

History walking course around Hitoyoshi City (castle town course)

Overview of the castle town Hitoyoshi

Hitoyoshi flourished as a castle town of the Sagara clan of the Hitoyoshi domain.

Aoi Aso Shrine, Kumamoto Prefecture's only national treasure, is located in the city center.

The center of the city is at the western end of the Hitoyoshi Basin, where the Kuma River flows from east to west. Within the city, many tributaries flow into the Kuma River, including the Mae River, Yamada River, Kaname River, and Mune River. The city center retains the appearance of an ancient castle town, and is called Little Kyoto.

When traveling by car)

12:00 Arrive at Hitoyoshi Imterchange

12:15 Lunch (Enjoy Hitoyoshi's famous eel and river fish)

13:15 Kajiyamachi Street

14:00 Hitoyoshi Castle Ruins

14:40 Eikokuji Temple

15:20 Aoi Aso Shrine

16:00 Ganjoji Temple

(When using a rental bicycle)

11:30 Hitoyoshi Interchange

11:45 HASSENBA HITOYOSHI KUMA

(rent a bicycle)

12:00 Lunch (Enjoy Hitoyoshi's famous eel and river fish)

13:15 Kajiyamachi Street

14:15 Hitoyoshi Castle Ruins

15:00 Eikokuji Temple

15:40 Aoi Aso Shrine

16:30 Ganjoji Temple

17:00 HASSENBA HITOYOSHI KUMA

(veturn a bicycle)

Ganjoji Temple

kajiyamachi street



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Kajiyamachi Street



Hitoyoshi Castle



Hitoyoshi Castle is located on the south side of the Kuma River that flows through the center of the city, and was built on a mountain at the confluence of the Kuma River and its tributary, the Mune River. On the north and west sides, the Kuma River and the Mune River form a natural moat. The eastern and southern sides cleverly utilize nature, using the mountain slopes and cliffs as natural castle walls. It is a Hirayama Castle in the echelon style, with the Sannomaru along the Kuma River, the Ninomaru to the south, and the Honmaru on top of the hill. It is said that no castle tower was built in the main enclosure, but there was a Gomadō. Part of the stone wall of the palace, which was built at the end of the Edo period, has a unique stone wall called ``Musha Gaeshi," which is an application of the European castle construction technique known as the Hanedashi construction method. This Musha Gaeshi is a stack of flat stones that stick out slightly from the top of the castle wall, and it is like a Nezumi Gaeshi, which prevents people from crossing the castle wall, and also allows it to fall relatively easily, allowing it to attack enemies stuck to the castle wall. It can also be used for attacks. This castle wall is rare amo

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Hitoyoshi Castle





For a long time, it has continued to protect the castle as a back demon gate against the demon gate Ganjoji Temple.

The Kamakura period led to the era of the samurai, and Zen, which was introduced to Japan around the same time, became strongly associated with the samurai. This is because the philosophy of Zen had a lot of overlap with the way of life of the samurai, and Zen also gave rise to various cultures such as tea, flowers, and gardens. For the Sagara family, this temple is also said to have been a training center for successive heads of the Sagara family. It was a place to learn not only Zen but also a variety of other disciplines, and it is said that the 18th generation Yoshihi, who trained at this temple, was not only strong in battle, but also knowledgeable in waka poetry and was a compassionate man who cared for his subordinates. In addition, there is a hanging scroll of a ghost that is said to have been drawn by the priest who built the temple, Jitteiosho, and the temple is also known locally as the ``ghost temple." According to legend, a woman who died a tragic death by throwing herself into the Kuma River appeared as a ghost in the pond behind the temple. It is said that the priest himself drew a picture of the spirit and showed it to her in order to help her attain Buddhahood through her own guidance. It is said that the spirit was surprised to see itself and attained Buddhahood. Zen places emphasis on dialogue with oneself. Isn't the method of showing spirits how they have changed and making them realize it for themselves a guiding method unique to Zen? Today, the Yurei Festival, which has become a summer tradition in Hitoyoshi, is held mainly by young locals.

Aoi Aso Shrine



National treasure. It is the only national treasure building in Kumamoto Prefecture, and the southernmost architectural national treasure in Japan. A sacred place that represents Hitoyoshi Kuma. It was founded in 806 by soliciting the spirit of Aso Shrine. In 1198, Nagayori, the first generation of the Sagara family, enshrined it as the guardian deity. The five shrine buildings, which run from north to south: the main hall, the corridor, the hall, the worship hall, and the tower gate, were built in the early Edo period by the 20th head of the Sagara family. Due to the preciousness of the series of shrine buildings, it has been designated as a national treasure, the first of its kind in the prefecture.

Aoi Aso Shrine



According to Feng Shui and the theory of Yin-Yang and the Five Elements, it is said that families who build shrines and temples near the northwest/Tenmon gate will prosper forever, and shrines and temples built at this Tenmon gate are said to have a strong sense of protection for the nation. Perhaps because of this, you can see that people have put a lot of thought into building this shrine since ancient times.

The old ridge tag of the shrine states that it was built based on Feng Shui philosophy when it was first built. The Okunchi Festival, which is said to have continued for 1,200 years at this shrine, is held on September 9th of the lunar calendar, which is Chyoyo Day. In ancient times, people invented positive and negative numbers to explain the world. Odd numbers are positive numbers and even numbers are negative numbers. Shinto rituals were held at Aoi Aso Shrine on days when 9, the largest odd number, overlaps. At the tower gate, the divine mask that protects the four corners where yin and yang do not intersect is the only one in Japan that is in the Hitoyoshi style, and there are many feng shui, yin and yang designs, such as the southern pond that collects energy, and the Shumidan design, which represents the cosmic model in Buddhism. It is also a rare shrine where the five elements theory is expressed.

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Aoi Aso Shrine



Ganjoji Temple



According to historical sources, the current grave of the first head of the Sagara family, Nagayori, is located at the entrance to the graveyard of successive heads of the Sagara family, but it was originally located in front of the current main hall of Ganjo-ji Temple. He moved it to the current location of the tomb and built a main hall above it. It was the 18th generation Yoshihi who took the trouble to move the grave of the first generation Nagayori. Yes, this is the person who decided to locate the palace of Mikazuki Castle (Hitoyoshi Castle) at the current location of Sagara Gokoku Shrine. As you can clearly see from a bird's-eye view of the map, the mansion at Mikazuki Castle and Nagayori's grave at Ganjoji Temple are located exactly on the Ushitora no Kimon line.

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gannjyouji

