continue north up the hill beyond the ryokan, *minshuku* and love hotels until you reach the white **Busharito** (a traditional stupa said to hold the Buddha's ashes; Map p696) atop the hill, with superb views over the town.

The delightful **Shimada Art Museum** (島田美術館; Map p696; ☎ 352-4597; 4-5-28 Shimazaki; admission ¥500; ☎ 9am-5pm Thu-Tue) collects works pertaining to Miyamoto Musashi, mainly calligraphy and scrolls. The museum is within walking distance of Honmyō-ji (p697).

Northeast of the town centre, **Tatsuda Shizen-kōen** (立田自然公園; Tatsuda Nature Park; ☎ 344-6753; 4-610 Kurokami; admission ¥200; ☎ 8.30am-4.30pm, closed 29-31 Dec) contains the 1646 Taishō-ji. The grave of Hosokawa Gracia (1563-1600) is in the temple grounds. She was an early convert to Christianity but her husband arranged her death to prevent his enemies from capturing her. To get there, take a Musashigaoka-kita line bus from platform 28 at Kumamoto Kōtsū bus centre (Map p699; ¥190, 20 minutes).

Festivals & Events

Takigi Nō (薪能) Traditional performances at Suizen-ji-kōen are performed by torchlight on the first Saturday in August (from 6pm), usually in Kumamoto-jō.

Hi-no-kuni Matsuri (火の国まつり; Land of Fire Festival) Lights up Kumamoto with fireworks and dancing in mid-August.

Autumn festival From mid-October to early November the Kumamoto-jō has its grand festival, with *taiko* drumming and cultural events.

Sleeping BUDGET

Suizen-ji Youth Hostel (Map p696; ☎ 371-9193; fax 371-9218; 1-2-20 Hakuzan; dm member/nonmember ¥2900/3900; ☎ ☎) You face a 10pm curfew at this clean and friendly five-room hostel, just a five-minute walk from JR Shin-Suizen-ji station.

Higoji Minshuku (Map p696; ☎ /fax 352-7860; r per person from ¥3500; ☎ ☎) On the hill behind Kumamoto station, Kumamoto's best-value traditional option is a small and welcoming inn with superb night views. The kind owner will pick you up from the station if you call first.

Minshuku Kajita (Map p696; ☎ /fax 353-1546; 1-2-7 Shinmachi; s/d ¥4000/7200; ☎ ☎) This 10-room ryokan-style hotel with shared bathroom is clean, quiet and great value. Breakfast (¥700) and dinner (¥2000) are available. Look for 'Minshuku' in English outside. You'll know you're in the right place when you spot the Marilyn Monroe posters inside.

MIDRANGE & TOP END

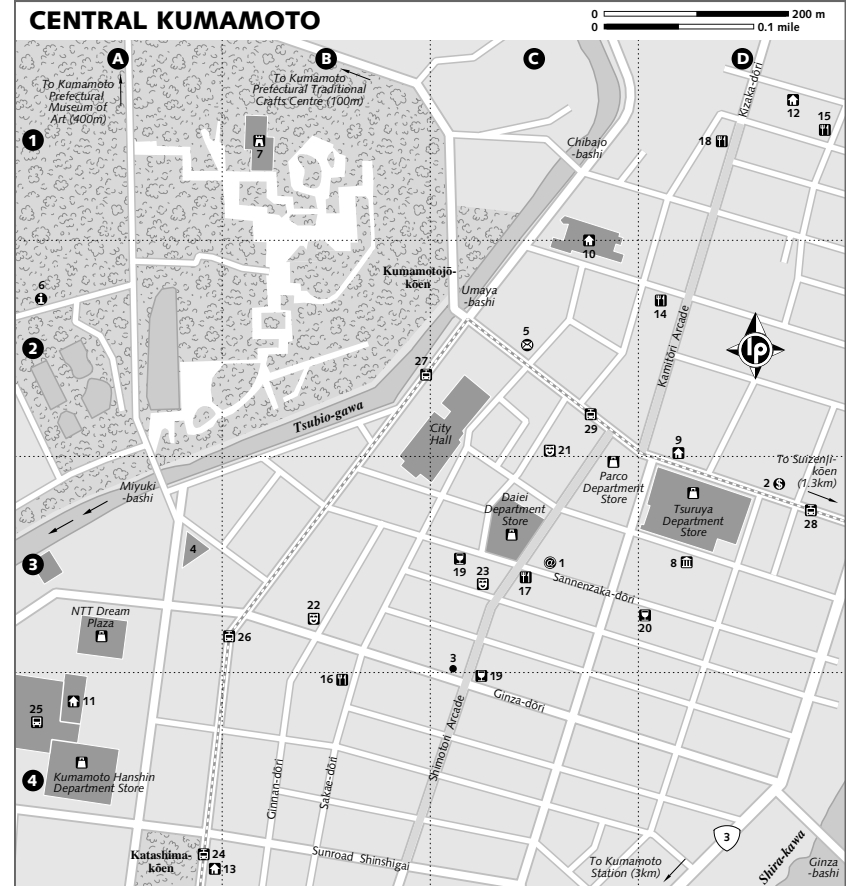
Kumamoto Castle Hotel (Map p699; ☎ 326-3311; fax 326-3324; 4-2 Jōtōmachi; s/tw/d from ¥10,300/18,500/19,650, Japanese-style/r ¥30,000; ☎ ☎ ☎) Overlooking the castle, this classy Kumamoto stand-by gets points for excellent service and clerks in formal kimono. The best views are from the twin or double rooms.

Maruko Hotel (Map p699; ☎ 353-1241; 11-10 Kamidōrimachi; d incl 2 meals from ¥12,600; ☎ ☎) This charming century-old Japanese-style inn in the town centre features an *o-furo* with good views. Look for the English sign inside the covered arcade.

Hotel Nikko Kumamoto (Map p699; ☎ 211-1111; www.nikko-kumamoto.co.jp; s/tw from ¥16,170/30,030; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) Kumamoto's smartest upscale hotel is subdued, elegant, centrally located and adjacent to the Contemporary Art Museum. Rooms are spacious and well appointed with reading lamps, roomy bathrooms, high ceilings and city views.

Other recommendations:

Kumamoto Kōtsū Center Hotel (Map p699; ☎ 326-8828; 3-10 Sakuramachi; s/d/tr from ¥5700/13,000/16,500; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) Remodelled business hotel, good location.



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紀伊国屋書店	3 C3
Kumamoto City International Centre	
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Kumamoto Kōtsū Center Hotel

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Shiyakusho-mae 市役所前	27 B2
Suido-chō 水道町	28 D3
Torichō-suji 通町筋	29 C2

JR Kyūshū Hotel Kumamoto (Map p696; ☎ 354-8000; kumamoto@jrk-hotels.com; s/tw ¥6210/11,340; ☒ ☑ ☎) New in 2003, with corner twin rooms.

Toyoko Inn Karashima Kō-en (Map p699; ☎ 322-1045; fax 322-2045; 1-24 Kouyama-machi; s/d ¥6090/8190; ☒ ☑ ☎ wi-fi) Two tram stops from Kumamoto-jō.

Eating

Adventurous diners will want to try a bite of *basashi* (raw horsemeat), *karashi-renkon* (fried lotus root with mustard) or *Higo-gyū* (Higo beef). Sometimes whalemeat is also served.

Kōran-tei (Map p699; ☎ 352-7177; 5-26 Anseimachi; house speciality ¥735; ☒ lunch & dinner) In the Shimotori arcade, opposite Daiei, this longtime Chinese restaurant serves good *teishoku* deals. Try the house speciality, *taipien* (*harusame* noodles with cuttlefish and vegetables).

Ramen Komurasaki (Map p699; ☎ 325-8972; 8-16 Kamitōri-machi; meals from ¥900; ☒ lunch & dinner; E) This popular and fast *rāmen-ya* is just opposite Higo in Kamitōri Arcade. Start with a plate of tender *gyōza* (¥400), then tuck into a bowl of King *rāmen* (¥560), with pork and fresh mushrooms.

Cafe Anding (Map p699; ☎ 352-6701; 4th fl, 4-10 Kamidōri; dishes ¥1000) Satisfy your sweet tooth at this upstairs coffee-and-pastry hang-out.

Izakaya Yokobachi (Map p699; ☎ 351-4581; 11-40 Kaminoura, Kamidōri-machi; meals incl beer ¥2000-3000; ☒ dinner; ☎ (M) E) The menu at this snappy eatery includes Kumamoto's raw-horsemeat speciality, *basashi* (¥1000). Watch the cooks at work in the modern open kitchen, or sit in the shaded courtyard. Look for a sign with a red sideways number '8'.

Jang Jang Go (Map p699; ☎ 323-1121; 12-10 Hanatacho; per person around ¥2500; ☒ lunch & dinner; E) Kumamoto's trendiest date spot serves neo-Chinese cuisine from a bustling open kitchen in this mock-colonial-style eatery that seats over 200.

Drinking

Kumamoto has a sprinkling of decent bars and clubs that attract both *gaijin* (foreigners) and local Japanese. The Nami Kizaka-dōri area, at the north end of the Kamitōri Arcade, is worth exploring.

Shark Attack (Map p699; ☎ 090-6299-1818; 8th fl, 6-3 Ansei-machi; beer, shōchū, cocktails ¥500-700; ☒ closed Tue) Despite the name, the mood is mellow here. A sandy floor, surfboards and tiki lamps be-

hind the bar set the tone at this cosy 8th-floor hole-in-the-wall.

Jeff's World Bar (Map p699; ☎ 090-9405-0867; 2nd fl, 1-4-3 Shimotori) A mix of *gaijin* and Japanese frequent this 2nd-floor pub boasting 25 Japanese and international beers, a lively darts scene, and dancing on weekends (with ¥2500 cover).

Entertainment

Rock Bar Days (Map p699; ☎ 323-7110; BF1-C, Shimotori 1-4-18) The DJ at Kumamoto's coolest basement dive plays rock, blues and requests till the wee hours. Drinks average around ¥600.

Euro Dance Bar (Map p699; ☎ 354-0803; basement, Shanse Sinagawa Bldg, 11-18 Hanabata; admission ¥400; ☒ 8pm-6am) Friday is salsa night, but you'll hear everything from disco to hip-hop at this small Ginza-dōri basement spot.

Bar Sanctuary (Map p699; ☎ 325-5634; 4-16 Eba Bldg; admission ¥500) Get your hand stamped at this combination dance, darts, drinks and karaoke scene with a mostly 20-something crowd.

Getting There & Away

Although there are flights to Kumamoto from Tokyo, Osaka and Naha (Okinawa), most visitors come by train. The JR Kagoshima line runs north to Hakata (*tokkyū*, ¥3440, 1½ hours) and south to Kagoshima-Chūō station (*shinkansen*, ¥5850, 70 minutes), while the JR Hōhi line goes to Beppu (¥4830, three hours) via Aso town.

Highway buses depart from the Kumamoto Kōtsū bus centre for almost every major destination in Kyūshū, including Fukuoka (¥2000, two hours), Kagoshima (¥3650, 3½ hours) and Nagasaki (¥3600, 3¼ hours). Kumamoto is a gateway to Aso-san (opposite), from where you can continue to Beppu (p727).

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Buses to and from the airport (¥670, 50 minutes) stop at the Kumamoto Kōtsū bus centre and JR Kumamoto station.

BUS

One-day tram passes are also valid for travel on green-coloured Shiei buses (but not other city buses), which are handy for connecting between the tram and outlying sights or zooming between JR Kumamoto station and the bus centre.

The small Castle Loop Bus (¥130) connects Kumamoto Kōtsū bus centre with all the sights

in the castle area at least every half hour, between 8.30am and 5pm daily. A one-day loop pass (¥300) will get you a discount at the museum and other establishments.

TRAM

Kumamoto's tram service connects with all the major sights. Single fares range from ¥130 to ¥200. A one-day pass (¥500) allows unlimited travel, and can be bought on the trams or in front of Kumamoto station.

YAMAGA & KIKUCHI ONSEN

山鹿温泉・菊池温泉

☎ 0968 / pop Yamaga Onsen 33,559, Kikuchi Onsen 52,681

These popular hot-springs towns northeast of Kumamoto spring to life during the spectacular **Yamaga Chōchin Matsuri** held on 15 and 16 August. *Taiko* drums signal the beginning of this famous lantern festival in rustic Yamaga Onsen. For two nights the women of the town, clad in summer kimonos, dance through the streets to the sound of *shamisen* (a three-stringed traditional Japanese instrument that resembles a banjo), wearing *washi* paper lanterns on their heads. **Yamaga Tourism Office** (☎ 43-2952), opposite the Plaza shops, can help with accommodation.

Yamaga Cycling Terminal (山鹿サイクリングターミナル; ☎ 43-1136; r per person incl 2 meals ¥5200), on a traffic-shielded 34km cycling route from Kumamoto via Ueki, has large communal tatami rooms and a huge bath. Without a bike, it's a 10-minute taxi ride (¥1500) from the centre of Yamaga Onsen.

Kikuchi Information Centre (☎ 23-1155), near the bus station, has maps and brochures in English.

Outside Kikuchi Onsen, **Kikuchi Gorge** (菊池溪谷; donation ¥100; ☒ mid-Apr–Nov), formed by Mt Aso's outer edge, has **walking trails** that follow the Kikuchi-gawa's cool and clear waters through groves of elm, camphor and refreshingly cool waters. Back in town, the hot-springs ryokan, *minshuku* and hotels are clustered together on a quiet maze of streets, just downhill from an imposing **statue** of a feudal lord on horseback.

Day-trippers should try the riverside **onsen** (¥500) at **Iwakura Ryokan** (☎ 27-0026).

Getting There & Around

From JR Kumamoto station or the Kumamoto Kōtsū bus centre (see opposite), there are

buses throughout the day to either Yamaga Onsen (¥870, 70 minutes) or Kikuchi Onsen (¥820, 70 minutes). For a day trip to Yamaga Onsen, ask the driver for an *ichi nichi furii joshaken* (round-trip pass ¥1200). There are frequent buses Monday to Saturday (¥430, 30 minutes) between the two *onsen* towns.

ASO-SAN AREA 阿蘇山

☎ 0967 / pop 29,948

In the centre of Kyūshū, halfway from Kumamoto to Beppu, is the gigantic Aso-san volcano caldera. There has been a series of eruptions over the past 300,000 years but the explosion that formed the outer crater about 90,000 years ago must have been a big one – the crater has a 128km circumference and accommodates towns, villages and train lines.

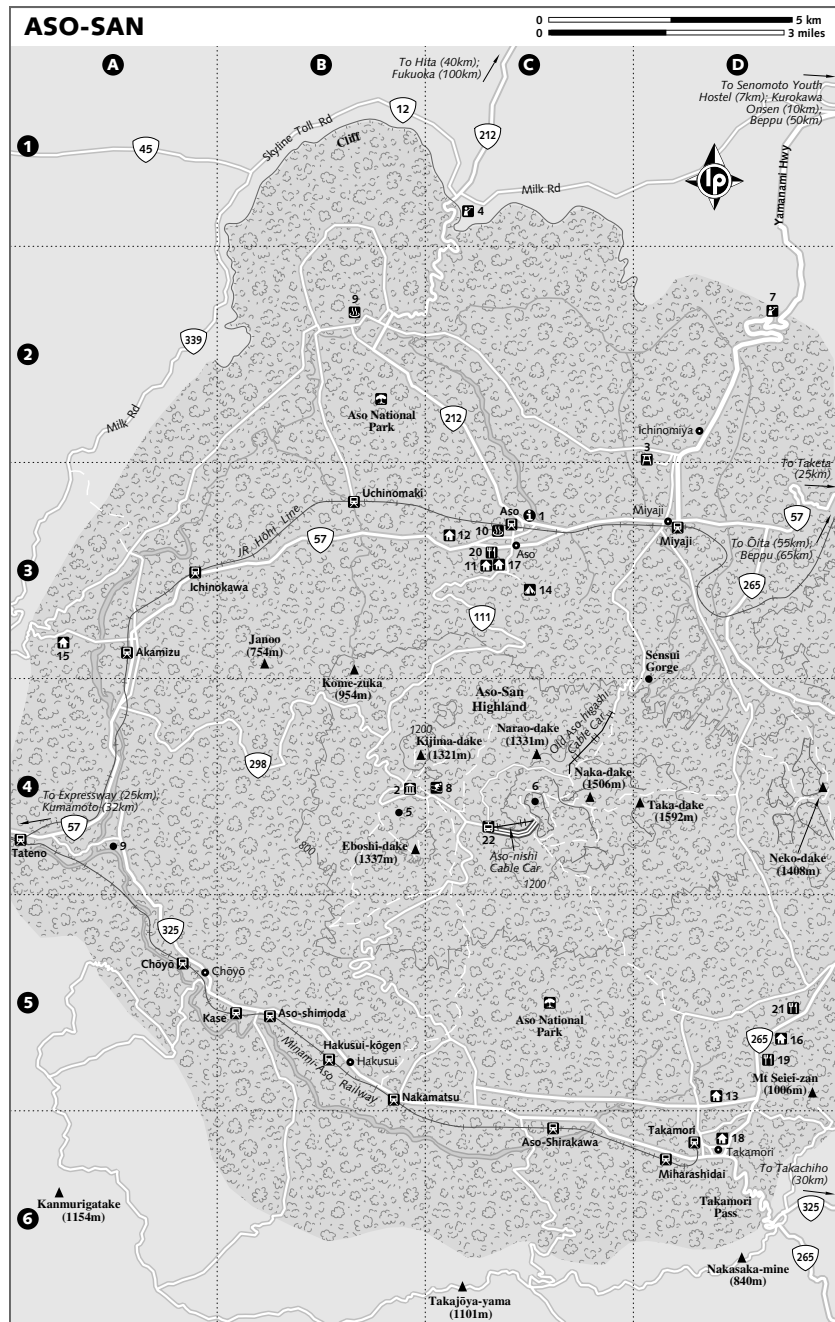
It's still the largest active caldera in the world – in 1979 an eruption of Naka-dake killed a woman on her honeymoon. The last major blast was in 1993, but the summit is frequently declared off limits due to toxic gas emissions. Check with the tourist information office (below) for continuous updates. Officials may close the summit for a day or just an hour; it all depends on wind conditions.

