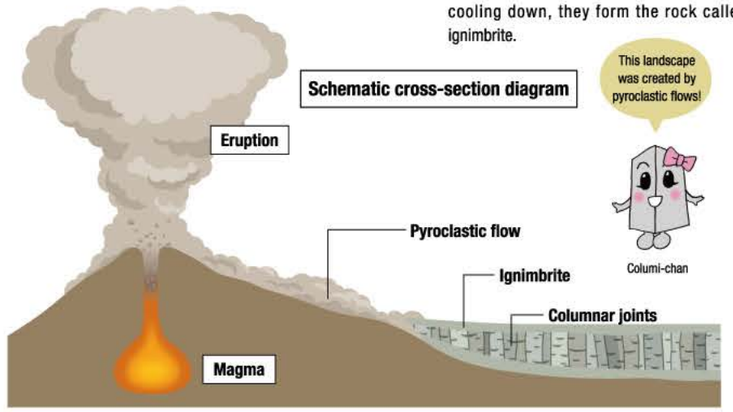
Massive pyroclastic flows created the landscape of Bungoono

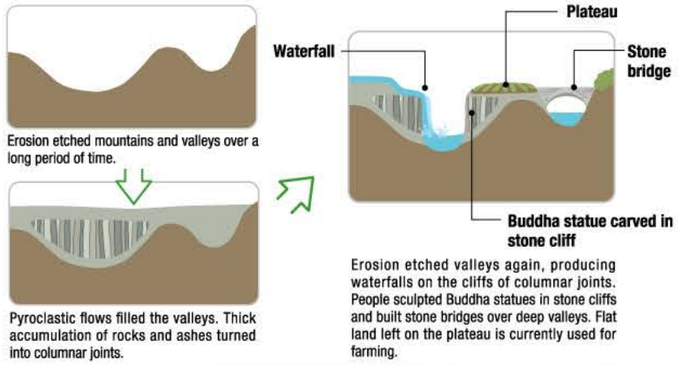
About 90,000 years ago, Aso Volcano (currently being a caldera) erupted on an enormous scale. Pyroclastic flows from the volcano covered most part of the Kyushu island and even reached Yamaguchi Prefecture on Honshu island across the sea. Pyroclastic flows cooled down, forming the geographic foundation of Bungoono.

Pyroclastic flow

A pyroclastic flow is a mixture of extremely hot gases, ashes and pumices running down the slope of a volcano. Its speed sometimes exceeds 100 kph. Accumulated pyroclastic deposit melt due to their own heat. After cooling down, they form the rock called ignimbrite.



How the geography of Bungoono was formed



Theme of Oita Bungoono Geopark

Ninety thousand years after a catastrophic pyroclastic flow, the colorful lands and waters of Bungo nurture all lives

Bungo Ono stands on grounds which were completely buried under the pyroclastic flow from a huge eruption of the Aso volcano around 90,000 years ago.
As time passed, water began to flow into the area, bringing life and abundance back to the land.
Land and water are the sources of all life, supporting and connecting all forms of "inochiki"*. We see these various types and ways of life as colorful.

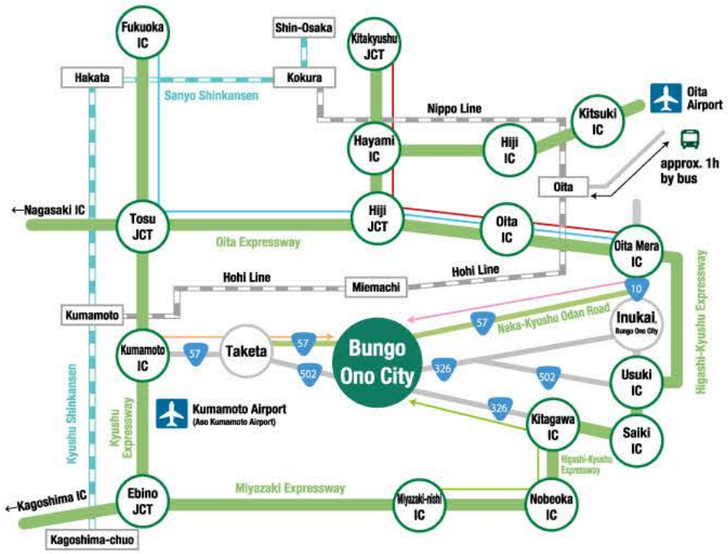
*"Inochiki" is the word for "livelihood" used in Oita dialect.

