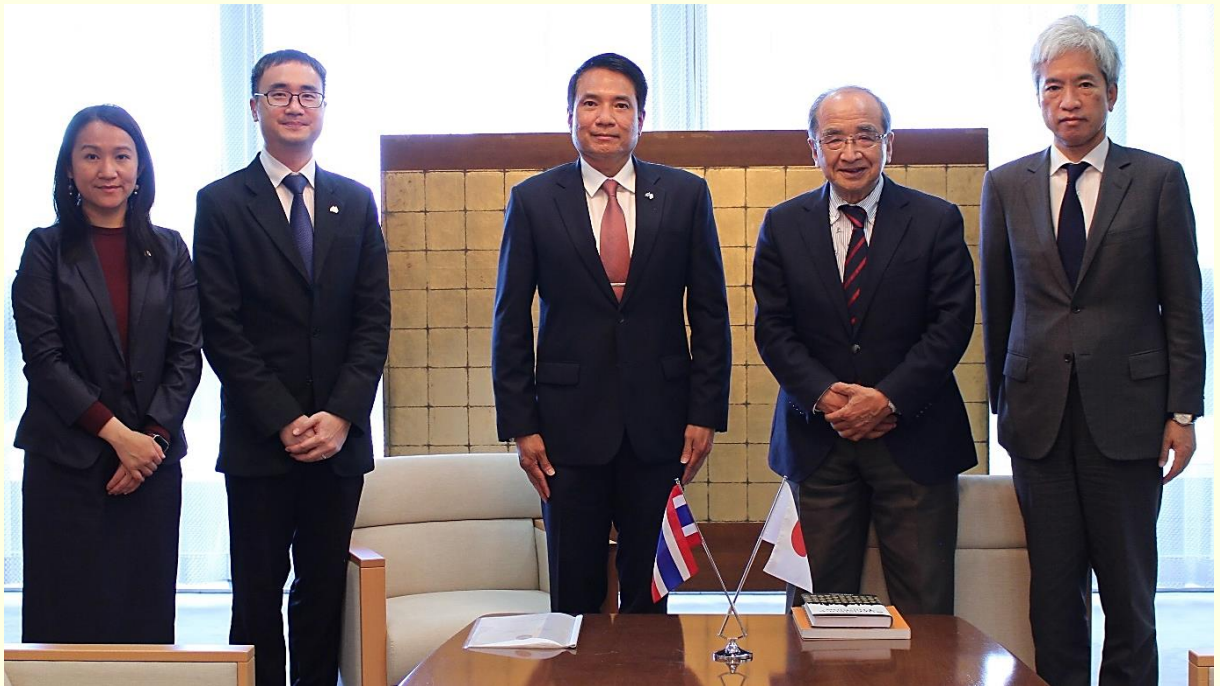




What's up, OITA!

Bringing the latest from Oita, Japan to people around the globe!

Royal Thai Consulate-General, Fukuoka Consul-General Sorut Sukthaworn Visits Oita



On April 19, Consul-General Sorut Sukthaworn, of the Royal Thai Consulate-General in Fukuoka, visited Oita Prefecture and met with Governor Hirose.

Governor Hirose welcomed the Consul-General, and Mr. Sukthaworn responded in turn. Bringing up the Thai students currently studying abroad in Oita, he stated his desire to support study of the Thai language in the prefecture.

He then spoke of how many businesses from Oita Prefecture are expanding into Thailand, and that he has high hopes for further collaboration on the economic front. It would appear that we can expect even greater cultural and economic exchange between Oita Prefecture and Thailand in the near future!

Ties Between Thailand and Oita

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2019, the number of Thai nationals staying in Oita numbered **18,296**, **fifth in the prefecture** after Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China. In addition, **227 Thai students** are studying in the prefecture's universities, such as APU, as of 2020. From the Oita side of things, many goods produced in the prefecture are exported to Thailand, such as **beef**, **pears**, and **shochu**.

