

## Travel Guide of Scenic Byway Kyushu

# Q-8 Yamanami Highland Parkway

Beppu City, Yufu City, Takeda City and Kokonoe Town, in Oita Pref. — **Volcano, Hot Spring, Outdoor Activities, and Rich Nature in Highland** —

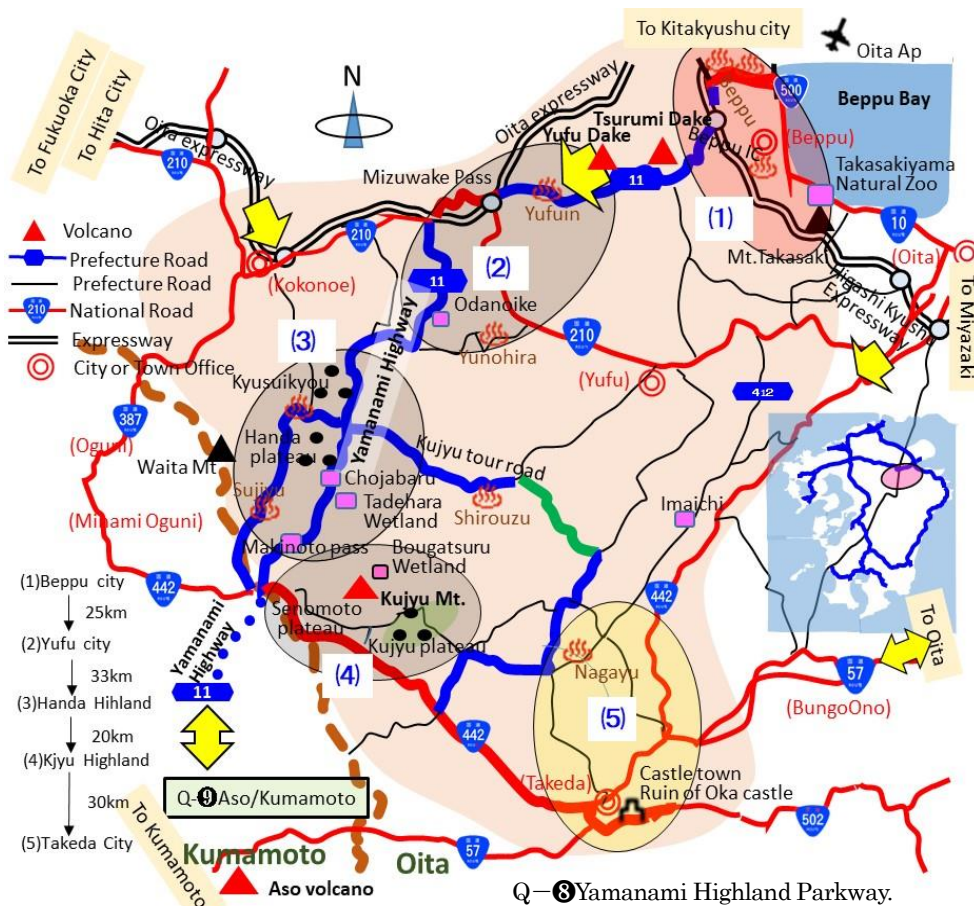
The road in the Kyushu Central Mountains crossing diagonally the Kyushu island is called "**Yamanami Highway**" and is a popular drive course of Kyushu. The scenic spots of Yamanami Highland Parkway are based on this highway, most of which is located in Aso-Kuju National Park. The municipalities in this landscape area are **cities of Beppu, Yufu and Takeda, and Kokonoe Town** in Oita Prefecture (see map).

**(Access).** There are various access routes to this scenic area, but Oita Airport is the closest, and the travel time from the airport to Beppu City is about 50 minutes by car or bus. Yufuin hot spring resort takes an additional 30 minutes. When using Fukuoka Airport, Yufuin is about 1 hour 30 minutes by express bus.

In the case of Kumamoto Airport, it takes 2 hours 30 minutes by car to Yufuin hot springs via National Route 57 and the Yamanami Highway. However, it is a very attractive access route as you can stop at the Aso volcano on the way.

When using the railway, there is a limited express "Yufuin-no-Mori", which connects Hakata Station and Yufuin Town. To access by the Kyushu Shinkansen, you need to change to the Hoho Line at Kumamoto Station and then go to Aso Station, but you may climb Aso Volcano and its outer ring.