What is a Geopark?

Geoparks are exactly what the name means, parks of the earth. They are places where you can find out about how the mountains and rivers surrounding us came to be, learning their natural origins alongside the history and culture of the people who made their homes among them. There are 46 regions registered as geoparks in Japan today, nine of which are recognized as UNESCO Global Geoparks. (As of February 2023)

Bungo Ono City promotes geopark activities.

Access to Bungo Ono City



By Public Transportation (Most sightseeing spots are located along the JR Hohi Line, including Miemachi Station.)

Hakata Station	approx. 2h by JR Limited Express	Oita Station	approx. 50min via JR Hohi Line	Miemachi Station
Kokura Station	approx. 1h 20min by JR Limited Express			
Miyazaki Station	approx. 3h by JR Limited Express			
Oita Airport	approx. 1h by airport shuttle bus			
Kumamoto Station	approx. 2h 30min by JR Limited Express			
Kumamoto Airport	approx. 2h by express bus	Bungo-Taketa Station (Taketa Onsen Hanamizuki)	approx. 25min via JR Hohi Line	

By Car

Fukuoka	approx. 2h 30min via Oita Expressway	Oita Mera IC	approx. 40min via National Route 10 and Naka-Kyushu Odan Road	Miemachi Bungo Ono City
Kitakyushu	approx. 1h 30min via Higashi-Kyushu Expressway			
Miyazaki	approx. 1h 30min via Higashi-Kyushu Expressway	Kitagawa IC	approx. 1h via National Route 326	
Kumamoto	approx. 2h 30min via National Route 57 and National Route 502			

Oita Bungoono Geopark Guides

For guided tours and information, contact

Oita Bungoono Geopark Guide Bureau
TEL.080-2708-7809

Let our guides lead the way!