The Prefecture also received a wonderful gift from the Consul-General!



＼Oita Prefecture is full of surprises…／



Culture City of East Asia, 2022, Oita: Hello Kitty takes up her post as PR Ambassador

The world-famous character Hello Kitty has taken up her post as PR ambassador to the Culture City of East Asia Project, 2022 in Oita. Her role as ambassador will ensure wide-scale promotion of the project. ‘Miss Hello Kitty, you have been appointed as the PR ambassador to the Culture City of East Asia Project, 2022, Oita. Please carry out PR activities to the best of your ability and promote an atmosphere of excitement surrounding the various events taking place as part of the Culture City of East Asia Project, 2022 in Oita!’, spoke Governor Hirose. Governor Hirose concluded the ceremony by handing Hello Kitty her letter of appointment. ‘I hope to spark an atmosphere of excitement in promoting the Culture City of East Asia Project, 2022 in Oita with its residents over the next year!’, commented PR ambassador Hello Kitty.



東アジア文化都市
2022大分県

Culture City of East Asia 2022. OITA

The Culture City of East Asia Project runs over the course of one year, with inter-city exchange, including various cultural and arts-

related events, taking place. Cities aiming at cultural and artistic development are chosen from three participating countries - Japan, China, and South Korea. China’s Wenzhou City and Jinan City, and South Korea’s Gyeongju City were selected alongside Oita City as the 2022 Cultural Cities of East Asia.



News from Around Oita

Headlines for April and May

- Beppu and Hita accept Ukrainian refugees
- Prefecture begins crowdfunding to support Ukrainian refugees
- Migration to Oita beats records for second year in a row. 1416 people moved to Oita in F.Y. 2021
- Kyushu Olle’s well-beloved “Oku-Bungo Course” celebrates its 10th anniversary, becoming a “Symbol for Grassroots Cultural Exchange”
- Welcome to the “Tyrol of the East.” *Anzen-kigan* (safety prayer) festival held at Yufu River Gorge in Hasama
- The Beppu Hatto Onsen Festival Begins! Stage shows and parades—events held for the first time in three years
- Usa Jingu’s “Path of Light” appears once again. The approach to the temple lines up nearly perfectly with the setting sun
- Kakaji Youth House in Bungo-Takada renovates. All rooms in annex now equipped with air conditioning
- “Kunisaki Studies” starts in order to deepen locals understanding of their hometown. Guidebook for kids created.



Usa Jingu



Kyushu Olle, Oku-Bungo Course



View of Beppu’s Hatto (Eight Onsen)



Tsukumi City's Tourism Destinations



Umitama Experience Park Tsukumi Dolphin Island



The connectedness and healing that occurs between humans and dolphins is the theme of Tsukumi's Dolphin Island, which is incredibly popular with families. This popular tourist destination is bustling with people during Golden Week every year when the Tsukumi Dolphin Festival is held. The festival features special performances amongst other events.



Hoto Island

Hoto Island prospers as a deep sea tuna fishing boat base. The island has very little flat land, with a sudden slope from the coast to the mountains upon which 3-4 story buildings jostle for space. At Hoto Island, you can enjoy a scenic view not dissimilar to that of a harbour in the Mediterranean Sea.

Tsukumi City's Local Specialties



Tsukumi Hyuga
Bowl



Tsukumi Mandarins



Tsukumi-caught
Squid & Tuna

Tsukumi City is blessed with a warm climate as well as sweet and juicy Tsukumi mandarins. One special characteristic of Tsukumi City is that the mountain water flowing from Tsukumi's limestone mines is rich in minerals, which makes for squid and tuna that is exceptionally fresh, and for a high quality yield from the sea. Tsukumi also has a gourmet campaign that showcases its high quality local produce and specialties.