Aso-san has literary value as well; in addition to its being used as the backdrop for a number of movies (those of Akira Kurosawa among them), it has been a key site for writers, artists and other literati to visit as well. Among them was Akiko Yosano, one of Japan's first feminists and a gifted writer, who toured this area, staying in local ryokan and writing poems as she went along. In one of her *tanka* poems, she wrote, 'In the faint mist covering Daikambo-san, the beauty of the morning glories stands out at the hotel, in the mountains of Aso.'

Orientation & Information

Rtes 57, 265 and 325 make a circuit of the outer caldera, and the JR Hōhi line runs across the northern section. Daikanbō Lookout is one of the best places to see Aso from afar. Aso is the main town in the crater but there are other towns, including Takamori, on the southern side. There are roads running into the centre of the crater and to the five 'modern' peaks within the one ancient outer peak.

Next to JR Aso station in the Eco building, there is a helpful English-speaking **tourist information office** (☎ 34-0751; ☒ 9am-6pm) offering

**INFORMATION**

Tourist Information Office 観光案内所1 C3

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Aso Volcanic Museum 阿蘇火山博物館2 B4
 Aso-jinja 阿蘇神社3 D2
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 Kusasenri 草千里5 B4
 Naka-dake Crater 中岳6 C4
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 Ski Field スキー場8 C4
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 Aso-no-Fumoto 阿蘇の麓12 C3
 Bluegrass ブルーグラス13 D5
 Bōchū Kyampu-jo 坊中キャンプ場14 C3
 Kumamoto YMCA Aso Camp
 熊本YMCA阿蘇キャンプ15 A3
 Kyūkamura Minami-Aso 国民休暇村南阿蘇16 D5
 Shukubou Aso Minshuku 宿房あそ17 C3
 Takamori Pension Mura 高森ペンション村(see 21)
 Takamori-Murataya Ryokan Youth
 Hostel 村田屋旅館ユースホステル18 D6

EATING

Bluegrass ブルーグラス(see 13)
 Dengaku-no-sato 田楽の里19 D5
 Sanzoku Tabiji 山賊旅路20 C3
 Takamori Pension Mura 高森ペンション村21 D5

TRANSPORT

Aso-nishi Cable-Car Station
 阿蘇西ロープウェイ乗り場22 C4
 Eki Rent-a-Car(see 1)

free hiking and road maps, and information on local accommodation. Coin lockers are available. A postal ATM is 100m south, across Hwy 57.

Sights**ASO-GOGAKU 阿蘇五岳**

The **Five Mountains of Aso** are the five smaller mountains within the outer rim. They are Eboshi-dake (1337m), Kijima-dake (1321m), Naka-dake (1506m), Neko-dake (1408m) and Taka-dake (1592m). Naka-dake is currently the active volcano in this group. Neko-dake, furthest to the east, is instantly recognisable by its craggy peak but Taka-dake, between Neko-dake and Naka-dake, is the highest.

ASO VOLCANIC MUSEUM 阿蘇火山博物館

This state-of-the-art **museum** (☎ 34-2111; www.asomuse.jp/in Japanese; admission incl/excl cable-car return ¥1480/840; ☎ 9am-5pm) has real-time footage, compliments of a camera mounted inside the active crater wall. You can point the camera with a remote control from inside the mu-

seum! There's an English brochure available plus a 17-minute big-screen video (with English audio) on Aso and other volcanoes from around the world, all strutting their stuff.

KUSASENRI & KOME-ZUKA 草千里・米塚

Opposite the volcanic museum is **Kusasenri** (1000km of grass), a grassy meadow with two lakes in the flattened crater of an ancient volcano. It's a postcard-perfect picture on a clear day.

Just off the road that runs from the museum to the town of Aso is the perfectly shaped small cone of **Kome-zuka** (954m), another extinct volcano. The name means 'rice mound'.

NAKA-DAKE 中岳

Naka-dake (1506m) has been very active in recent years. The cable car to the summit was closed from August 1989 to March 1990 due to eruptions, and it had only been opened for a few weeks when the volcano erupted again in April 1990, spewing dust and ash over a large area to the north.

In 1958, following an unexpected eruption that killed 12 onlookers, concrete shelters were built around the rim for sightseers to take shelter (in an emergency). Nevertheless, an eruption in 1979 killed three visitors over 1km from the cone, in an area that was thought to be safe. This eruption destroyed a cable car that used to run up the northeastern slope of the cone.

From the Aso Volcanic Museum (left), it's 3km up to the cable-car station. When Naka-dake is not misbehaving, the **cable car** (ropeway; each way ¥410; ☎ 9am-5pm) whisks you up to the summit in just four minutes. From there, the walk to the top takes less than 30 minutes. The 100m-deep crater varies in width from 400m to 1100m and there's a walk around the southern edge of the crater rim. Arrive early in the morning to glimpse a sea of clouds hovering inside the crater, with Kujū-san (1787m) on the horizon.

Activities

From the top of the cable-car run you can walk around the crater rim to the peak of Naka-dake and on to the top of Taka-dake. From there you can descend to Sensui Gorge (Sensui-kyō), which blooms with azaleas in mid-May, or to the road that runs between Taka-dake and Neko-dake. Either way will

lead you to Miyaji, the next express train station east of Aso. The direct descent to Sensui Gorge is very steep, so it's easier to continue back from Taka-dake to the Naka-dake rim and then follow the old Aso-higashi cable-car route down to Sensui Gorge. Allow four to five hours from the Aso-nishi cable-car station walking uphill to Sensui Gorge, then another 1½ hours for the descent.

Shorter walks include the easy ascent of Kijima-dake from the Aso Volcanic Museum, about 25 minutes to the top. You can then return to the museum area or take the branch trail to the Naka-dake ropeway in about 30 minutes. You can also climb to the top of Eboshi-dake in about 50 minutes. All the peaks offer superb views, as do several lookout perches on the crater's outer rim, including Shiroyama Tembōdai on the Yamanami Hwy, and Daikanbō near Uchinomaki Onsen.

Perfect after a long hike, **Yume-no-yu Onsen** (☎ 35-5777; admission ¥400; ♾ 10am-10pm), just in front of Aso station, has wonderful indoor and outdoor pools and a large sauna.

Festivals & Events

A spectacular fire festival, **hi-furi-matsuri**, is held at **Aso-jinja** (☎ 22-0064) one day in mid-March (dates vary). The shrine, dedicated to the 12 gods of the mountain, is about a 300m walk north of JR Miyaji station, and is one of only three shrines in Japan with its original *mon* (gate). The drinking water here is said to be delicious, and at dusk residents can be seen filling 20L canteens to take home with them.

Sleeping & Eating

Over 50 places to stay make finding a bed in the Aso-san area easy. Most are in Aso town, Akamizu and Takamori village; most provide meals. Away from Aso town, accommodation is scattered and hard to reach by public transport. There's a cluster of eateries on Hwy 57 near Aso station, plus one inside the station, just right for catching the nearby bus to the ropeway cable car.

ASO TOWN

Bōchū Kyampū-jo (☎ 34-0351; camp sites per person ¥310; ♾ Jun-Sep) Reached via a path that veers off the highway below the youth hostel, the camp has good facilities and tent rentals (¥600).

Aso Youth Hostel (☎ 34-0804; dm ¥2450; ♻) This friendly 10-room hostel is a 20-minute

walk from JR Aso station uphill towards the mountain, past small Saigenden-ji, which dates from AD 726. Buses up to the cable-car station stop outside the hostel. A kitchen is available and the owners will happily discuss hiking in the area.

Our pick **Aso-no-Fumoto** (☎ 34-0624; r per person ¥4200; ♻ ♻ ♻) Great value, this well-managed *minshuku* is approximately 350m from the station; the owner will also pick you up. Breakfast (¥500) and dinner (¥1000) are available.

Shukubou Aso Minshuku (☎ 34-0194; fax 34-1342; r per person incl/excl 2 meals ¥12,000/6000; ♻ ♻ ♻) This traditional *minshuku* with modern touches is set in the trees, less than 500m from Aso station, and good value.

Sanzoku-Tabiji (☎ 34-2011; set meals from ¥950; ♾ 11am-7pm; ♻ ♻) On Hwy 57, five minutes' walk from Aso station, just past Lawson store; has very good *teishoku*.

TAKAMORI

On the outskirts of Takamori is *pension mura* (pension village) charging rates of around ¥8000 per person, with two meals. Inquire at the tourist information counter next to Aso station.

Takamori-Murataya Ryokan Youth Hostel (☎ 62-0066; dm HI member/nonmember ¥2700/3700) In Takamori town, this is quite pleasant, though the toilets are Japanese-style only. The owner will meet you at the station.

Bluegrass (☎ 62-3366; fax 62-3022; r per person incl/excl 2 meals ¥7000/4000; ♻ E) This rustic ranch house and inn manages to serve both Western-style barbecue and Japanese cuisine (meals from ¥1500; open 11am to 8pm, closed Tuesday).

AKAMIZU

Kumamoto YMCA Aso Camp (☎ 35-0124; dm ¥3000-3200; ♻) With clean, modern and comfortable cabins. It's about 600m west of JR Akamizu station, across the river.

Kyūkamura Minami-Aso (☎ 62-2111; r per person from ¥5500; ♻) A national vacation village that gets crowded in July and August. Inquire at the information counter next to Aso station.

Dengaku-no-Sato (☎ 62-1899; set meals from ¥1800; ♾ lunch & dinner) At this old farmhouse restaurant, you cook your own kebablike *dengaku* (hardened *mochi* rice dipped in miso) on individual *hibachi* (barbecue).

Getting There & Around

Aso is on the JR Hōhi line between Kumamoto (*tokkyū*, ¥2180, 70 minutes) and Ōita (*tokkyū*,

¥3490, two hours). Some buses from Beppu (¥3080, 2½ hours) continue to the Aso-nishi cable-car station (an extra ¥1130).

To get to Takamori on the southern side of the crater, transfer from the JR Hōhi line at Tatenō (¥360, 30 minutes) to the scenic Minami-Aso private line, which terminates at Takamori (¥470, 30 minutes). Buses from Takamori continue southeast to the mountain resort of Takachiho (¥1280, 70 minutes, three daily).

Buses operate approximately every 90 minutes from JR Aso station via the youth hostel and volcano museum to Aso-nishi cable car station (¥470, 35 minutes). The first bus up leaves at 8.37am, with the last return trip down from the cable-car station at 5pm.

Bike rentals are available at Aso station (¥300, two hours). Cars can be rented for the day at **Eki Rent-a-Car** (☎ 34-1001; www.ekiren.co.jp in Japanese), opposite the tourist information office adjacent to the train station, from ¥6000.

A toll (¥560) is required on a portion of the road skirting the crater. If you hire a car, there's only one toll road in the area, from Aso-nishi to Kato-nishi (¥560, 1.5km).

KUROKAWA ONSEN 黒川温泉

☎ 0967 / pop 400

A real treasure. A few dozen ryokan lie along a steep-sided valley beside the Kurokawa, some 6km west of the Yamanami Hwy. Considered one of the best *onsen* villages in Japan, Kurokawa is everything a resort town should be without accompanying kitsch or ugliness. While it's well frequented and you certainly won't be alone, this low-key resort still seems like it's a tiny, forgotten village that you've been lucky to stumble upon.

The enlightened Onsen Association has also made it affordable: an '*onsen* passport' (¥1200) from the **tourist information desk** (☎ 44-0076; ♾ 9am-6pm) and from several ryokan allows access to three baths (8.30am to 9pm) of your choice. Kurokawa is especially famous for its 23 *rotemburo*. Among local favourites are Yamamizuki, Kurokawa-sō and the magnificent Shimmei-kan, with its cave baths and riverside *rotemburo*. Many places offer *konyoku* (mixed bathing) and separate male and female baths.

Sleeping

Between Miyagi and Kurokawa Onsen, **Aso Senomoto Youth Hostel** (阿蘇瀬の本ユースホ

ステル; ☎ 44-0157; www.jyh.gr.jp/aso/next.html; dm HI member/nonmember ¥2415/2940) has English information about hiking Kujū-san and other high peaks in the area. Breakfast and dinner are available.

The *onsen* ryokan at Kurokawa are well worth splurging on – not cheap, but good value and unique.

At secluded **Sanga Ryokan** (山河旅館; ☎ 44-0906; www.sanga-ryokan.com in Japanese; r per person incl 2 meals from ¥13,800) several of the 15 rooms have private *onsen* attached. Nearby **Okyakuya Ryokan** (御客屋旅館; ☎ 44-0454; fax 44-0551; r per person incl 2 meals from ¥12,000) overlooks a serene garden. English is spoken at both ryokan, and a station pick-up service is provided.

Getting There & Away

There are five buses daily from JR Aso station (Map p702) to Senomoto-Kogen (¥810), Senomoto Youth Hostel (¥830) and Kurokawa Onsen (¥960, one hour). The last bus to return to Aso departs at 5.55pm. If you miss it, you can take a taxi out to the Yamanami Hwy (¥1000) and take a bus from the Senomoto bus stop to Aso. A taxi between Kurokawa and Aso costs around ¥7000 (40 minutes). The last bus leaves Kurokawa for Kumamoto at 8.30pm (¥1430, one hour); the last bus to Beppu departs at 7pm (¥2350, two hours).

SOUTH OF KUMAMOTO

About 90km south of Kumamoto, the **coastal wetlands** at Izumi are the winter home to 85% of the global population of hooded cranes.

The nearby port of **Minamata** became infamous in the late '60s when it was discovered that a nearby chemical factory had been dumping waste containing high levels of mercury into the sea, contaminating the fish eaten by local residents, leading to high rates of illness and birth defects. The company's efforts to suppress the story led to outrage in Japan. In the early '70s, W Eugene Smith's heart-rending documentary photos focused worldwide attention on the town's tragedy.

AMAKUSA ARCHIPELAGO 天草諸島

☎ 0969

South of the Shimabara Peninsula are the islands of the Amakusa-shotō. The islands were a stronghold of Christianity during Japan's 'Christian Century' and the grinding poverty here was a major factor in the Shimabara

Rebellion of 1637–38. It's still one of the least developed regions of Japan.

Around the islands, there are opportunities for diving and dolphin-watching cruises. **Hondo** is the main town and has exhibition halls relating to the Christian era. **Amakusa Youth Hostel** (天草ユースホステル; ☎ 22-3085; dm HI member/nonmember ¥2780/3780) is about a 300m walk uphill from the bus terminal. Tamioka, where Nagasaki ferries berth, has castle ruins; this west-coast area is particularly interesting.

Getting to the islands usually involves a ferry from various places in Nagasaki-ken or along the Kumamoto coast. Amakusa Five Bridges links the island directly with Misumi, southwest of Kumamoto.

KAGOSHIMA-KEN

鹿児島県

Kyūshū's southernmost prefecture is dominated by the majestic volcano of Sakurajima, which overlooks the bustling city of Kagoshima across the bay. To the south is the Satsuma Peninsula, and to the north Kirishima-Yaku National Park with its superb volcanoes and hiking. Here is where the Meiji Restoration began, initially under the leadership of Saigō Takamori (see the boxed text, p715). Famous also for its dialect, the prefecture's Kagoshima-ben is so difficult that it was used as code in WWII much the way the Native American Navajo language was used by the USA.

Atop an unimpressive bluff in Kokubu city, 40 minutes north of Kagoshima, a construction crew digging a hotel foundation stumbled upon what would be identified as the oldest Jōmon-era remains ever found. Almost 10,000 years ago primitive civilisation arrived here and stayed long enough to leave relics of its passing. The site at Uenohara boasts a small museum and a research station, well worth a stop if you're heading in that direction.

KIRISHIMA-YAKU NATIONAL PARK

霧島

The day walk from Ebino-kōgen (Ebino Plateau, not to be confused with the town of Ebino down on the plains) to the summits of a string of volcanoes is one of the finest volcanic hikes in Japan. Parts of the park are in Miya-

zaki-ken, but much of it is in Kagoshima-ken. It's 15km from the summit of Karakuni-dake (1700m) to the summit of Takachiho-no-mine (1574m) and there's superb scenery – if the peaks aren't being lashed by thunderstorms or shrouded in fog, which is common during the rainy season (mid-May through June). Shorter walks, such as a lake stroll on the plateau or up and down Karakuni-dake or Takachiho-no-mine, are great too. The area is known for its wild azaleas, hot springs and the impressive 75m waterfall, **Senriga-taki**.