Contact for information

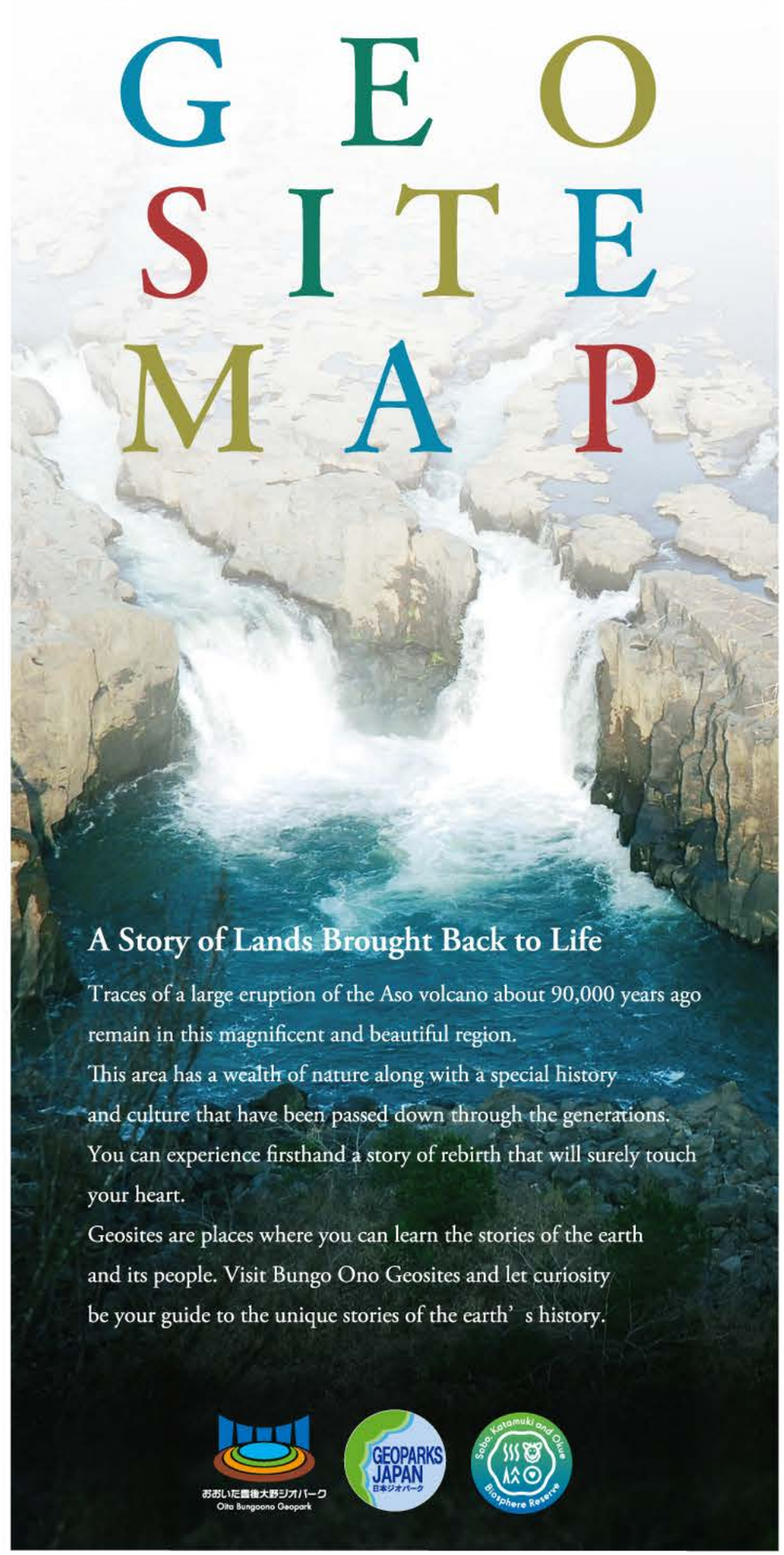
Oita Bungoono Geopark Promotion Council
(Commerce and Tourism Division, Bungo Ono City)
1200 Miemachi-Ichiba, Bungo Ono City,
Oita Prefecture 879-7198
TEL.0974-22-4089
https://bungo-ohno.com/

Scan here to see the website.

Issued: October 2025

Oita Bungoono Geopark

GEO SITE MAP



A Story of Lands Brought Back to Life

Traces of a large eruption of the Aso volcano about 90,000 years ago remain in this magnificent and beautiful region.
This area has a wealth of nature along with a special history and culture that have been passed down through the generations.
You can experience firsthand a story of rebirth that will surely touch your heart.
Geosites are places where you can learn the stories of the earth and its people. Visit Bungo Ono Geosites and let curiosity be your guide to the unique stories of the earth's history.

おおいた豊後大野ジオパーク
Oita Bungoono Geopark
GEOPARKS JAPAN 日本ジオパーク
Sobo, Katamuki and Oita Biosphere Reserve

Remnants of Huge Pyroclastic Flows

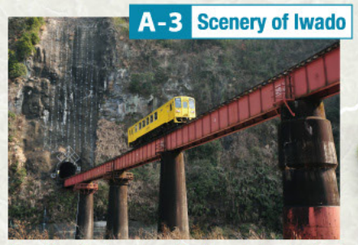
A-1 Harajiri Falls

About 20 m high and 120 m wide, Harajiri Falls runs down the ignimbrite cliff which formed while the huge pyroclastic flows from the Aso volcano cooled and solidified after an eruption about 90,000 years ago.