Down the Rabbit Hole: Kuju Flower Park

My first trip to Kuju Flower Park was one of soft but vibrant colours melting into a dream-like atmosphere, sprinkled with an ethereal ambience that wafted in the gentle breeze. I entered the park just as the flowers were in bloom, their delicate faces turned towards the hazy sun in sheer delight. It was a Monday, yet very busy for one, though it was easy to see why: most of the spring flowers were in full bloom. This is what I had aimed for, what I had poured over flower charts and predictions for. A staff member confirmed my efforts, reiterating that most flowers were indeed in full bloom, just as I had hoped.

Sivara Fife
Coordinator for
International Relations



Amongst the roses was where I was spotted: NHK Oita had obviously done their homework just as I had. A compact camera crew were hovering around the roses, calculating the best angles for shots. A beeline was made towards me; a foreign opinion would be the perfect scoop. In awe of the voluminous roses surrounding me, their petals clustered together tightly to form bulbous but beautiful circular

arrangements, I gave my opinion, dumbstruck and high on the sweet sensory cocktail whipped up by the atmosphere of Kuju Flower Park.

Roses, dotted around, their heavy heads nodding in the afternoon sun. Bees, drunk on nectar bobbed through the air leisurely. This was not quite what I came for; I prefer a sea of flowers over clustered petals. At any rate, roses are symbolic of the UK, and here I am in Japan; somehow it seems a waste to focus on roses when there are fields of flowers more famous for their beauty in Japan and





amongst the Japanese. So it is there I let my feet lead me.

A nemophila field was what rewarded my patience. A sea of lilac blue spread outwards as far as the eye could see, with shadowy blue mountains framing the horizon in this picturesque scene. Gliding through the field was like losing oneself in a dream. The afternoon haze clouded my vision with an

ethereal lens; there I was, stuck in a dream from which I never wanted to awaken. Down the rabbit hole I fell. Fields upon fields of flowers awaited me, all punctuated by the dips and rises of the Kuju mountain range. Tall poppies offered a sweeping kaleidoscope of colour. Like a field of wild flowers, whose seeds had been scattered by the wind in a manner only nature can dictate, the poppies grew tall and plentiful, following no regimented pattern or line. Block coloured fields provided a patchwork of colour and texture, with flowers I had never before seen, as well as pansies; these I almost expected to turn towards me haughtily and begin speaking.



A light lunch and a two-scoop lavender and matcha gelato later, and I was on my way. Once again, I opted out of roses, and chose the lavender flavour, although perhaps in hindsight this was a little overpowering for such a mellow afternoon. Some things are best kept as they are, and it is spring after all. Stepping outside of the fantasy bubble encasing this wondrous landscape, I emerged back into the real world up through the rabbit hole once more.

Kuju Flower Park: Information

★ Opening hours: 8:30~17:30 (last entry 17:00; closed December → January)

