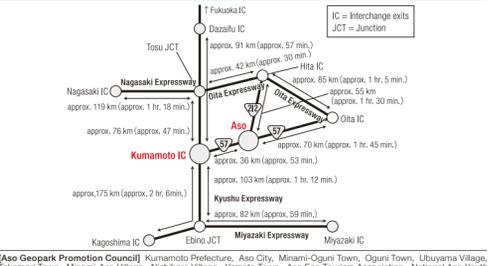
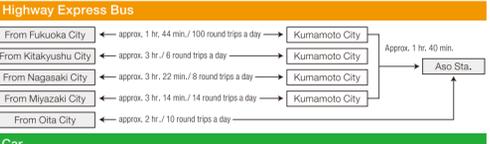
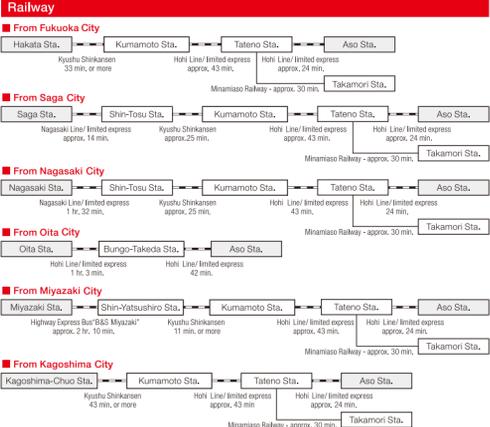


# ASO GeOPARK



## Access to Aso Geopark from each prefecture in Kyushu, Japan

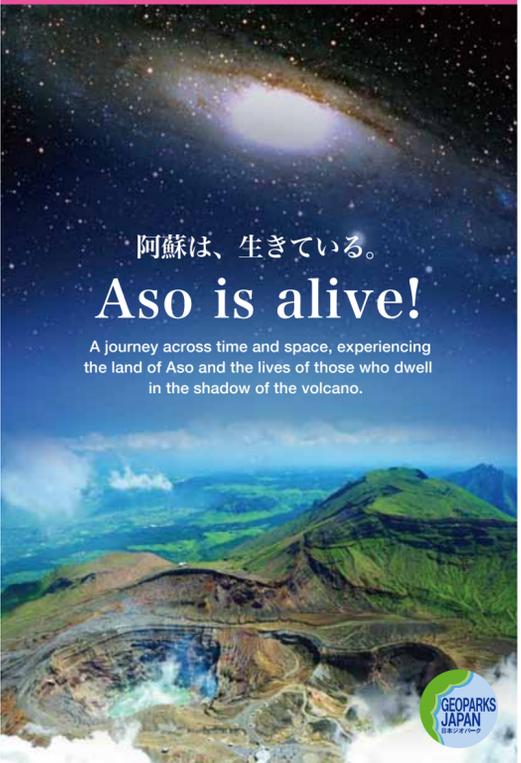


**[Aso Geopark Promotion Council]** Kumamoto Prefecture, Aso City, Minami-Oguni Town, Oguni Town, Ubuyama Village, Takamori Town, Minami-Aso Village, Nishihara Village, Yamato Town, Aso Eco Tourism Association, National Aso Youth Friendship Center, Aso Den-en Kukan Eco Museum Office, Aso Museum, Namiyo Plateau Yasuagi Recreation and Rest Center, Aso Nature Guide Association, Aso Tandabo Eco Museum, Aso Park Volunteers Association, Aso City Tourism Association, Minami-Oguni Town Tourism Association, Oguni Tourism Association, Ubuyama Village Tourism Association, Takamori Town Tourism Association, Minami-Aso Village Tourism Association, Yamato Town Tourism Association, Aso Volcano Museum, Kumamoto University, Aso Volcanological Laboratory Institute for Geothermal Sciences Graduate School of Science, Kyoto University, Kumamoto Geoscientific Association, Kumamoto Geotechnical Consultants Association, Aso Nature Conservation Group, Natural Parks Foundation Aso Branch, Aso Green Stock Foundation, Aso Design Center Foundation, Aso Junior Chamber of Commerce, Kumamoto 21, Japan Linerite Co. Ltd.

Aso Geopark Promotion Council  
Aso Volcanic Museum 1F, 1930-1 Akamizu, Aso City, Kumamoto prefecture 869-2232 Japan.  
HP: <http://www.aso-geopark.jp/> E-mail: [info@aso-geopark.jp](mailto:info@aso-geopark.jp)



## Geotourism Course map



# ASO Ge



## The Land of Aso Volcano and the Lives of Its People

The Aso Caldera is situated in central Kyushu, Japan. It is one of the largest calderas in the world, covering a total area of 350 km<sup>2</sup> and measuring 18 km east-west and 25 km north-south in width. In the caldera are the five peaks of Mt. Aso: Mt. Takadake, Mt. Nekodake, Mt. Kijimadake, Mt. Eboshidake, and the still-fuming Mt. Nakadake. There also lie volcanic clusters consisting of various mountains. A plain spreads at the foot of the mountain range from north to south. Surrounding the plain and volcanic clusters, the outer rims form a gently-sloping pyroclastic plateau. This unique geography is formed by the Aso volcano, which has displayed repeated volcanic activities since approximately 270,000 years ago. The major theme of Aso Geopark is to provide visitors with information about the geological history of the Aso volcano and its relation to the lives of people: how they have enjoyed the bounties of the earth, engaged in their livelihood, and developed a unique culture and landscape.