Orientation & Information

A centre at each end of the volcano walk has bilingual maps and hiking information. **Ebino-kōgen Eco Museum Centre** (☎ 0984-33-3002; ☎ 9am-5pm) This has most of the hotels, restaurants and camping facilities, and also has displays on local wildlife and geology, plus an indoor rest area with vending machines. Staff sells topographic hiking maps, and dispenses local advice for free.

Takachiho-gawara Visitors Centre (☎ 0995-57-2505; ☎ 9am-5pm)

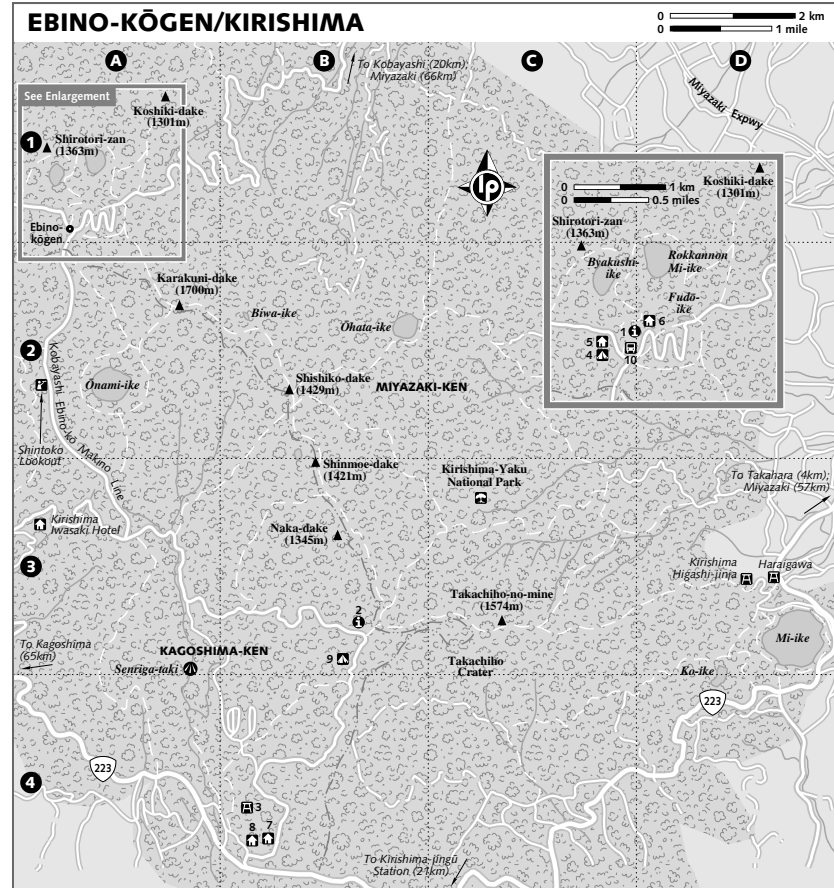
Sights & Activities

EBINO PLATEAU WALKS

The Ebino-kōgen lake circuit is a relaxed 4km stroll around a series of volcanic lakes – **Rokkannon Mi-ike** has an intense blue-green colour. Across the road from the lake, Fudo-ike, at the base of Karakuni-dake, is a steaming *jigoku*. The stiffer climb to the 1700m summit of **Karakuni-dake** skirts the edge of the volcano's deep crater before arriving at the high point on the eastern side. The panoramic view to the south is superb, taking in the perfectly circular caldera lake of Onami-ike, rounded **Shinmoe-dake** and the perfect cone of Takachiho-no-mine. On a clear day, you can see Kagoshima and the smoking cone of Sakurajima. Naka-dake is another nice half-day walk, and in May and June it offers good views of the Miyama-Kirishima azaleas.

LONGER WALKS

The long views across the lunarlike terrain of volcano summits are otherworldly. If you have six or seven hours, you can continue from Karakuni-dake to Shishiko-dake, Shinmoe-dake, Naka-dake and Takachiho-gawara, from where you can make the ascent of Takachiho-no-mine. Close up, Takachiho is a formidable volcano with a huge, gaping crater. The whole trek goes above and below the treeline on a



trail that can be muddy or dry, clear or foggy. But cheer up; some Kagoshima monks-in-training do this route daily.

If you miss the afternoon bus (3.49pm) from Takachiho-gawara to Kirishima-jingū; it's a 7km walk down to the village shrine area, or a ¥1000 taxi ride; a taxi up to Ebino-kōgen is about ¥3500.

KIRISHIMA-JINGŪ 霧島神宮

Bright-orange **Kirishima-jingū** (☎ 0995-57-0001) is beautifully situated, picturesque, and offers nice views of the surrounding area. Though it dates from the 6th century, the present shrine was built in 1715. It is dedicated to Ninigi-no-mikoto, who, according to the *Kojiki* (a historical book compiled in 712), made his

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legendary landing in Japan on the Takachiho-mine summit.

The shrine can be visited en route to Takachiho-gawara. It's accessible by bus (¥240, 15 minutes) from JR Kirishima-jingū station. The festivals of **Saitan-sai** (1 January), **Ota-ue-sai** (mid-March) and the lantern festival of **Kontō-sai** (5 August) are worth seeing. If you're a temple fan, visit Kirishima Higashijinja for ancient cedars and scenic views.

Sleeping & Eating

Ebino-kōgen village (on the Miyazaki side) has a reasonable choice of accommodation, but not restaurants. Most village shops close by 5pm.

Ebino-kōgen Campground & Lodge (☎ 0984-33-0800, 0984-35-1111; camp sites/lodge cabins from ¥980/1560) About a 500m walk from the Eco-Museum Centre. Open year-round, tent and blanket hire is available. In July and August the room price at the lodge cabins jumps to ¥6000.

Takachiho-gawara camping ground (☎ 0995-57-0996; tent rental ¥1100; ☞ Jul & Aug) Camping items (tent etc) can be rented. A set-up tent, blankets, and cooking utensils for five people costs ¥2760.

Kirishima Jingū-mae Youth Hostel (☎ 0995-57-1188; dm HI member/nonmember ¥3500/4500; ☞ Southeast of Kirishima-jingū, this clean and comfy hostel has a liberal midnight curfew, and offers breakfast (¥500) and dinner (¥1000).

Minshuku Kirishima-ji (☎ 0995-57-0272; r per person ¥4500) This basic six-room ryokan with shared bath has a small *onsen*, and offers breakfast (¥700).

Karakuni-sō (☎ 0984-33-0650; fax 0984-33-4928; per person incl 2 meals ¥8600, annexe house s/d/tr ¥5000/8000/9000) This small, comfortable ryokan comes with deer nibbling around the grounds and a wonderful *onsen* that is also open to the public from 11am to 3pm (¥300).

Highland Resort Ebino-kōgen-sō (☎ 0984-33-0161; www.ebinokogenso.jp/in Japanese; r per person incl 2 meals from ¥12,000) This is a surprisingly elegant *kokumin-shukusha* with *rotomburo* and sauna. Stop by its good-value restaurant, Nokaidō (dishes ¥600 to ¥1200; open for lunch). The exquisite *rotomburo* is open to the public from 11.30am to 7.30pm (¥500).

Getting There & Away

The main train junctions are JR Kobayashi station, which is northeast of Ebino Plateau, and Kirishima-jingū station to the south.

However, a direct bus to Ebino-kōgen is by far the best way to go. From Kagoshima, Hayashida buses (four daily) make the 27km run to Ebino-kōgen starting at 10am (¥1570, 1¾ hours).

The approach from Miyazaki is more difficult – take the bus to Kobayashi (¥2000, 80 minutes). From there, you'll need to take a taxi (¥5000, 35 minutes), or hitch.

Schedules often change for travel to Ebino-kōgen; check before starting out.

KIRISHIMA-SHI KOKUBU 霧島市国分 Directly north of Sakurajima you'll find Kokubu, Kagoshima's second-largest city, which still seems like a small countryside town despite its growing population and several industries, such as Kyōcera and Sony, which have branches nearby.

Sights

UENOHARA JŌMON-ERA SITE 上の原縄文遺跡

If you have an interest in archaeology, you'll want to detour to see Uenohara. Once just a remote make-out spot with an empty parking lot and a few lonesome vending machines, Uenohara was transformed when – in the process of digging the foundation for a planned hotel – the oldest known Jōmon-era pottery shards were uncovered leading to entirely new views about how civilisation developed in Japan. It now appears that the first humans may have come from the south rather than the north, via canoes or rafts along the Ryūkyū island chain.

A re-created Jōmon-era village, demonstrations, tools and artefacts make this appealing **museum** (上野原縄文の森; ☎ 48-5701; admission ¥300; ☞ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun) a fascinating spot.

Getting There & Around

Kokubu can be easily reached by frequent trains from Kagoshima (see p715). Buses from Kokubu station (¥400, six daily) arrive at the Uenohara Jōmon Site in 24 minutes. The last bus leaves Uenohara for Kokubu station at 5.35pm. Car rentals can be made with **Toyota Rent a Lease** (Toyota Rent a Riisu; ☎ 47-0600; ☞ 8am-8pm), three minutes' walk from Kokubu station; turn left at the first street after the station.

KAGOSHIMA 鹿児島

☎ 099 / pop 604,367

Kagoshima is the southernmost major city in Kyūshū and a warm, sunny and relaxed place –

at least while looming Sakurajima volcano, just a stone's throw across the bay, is behaving itself. 'Dustfall' brings out the umbrellas in Kagoshima as frequently as rainfall in other parts of the world, coating cars, leaves, rooftops and, of course, any laundry left outside to dry.

History

Recent archaeological discoveries (see opposite) are showing that Kagoshima may actually be the birthplace of Jōmon civilisation, as its 10,000-year-old remains are some of Japan's oldest. For much of its history, Kagoshima prefecture was dominated by one family, the Shimazu clan, who held sway for 29 generations (nearly 700 years) until the Meiji Restoration. Even then, the clan continued to influence events. In 1865 the family helped to smuggle more than a dozen young men out of the country to study Western technology first-hand in the UK. A statue in front of JR Kagoshima station commemorates these 17 adventurers who defied a national ban on foreign travel.

In fact the Kagoshima region, known as Satsuma, had always been receptive to outside contact and for many years was an important centre for trade with China. St Francis Xavier first arrived here in 1549, making Kagoshima one of Japan's earliest contact points with Christianity and the West. Contact was also made with Koreans, whose pottery methods were influential in the creation of Satsumayaki (see p678).

Orientation

Kagoshima spreads north-south along the bayside and has two JR stations, the major one being Kagoshima-Chūō to the south. The town centre is at the point where the lively Tenmonkan-dōri shopping and entertainment arcade crosses the tram lines. The garden of

Sengan-en (below), the town's principal attraction, is north of Kagoshima station but most other things to do are around the centre, north of the river (Kōtsuki-gawa), with frisky Sakurajima always in view.

Information

Numerous places in the city (including the tourist information office) carry an excellent English guide called (not surprisingly!) *Kagoshima*. It has maps, a host of activities, model excursions broken into three-hour, half-day and whole-day sections, all with detailed maps. Some highlights include visiting local pottery kilns, silk-weaving workshops, *shōchū* distilleries and even a Satsuma fish-paste factory! Also check out the excellent website www.synapse.ne.jp/update.

The postal savings ATM at the central post office (Map pp712–13) near JR Kagoshima-Chūō station accepts international cards.

International Exchange Plaza (Map p710; ☎ 221-6620; 14-50 Yamashita-cho; access per 30min free; ☞ 8.30am-7pm, closed Mon) It also has CNN, magazines and books for browsing.

Internet Café Aprecio (Map pp712-13; ☎ 226-2077; 17-28 Nishisengoku-cho; per 30min ¥300; ☞ 24hr) In Tenmonkan.

Joy Road (☎ 253-2201; www.jr.kyushu.co.jp/english/index.html; Kagoshima-Chūō station; ☞ 8am-8pm) JR's own travel service inside the station, and can help with various travel needs.

Tourist information office (Map pp712-13; ☎ 253-2500; inside JR Kagoshima-Chūō station; ☞ 8.30am-7pm) Has information in English. Pick up a copy of *Kagoshima Visitor's Guide*.

Sights

SENGAN-EN (ISO-TEIEN) 庭園園仙巖園 Starting in 1658, the 19th Shimazu lord laid out this beautiful bayside **garden** (☎ 274-1551;

GUNS IN JAPAN

It's rare to see a gun in Japan, even though they've been around for centuries. The first guns appeared in 1543, when a Chinese trade ship bound for Macao was blown off course, drifting ashore on the southern island of Tanegashima. Among those aboard were a few Portuguese adventurers sporting primitive muskets. Military commanders at Kagoshima soon learned of the new weapon, and within 20 years Japan was manufacturing the highest-quality guns in the world.

The powerful samurai class was not impressed. Battles decided by guns rather than swords threatened a long tradition. Moreover, guns were a decidedly foreign invention. Restrictions on gun production grew and Japan gradually abandoned the technology it had perfected. The conflict between samurai culture and the new order is beautifully dramatised in Kurosawa's cinematic masterpiece *The Seven Samurai*.



9700-1 Yoshinochō; admission incl/excl guided villa tour & tea ceremony ¥1500/1000; ☎ 8.30am-5.15pm), incorporating one of the most impressive pieces of 'borrowed scenery' to be found anywhere in Japan – the fuming peak of Sakurajima. Look for the stream where the 21st Shimazu lord once held poetry parties – the participants had to compose a poem before the next cup of sake floated by (haiku verse was no doubt popular). The villa of **Shimazu-ke** was once a second home of the omnipotent Shimazu clan. Women in elegant kimonos guide you through the villa, after which you are served traditional tea and sweets. Look for a moment at the tea bowl's pattern or shape before you take a sip, if you want to be especially polite.

Other teashops around the garden sell *jambo* (pounded rice cakes on a stick).

The museum of **Shōko Shūseikan** (尚古集成館; admission free with garden ticket; ☎ 8.30am-5.15pm), adjacent to Sengan-en, once housed Japan's first factory, built in the 1850s. Exhibits relate to the Shimazu family – in fact most of the 10,000 items are precious heirlooms, including ancient scrolls, military goods and pottery. The art of *kiriko* (cut glass) has been revived at an on-site workshop.

MUSEUMS

Museum of the Meiji Restoration (Map pp712-13; ☎ 239-7700; 23-1 Kaijiya-chō; admission ¥300; ☎ 9am-5.30pm mid-Jul–Aug, to 4.30pm Sep–mid-Jul) has hourly performances by robotic Meiji reformers, including Saigō Takamori (see the boxed text, p715). Exhibits and historical hi-tech dioramas, labelled mostly in Japanese, laud Kagoshima Meiji-era firsts (Japan's first telegraph, first gas lighting, among others).

Kagoshima City Museum of Art (Map pp712-13; ☎ 224-3400; 4-36 Shiroyamachō; admission ¥200; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Tue-Sun) has a small, permanent collection of works by modern-day Kagoshima painters, as well as some 16th-century porcelains and wood-block prints. Be sure to see the collection of Sakurajima paintings.

Reimeikan (Kagoshima Prefectural Museum of Culture; Map p710; admission ¥300; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Tue-Sun) is on the former site of **Tsurumaru-jō** – the walls and the impressive moat are all that remain of the 1602 castle, and bullet holes in the stones are still visible. Inside you'll find interesting exhibits on Satsuma history and ancient sword-making displays.

OTHER SIGHTS

Kagoshima boasts no less than 50 public *onsen*. Local favourite **Nishida Onsen** (Map pp712-13; ☎ 255-6354; 12-17 Takasu) is just a few minutes' walk from JR Kagoshima-Chūō. **Kagomima Sentō (Onsen)** (Map p710; ☎ 226-2688; 3-28 Yasui-chō; admission ¥360; ☎ 10am-1am) is five minutes' walk from the Sakurajima Port.

Kagoshima City Aquarium (Map p710; ☎ 226-2233; 3-1 Hon Minato Shiminachi; adult/child ¥1500/750; ☎ 9am-5pm) is well done, not least the examples of local marine life, giving glimpses of spectacular diving in the Southwest Islands. **Iso-hama**, the city's popular and kid-friendly beach getaway, is good for summer swimming and splashing about, with Sakurajima in view.

Festivals & Events

Sogadon-no-Kasayaki (Umbrella Burning Festival) One of Kagoshima's more unusual events in late July. Boys burn umbrellas on the banks of Kōtsuki-gawa in honour of two brothers who used umbrellas as torches in one of Japan's oldest revenge stories.

Isle of Fire Festival In late July on Sakurajima.

Ohara Festival Featuring folk dancing in the streets on 3 November; visitors are invited to join in.