★ Entry fee: 1,300¥/adults
500¥/children

★ Spring flower viewing season:
early May → early June



Kuju Flower Park Homepage →



✧ lovely ✧

My interview at Kuju Flower Park 23rd May '22 →





Kuju Flower Park

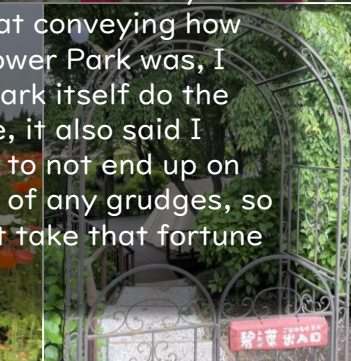
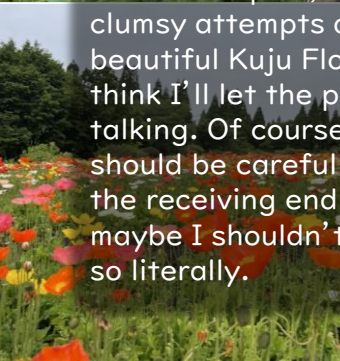
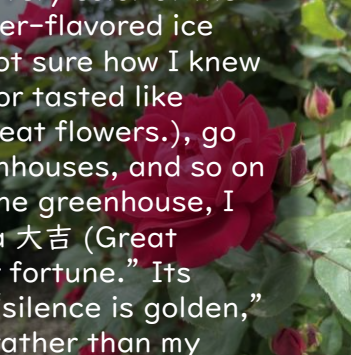
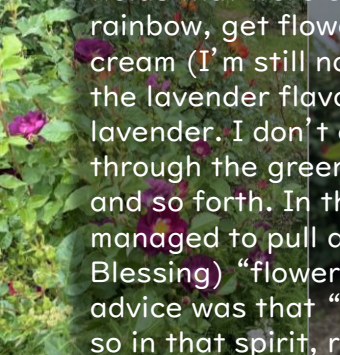
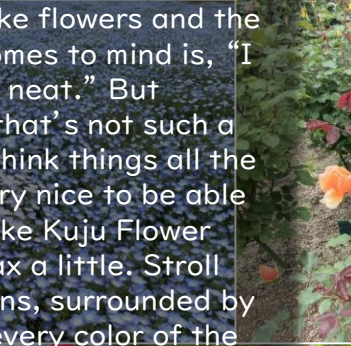
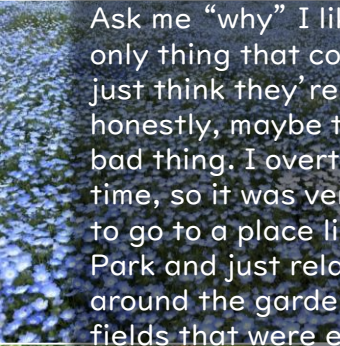
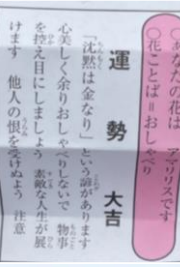
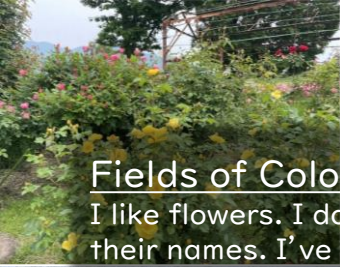


Austin Vaughn

Fields of Color

I like flowers. I don't know most of their names. I've never grown any.

Ask me "why" I like flowers and the only thing that comes to mind is, "I just think they're neat." But honestly, maybe that's not such a bad thing. I overthink things all the time, so it was very nice to be able to go to a place like Kuju Flower Park and just relax a little. Stroll around the gardens, surrounded by fields that were every color of the rainbow, get flower-flavored ice cream (I'm still not sure how I knew the lavender flavor tasted like lavender. I don't eat flowers.), go through the greenhouses, and so on and so forth. In the greenhouse, I managed to pull a 大吉 (Great Blessing) "flower fortune." Its advice was that "silence is golden," so in that spirit, rather than my clumsy attempts at conveying how beautiful Kuju Flower Park was, I think I'll let the park itself do the talking. Of course, it also said I should be careful to not end up on the receiving end of any grudges, so maybe I shouldn't take that fortune so literally.





Kuju Flower Park



Austin Vaughn

Pressing Petals

After the Flower Park, our group went for a flower pressing experience at "Ichirinsou," a pressed flower art studio in "downtown" Taketa. We opted to make keychains. At first, I was going to make a smiley face, but given the colors available and recent events, I went with making a keychain of the Ukrainian flag instead. The owner was very helpful throughout the whole process, and there are many different objects you can make or purchase as well, so if you're at all interested in the traditional Japanese art of *oshi-bana*, I'd recommend dropping in some time.

Ichirinsou Pressed Flower Art Studio
 Address: 592 Taketamachi, Taketa
 Hours: 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM,
 Closed Tuesdays
 Phone: 0974-62-2572
 Reservation Required