A-2 Chinda Falls

Consisting of the Male and Female Falls, Chinda Falls is also well known by a painting of Sesshu from the Muromachi period. A hydraulic power plant was built nearby in the Meiji era.

A-3 Scenery of Iwado



The cliff, with a tunnel running through, has its lower half formed by pyroclasts from the third eruption of the Aso volcano while its upper half by those from the fourth eruption.

A-4 Taizako Canyon

Formed by ignimbrite, the cliff soaring 70 m high shows outstanding columnar joints. Rocks about 15 million years old are seen exposed at the bottom of the canyon.

A-5 Buried Trees in Matsuo

Trunks of huge trees excavated from the bottom of the nearby stream were once buried under pyroclasts from the Aso volcano and smothered by their heat, as shown by their carbonized surface.

Rich Water and Lush Nature

B-1 Kawakami Canyon

Situated at the highest upstream of the Okudake River, Kawakami Canyon shows white granite rocks exposed at the bottom. The area is also home to endangered plant species.

Charged

B-2 Sobo-Katamuki Mountain Range

The mountain range running from Mt. Sobo, one of the 100 Best Mountains in Japan, is designated a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve inhabited by living treasures.

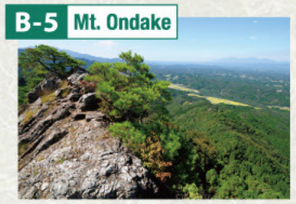
B-3 Tedori-gando

Sediment about 100 million years old inclined significantly in crustal movements and were exposed at the bottom of the river. It is said the river flows so swiftly here that even crabs are swept away.

B-4 Enaido Landscape

The Ono River, one of Kyushu's most outstanding waterways, eroded the land covered with pyroclasts from the Aso volcano and created a granary with an abundant harvest.

B-5 Mt. Ondake



Rocks around Mt. Ondake originally formed at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean and were transported here by the tectonic plate movement. The view from the top is magnificent.

B-6 Hakusan Valley

Known for the fireflies which dance on the limpid stream in summer, Hakusan Valley is also home to the Inazumi Underwater Limestone Caves, which were flooded due to pyroclastic flows from the Aso volcano.

C-2 Miyazako-Higashi and -Nishi Sekibutsu

(Miyazako-East and -West Buddha Statues Carved in Stone Cliff)

Prayers in Stone

These Buddha figures at two locations, east and west, are carved in the surface of the ignimbrite cliff formed by pyroclasts from the Aso volcano. Both are believed to have been carved in the late Heian period.

C-3 Shibakita Kumano Shrine

The stone cliff behind the shrine features the kanji characters "Kumano Shrine" carved on it. Below the cliff, water springs from an underground reservoir.

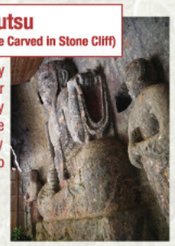
C-4 Fukoji Magaibutsu

(Fukoji Buddha Statues Carved in Stone Cliff)

These statues, among the largest of the kind in Japan, are carved in the cliff formed by pyroclasts from the third eruption of the Aso volcano about 120,000 years ago.

C-6 Inukai Sekibutsu

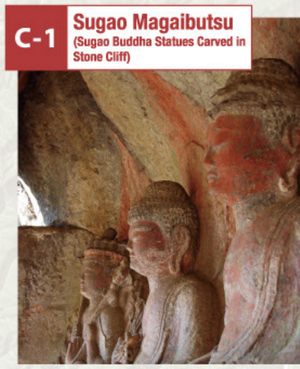
(Inukai Buddha Statue Carved in Stone Cliff)



This Fudo Myo-o with a uniquely gentle expression is known for appearing in a tanka poem by Yosano Akiko. It is carved in the ignimbrite cliff formed by pyroclasts from the Aso volcano about 90,000 years ago.