Sleeping

Ourpick Nakazono Ryokan (Map p710; ☎ 226-5125; shindon@satsuma.ne.jp; 1-8 Yasuichō; s/d/tr ¥4200/8400/11,970; ☎ ☎) You can find fancier and better-appointed places to rest your head, but you'll get a good taste of Kagoshima hospitality at this inn, used to dealing with the vagaries of *gaijin* clients. Part of the Japanese Inn Group, it is one of those gathering places filled with the personality of its owner, in this case the inimitable Shinichi Nakazono, who greets guests with a wry smile and a small pot of tea. He provides maps with handwritten notes highlighting Kagoshima's attractions, big and small. There's also a mineral-water *sentō* (public bathhouse) nearby, and the inn is walking distance to Tenmonkan. If you return late at night, Nakazono-san will show you the secret door entry. The ryokan is tucked down a narrow alley behind a temple, near the Shiyakusho-mae (City Hall) tram stop and a five-minute walk to Sakurajima pier.

Hotel Ishihara-sō (Map pp712-13; ☎ 254-4181; 14-14 Chūhōchō; s/d ¥4725/8925; ☎ ☎) This surprising 14-room urban oasis is only four minutes' walk from the station. There's a small elegant lobby with a good Satsuma-cuisine restaurant attached.

CENTRAL KAGOSHIMA

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	Yamakataya Bus Centre バスセンター 山形屋..... 54 F1

Hotel Gasthof (Map pp712-13; ☎ 252-1401; 7-1 Chūō-chō; s/d/tw/tr ¥5565/8400/8925/12,600; ☒ ☑ ☒) Old-world Europe meets urban Japan at this unusual 48-room central hotel, with big rooms and big furniture straight from Bavaria. There's also a gallery packed with Japanese and Chinese artwork and a swank basement restaurant.

Plaza Hotel Tenmonkan (Map pp712-13; ☎ 222-3344; fax 222-9911; 7-8 Yamanokuchi-chō; s/tw incl breakfast from ¥5700/9000; ☒ ☑ ☒) One of the best values in Tenmonkan, this well-managed business hotel has a narrow, inviting entry (with a tiny English sign). Rooms are smallish, but spotless. The breakfast buffet is generous.

Nanshū-kan (Map pp712-13; ☎ 226-8188; fax 226-9383; 19-17 Higashi-Sengo-kuchō; s/d from ¥6300/8400; ☒ ☑ ☒) Excellent value and well located, the attractive and comfortable rooms combine Japanese and Western features. A breakfast buffet is available (¥840).

Lexton Hotel (Map pp712-13; ☎ 222-0505; www.nisikawa.net/lexton/english/dining/index.html; 4-20 Yamanokuchi-chō; s/d from ¥7350/10,080; ☒ ☑ ☒) This smart-looking hotel is one of Tenmonkan's newest. Rooms are large and well appointed with dark-wood furnishings. All rooms are smartly arranged around an open centre, with skylight above. This is excellent value in this range.

Onsen Hotel Nakahara Bessō (Map pp712-13; ☎ 225-2800; fax 226-3688; 15-19 Terukunichō; r per person incl/excl 2 meals ¥10,000/8000; ☒ ☑ ☒) This family-owned Japanese-style accommodation dates from 1904. Ignore its boxy exterior; inside you'll find spacious rooms, a modern *rotemburo*, traditional artwork plus a good *Satsuma-ryōri* restaurant.

Also recommended:

Silk Inn Kagoshima (Map pp712-13; ☎ 258-1221; 19-30 Uenosonochō; s/d/tw from ¥6090/9975/10,500; ☒ ☑ ☒) Well-appointed business hotel near children's park.

JR Kyūshū Hotel Kagoshima (☎ 213-8000; kagoshima@jrk-hotels.com; 1-1-2 Take; s/tw ¥6900/12,600; ☒ ☑ ☒)

Eating

Side streets around Tenmonkan and JR Kagoshima-Chūō station have an abundance of eateries, many featuring Kagoshima *Satsuma-ryōri* – the food of the Satsuma region. Dishes to try: *tonkotsu*, pork ribs seasoned with miso (fermented soybean paste) and black sugar; and *satsuma-age*, a deep-fried fishcake flavoured with sake.

Ōshō (Map pp712-13; ☎ 226-4718; Naka-machi; dishes ¥400-700; 🍽️ lunch & dinner) Just around the corner from the central post office, with excellent (nongreasy!) chicken *kara-age*, a local favourite, fried rice and *gyōza* – it's cheap, good and fast. A picture menu is available.

Izakaya Wakana (Map pp712-13; ☎ 286-1501; 2-21-21 Nishida-chō; dishes from ¥600; 🍽️ lunch & dinner) Just a two-minute walk from JR Kagoshima-Chūō station's west gate, this smart and busy eatery serves excellent, reasonably priced Japanese standards, including *nabe* (Japanese-style hot pot), *oden* and black pork. No English sign; look for the hanging red *noren* cloth. A picture menu is available from the helpful staff.

Modern Bali (Map pp712-13; ☎ 224-1338; 12-20 Higashi-Sengoku-chō; dishes from ¥600; admission ¥500; 🍽️ dinner, closed Mon; E) This atmospheric eatery and bar serves authentic Indonesian favourites like *gado-gado* and *nasi goreng*.

Wakana Honten (Map pp712-13; ☎ 222-5559; 9-14 Higashi-Sengoku-chō; dishes from ¥700; 🍽️ 5.30-11.15pm) Come early to avoid the wait at this popular eatery specialising in *miso-oden* (¥650), sashimi and black pork that you cook at your table.

No No Budo (Map pp712-13; ☎ 206-7585; 5th fl, Amu Plaza; lunch/dinner buffet ¥1600/2200; 🍽️ lunch & dinner; 🍷 🍷 🍷 E) Follow the after-work crowd to this natural-food all-you-can-eat buffet with a range of Japanese standards, sashimi and desserts. Hard to beat, and there's a real non-smoking section.

There's always a *rāmen* debate in the Tenmonkan area. You'll have to stand in line at **Tontoro** (Map pp712-13; ☎ 222-5857; 9-41 Yamanokuchi; *rāmen* dishes from ¥500; 🍽️ until late), a hole-in-the-wall and one of Kagoshima's favourite new noodle shops. Both food and atmosphere are lively. Others in the area worth sampling include **Komurasaki** (Map pp712-13; ☎ 222-5707; 11-19 Higashi-Sengoku-chō; 🍽️ lunch & dinner, closed Thu), **Kuroiwa** (Map pp712-13; ☎ 222-4808; 9-9 Higashi-

Sengoku-chō; 🍽️ lunch & dinner) and **Wadaya** (Map pp712-13; ☎ 226-7773; 11-2 Higashi-Sengoku-chō; bowls ¥630-800; 🍽️ lunch & dinner), another Tenmonkan favourite.

Drinking

There's a lot happening in Tenmonkan – shot bars, discos, karaoke boxes and retro coffee shops. Most dance clubs don't get going until around 11pm. Many bars have an admission charge (average ¥500 to ¥1000).

Suigei Bar (Map pp712-13; ☎ 227-7707; Tanaka Bldg, 14-15 Sennichi-chō; E) Named 'Drunken Whale' in Japanese, this appealing, low-key pub has a cluster of small tables and stools, with *shochū* and other drinks from ¥500, small meals like rice salad from ¥600.

Bourbon Street (Map pp712-13; ☎ 224-6854; 13-18 Higashi-Sengoku-chō; admission free; 🍽️ until late) Listen to mellow jazz and blues at this smart basement shot bar, just opposite Tenmonkan-dō tram stop.

Kanejō (Map pp712-13; ☎ 223-0487; 2nd fl, 7-20 Higashi-Sengoku-chō) Small Asian café by day; atmospheric jazz bar by night.

Kurō-udo Bar & Izakaya (☎ 227-0960; 5th fl, Rodan Bldg, 13-3 Sennichi-chō) Over 200 kinds of *shochū*, swank bamboo décor and cool jazz make this an inviting spot.

Entertainment

Jazz Bar Pannonica (Map pp712-13; ☎ 216-3430; 2nd fl, 7-12 Higashi-Sengoku-chō; admission ¥500-1000) This cool jazz bar often features live vocalists.

El Para Latin Sports Bar (Map pp712-13; ☎ 223-3464; 2nd fl, Diamond Bldg, 11-7 Yamanokuchi-chō) Catch your big sports game here, or indulge in beer and darts. Features a killer menu of *tapas* (small-plate Spanish appetisers).

De'Nile (Map pp712-13; ☎ 222-4970; admission incl 2 free drinks ¥1000-3000; 🍽️ Sat & Sun) This is another subterranean dance spot with different DJs every night, located behind Taka-Pla.

SAIGŌ TAKAMORI 西郷隆盛

Although the Great Saigō had played a leading part in the Meiji Restoration in 1868, in 1877 he had second thoughts about the curtailment of samurai power and status, and this led to the ill-fated Satsuma Rebellion. Kumamoto's magnificent castle was burnt down during the rebellion but when defeat became inevitable, Saigō retreated to Kagoshima and committed *seppuku* (ritual suicide by disembowelment).

Despite his mixed status as both a hero and villain of the Restoration, Saigō is still a towering figure in the history of Japan. His square-headed features and bulky stature are instantly recognisable, and Kagoshima, like Ueno-kōen, Tokyo (see p133), also has a famous Saigō statue, as well as a memorial hall. Displays at the **Saigō Nanshū Kenshō-kan** (☎ 099-247-1100; 2-1 Kami Tatsuocho; admission ¥100; 🍽️ 9am-5pm, closed Mon) tell of the failed rebellion.

Shopping

Satsuma specialities include a variation on the *ningyō* (Japanese doll), *kiriko* and cards printed with inks produced from Sakurajima volcanic ash. Sakurajima ash is used in the making of Sakurajima pottery, but the main ceramic wares are white and black Satsumayaki. *Imo jōchū* (see the boxed text, opposite) is the drink of choice. There's another *asa-ichi* at the smaller Kagoshima station.

Futaya (Map p10; ☎ 222-5261; 5-20 Yasui-chō) For vintage kimonos and inexpensive gifts; near Nakazono Ryokan.

Asa-ichi (morning market; Map pp712-13; 🍽️ 6am-noon Mon-Sat) Kagoshima's *asa-ichi* is just south of JR Kagoshima-Chūō station. It's a raucous, lively event.

You can shop for quality goods at Senganen (Iso-teien), p709, and **Kagoshima Brand Shop** (Map pp712-13; ☎ 892-0821; 9-1 Meizan-chō; 🍽️ 9am-5pm) in Tenmonkan.

Getting There & Away

AIR
Kagoshima's airport has international connections with Shanghai and Seoul, as well as domestic flights to Tokyo (¥34,700, 95 minutes), Osaka (¥24,000, 70 minutes), Fukuoka (¥16,700, 45 minutes) and other Kyūshū destinations. Kagoshima is also the major jumping-off point for flights to the Southwest Islands and Okinawa (¥23,300, 85 minutes).

BICYCLE

Bikes can be rented reasonably (per two hours/day ¥500/1500) at Kagoshima-Chūō station and returned at a number of participating hotels (¥300). JR pass holders get a 40% discount. Ask at the tourist information office for details (p709).

BOAT

Ferries shuttle every 10 to 30 minutes across the bay to Sakurajima (¥150, 15 minutes). Jetfoils depart from Kita-futō (north wharf) to Yakushima (¥9000, three hours). Regular ferries to Yakushima depart from Minami-futō (south wharf; ¥5400, 13 hours). For details on ferry services to Yakushima, see p743.

From Kagoshima Shin-kō (Kagoshima New Port), **Queen Coral Marix Line** (☎ 225-1551) has ferries to Naha (Okinawa) via the Amami archipelago (¥14,200, 24 hours).

BUS

Most long-distance buses leave from the Express Bus Center in the Nangoku Nissei Building, opposite Amu Plaza at Kagoshima-Chūō station. There are myriad highway bus stops, mostly found around Kagoshima-Chūō station and Yamakataya (Map pp712-13) in Tenmonkan.

Typical services include Miyazaki (¥2700, 2¼ hours), Fukuoka (¥5300, four hours), Oita (¥5500, six hours) and overnight to Osaka (¥12,000, 12 hours).

Hayashida buses to Ebino-kōgen (¥1550, two hours) depart from opposite Taka-Pla department store in Tenmonkan or JR Kagoshima-Chūō station.

TRAIN

Most trains arrive and depart from Kagoshima-Chūō station. Additionally, the JR Kagoshima line heads north to Kumamoto (*shinkansen*, ¥5850, 75 minutes) and Fukuoka-Hakata (¥8920, four hours). Also stopping at Kagoshima station, the JR Nippō line goes to Miyazaki (*tokkyū*, ¥3790, two hours) and Beppu (¥9460, five hours).

Trains also run south from Kagoshima to the popular hot-spring resort of Ibusuki

DRINKING SHŌCHŪ

The drink of choice throughout Kyūshū is *shōchū*, and the island's southern region claims the highest per-capita consumption in Japan of this distilled liquor. Each prefecture is known for its own particular variety. In Kumamoto, it's usually made from rice; in Oita, barley is the favourite. But in the *izakaya* bars of southern Kyūshū, the first choice is the sweet potato. Ask for *imo-jō-chū*. You can drink it straight, with soda or over ice, but the most traditional way is to sip it warm (*oyu-wari*) from a stone pot, heated over glowing coals, and poured into a tiny cup. From this, you taste modestly, while enjoying your meal. If you lose count (a common risk), you generally begin to glow like the coals.

make your way by local bus back to Kagoshima.

Renting a car is a good alternative, and **Eki Rent-a-Car** (www.ekirent.co.jp in Japanese; 12hr from ¥4720); JR Kagoshima-Chūō station (☎ 258-1412; 2nd fl tourist information booth; ☎ 8am-8pm); Ibusuki (☎ 0993-23-3879; JR Ibusuki station, 1-1-1 Minata; ☎ 8am-5pm) is the easiest option.

Daily bus tours to Ibusuki and Chiran depart from Kagoshima-Chūō station. A daily sightseeing bus (¥4550) heads off to Chiran at 8.50am, whizzes you around the sights and then does the same thing in Ibusuki, ending the day with a soak in a hot spring.

Chiran 知覧

☎ 0993 / pop 13,453

Just 34km south of Kagoshima, Chiran has a fine collection of samurai houses and gardens, plus a fascinating museum memorial to WWII's kamikaze pilots. Chiran was one of the major bases from which fighters left on their final missions.

All seven of the residences along Chiran's street of **samurai houses** (武家屋敷; ☎ 83-2511; admission ¥500; ☎ 9am-5pm), dating from the mid-Edo period, are noted for their gardens. Look for the use of 'borrowed scenery', particularly in No 6. Water is usually symbolised by sand or gravel. A well-stocked carp stream runs parallel to the samurai street.

Taki-An (高城庵) is a traditional house and garden on the samurai street where you can sit on tatami mats to eat a bowl of hot *soba* (buckwheat noodles; ¥600) and sip Chiran's famous green tea.

Another kind of warrior is commemorated in the **Kamikaze Peace Museum** (知覧特攻平和会館; Chiran Tokkō Heiwa-Kaikan; ☎ 83-2525; admission ¥500; ☎ 9am-4.30pm), 2km west of town; a collection of aircraft, mementos, and photos of young, fresh-faced men who were selected for the Special Attack Corps in WWII. It's difficult to see these young men as different from any other country's soldiers: young, idealistic, hoping to defend their country. It's a moving tribute. There's a helpful English brochure.

Kagoshima Kōtsū buses to Chiran (¥920, 80 minutes) and Ibusuki run from JR Kagoshima-Chūō station and the Yamakataya bus station in Tenmonkan. From Chiran, there are three buses per day to Ibusuki (¥940, 65 minutes), leaving from stops along the highway.

Ibusuki 指宿

☎ 0993 / pop 46,124

At the southeastern end of the Satsuma Peninsula, 50km from Kagoshima, is the hot-spring resort of Ibusuki. It's quiet, especially in the off-season, and more especially after dark. At Ibusuki station, the **information desk** (☎ 22-2111; ☎ 8.30am-5.15pm Mon-Fri) has basic maps and can assist with directions.

ACTIVITIES

On the beachfront is Ibusuki's *raison d'être*, the **Tennen Sunamushi Kaikan** (天然砂蒸し会館; ☎ 23-3900; admission ¥900; ☎ 8.30am-noon & 1-9pm). Pay at the entrance (the fee includes a *yukata* and towel), change downstairs, and wander down to the beach where the burial ladies are waiting, shovel in hand, to cover you in wonderfully hot volcanic sand. Reactions range from claustrophobic to euphoric; 15 minutes is usually recommended, but many stay longer. Now and then, the ladies may gently mop your brow, while the quiet wash of the bay plays with your senses. When you're through, head back up to the bath, discard the sand-covered *yukata* and stay for as long as you like in the regular *onsen*. For hot-springs aficionados, Ibusuki's sand baths are a must.

The sand baths are less than 1km southeast of Ibusuki station.

SLEEPING & EATING

Tamaya Youth Hostel (圭屋ユースホステル; ☎ 22-3553; dm incl 2 meals/breakfast ¥4200/3200) Of the two youth hostels in town, this is the closest to the sand baths. Look for the palm tree out front.

Minshuku Marutomi (民宿丸富; ☎ 22-5579; fax 22-3993; r incl 2 meals from ¥7000) A small but very popular inn, famous for its fresh seafood, caught by the owner who would rather be fishing.