### What is the "Geopark" ?

By observing the earth and nature scientifically, we define a place of scientific importance as a geopark, where many valuable and beautiful natural heritages exist such as strata, rocks, topography, volcano, and faults. A geopark values conservation and utilization of geological heritages. It is a place for people to become familiar with "geo" (the earth), learn about its history and mechanisms, and think about its relation to ecology as well as human life through natural heritages including the culture of the people in the area. Geoparks are promoted around the world by the Global Geoparks Network (GGN), which was established in 2004 and is supported by UNESCO.

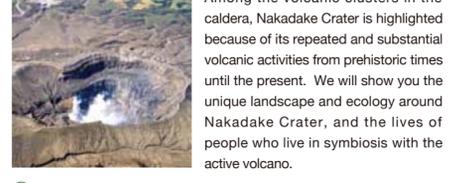
### We introduce geotourism based on three themes to comprehensively show the attractions of Aso Geopark



### Memories of eruptions engraved in the grand caldera

The world-class caldera is the symbol of Aso Geopark. Unique land features and strata have been formed by considerable volcanic activities over the past 270,000 years and by a great eruption that occurred 90,000 years ago. Visitors will learn about such geographical information as well as influences of the eruption on various places in Japan through geosites.

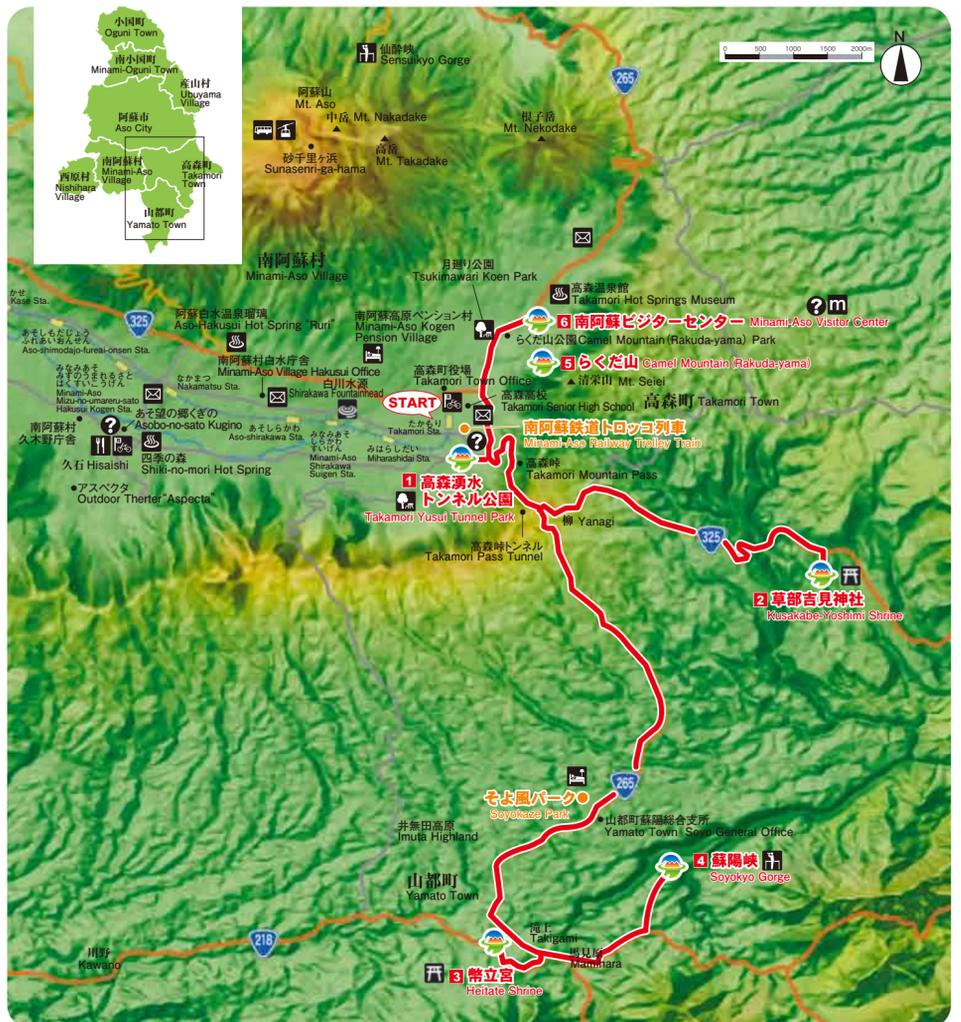
### Nakadake Crater: Feeling the breath of the earth



Among the volcanic clusters in the caldera, Nakadake Crater is highlighted because of its repeated and substantial volcanic activities from prehistoric times until the present. We will show you the unique landscape and ecology around Nakadake Crater, and the lives of people who live in symbiosis with the active volcano.