C-1 Sugao Magaibutsu

(Sugao Buddha Statues Carved in Stone Cliff)



These images were carved in the late Heian period in ignimbrite cliff formed by pyroclasts from the Aso volcano. They are designated a nationally important cultural property.

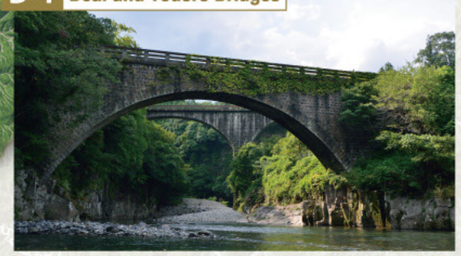
C-5 Osako Magaibutsu

(Osako Buddha Statue Carved in Stone Cliff)

This statue, carved in the fragile cliff from 600,000 years ago, wears odd appearance on the face due to the erosion of the clay on the surface.

Fostering History and Culture

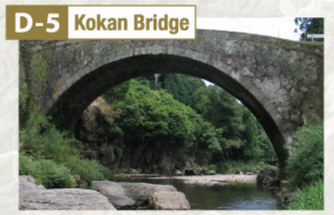
D-1 Deai and Todoro Bridges



Stone bridges boasting the largest and second largest spans (arch width) in Japan are situated next to each other. Along both banks of the river stand majestic columnar joints of ignimbrite.

*Limited traffic for vehicles

D-5 Kokan Bridge

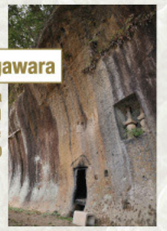


The name means "bridge arching over the valley like a rainbow." It was built in the late Edo period with joint funding by local merchants. It is designated a nationally important cultural property. *Limited traffic for vehicles

D-3 Jinkakuji Temple

Jinkakuji Temple, a historic old temple standing atop a ridge of columnar joints of ignimbrite formed by pyroclasts about 15 million years ago, offers a grand view of Bungo Ono City.

D-2 Stone Bath at Tsujigawara



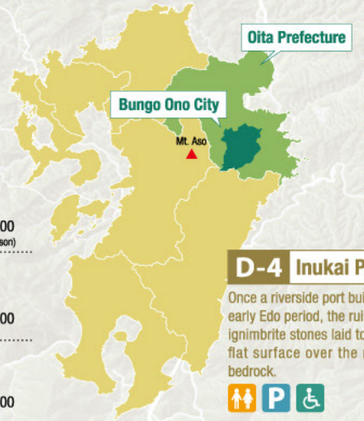
This stone bath is a kind of sauna filling a stone cave with the vapor of medicinal herbs. The cave was created in the ignimbrite walls that formed about 120,000 years ago.

D-6 Komori Falls

These falls stand 10 m high over the main course of the Ono River. During the Meiji era, a waterway with a slope was constructed to detour around the waterfall.

D-4 Inukai Port Ruins

Once a riverside port built in the early Edo period, the ruins have ignimbrite stones laid to form a flat surface over the rugged bedrock.



Michi-no-Eki rest areas

Michi-no-Eki Harajiri Falls
0974-42-4140
P190 cars
Open: 9:00 – 17:30 (differs by season)

Michi-no-Eki Asaji
0974-64-1210
P92 cars
Open: 9:00 – 17:30

Michi-no-Eki Mie
0974-24-0010
P99 cars Open: 9:00 – 18:00 (differs by season)

Michi-no-Eki Ono
0974-34-3231
P82 cars Open: 9:00 – 18:00

Michi-no-Eki Kiyokawa
0974-35-2117
P82 cars Open: 7:30 – 18:00

Geopark Base Facility

Oita Bungoono Geopark Museum
0974-24-0040
Open: 9:00 – 17:00 Closed: Mondays and holidays

Restroom available · Parking available · Wheelchair accessible · Distance from the parking area · Has stairs or slopes · Full-scale trekking equipment required