Ryokan Ginshō (旅館吟松; ☎ 22-2321; www.ginshyou.co.jp in Japanese; r per person incl 2 meals from ¥15,000; ☎ ☎) The seaside *rotemburo* at this upscale ryokan has romantic, lanternlit shower stalls.

Aoba (青葉; ☎ 22-3356; dishes from ¥750; ☎ lunch & dinner, closed Tue & Wed; ☎) Tasty Japanese standards with a beautiful aquarium (for viewing only), and it's next to the station.

Iwasaki Hotel (いわさきホテル; ☎ 22-2131) From July through September, it has a beer garden.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Ibusuki is less than two hours from Kagoshima by bus (¥850). A bit faster is JR's Nano-Hana Deluxe train (¥1000, 60 minutes).

AROUND SATSUMA PENINSULA

West of Ibusuki, **Ikeda-ko** is a beautiful volcanic caldera lake, inhabited by giant eels that grow 2m long. South of the lake is **Cape Nagasaki-bana**, from where offshore islands can be seen on a clear day.

Tōsenkyō-kōen Sōmen Nagashi (唐船峡公園 そうめん流し; ☎ 0993-32-2143; dishes from ¥500; ☎ 8.30am-6pm) is a 10-minute taxi ride (¥1500) from JR Kaimon station. This place is fun: *sōmen* noodles whirl around in a plexiglass table-top trough; you simply dip your chopsticks in and let the current do the rest – then dip them in sauce and slurp.

The beautiful symmetrical 924m cone of **Kaimon-dake** can be climbed in two hours from the Kaimon-dake bus stop, or also from JR Jamakawa station and JR Kaimon station. Start early and you'll be rewarded with views of Sakurajima, Cape Sata, and tropical islands Yakushima and Tanegashima.

At the southwestern end of the peninsula is **Makurazaki**, a busy port famous for *katsuo* (bonito) and the terminus for the train line from Kagoshima. Just beyond Makurazaki is **Bōnotsu**, a fishing village that was an unofficial trading link with the outside world via Okinawa during Japan's two centuries of seclusion. About 35km north of Bōnotsu is **Fukiage Beach. Fukiage-hama Youth Hostel** (吹上浜ユースホステル; ☎ /fax 0992-92-3455; dm ¥3750) has just a dozen beds; no English is spoken. It's a 1.5km walk from JR Ijūin station.

ŌSUMI PENINSULA

The southernmost point on the main islands of Japan, **Cape Sata** is on the opposite side of Kagoshima, the Ōsumi Peninsula, and is marked by the oldest lighthouse in Japan. You can reach the cape from the Kagoshima side of Kinkō-wan by taking the ferry from Yamakawa, a stop south of Ibusuki, to Nejime on the other side. However, public transport onward is nearly impossible. An 8km bicycle track leads down to the end of the cape.

If you're bent on getting here, another option is to rent a car in Kagoshima (p716) and drive. At the cape's tip, the **Sata-Day-Go** (☎ 0994-27-3355; 30min tours adult/child ¥2000/1000), a glass-bottomed boat, offers views of the un-

derwater fish and coral. Sea turtles, sharks or dolphins may swim by. You will certainly see plenty of *fugu* (pufferfish), which are plentiful (and deadly if prepared incorrectly!).

There is a ferry (¥600, 50 minutes) connecting Yamakawa (Satsuma) to Nejime (Ōsumi).

MIYAZAKI-KEN 宮崎県

Rte 222 from Miyakonōjō to Obi and Nichinan on the coast is a superb road, twisting and winding over the hills along the sea. Although there is train and bus service, renting a car to explore this rugged coastline south of Miyazaki will allow you greater freedom.

AOSHIMA 青島

☎ 0985

This is a beach resort famed for its small island covered in betel palms, fringed by spectacularly unique washboard rock formations and connected to the mainland by a thin causeway. A short walk east of Aoshima station is photogenic **Aoshima-jinja** (青島神社; Ōgre's Washboard Temple; ☎ 65-1262), reputedly good for matchmaking, and the scene of two exciting **festivals**. On the second Monday in January, loin-cloth-wearing locals dive into the ocean while on 17 June there's more splashing as *mikoshi* are carried through the shallows to the shrine. Nearby is a **botanical garden** (青島熱帯植物園; ☎ 65-1042; admission ¥200) that boasts 64 different species of fruit trees. Wandering around the grounds and garden is free. While you're in Aoshima, check out the Aoshima Palm Beach Hotel for a version of Florida in the Pacific.

Aoshima is on the JR Nichinan line from Miyazaki (¥360, 30 minutes). Buses from Miyazaki train station stop at Aoshima (¥670, 40 minutes, hourly) en route to Udo-jingū.

UDO-JINGŪ 鵜戸神宮

If you walk through this brightly painted coastal **shrine** (☎ 0987-29-1001) to the end of the path, you'll find yourself in an open cavern overlooking an unusual rock formation. A popular sport is to buy five *undama* (luck stones), make a wish and try to hit the shallow depression on top of one of the turtle-shaped rocks. Wishes are usually related to marriage and childbirth, possibly because the boulders in front of the cavern are said

to represent Emperor Jimmu's mother's breasts!

Hourly buses from Aoshima (¥990, 40 minutes) and Miyazaki (¥1440, 1½ hours) stop on the highway. From the bus stop, an approximately 700m walk to the shrine will take you past wonderful rock formations, more washboards and picturesque fishing boats.

Obi 飴肥

From 1587 the wealthy Ito clan ruled this town from the castle for 14 generations, surviving the 'one kingdom, one castle' ruling in 1615. The clan eventually dissolved as the Meiji Restoration ended the feudal period.

Sights & Activities

Only the walls of the original castle remain, but the grounds of **Obi-jō** (飴肥城; ☎ 0987-25-4533; combined admission ¥600; ☎ 9.30am-4.30pm) contain a number of interesting buildings, including the impressive gate, **Ōte-mon**. The castle **museum** has a collection relating to the Ito clan's long rule over Obi, with everything from weapons and armour to traditional clothes and household equipment. **Matsuo-no-Maru**, the lord's private residence, has been reconstructed. When the lord visited the toilet at the far end of the house, he was accompanied by three pages – one to lead the way, one to carry water for washing, and one to fan him during the summer months!

Yōshōkan, formerly the residence of the clan's chief retainer, stands just outside the castle entrance and has a large garden incorporating Atago-san as 'borrowed scenery'.

Shintōku-dō, the hall adjacent to the castle, was established as a samurai school in 1831. Up the hill behind Shintōku-dō is **Tanoue Hachiman-jinja**; the shrine is shrouded by old-growth trees and reached by a steep flight of steps.

On the western side of the river, **Ioshi-jinja** has a pleasant garden and the Ito family mausoleum.

Getting There & Around

The JR Nichinan line connects Obi with Miyazaki (*kaisoku*, ¥910, 65 minutes) via Aoshima. From Obi station, it's a short bus ride (¥140) plus about a 500m walk to the castle, reached by turning left outside the station. Buses from Miyazaki (¥1990, 2½ hours, last return bus 4pm) stop along the main road below the castle entrance. Bikes are the best way to visit,

and can be rented (¥300 for three hours) at the train station.

NICHINAN-KAIGAN & CAPE TOI

日南海岸都井岬

The beautiful 50km stretch of coast from Nichinan to Miyazaki offers stunning views, picturesque coves, interesting stretches of washboard rocks and heavy traffic at holiday times. Like Cape Sata, the ocean views from Cape Toi are superb.

On the last weekend in September Cape Toi hosts a dramatic **fire festival**. The cape is also famed for its herds of wild horses, but don't come expecting galloping stallions and frisky mares: it's essentially a grassy park, and the horses seem rather friendly.

Just off the coast from the beach at **Ishinami-kaigan**, the tiny island of **Kō-jima** is home to a group of monkeys that apparently rinse their food in the ocean before eating. To stay overnight in the area, head to **Koigaura Beach**, a popular surfing beach, about 5km from Cape Toi or 7km from Kōjima. Try **Minshuku Tanaka** (☎ 0987-76-2096; per person incl 2 meals from ¥6000) or **Koigaura Minshuku** (☎ 0987-76-1631; per person incl 2 meals from ¥4500).

MIYAZAKI 宮崎

☎ 0985 / pop 311,098

Due to the warm offshore currents, the city of Miyazaki has a balmy climate and some of the best surfing in Japan, particularly at Kizaki-hama and other beaches further north towards Hyūga. The warm weather also brings five professional baseball teams here for spring training. Many areas around Miyazaki played an important part in early Japanese civilisation, and are recorded in Japan's oldest chronicle, the *Kojiki*. Interesting excavations can be seen at Saitobaru (p724).

Information

There's a 24-hour internet café above Cafe Lanai (p724) charging ¥480 for the first hour, or ¥1900 for unlimited access between midnight and 8am, including soft drinks.

There's an international ATM at the south end of Miyazaki station, and also at the central post office, five minutes' walk up Takachiho-dōri from Miyazaki station.

At the **tourist information centre** (☎ 22-6469; inside Miyazaki station; ☎ 9am-6.30pm), the helpful staff speaks English and has maps of the city and surroundings. Make sure you pick up

the excellent *Discovering Miyazaki: A Travel Guide* or *Let's Go Miyazaki City* guidebook and pullout map.

The **Miyazaki Prefectural International Plaza** (☎ 32-8457; 8th fl, Carino Bldg; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Sat) opposite the main post office has CNN and English-language newspapers and magazines, but no internet access.

Sights

MIYAZAKI SCIENCE CENTRE

宮崎科学技術館

A short walk from Miyazaki station, this hi-tech science **museum** (☎ 23-2700; 38-3 Miyawakichō; admission with sky show ¥730; ☎ 9am-4pm Tue-Sun) (aka Cosmo Land) topped by a gleaming silver dome, boasts one of the world's largest planetariums and interactive displays. English-language pamphlets are available.

MIYAZAKI-JINGŪ & MUSEUM

宮崎神宮 宮崎総合博物館

Three kilometres north of the town centre in the village of Koguya, this **shrine** (☎ 27-4004; 2-4-1 Jingū) honours the Emperor Jimmu, the semi-mythical first emperor of Japan and founder of the Yamoto court. There are 600-year-old wisteria vines covering the thickly forested grounds. Just north of the shrine grounds, the **Miyazaki Prefectural Museum of Nature & History** (☎ 24-2071; 2-4-4 Jingū; admission free; ☎ 9am-4.30pm, closed Tue) has kid-friendly exhibits on local history, archaeological finds, festivals and folkcrafts. Behind the museum is the interesting **Minka-en** (民家園; admission free), with four traditional-style Kyūshū farmhouses.

The shrine is located about a 500m walk from Miyazaki-jingū station, one stop north of Miyazaki. Several buses from Miyazaki station and Tachibana-dōri run directly to the shrine (¥160, 10 minutes).

HEIWADAI-KŌEN 平和台公園

The centrepiece of **Heiwadai-kōen** (Peace Park; ☎ 24-5027; admission free) is a 37m-high tower constructed in 1940, a time when peace in Japan was about to disappear. **Haniwa Garden**, within the park, is dotted with reproductions of the curious clay *haniwa* (earthenware figures found in Kōfun-period tombs) that have been excavated from the Saitobaru burial mounds (p724).

Heiwadai-kōen is about 1.5km north of Miyazaki-jingū. There are frequent buses there from along Tachibana-dōri (¥270, 20 minutes).

SEAGAIA シーガイア

About 10km north of town at the sprawling Seagaia resort, **Ocean Dome** (オーシャンドーム; ☎ 21-1111; www.seagaia.co.jp/english/odr; Hamayama Yamasakichō; adult/child ¥2000/1000; ☎ 10am-5pm) is a water-based theme park with a variety of razzle-dazzle attractions. But beware; it's kid-friendly to the point of exhaustion!

KAEDA GORGE 加江田溪谷

An 8km **hiking path** at Kaeda Gorge follows a sparkling stream filled with big boulders and hidden swimming holes, banana palms and mountain cedars. About 1km from the car park, poke your nose into a lovely middle-of-nowhere pottery **gallery** (きまぐれ陶芸かん).

Festivals & Events

Yabusame (samurai-style horseback archery) You can witness this at Miyazaki-jingū (left) on 2 and 3 April.

Fireworks show Kyūshū's largest, lighting up the summer sky over the Oyodo-gawa in early August.

Erekocho Matsuri (えれこつちやみやざき) Miyazaki's newest festival with dancers and *taiko* drummers filling Tachibana-dōri in mid-August.

Miyazaki-jingū Grand Festival (Jimmu-Sama) In late October; brings in the fall season with horses and *mikoshi* being carried through the streets.

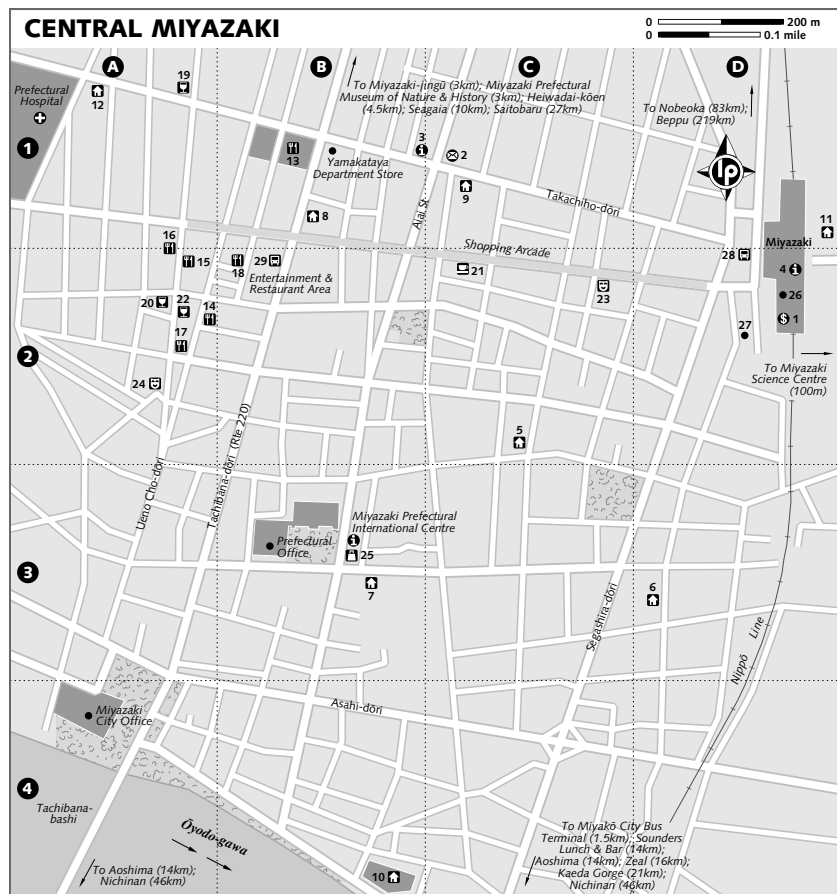
Sleeping

Fujin-kaikan Youth Hostel (☎ 24-5785; 1-3-10 Asahi; dm ¥2750; ☎ ☎) A well-managed Japanese-style hostel that doubles as a rec centre during the day, requiring that you not be around from 10am to 3pm. Aside from that, and the 10pm curfew, it's quite inviting! Japanese breakfast is available (¥500).

Business Hotel Royal (☎ 25-5221; fax 29-1103; 2-5-20 Segashira; s/d/tw from ¥4200/6000/7000; ☎ ☎ ☎) Close to Miyazaki station on a quiet side street, this 32-room hotel has a cosy lobby filled with greenery, a coffee bar and a parakeet.

Hotel Kensington (☎ 20-5500; www.face.ne.jp/kensington in Japanese; 3-4-4 Tachibanadōri-higashi; s/d ¥6300/10,000; ☎ ☎ ☎) Look for the British suit of armour in the lobby that seems to be waiting for the lift. Small but spotless rooms – plus an excellent breakfast (with *Hiya-jiru* porridge) and lunch buffet – make this good value.

Hotel Mirieges (☎ 26-6666; www.merieges.co.jp in Japanese; 1-11 3-chome Tachibana-dōri-Nishi; s/d from ¥8100/12,600; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) Excellent value in this price range, it offers large sparkling



rooms, satellite TV, handsome rattan furnishings and good service throughout. The lobby is on the 3rd floor past the wedding shops.

On the riverside are Miyazaki's top-end hotels, with the **Miyazaki Kankō Hotel** (☎ 32-5920; www.miyakan-h.com in Japanese; 1-1-1 Matsuyama; s/d from ¥7710/14,000, Japanese-style r ¥8400-18,000; (P) (X) (24) (L)), easily the best of the lot, with stylish rooms, *onsen* and a baby grand in the lobby. Ask for a river-view room.

Also recommended:

Business Family Hotel Miyako (☎ 27-9991; fax 27-0023; 13-21 Miyatachō; r per person ¥3675; (24)) Large tatami rooms. No English; look for the white picket fence in window!

Toyoko Inn Miyazaki Ekimae (☎ 32-1045; www.toyoko-inn.com; 2-2-31 Oimatsu; s/tw incl breakfast

¥5250/7770; (P) (X) (24) (L); wi-fi) Free lobby phones, clerks in pastel.