Furthermore, if you access from Kansai or Shikoku, you can enjoy a boat trip by the ferry connecting Osaka Port or Shikoku Uwajima Port and Beppu Port.



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In short, you can access this highland area by various domestic transportations from Oita, Fukuoka, Kumamoto, Kansai Airports and so on, so you can use the transportation you are interested.

**(Main Route).** This scenic region is mainly mountainous, but relatively calm plateaus formed by repeated volcanic eruptions. From Beppu City, you can go to Yufuin Basin and Mizuwake Pass via the Oita Expressway and National Route 210. If going further south on the Yamanami Highway, you will reach the Senomoto Plateau.



(4) Tadehara Wetland



(3) (4) Yamanami Highway in Handa Highland

The Kuju mountain range in winter is the coldest areas in Kyushu, but many people live in this highland. In the 16th century (Edo period), territories of Mori and Oka were established, and each castle town developed. In the adjacent Hita region (present Hita City), a regional office of the



shogunate was established and it became a direct control area.

Meanwhile, after World War II, “Yamanami Highway”, part of Prefectural Road 11, was constructed as the first toll road in Kyushu. The Kuju area is now surrounded by expressways of Kyushu, Oita, and Higashi Kyushu. Therefore, the scenic areas are all mountains, but have an excellent road network.

You can find various entrances on expressways to the scenic spots, as indicated by the large yellow arrows on the map. Under such a road network, the main access points are Prefecture Road 11 and National Route 422, and there are various drive courses in this scenic area.

**(Regional Resources).** With the distribution of landscape resources on this road network, it is divided into five zones: Beppu (1), Yufuin (2), Makinoto (3), Senomoto (4), and Takeda (5). Common resources in these zones are given by volcanoes and hot springs, outdoor activities, and plateaus with an average altitude of 1000 m.

#### A. Volcanos and Hot Springs.

Active volcanoes of Tsurumidake, Yufudake and Kuju are lined up, but they are not as active as the nearby Mt. Aso. However, you must be careful when climbing, as the possibility of future eruptions cannot be ruled out.

Of course, these volcanoes give us the blessings of hot springs. Many types of facilities and resorts of hot springs are scattered throughout the area along the scenic roads. If all of hot springs are plotted, there will be many marks on the map and there will be no gaps.

In this situation, if introducing several hot springs for reference, Beppu Onsen (hot springs) has hot springs of various properties, and Yufu City is a quiet resort area called an annex village of Beppu City. Sujiyu-Onsen, located in Kokonoe Town, is famous for the bathing method to pour hot water over your shoulders from high place. Nagayu Onsen in Takeda City has the highest carbonate concentration in the world and is considered to be healthy. There is also a rooftop bath of hot spring



(1) Public Bathhouse, Takegawara-Onsen (Hot Spring).



Monk-head type of Jigoku



Mountain type and Blood Pond type of Jigoku



Sea type of Jigoku

(1) Many Style of Spout, “Jigoku (Hell)”, in Beppu City.

with a good view, a hot spring in a cave, and a quiet open-air bath along a stream.

#### B. Outdoor Activities in Highlands.

Paddy fields spread in the northeastern part of the Handa Plateau. This is the result of the resettlement of people who lost farmland due to the flood of the Chikugo River in 1889 and the development of cold-tolerant rice. In addition, in the highlands and mountains, various fields of agriculture and forestry such as livestock, highland vegetables, shiitake cultivation, blueberries and pears have been developed.

On the other hand, there are many outdoor activities such as mountain climbing, golfing, trekking, walking, outdoor training and camping. The largest ski resort in Kyushu opens in winter, and many people enjoy it. In recent years, many people have visited for marathon and cycling training. In short, this scenic highway area is the largest outdoor sports training center in Kyushu.

#### C. Rich Nature in the Kuju Region.

In the mountainous area of Kuju, the altitude changes greatly from 0m in Beppu Bay to 1791m in Nakatake of Kujyu Mountains, and as mentioned above, hot springs are scattered in the areas with active volcanoes.

Therefore, the Kuju Plateau has many interesting things. For example, in early summer, you can enjoy beautiful scenery full of flowers. It is said that you can relax in a hot spring, which is good for health and beauty, while admiring the green carpet in summer, the autumn leaves in the fall, and the white snow scene in winter.

In other words, you can fully enjoy the nature of each season, but here are some concrete examples.