### Blessings of the volcanic mountain and people's lives

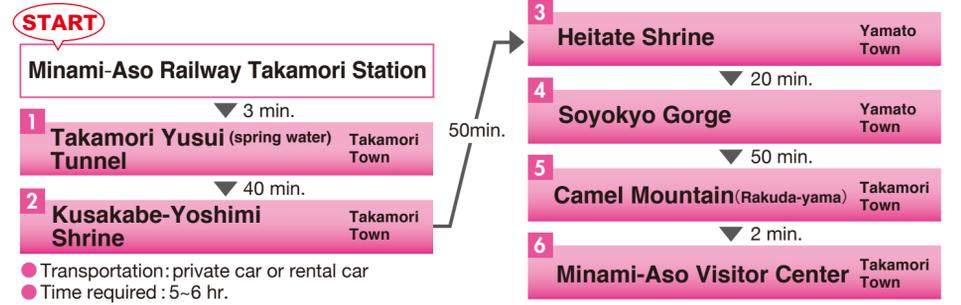
People who live side by side with a volcano have explored ways to live in harmony with nature in awe of the volcano, and developed their own culture and lifestyle. And nature has brought them abundant blessings like spring water and hot springs which are commonly found in volcanic regions.



凡例 Legend	案内所 Information	ロープウェイ Ropeway	温泉 Hot Spring	博物館/美術館 Museum	水湧 Waterfall	JR 肥後本線 JR Hoho Line
パソコン PC Facilities	駐車場 Parking	ゴルフ場 Golf Course	ホテル/宿泊施設 Hotel / Accommodation	史跡 Historic Site	公園 Park	南阿蘇鉄道 Minami Aso Railway Line
鉄道 / 鉄道駅 Railway / Railway Station	レンタサイクル付き自転車 Electric Bicycle Rental	郵便局 Post Office	展望地 / 景勝地 Viewpoint	キャンプ場 Camp Site	レストラン Restaurant	ジオツアーリズムコース Geotourism Course
バス / バスのりば Bus / Bus Stop	レンタカー Car Rental	キャッシュサービス Cash Service	神社 Shrine			

## Tracing the Path of Aso and its Myths

There remain various myths regarding Takeiwatatsuno-mikoto, Aso's deity of path-finding. They all relate to the geography and the place names of Aso, as well as traditional events and the livelihood of its people. This course offers the wonders and myths of Aso.



- 1 Takamori Yusui Tunnel** (Takamori Town)  
Transportation: private car or rental car  
Time required: 5~6 hr.
- 2 Kusakabe-Yoshimi Shrine** (Takamori Town)  
The Sanno-miya shrine, the third-highest shrine of Aso Shrine, is dedicated to Hikoyaino-mikoto, the first prince of the Emperor Jimmu, and 12 other deities. The name Kusakabe originated from the fact that the wall of the shrine was thatched with grass (kusa in Japanese). The arrangement of the shrine buildings called "Kudari-miya" is uncommon, where the shrine building is located at an area lower than the gateway. It is one of the three largest "Kudari-miya" in Japan.
- 3 Heitate Shrine** (Yamato Town)  
It is said that the chief priest of Aso Shrine dedicated this shrine to the deity Amaterasu Omikami sometime between 901 and 923 A.D. This shrine is the former Ise Shrine, dedicated to the God of the Sun whose ancestral god is Amenominakanushi.
- 4 Soyokyo Gorge** (Yamato Town)  
It is located at the south-east side of the Aso Caldera, stretching to the outer rims. Its altitude is 550 m. The Gokase-gawa River runs at the bottom of an approximately 15 km-long gorge. The width is 200 m ~ 300 m and its height is about 200 m. Steep valley walls consist of Aso pyroclastic sediment (welded tuff).
- 5 Camel Mountain (Rakuda-yama)** (Takamori Town)  
It is the dike penetrating pre-Aso lavas (basaltic pyroclastic rocks) which formed the south-east part of the caldera walls. Undulation of the upper part of the rocks looks like the back of a camel from the north and south, it is named Rakuda-yama (rakuda means camel in Japanese). The outer layer of the dike and the shape of the columnar joint can be observed nearby.
- 6 Minami-Aso Visitor Center** (Takamori Town)  
It is a facility to introduce to visitors the nature and livelihoods of the locals. A guide to the Aso Wild Flower Garden, where you can observe various plants in Aso in nature-like surroundings, is available. Through activities such as the observation workshop, one can enjoy contact with nature.

### ASO Geotourism Places of interest

#### A soothing nature-oriented theme park Soyokaze Park (means gentle breeze)

Stocked with fine facilities such as hotels, restaurants, shops, baths, workshops, and farming fields. Everything from food to entertainment is available here.

[TEL] 0967-83-0880

#### Enjoy a leisurely trip to Aso on the smallest train in Japan Trolley train of Minami-Aso Railway

Running through the expansive valleys of Minami-Aso, this special train has no windows and the passengers can feel the fresh breeze inside the carriage. A truly enjoyable experience!

[TEL] 0967-62-0058 (Takamori Station, Minami-Aso Railway)