Roynet Hotel Miyazaki (☎ 60-0055; fax 60-2000; 2-2-3 Miyazaki-Eki Higashi; s/d/tw from ¥6900/8800/12,000, all incl breakfast buffet; (P) (X) (24) (L)) Smart business hotel behind Miyazaki station.

Eating

Hiya-jiru is a cold summer soup made from baked tofu, fish, miso paste and cucumbers, served over rice. Miyazaki is also known for *yuzu-kosho*, a tangy citrus spice. At Miyazaki station, a favourite *ben-tō* for the train is *shiitake ekiben*, a boxed lunch featuring mushrooms. Be aware that many eateries in the entertainment district add a 'table charge' of around ¥300, which usually gets you a small appetiser.

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La Dish Gourmet & Deli (☎ 32-7929; 1-1 Chuōdōri; ☎ 11am-3am Mon-Sat, 6pm-1am Sun) Amid the hustle of the entertainment district, this import grocery store sells both cold and hot deli items, plus a good selection of wines, cheeses and desserts.

Den Den Den (☎ 24-3825; 3-2-10 Tachibana-dōri-nishi; ☎ 6pm-2am) This boisterous *izakaya* specialises in *kushiage* (deep-fried seafood on skewers from ¥150) and generous *teishoku* from ¥1000. Owner-cook speaks English. Look for dark-wood exterior.

Restaurant Bar De-meté-r (☎ 29-0017; 2nd fl, 3-8-18 Tachibana-dōri-nishi; dishes ¥450-1400, pizzas ¥700-1200; ☎ dinner) Popular for its brick-oven pizza, this place features an endless bilingua menu, draught beer and no cover charge.

Sounders Lunch & Bar (サウンダーズ; ☎ 65-0767; 1-6-23 Aoshima; set meals from ¥600; ☎ lunch & dinner; (E)) The owners of this Hawaiian surf bar near Aoshima cook up spinach and bacon salads, burgers and tacos with a Japanese twist. Set lunches and dinners start at ¥600. There's live music most weekends.

Izakaya Seoul (☎ 29-8883; 7-26 Chūōmachi; ☎ dinner; E) This tiny no-nonsense Korean-Japanese restaurant features great *nabe* dishes from ¥1000.

Zeal (ジール; ☎ 65-1508; 6411 Kaeda; buffet adult/child ¥1300/800; ☎ lunch Sat, Sun & holidays) On the road to Kaeda (15km), this macrobiotic lunch spot with outdoor tables offers a constantly changing menu of fresh pasta, veggies, desserts etc.

Don Don Ju (☎ 31-8929; basement, 3-10-36 Tachibana-dōri-nishi; set meals ¥2200-3600; ☎ lunch & dinner) This eatery specialises in *Miyazaki-gyū*

(Miyazaki beef), which is the real thing, and has English-speaking staff and menus.

Bon Belta has an 8th-floor restaurant arcade (lunch sets under ¥1000) and a variety of takeaway is available from its basement marketplace. Don't miss the *onigiri* (rice-ball snack) counter.

Drinking

Locals claim that Miyazaki has some 3500 bars, which may be a bit of an exaggeration, or perhaps not. Avoid the 'snack bars' where the customer is the snack.

One Coin Bar (☎ 31-1152; 8-21 Chūō-dōri; ☎ closed Tue) All drinks are ¥500 (one coin!) at this smart eight-stool hole-in-the-wall where you can't help but rub elbows with other customers, while gracious English-speaking owner Hideki Yano makes your drink.

Suntory Shot Bar (☎ 0985-25-4665; 1-13-1F, Chūōdōri) Good for a quiet, inexpensive beer, and the owner speaks some English – ask him for his 'special'.

Pari No Okashiyasan (☎ 29-3507; 1-68 Hiroshima; ☎ 10am-8pm) This French-style place offers pastries, sweets and coffee near the station.

In summer Bon Belta department store has a rooftop beer garden.

Entertainment

Miyazaki has a surprising nightlife, and the establishments range from the quiet and relaxing to the wild and crazy. The downtown Ichibangai area and the train station are both alive with the sounds of street musicians.

Jazz Spot Lifetime (☎ 27-8451; www1.ne.jp/~life time; 2nd fl, 2-3-8 Hiroshima; admission Fri ¥500; ☎ 11.45am-2pm & 5pm-12.30am, closed Sun) Modern jazz is alive and well in Miyazaki where near- nightly jams at this upstairs bistro-bar feature top bop musicians. When the band isn't jamming, English-speaking owner Kenjiro plays classics from Miles to Coltrane. Drinks start at ¥600, with coffee, snacks and steaks on the menu.

Cafe Lanai (☎ 23-3412; 2-1-1 Shimizu) This mel- low pub, with a surf-and-aloha groove, has a great selection of Hawaiian slack-key music plus surfing videos above the full bar. Dishes (from ¥700) also have an island flair.

Planet Café Sports (☎ 32-5064; 8-25 Kamino-machi) Come for the sports, stay for the great *Jidori*, a grilled chicken dish that goes great with beer or *shōchū*.

Shopping

Miyazaki Prefectural Products Promotion Exhibition Hall (☎ 22-7389; 1-6 Miyatachō; ☎ 9.30am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6.30pm Sat & Sun) Sells handwoven *tetsumugi* textiles, clay *haniwa* and Takachiho *kagura* masks.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Miyazaki is connected by air with Tokyo (¥32,700), Osaka (¥21,000), Okinawa (¥25,200), Fukuoka (¥17,700) and other cities around Kyūshū.

BOAT

There are ferry services linking Miyazaki with Osaka (2nd class ¥10,000, 13 hours) and Kawasaki (¥12,640, 21 hours). For reservations contact **Marine Express** (☎ in Kyūshū 0982-55-9090, in Osaka 06-6616-4661, in Miyazaki 22-8895).

BUS

Most long-distance buses originate at the **Miyakō City bus terminal** (☎ 52-2200) south of the river, near JR Minami-Miyazaki station, including to Kagoshima (¥2700, 2¼ hours), Kumamoto (¥4500, 3¼ hours), Nagasaki (¥6500, 5½ hours) and Fukuoka (¥6000, four hours).

Many buses run along Tachibana-dōri, but if you don't read Japanese you may be better off heading down to the Miyakō City bus terminal. There is also **Miyazaki Ekimae Bus Center** (☎ 53-1000) opposite Miyazaki station.

TRAIN

The JR Nippō line runs down to Kagoshima (*tokkyū*, ¥3790, two hours) and up to Beppu (*tokkyū*, ¥5770, three hours). The JR Nichi- nan line runs slowly along the coast south to Aoshima (¥360, 30 minutes) and Obi (¥910, 65 minutes).

Getting Around

Miyazaki's airport is connected to the city centre by bus (¥400, 30 minutes) or train (¥340, 10 minutes) from JR Miyazaki station. Although most bus services start and finish at the Miyakō City bus terminal, many run along Tachibana-dōri in the centre. Only a few depart from outside Miyazaki station.

There are several car-rental companies around Miyazaki station and at the airport.

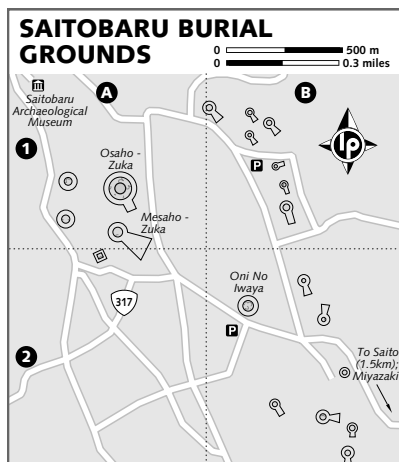
AROUND MIYAZAKI 宮崎周辺

Saitobaru 西都原

☎ 0983

If the *haniwa* in Miyazaki piqued your inter- est in the region's archaeology, then you should head north 27km to the **Saitobaru Burial Mounds Park**, where several square kilometres of fields and forest are dotted with over 300 *kofun* (burial mounds). The mounds, dating from AD 300 to 600, range from insignificant little bumps to hillocks large enough to appear as natural creations.

The interesting small **Saitobaru Archaeo- logical Museum** (西都原考古博物館; ☎ 41-0041; http://saito-muse.pref.miyazaki.jp/home.html; admission free; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun) has displays of archaeologi-



cal finds, including ancient swords, armour, jewellery, *haniwa* and much more.

The park area is always open. Buses run frequently to Saitobaru from along Tachibana-dōri in Miyazaki (opposite) and also from Miyakō City bus terminal (¥1040, one hour). You'll need your own transport if you want to explore the mound-dotted countryside, or you should plan to walk a lot.

Saitobaru is just outside the town of Saito, where the unique **Usudaiko dance festival**, with drummers wearing odd pole-like headgear, takes place in early September. The equally interesting **Shiromi Kagura** performances are on 14 and 15 December, part of a harvest festival that lasts from 12 to 16 December.

TAKACHIHO 高千穂

☎ 0982 / pop 15,840

The mountain resort town of Takachiho is about midway between Nobeoka on the east coast and Aso-san in the centre of Kyūshū. Just north of the bus station in the centre of town is the **Takachiho Tourism Association** (☎ 72-1213; ☎ 8.30am-5pm); visit for reliable information in English about events and lodgings in and around Takachiho.

Sights

TAKACHIHO-KYŌ 高千穂峡

Takachiho's magnificent gorge, with its water- fall, overhanging rocks and sheer walls was formed over 100,000 years ago by a double volcanic eruption. During the autumn, trees seem to burst into the colours of the season. There's a 1km-long nature trail above the gorge, but it is best viewed up close in a **row- boat** (☎ 73-1213; per 30min ¥1500; ☎ 8.30am-5pm). The gorge is about 1km from the centre.

TAKACHIHO-JINJA 高千穂神社

Takachiho-jinja, close to the train and bus stations, is set in a grove of cryptomeria pines. From late November to February the local *iwato kagura* dances (☎ 73-2413; tickets ¥500) are performed for an hour each evening from 8pm (see the boxed text, right, for de- tails).

AMANO IWATO-JINJA 天岩戸神社

The Iwato-gawa splits **Amano Iwato-jinja** (☎ 74-8239) into two parts. The main shrine, Nishi Hongū, is on the west bank of the river while on the east bank is Higashi Hongū, at the cave where Shintō myth holds that the sun god-

dess Amaterasu hid until she was lured out by the bawdy performance of another goddess, Uzume (see the boxed text, below).

A short walk from the Amano Iwato-jinja beside a picture-postcard stream takes you to the **Amano Yasugawara** cave where Amaterasu finally emerged, bringing light to the world again. The shrine is 8km from Miyakō. Buses from Miyakō bus centre depart hourly (¥370, 17 minutes).

Festivals & Events

Important *iwato kagura* festivals are held from 10am to 10pm on or around 2 and 3 May, 22 to 23 September and 3 November (dates change every year) at the Amano Iwato-jinja (left). There are also all-night performances in farmhouses from mid-November to mid-February and a visit can be arranged by inquiring at the shrine. In all, 33 dances are performed from 6pm until 9am the next morning. If you brave the cold until morning, prepare to be caught up in a wave of excitement.

Sleeping & Eating

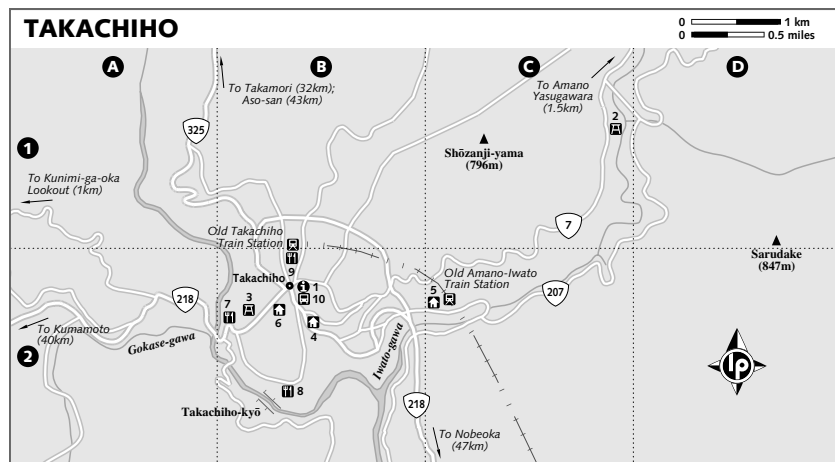
Takachiho has over 30 hotels, ryokan, *min- shuku* and pensions. Every place in town can be booked out during peak holiday periods.

Many visitors just eat at their ryokan or *minshuku*, but Takachiho also has plenty of *yakitori-ya* where you can order *kappo-zake*, local sake heated in bamboo stalks.

Takachiho Youth Hostel (☎ /fax 72-3021; dm HI mem- ber/nonmember ¥2800/3800; P) About 2km from

TAKACHIHO LEGENDS

Ninigi-no-mikoto, a descendant of the sun goddess Amaterasu, is said to have made land fall in Japan on top of the legendary mountain Takachiho-yama in southern Kyūshū. In Takachiho the residents insist that it was in their hamlet that the sun goddess's grandson arrived. They also lay claim to Ama-no-Iwato, or the boulder door of heaven. Here Amaterasu hid and night fell across the world. To lure her out, another goddess performed a dance so comically lewd that the sun goddess was soon forced to emerge from hiding to find out what the merriment was about. That dance, the *iwato kagura*, is still performed in Takachiho today, characterised by masks with unusually long...noses.



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TRANSPORT

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the centre, near Amano-Iwato station. Clean and efficient, with bunk beds and breakfast.

Yamatoya Ryokan (☎ 72-2243; fax 72-6868; r per person incl 2 meals ¥8000-15,000; P ☒ ☒) All rooms are traditional ryokan style, and there's helpful English-speaking staff. Look for the masked *iwato kagura* dancer painted on the front.

Folkcraft Ryokan Kaminoya (☎ 72-2111; fax 72-5040; r incl 2 meals ¥975-12,075; P ☒) Just downhill from the bus station, right in the centre of Takachiho, this well-managed ryokan is good value, especially for two. Rooms are spacious with large *shōji*-style windows. Look for the blue wooden sign.

Young Echo (☎ 72-4948; dishes from ¥600; ☒ breakfast, lunch & dinner) This reliable eatery is a good spot to plot your next move. The outdoor

summer beer garden is open from 5pm to 10pm.

Several *sōmen-nagashi* (thin noodles served in running water, then dipped in a soy-based broth) places offer a light, refreshing change. Try **Chiho no Le** (千穂の家; ☎ 72-2115; ☒ breakfast & lunch) or **Onokoro Chaya** (おのころ茶屋; ☎ 72-3931; ☒ breakfast & lunch). You catch noodles with your chopsticks as they float by in halved bamboo rafts.

Getting There & Around

From Miyakō bus centre, about a 500m walk downhill from the old train station (trains no longer serve Takachiho), there are buses to Takamori (¥1280, 70 minutes, three daily), near Aso-san, and Kumamoto (¥2300, 2¾ hours).

Although you can walk to the gorge and Takachiho-jinja, the other sites are some distance from town and public transport is a problem. Regular tours leave from the bus station: the 'A Course' (¥2000) covers everything, while the 'B Course' (¥1500) skips Amano Iwato-jinja. Bicycles can be rented next to the old station in Takachiho (two/four/eight hours ¥700/1200/2000).

ŌITA-KEN 大分県

Ōita-ken offers Japanese *onsen* mania, Beppu and the traditional town of Yufuin. The region also bears some traces of Japan's earliest civilisations, particularly on the Kunisaki Peninsula. The office of **Tourism Ōita** (Map p730; ☎ 0977-26-6250;

☒ 9am-5pm) at the west end of JR Beppu station has helpful English-speaking staff.

USUKI 臼杵

☎ 0972 / pop 43,051

About 5km from Usuki is a superb collection of thousand-year-old **Buddha images** (臼杵石仏; ☎ 65-3300; admission ¥530; ☒ 8.30am-4.30pm). Four clusters comprising 59 Buddha images lie in a series of niches in a ravine. Some are complete statues, whereas others have only the heads remaining, but many are in wonderful condition. The **Dainichi Buddha head** (古圖石仏) is considered the finest stone Buddha statue in all of Japan. Some of the faces are so well preserved that they almost seem alive. Serene and spectacular, it's a must-see well worth making a special detour for.

Usuki also has several temples and well-preserved traditional houses. On the last Saturday in August, the town hosts a **fire festival**, and there are other festivities throughout the year. Ask for details at the **tourist information office** (☎ 64-7130; ☒ 8.30am-5pm) adjacent to Usuki station. Internet users can log on for free at **Sala de Usuki** (サーラデ臼杵; ☎ 64-7271), the town civic/rec centre.

Local restaurants boast the best *fugu* in Japan; expect to pay about ¥8000 for a dinner set, including sake.

The town of Usuki is about 40km southeast of Beppu. Take the JR Nippō line to Usuki station (*tokkyū*, ¥1430, 55 minutes), from where it's a 20-minute bus ride to the ravine site. Bikes can also be rented for free from Usuki station (☎ 63-8955) or the town centre (☎ 64-7130).