○Noyaki (field burning) has been passed down since ancient times. Its purpose is not only to maintain pasture, but also to burn the vast grasslands to prevent pests, promote new shoots and maintain afforestation for environmental protection. Therefore, it has a different meaning from slash and burn agriculture.

○Miyama-Kirishima Shrub is a kind of azalea that can survive as a dominant species in the volcanic area. In various volcanoes in Kyushu, flowers bloom from late May to early June, and in the Kuju mountain range, many pink flowers bloom on the slopes of Hiji-Dake (see Photo (4)).

○The “Bogatsumi” wetland of Takeda City and the “Tadehara” marshland of Kokonoe Town, which are registered in the Ramsar Convention, are adjacent between the Kuju Mountain and Daisen Mountain of the Kuju mountain range. The former is 1200m above sea level, the area is 53 ha, and the latter is 1000 m and 38ha. They are a valuable habitat for animals and plants and Japan's largest intermediate wetland. The sidewalks are well maintained, so you can enjoy walking safely.

○On the way from JR Bungo-Nakamura Station to Handa Plateau, you can see the stunning autumn leaves at Kyusui-Kyo Valley. Scenery of colored leaves is reflected in the Kinrin Lake in Yufuin Town. In Takeda City, autumn leaves reminiscent of the glory of the former Oka Castle can be seen. In other words, even with the same autumn leaves, you can enjoy unique scenes depending on the location. Such a variety of nature is also a feature of this landscape road.

#### (1) Beppu Spa town in Beppu City

In the Beppu area, landslides had frequently occurred due to the eruption of Tsurumi-Dake Volcano in the ancient ages. Then, mud and sand flowed into Beppu Bay, creating an alluvial fan. Beppu City was formed by these geological activities, and is now developing as Japan's largest hot spring town.

The foundation of present Beppu tourism was established in the mid-20th century. The promotion is by Aburaya Kumahachi, a businessman. In honor of his achievement, his statue is in the front square of JR Beppu Station. His slogan was a unique phrase: "Mountain is Fuji, Sea is Setouchi, and Onsen is Beppu". It emphasizes that Beppu Onsen is a major tourist destination comparable to Mt. Fuji and the Seto Inland Sea.

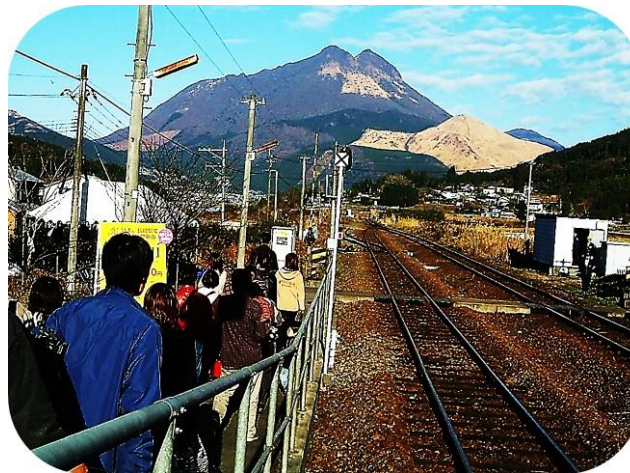
The best item on scenic route in Beppu is "Beppu Hatto", in which “Hatto” means eight hot springs. Those are scattered in Beppu City, and the quality of each fountain is different.

As shown in Phot (1) on page 2, Takekawara Public Bathhouse built in 1938 is an important scenery as a symbol of Beppu City. The front has a Japanese-style luxury roof, and the lobby with a high ceiling retains the image of the early Showa era. If you follow Japanese customs in the bath, you can meet naked citizens. Of course, men and women are separated and this is a Japanese-style bath. Please heal your body in a hot bath.

Hot springs spill out everywhere in the city, but the ponds formed around it are diverse, reflecting the differences in geology. As you can see in photo (1) on page 2, there are various types of ponds, such as steam smoke pond, mud pond, red colored pond and blue colored pond. These ponds are called hell, and you can observe them while learning about the mechanism of hot springs.

#### (2) Yufuin Annex-Town (Yufu City).

The symbol of Yufuin-machi in Yufu City is the volcano of Yufu-dake. The main attractive scenery is Lake of Kinrin-ko at the foot



(2) Yufudake Volcano Mountain in Yufu City.