BEPPU 別府

☎ 0977 / pop 122,814

Understanding the working spa town of Beppu is in some ways to understand Japan. Quaint yet crowded, traditional and modern, Beppu remains what it always has been: a place to which people escape. For some that's hedonistic fun in the pleasure district, for others it's relaxing soaks in one of hundreds of baths. The recent arrival in 2000 of **Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University** in the foothills north of town has brought a welcome influx of both Japanese and international students to Beppu.

Orientation & Information

Beppu is a sprawling town and the hot-spring areas are spread out, often some distance from

the town centre. The adjacent town of Ōita is virtually contiguous with Beppu, although it lacks any notable attractions. The tiny but beautiful *onsen* village Myōban (p729) is a quieter place to soak if you're so inclined.

At Beppu station, the **Foreign Tourist Information Office** (Map p730; ☎ /fax 23-6220; 12-13 Ekimae-machi; ☒ 9am-5pm) has helpful English-speaking personnel with an arsenal of English-language information on Beppu and its environs. They can happily recommend accommodation, itineraries and more. Another **Foreign Tourist Information Office** (☎ 23-1119; fax 25-0455; cnr Ekimae-dōri & Ginza Arcade; ☒ 9am-5pm) is a five-minute walk from the station, and also has free internet use.

International ATM machines can be found at the Kitahama post office (Map p730) and the nearby the Cosmopia shopping centre. Ōita Bank handles foreign exchange services.

Sights & Activities

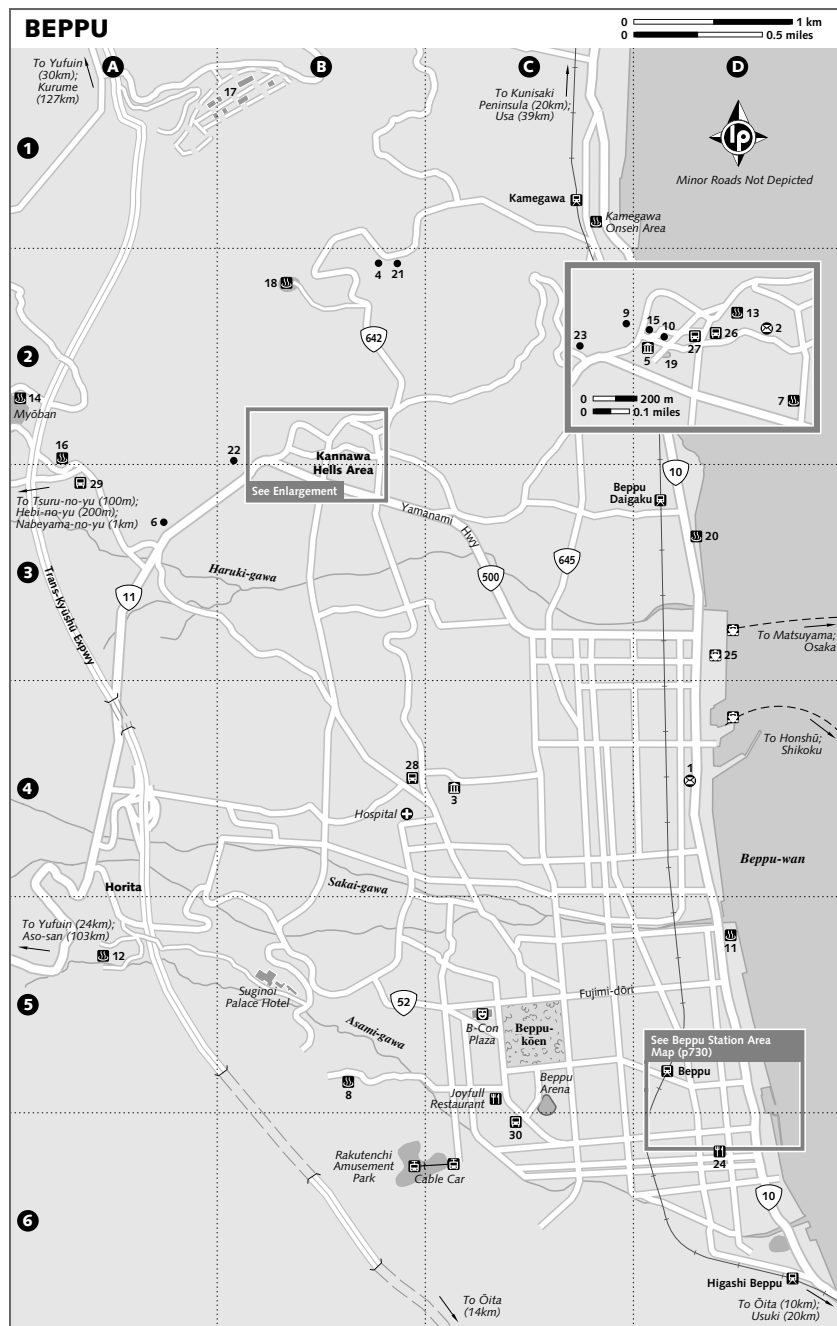
HOT SPRINGS

Beppu has two types of hot springs, and they pump out more than 100 million litres of hot water every day. *Jigoku* are hot springs for looking at. *Onsen* are hot springs for bathing. If you go to a high spot such as Myōban (p729) where you can look down over Beppu, you'll see the white plumes (called 'yunoka') of hundreds of steam vents.

The Hells

Beppu's most hyped attraction is the 'hells' or *jigoku*, a collection of **hot springs** (Map p728; each hell ¥400; ☒ 8am-5pm) where the water bubbles forth from underground, often with unusual results. You can purchase a ¥2000 coupon that covers all except two (Hon Bōzu Jigoku and Kinryū Jigoku). Unlike Wonders (p692), where you see the geothermal wonders natural, raw and unadorned, these have been turned into mini-amusement parks, each with a different theme. If you're pressed for time and unsure if this is your cup of, er, *onsen* water, peek at the postcard pack in the station, which has good pictures, and you'll know instantly whether these are worth your time.

The hells are in two groups – eight at Kannawa, over 4km northwest of Beppu station, and two more several kilometres away. In the Kannawa group, **Umi Jigoku** (Sea Hell), with its large expanse of steaming artificially blue water, and **Shiraike Jigoku** (White Pond Hell) may be worth a look. **Kinryū Jigoku** (Golden



INFORMATION

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 Shiraike Jigoku (White Pond
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 Shōnin-ga-hama Sand Bath 20 D3
 Tatumaki Jigoku (Waterspout
 Hell) 21 B2
 Umi Jigoku (Sea Hell) 海地獄 22 B2
 Yama Jigoku (Mountain Hell)
 山地獄 23 C2

EATING

Tomonaga Panya (Bread shop)
 友永パン屋 24 D6

TRANSPORT

Ferry Port フェリーのり場 25 D3
 Kamenoi Bus Station (Buses to
 Beppu Station) 亀の井バスターミナル
 (至別府駅) 26 D2
 Kamenoi Bus Station (Buses to
 Chi-no-ike Jigoku)
 亀の井バスターミナル
 (至血の池地獄) 27 D2
 Minami-baru Bus Stop
 南原バス停 28 B4
 Tsurumi Rei-en Bus Stop
 鶴見霊園バス停 29 A3
 Yakyū-jō-mae Bus Stop
 野球場前バス停 30 C6

Dragon Hell) and **Kamado Jigoku** (Oven Hell) have dragon and demon figures overlooking the pond. Kinryū features tropical fruit trees, compliments of the steamy tropical surroundings. Skip the **Oni-yama Jigoku** (Devil's Mountain Hell) and **Yama Jigoku** (Mountain Hell), where a variety of animals are kept under shamefully bad conditions.

The smaller pair has **Chi-no-ike Jigoku** (Blood Pool Hell), with its photogenically red water, and **Tatumaki Jigoku** (Waterspout Hell), where a geyser performs regularly. The final two hells, not included in the group's admission ticket, are **Hon Bōzu Jigoku** (Monk's Hell) with its collection of hiccupping and belching hot-mud pools up the long hill from the main group of hells, and **Kinryū Jigoku** with its 'dragon-spitting' steam vent, for the easily impressive.

From the bus stop at JR Beppu station, buses 5, 9, 41 and 43 go to the main group of hells at Kannawa. There are buses every 20 minutes but the round trip (¥820) costs virtually the same as an unlimited-travel day pass (¥1000).

Jigoku tour buses regularly depart from the JR Beppu station (¥3000, including admission to all hells).

Onsen

The hells, though mildly interesting, shouldn't distract you from the *real* hot springs. Scattered around the town are eight *onsen* areas. *Onsen* enthusiasts spend their time in Beppu moving from one bath to another – experts consider at least three baths a day *de rigueur*. Costs range from ¥100 to ¥1000, though many (and two of the best) are free. Bring your own

soap, washcloth and towel, as many places don't rent them. There's an **onsen festival** during the first weekend in April. Some of the baths alternate daily between male and female so that each gender can appreciate each side.

Near JR Beppu station, the classic **Takegawara Onsen** (Map p730; ☎ 23-1585; 16-23 Motomachi; admission ¥100, sand bath ¥1000; ♀ 6.30am-10.30pm, sand bath 8am-9.30pm) dates from the Meiji era. Its bath is very simple and *very* hot; simply scoop out water with a bucket, pour it over yourself, and jump in! It also has a relaxing sand bath where a *yukata* is provided. You lie down in a shallow trench and are buried up to your neck in heated sand, followed by an *onsen* dip and shower. The entire affair takes about 40 minutes.

North of the town, in the **Kannawa onsen area** (Map p728), near the major group of hells, is the popular and renovated **Mushi-yu steam bath** (Map p728; ☎ 67-3880; 1 Furomoto, Kannawa; admission ¥500, yukata ¥210; ♀ 9am-6pm). **Hyōtan Onsen** (Map p728; ☎ 66-0527; 159-2 Kannawa; admission ¥700; ♀ 8am-9pm) has a *rotemburo* and also offers sand baths (*yukata* rental ¥200). Most ryokan and *minshuku* also have public baths.

Shibaseki onsen baths (Map p728; ☎ 67-4100; 4 Noda; admission ¥210; ♀ 7.20am-8pm, closed 2nd Wed of each month) are near the smaller pair of hells. You can also rent a private *kazoku-buro* (private family or couples bath) for ¥1570 per hour. Between JR Beppu station and the **Kamegawa onsen area**, try the very popular **Shōnin-ga-hama sand bath** (Map p728; ☎ 66-5737; admission ¥1000; ♀ 8.30am-6pm Apr-Oct, 9am-5pm Nov-Mar); it has a great beach location and English is spoken.

In the hills northwest of the town centre is the **Myōban onsen area** (p728). Quieter and quite hilly, you will find numerous baths as well as

odd thatched-roof huts that are Edo-era replicas of the huts in which bath salts were made. You can go inside (the salts resemble yellow-brown mould), wander the 'hell' outside, and even purchase salts for a bath from hell when you return home. Nearby, **Onsen Hoyōland** (Map p728; ☎ 66-2221; 5-1 Myōban; admission ¥1050; ☎ 9am-8pm) has wonderful giant mud baths, as well as mixed-gender and open-air bathing.

For an *onsen* experience next to the beach, head to **Kitahama Termas Onsen** (Map p728; ☎ 24-4126; admission ¥500; ☎ 10am-8pm). There are separate baths for men and women; the outside *rotemburo* mixes it up, but you'll need a bathing suit.

Ekimae Kōtō Onsen (Map p730; ☎ 21-0541; 13-14 Ekimae-machi; admission ¥300) is very simple and hot, and just a couple of minutes' walk from the station.

HIDDEN BATHS

Tsuru-no-yu, Hebi-no-yu & Nabeyama-no-yu 鶴の湯 ヘビノ湯 鍋山の湯

The Myōban area has some wonderful baths, some tucked away out of the public eye. Locals built and maintain **Tsuru-no-yu** (the easiest to

reach), a lovely free *rotemburo* on the edge of Ogi-yama. In July and August, a natural stream emerges to form the milky blue bath. Take a bus to Konya Jigoku-mae bus stop (25 minutes northwest from JR Beppu station). Walk up the small road that hugs the right side of the graveyard until the road ends. Dive into the bushes to your left, and there's the bath. Higher in the mountain greenery is another free *rotemburo*, the **Hebi-no-yu** (Snake Bath). Continue further (about 1km) to reach **Nabeyama-no-yu**, the last of the wild *onsen* of Myōban. The Beppu station information desk ladies (volunteers all!) are also happy to make you a hand-drawn map.

Mugen-no-sato 夢幻の里

This collection of privately available small *rotemburo* is ideal for a romantic, secluded dip. Ask for a **kazoku-buro** (private bath; Map p728; ☎ 22-2826; 6 Hotta; admission ¥600; ☎ 9am-9pm). Take a bus 33, 34, 36 or 37 to Horita. Mugen-no-sato is five minutes' walk west.

Ichinoide Kaikan いちのいで会館

The owner of **Ichinoide Kaikan** (Map p728; ☎ 21-4728; 14-2 Ueharamachi) is an *onsen* fanatic, so

much so that he built three pool-sized *rotemburo* in his backyard. The view, overlooking Beppu and the bay, is the city's finest. Bathing is free when you order a *teishoku* (¥1050), and the chefs prepare it while you swim. To get there by bus and walking, inquire at the Foreign Tourist Information Office. A shared taxi (from Beppu; ¥900) might be a good investment.

OTHER SIGHTS

Given all that sybaritic bathing, **Hihōkan Sex Museum** (Map p728; ☎ 66-8790; 338-3 Shibuya, Kannawa; admission ¥1000; ☎ 9am-10pm) fits right in. Among the Kannawa hells, it hosts a bizarre collection of sex-related items ranging all the way from fine erotic *ukiyo-e* (wood-block prints) and zany porno to life-sized dioramas and kinky toys. There's an unfortunate paucity of postcards in the gift store, but plenty of surreal items with which to disturb the customs officials on the way home.

Near Takegawara Onsen, the **Hirano Library** (Map p730; ☎ 23-4748; 11-7 Motomachi; admission free; ☎ Mon-Sun) is a private institution with historical exhibits and photographs of the Beppu area.

The hands-on **Beppu Traditional Bamboo Crafts Centre** (Map p728; ☎ 23-1072; 8-3 Higashi-sōen) displays masterpieces dating from the Edo period, as well as incredible examples of what can be made with this versatile material. Seasonal hands-on demos allow you to try your own hand at making something. From Beppu sta-

tion, take Kamenoi bus 25 to Dento Sangyo-mae, in front of the centre.

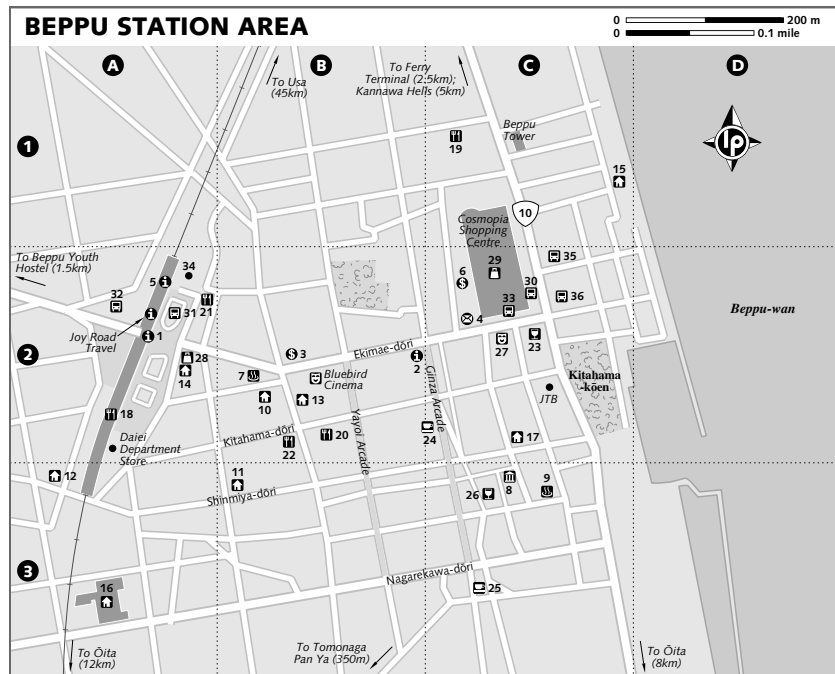
In 2000, Kyoto-based **Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University** (Map p728; ☎ 78-1114; 1-1 Jūmonjihara) opened its landmark college in Beppu, with about half its undergraduates drawn from other parts of Asia and beyond – a unique situation in Japan. The campus overlooks the city from Jumonji-baru, a 30-minute bus trip from Beppu station (¥520).

Sleeping

Beppu Guest House (Map p730; ☎ 3967-9044; beppu.g.h@q.vodafone.ne.jp; 1-12 Ekimae-chō; dm/s/tw/tr ¥1500/2000/4000/6000; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) Newly opened in 2006, this is Beppu's cheapest lodging and good value. The atmosphere is upbeat, and there's a big kitchen to make meals in and chat with fellow travellers. You can choose dorm-style or private rooms, and the English-speaking owners can steer you to Beppu's bubbliest spots.

Hotel Annex Matsumi (Map p730; ☎ 25-5872; fax 25-3699; 6-28 Ekimae-honchō; s/tw/tr ¥4000/7000/10,000; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) Count on a converted love hotel to feature large rooms and good service at budget prices. Just behind Beppu station, the Matsumi also offers free lobby internet use.

Kokage International Minshuku (Map p730; ☎ 23-1753; www.tiki.ne.jp/~kokage; 8-9 Ekimae-machi; s/d/tr ¥4350/7650/1475) This cosy 10-room Japanese Inn group member feels old and friendly, starting with the small antique-filled sitting area where you can make tea and toast. There's



INFORMATION

Foreign Tourist Information Office

外国人旅行者観光案内所.....1 A2

Foreign Tourist Information Office

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Iyo Bank 伊予銀行.....3 B2

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Eki Ichiba Station Market 駅市場.....18 A2

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Toyotsune とよ常.....21 A2

Ureshi-ya うれしや.....22 B2

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駅レンタカー.....23 C2

Natsume Kissa なつめ喫茶.....24 C2

Shingai Coffee Shop

しんがいコーヒーショップ.....25 C3

Speakeasy スピークイージー.....26 C3

ENTERTAINMENT

World Sports Bar Small Eye

ワールドスポーツ.....27 C2

パースモールアイ.....27 C2

SHOPPING

Family Mart ファミリーマート.....28 A2

Tokuya Department Store

トキヤデパート.....29 C2

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Airport Bus Stop 空港バス停.....30 C2

Beppu Station Bus Stop (East side)

別府駅 東口バス停.....31 A2

Beppu Station Bus Stop (West side)

別府駅 西口バス停.....32 A2

Bus Stop for Kannawa Onsen

鉄輪温泉行きバス停.....33 C2

Eki Car Rental Office

駅レンタカー.....34 A2

Kamenoi Bus Station (Sightseeing

Buses) 亀の井バスセンター.....35 C2

Kitahama Bus Station (Sightseeing

Buses & Buses to Fukuoka) 北浜バ

センター.....36 C2

an *onsen*, and the quietest rooms are over the entrance.

Beppu Youth Hostel (Map p728; ☎ 23-4116; 20-28 Nakajima; dm incl/excl 2 meals ¥4935/3360; (P) (♿)) Just 1km from JR Beppu station, this hostel has a hot-springs bath and a bar, where travellers can trade *onsen* tips while sipping the owner's homemade *Kabosu-shōchū*.

our pick **Nogami Honkan Ryokan** (Map p730; ☎ 22-1334; www.008.upp.so-net.ne.jp/yuke-c/english.html; 1-12-1 Kitahama; r per person incl/excl breakfast ¥5500/4500; (P) (♿) (♿)) Located near Takegawara *onsen*, 19 of the 24 tatami-style rooms have private bathrooms. And there's not one, but five small *onsen*; you can reserve your own for an hour at a time.

Hotel Arthur (Map p730; ☎ 25-2611; 1-2-5 Kitahama; s/d from ¥5500/9500; (P) (♿) (♿)) A grandfather clock and fresh flowers brighten up the lobby of this smart 100-room business-tourist hotel, less than five minutes' walk from Beppu station. You'll get city views from the 5th floor up.

Hotel Seawave Beppu (Map p730; ☎ 27-1311; www.coara.or.jp/seawave in Japanese; 12-8 Ekimae-chō; s/tw/ste from ¥6300/8400/17,800; (P) (♿) (♿)) Just across the street from the station, the Seawave has smart-looking modern rooms, English-speaking staff and a breakfast buffet (¥800).

Also recommended:

Kamenoi Hotel (Map p730; ☎ 22-3301; www.kamenoi.com; 5-17 Chūomachi; s/d/tw incl 2 meals from ¥6950/9000/10,100; (P) (♿) (♿)) Bustling tour group mecca with *onsen* and restaurants.

Hotel Seikaisō (Map p730; ☎ 22-0275; fax 23-4885; www.seikaiso.com; 14-3 Kitahama; r per person from ¥12,500; (P) (♿) (♿)) Seaside Japanese-style inn with bed-tatami rooms and private rooftop *onsen*.

Eating

Beppu is renowned for its freshwater fish, for its *fugu* and for the wild vegetables grown in the mountains further inland. Also look out for *dango-jiru*, a *miso* soup with vegetables and dumplings.

our pick **Eki Ichiba** (station market; Map p730; ☎ 9am-5pm) To see a Beppu few travellers find, head to the long and winding shopping arcade under the tracks out the back of Beppu station. This is where local residents fill their grocery bags with fresh fish and veggies, and also pick up wonderful *eki-ben* (station lunch boxes) and hot meals to take home. You don't need much English to enjoy this bustling, workaday market, and get a good bargain while you're at it. It's great fun to wander from stall to stall,

savouring the *yobuko-ika* (squid tempura) or *futomaki sushi* (rice and seaweed roll). On weekends, you'll find lots of university students stocking up on provisions for the week ahead. During the week many elderly folks who live alone come here to pick up dinner. But you don't have to be an old-timer to take away a well-cooked meal, made to order, and perfect for a picnic on the beach at Kitahama-kōen.

Tomonaga Panya (Map p728; ☎ 23-0969; Chiomachi 2-29; ☎ breakfast & lunch Mon-Sat) Tomonaga's hot-from-the-oven fresh rolls, breads and pastries are a treat worth waking up early for, and they go fast (phone orders accepted!). The walls are filled with photos going back to 1917 when it first opened.

Kuishinbō (Map p730; ☎ 21-0788; 1-1-12 Kitahama-dōri; dishes from ¥600; ☎ dinner) A cheerful corner *izakaya* open till 2am serving unusual tofu and *daikon* steaks, and *chawan-mushi* (savoury custard), and ¥100 *yakitori* skewers – good for late-night snacking.

Toyotsune (Map p730; ☎ 22-2083; 3-7 Ekimae Honmachi; ☎ lunch & dinner, closed Thu) This reliable eatery just opposite Beppu station has no English menu, but the tempura rice bowl (*tendon*; ¥620) with huge prawns is the dish to get. Sashimi and chicken *kara-age teishoku* sets (¥1050) are also good choices.

Ureshi-ya (Map p730; ☎ 22-0767; 7-12 Ekimae-machi; ☎ dinner, closed Mon) You'll get your money's worth at this friendly and busy *shokudō* (budget eatery) with *donburi* (dishes served over rice), sashimi, *oden* and noodle dishes from ¥750. Food models are displayed in the window.

Fugu Matsu (Map p730; ☎ 21-1717; 3-6-14 Kitahama; ☎ lunch & dinner; E) This is the place to try *fugu* in style, if you're game (die-hards love it). Expect to pay from ¥3000.

Drinking & Entertainment

Beppu hides some one-of-a-kind coffee shops in the central shopping arcades.

Speakeasy (Map p730; ☎ 21-8116; 12-1 Motomachi; ☎ closed Tue; E) Like speakeasies of old, you have to duck under a low door to enter this swank and friendly back-alley jazz bar. Tap beer and stronger stuff cost from ¥500.

Jin Robata & Beer Pub (Map p730; ☎ 21-1768; 1-15-7 Kitahama; ☎ dinner; E) A flashing neon fish sign directs you to this welcoming pub with a good mix of APU students, salarymen and office ladies as the night goes on. There's plenty of

god food to go with your beer, *shōchū* or sake. Pick a favourite from the rows of fresh fish on display, then watch it grilled (*robata-style*) behind the counter, or try a steaming bowl of *ocha-zuke* (green-tea *soba*).

World Sports Bar Small Eye (Map p730; ☎ 21-3336; 2nd fl, 1-10-12 Kitahama; drinks/snacks from ¥500/400; ☎ closed Thu) You'll find a good mix of locals, APU students and *gaikin* at this Hawaiian-style bar with high ceilings, darts and beach umbrellas. Expect to hear hip-hop, reggae and classic Hawaiian tunes on the great sound system.

Natsume Kissa (Map p730; ☎ 21-5713; 1-4-23 Kitahama; ☎ closed Wed) A good snack and dessert spot best known for its own *onsen kōhi* (¥530), coffee made with hot-springs water.

Shingai Coffee Shop (Map p730; ☎ 24-1656; 10-2 Kusumachi; ☎ closed Mon) A mellow place with good coffee, plus antique maps and old photos of Beppu.

Getting There & Away

There are flights to Ōita airport from Tokyo Haneda (¥31,800), Osaka (¥17,300), Okinawa (¥27,000) and cities around Kyūshū. It's even possible to fly direct to Seoul (¥27,000).

The JR Nippō line runs from Hakata (Fukuoka) to Beppu (*Sonic tokkyū*, ¥5250, two hours) via Kitakyūshū, continuing down the coast to Miyazaki (¥6270, 3¼ hours). The JR Hōhi line connects Beppu with Kumamoto (¥5330, three hours) via Aso-san (¥3940, 1½ hours).

There's a Beppu Kyūshū Odan bus to Aso station (¥2950, three hours).

The **Ferry Sunflower Kansai Kisen** (☎ 22-1311) makes an overnight run between Beppu and Osaka (¥8800, 11 hours), stopping en route at Matsuyama (4½ hours) and Kobe (10 hours). The evening boat departs at 7pm to western Honshū and passes through the Inland Sea, arriving at 6am the next morning. For the port, take bus 20 or 26 from Beppu station's west exit.

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Hovercraft (☎ 097-558-7180, 0120-81-4080) run from JR Ōita station to Ōita airport (¥2950, 25 minutes), located around the bay from Beppu on the Kunisaki Peninsula.

Beppu airport buses to Ōita-ken airport stop outside the Tokiwa department store (¥1450, 45 minutes, twice daily) and Beppu station.

BUS

Of the local bus companies, **Kamenoi** (☎ 23-5170) is the largest. Most buses are numbered. An unlimited 'My Beppu Free' travel pass for Kamenoi buses comes in two varieties: the 'minipass' (adult/student ¥900/700), which covers all the local attractions, including the hells, and the 'wide pass' (one/two days ¥1600/2400), which goes further afield to Yufuin and Ritsumeikan APU. Passes are available from the Foreign Tourist Information Office (p727) and at various lodgings around town. Buses 5, 9 and 41 take you to Myōban (20 to 30 minutes).

YUFUIN 湯布院

☎ 0977 / pop 36,407

About 25km inland from Beppu, picturesque Yufuin sits in the shadow of the majestic twin peaks of Yufu-dake. Tourism development has gradually increased in the past few years, and Yufuin is best avoided on holidays and weekends. It's still very much worth a stop en route to Aso, or on a day trip from Beppu.

The **Yufuin Hot Springs Tourist Information office** (☎ 84-2446; ☎ 9am-7pm) inside the train station has some information in English, including an excellent and detailed walking map showing galleries, museums and *onsen*. There is a postal ATM next to the station. The station itself is a striking piece of architecture, and holds a small art gallery as well.

As in Beppu, making a pilgrimage from one *onsen* to another is a popular activity in Yufuin. **Shitan-yu** (下ん湯; admission ¥200; ☎ 10am-9pm) is a thatched bathhouse on the northern shore of Kirin-ko, a lake fed by hot springs, so it's warm(ish) all year round. Yufuin is noted for its high-quality handicrafts. The town also has a few interesting temples and shrines; **tourist information** (☎ 85-4464) is available.

The double-peaked **Yufu-dake** (1584m) volcano overlooks Yufuin and takes about 90 minutes to climb. A few buses between Beppu and Yufuin stop at the base of Yufu-dake, Yufu-tozan-guchi%由布登山口; ¥700, 43 minutes). From Yufuin, the bus takes 16 minutes (¥360).

Sleeping & Eating

Yufuin has many *minshuku*, ryokan and pensions; most are upscale, with rates to match. Prices average 10% higher on weekends and holidays.

Yufuin Youth Hostel (湯布院ユースホテル; ☎ 84-3734; dm HI member/nonmember ¥3040/3565; ♻️) Almost 2.5km northeast of the train station, this peaceful hostel occupies a forested hillside with breathtaking views. Buses (¥180) run weekdays to the hostel, and on weekends the English-speaking owners will pick you up. Two meals are available for an extra ¥1750.

Pension Yufuin (ペンション湯布院; ☎ 85-3311; rincl breakfast from ¥6500; ♻️) This popular riverside guesthouse is patterned after *Anne of Green Gables*, and there's no shortage of cherub water fountains or angel-patterned wallpaper. The very kind owner speaks a bit of English.

Makiba-no-ie (牧場の宿; ☎ 84-2138; fax 85-4045; r per person incl 2 meals ¥8000-13,500; ♻️) Accommodation is available here in a series of thatched-roof huts around a large *rotemburo*. The antique-filled garden restaurant does chicken *jidori* and wild-boar *teishoku* meals from ¥1500 to ¥2700. Day visitors can make use of the lovely *rotemburo* for ¥525.

Hanayoshi (☎ 84-5888; ☎ 11am-4pm; ♻️) Stop in at this superb *soba* restaurant for generous and steaming bowls of *soba* and *udon* (¥500 to ¥1000). Walk out 20m from the station, take the first right and it's opposite the bike shop. There's a picture menu.

Getting There & Away

Local trains on the JR Kyūdai line connect Beppu with Yufuin (¥1080, 1½ hours), via Ôita. Limited express trains (¥1510) make the trip in 60 minutes. There is a special 'Yufuin no Mori' express train a few times daily (¥4400, 2¼ hours).

Buses depart JR Beppu station (p733) for Yufuin throughout the day (¥900). Continuing beyond Yufuin is not so simple. Buses go to Aso and Kumamoto but not year-round. There are also express buses (Kyūshū Sanko) to Fukuoka (¥3100).

YUFUIN TO ASO-SAN

The picturesque Yamanami Hwy extends 63km from the Aso-san region to near Yufuin; from there, Hwy 38 runs to Beppu on the east coast. You'll cross a high plateau and pass numerous mountain peaks, including **Kujū-san** (1787m), the highest point in Kyūshū.

Taketa 竹田

South of Yufuin, near the town of Taketa, are the **Oka-jō ruins**, which have a truly magnificent ridgetop position. The ruins are over 2km from

JR Bungo-Taketa station. Taketa has some interesting reminders of the Christian period, as well as atmospheric temples and well-preserved traditional houses. **Taketa Onsen Hanamizuki** (花水月温泉; ☎ 0974-64-1126; admission ¥500; ☎ 9am-9pm) is a short walk from the station.

From Aso-san, it takes just under an hour by train on the JR Hōhi line to Bungo-Taketa (*futsū*, ¥820); from there it's just over an hour by train to Ôita (¥1250) – a little longer by bus.

KUNISAKI PENINSULA 国東半島

Immediately north of Beppu, Kunisaki-hantō bulges eastward from the Kyūshū coast. The region is noted for its early Buddhist influence, including some rock-carved images related to more famous images at Usuki (p727).

Sights

USA 宇佐

In the early post-WWII era, when 'Made in Japan' was no recommendation at all, it's said that companies would register in Usa so they could proclaim that their goods were 'Made in USA'! **Usa-jinja** (宇佐神社; ☎ 0978-37-0001; admission to treasure hall ¥300; ☎ closed Tue), the original of which dates back over 1000 years, is connected with the warrior-god Hachiman, a favourite deity of Japan's right wing. It's a 10-minute bus ride from Usa station on the JR Nippō line from Beppu (*tokkyū*, ¥17200, 29 minutes).

OTHER SIGHTS

The 11th-century **Fuki-ji** (富貴寺; ☎ 0978-26-3189; admission ¥200) in Bungotakada is the oldest wooden structure in Kyūshū and one of the oldest wooden temples in Japan. Ôita Kōtsū buses from Usa station go to Bungotakada (¥810, 35 minutes); from there, it's a 10-minute taxi ride (around ¥1000).

In the centre of the peninsula, near the summit of Futago-san (721m), is **Futago-ji** (両子寺; ☎ 0978-65-0253; admission ¥200), dedicated to Fudō-Myō-ō, the ferocious, fire-enshrouded, sword-wielding deity who shows the inner power of Buddha – able to repel attacks even while appearing calm outside.

Nearby **Taizō-ji** (☎ 0978-26-2070; admission ¥200; ☎ 8.30am-5pm) is known for its famously uneven stone stairs. Local legend says that they are so random and haphazard that the Oni (devils) must have created them in a single night, confirming that, even in mythology, it has always been hard to get good help.

Carved into a cliff behind Taizō-ji, 2km south of **Maki Ōdō**, there are two 8th-century Buddha images; a 6m-high figure of the Dainichi Buddha and an 8m figure of Fudō-Myō-ō. Known as **Kumano Magaibutsu**, these are the largest Buddhist images of this type in Japan. Other stone statues, thought to be from the Heian period, are seen in Maki Ōdō. There are no buses here; get a taxi from Fuki-ji to Bungotakada, and then a bus to Usa (¥260).

Getting Around

Beppu's Ôita airport is on the peninsula, about 40km from Beppu. Kaminoie tour buses (reservations ☎ 0977-23-5170) pick up and drop off at Beppu station (¥6400); the excursion takes seven hours. Prices include admission to all the temples and even an *omiyage* (souvenir) to bring home. Otherwise try **Eki Rent-a-Car** (☎ 0977-24-4428; www.ekiren.co.jp in Japanese) in JR Beppu station.

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