(2) Kinrin-ko Lake on the Base of Yufu-Dake Mountain



(2) Yunotsubo Street in the Yufuin Spa Town of Yufu City.



(2) Burning off Fields in Kuju Highland





Sagisou (Odano-Ike Lake)



(5) Statue of Rentaro Taki (Composer) and Ruins of Oka Castle in Takeda City.

of Yufudake and the comfortable spa located on Yunotsubo Street. The beautiful lake is the source pond of the Oita River, and you can enjoy a quiet circumstance. In addition, Yunotsubo Street has various cultural facilities and rural landscape, so you can enjoy a stroll after taking a bath (see photo (2)).

In addition, there is a Japanese style of Yunohira Onsen (hot springs) in the southwestern area around Yufuin, so we recommend that you stop by. Furthermore, if going along the Yamanami highway, you will find the Mizuwake Pass, Lake Yamashita, and Odanoike Pond which is a natural lake. There is a swamp in which mud accumulates in the southeast side of the pond, and an rare small plant, "Sagisou", grows naturally, as in above photo.

### (3) & (4) Driving or Walking on Kuju Highlands

Zones (3) and (4) are located in the Kuju Mountains and Highlands, and you can drive up the plateau while watching volcanoes and mountains over 1500 m.

As shown on the map, this area has several branch roads in addition to the main route. Above all, the route to the Bungo-Nakamura district is along the scenic valley called "Kjusui-Kyo". On the way, there is a 390m long pedestrian suspension bridge at a height of 173m from the riverbed, you can see Shindo Waterfall, and the surrounding area is famous for the autumn colors. Kujunomori Park has Sujiyu Onsen and a ski resort, and you can visit the geothermal power plants if you apply in advance.

On the other hand, if you go to the south of the Yamanami highway, you can visit the Chojabaru Visitor Center, Tadehara Wetland, Makinoto Pass, and enjoy the scenery as much as you like.

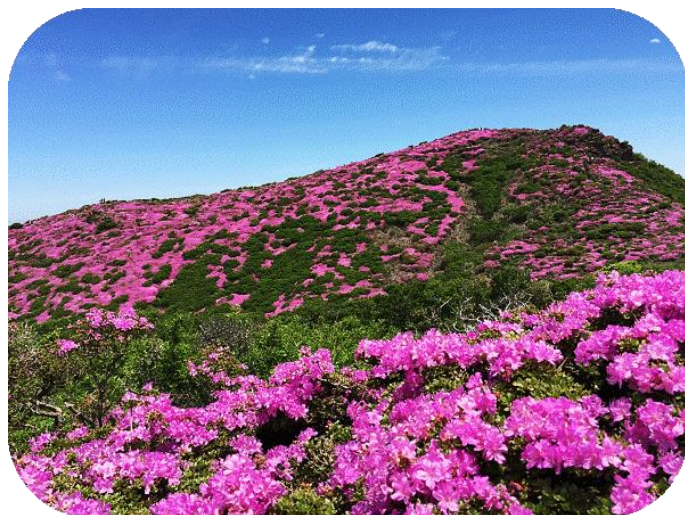
Zone (4) is the section of Yamanami-Highway from Makinoto Pass to Senomoto Highland, and the Kuju mountains develop on the left side in the direction of travel. The region has 10 major mountains, divided into the Kuju group and Daisen group. Bogatsuru Wetland is located in the valley between two groups. Also, the flowers of MiyayamaKirishima at Mount Hiji are very precious, and the scenery is a masterpiece created by nature. Also, Zone (4) is the best drive course in the center of the Kuju Mountains.

### (5) Oka's Castle and Nagayu's Spa

Going to Takeda City through the Kuju Highlands, you will find the remains of Oka Castle on the hill. The castle is famous for the song, "The moon illuminates the ruined castle" (composed by Rentaro Taki). The castle town is located at the foot of the hill, and



(3) Suspension Pedestrian Bridge for Kokonoe Yume Otsuribashi.



(4) Flower of Miyama-Kirishima blooming on the southern slope of Hiji-Dake (Photo by Wataru Fujiki)

some facilities and houses are from the Edo period. The relationship between the castle and its town is similar to the old castle town along the German Romantic Road.

As another famous spot, we will recommend the carbonated spring of Naouri Onsen and the waterfall in Mount Sobo. Including them, you can enjoy the green tourism of forest.

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