

Kagoshima Prefecture
Imutaike
Prefectural Nature Park
Round Tour Map
IMUTA

**Ramsar Convention registered wetland
Lake Imuta**

The Imutaike Prefectural Nature Park stands as a premier Ramsar Convention-registered wetland in Kagoshima. The serene lake formed by volcanic landscapes and the vibrant natural environment reveal a unique charm throughout the four seasons. Wetland plants extend gracefully along the water's edge, while wildfowl soaring through the sky provide a calming presence for visitors. This location offers an ideal opportunity to connect with nature, whether you choose to stroll, observe birds, or appreciate seasonal blooms. Why not take some time to be with your family and friends, experiencing the essence of life?



**Nature's archive marks the passage of time
Lake Imuta's peat layers**

Low-lying wetland areas on Lake Imuta's west and north shores are home to clusters of marsh plants. When these plants die, they form peat, which eventually turns into coal. This is highly rare in warm climates; thus, the areas were recognized and preserved as a national natural monument in 1921.

**Roadside Station
Hiwaki Yuyukan**
156 Hiwakichoichihino, SatsumaSendai
Phone: 0996-38-2506

**Ojatta Mall
Satsumasendaikan**
7100-1 Irikichoranomyo,
Satsumasendai

1 Atago Vista Park
The park serves as a launch pad for paragliders and offers a scenic lookout. A grassy area, lavatories, and a rest area are located next to the car park, offering views of Mount Shibi, Iriki Pass, the Yae mountains, and beyond.

Events information

February
Imutaike Ume Marathon
The annual historical marathon occurs around the lake each February. The course presents beautiful views of plum blossoms, making it a perfect opportunity to participate in the run while enjoying the scenery.

May and November
Imutaike Marché
The Imutaike Marché, taking place every May and November, features a variety of food, general merchandise, crafts, and workshops, along with live music performances on stage. Experience the vibrant Lake Imuta, which offers a unique contrast to the typically serene atmosphere of the lake.

December
Lake Imuta Outer Rim Trail
The Lake Imuta Outer Rim Trail seeks to strengthen the bonds among trail running enthusiasts and breathe new life into the Imuta area. This event is brimming with the allure of nature and the warmth of community that newcomers and children alike can enjoy. We invite you to experience the beauty of Lake Imuta in winter.

The birthplace of the Japanese anthem



2 Omiya Shrine
The shrine is believed to be the birthplace of the Japanese anthem. During the annual festival, the Iriki Kagura, a distinctive performance of Iriki, is presented as an offering to the gods. The Iriki Kagura performance, "Jyuninin Kenbu," features the national anthem, Kimigayo.

Defense utilizing volcanic landforms



3 The site of Kiyoshiki Castle
This national historic site is renowned for its expansive dry moat, which extends in a direct line from the summit of the mountain to its base. The width measures 2 meters, while the height approaches 20 meters. The view of Lake Imuta's outer rim from this vantage point is referred to as Nenishigo, as it resembles the profile of Saigo Takamori.

Camp

**Imutaike Nature Park
Camping Site**

The camping site does not require a reservation. This location is a beloved destination for campers. The tent site is available for various uses, including vehicle parking. Day campers are welcome! The site features a covered cooking facility, a water supply, and lavatories. For information on availability, please call 090-6267-2370.

Activities

Activities at Lake Imuta

- Rent-a-bike
- Boating (March to October)
- Fishing
- Camping
- Trekking

Lake Imuta boasts pristine natural beauty. Experience the beauty of blossom viewing in spring, the vibrant crimson leaves in autumn, and the welcoming presence of wildfowl for visitors.

Ecosystem Conservation Museum Aquium

The museum displays a variety of freshwater fish, as well as associated books, for visitors to enjoy and learn about while taking in the valuable natural environment. Visitors can also rent fishing gear for free and purchase the fish they catch. *Closed on Mondays.

1 The legend of a dragon links the Lakes Imuta, Sumiyoshi, and Onami Source: History of Kedo'in (partially edited)

Long ago, a male and a female dragon coexisted peacefully in Lake Imuta. However, the male dragon became dissatisfied with his daily routine and fled the lake, never to be seen again. Left behind, the female dragon continued to wait for her partner's return, and her emotions gave rise to the mythology of Mount Imori. Later, when the goddess discovers that her partner is living with another goddess at Lake Onami in Kirishima, she attempts to win him back. She tries to ascend to the skies on a cloud and dig through the earth, but both attempts fail. The topography and mythology that emerged as a result of this process were passed down as stories about Lake Sumiyoshi. Even after many years had passed, the goddess was reluctant to abandon her partner, so she tried to flee to the heavens in the guise of a dragon, but when a villager saw her on a foggy day, she was supposed to have given up and changed into a rock. This rock, known as the "Dragon Stone," is located on the west shore of the lake.

Lake Imuta



4 Choyotodoro Falls
The falls bestow a sense of spiritual energy, as the emerald green water glistens gracefully in its vast basin. During the season when fireflies twirl in the night sky, a magical panorama reveals itself to you.



5 Ta no kami modoshi
The "ta no kami modoshi" ceremony, a tradition preserved in the Imuta district for more than 150 years, is a Shinto ritual where newlyweds in the village care for the "god of the rice fields" for a year. Each spring, they relocate the deity while offering prayers for the prosperity of their descendants, good health, and an abundant harvest.

7 Welded tuff of the Kakuto pyroclastic flow
The rocks found in Kakehashizaka slope, Tatsumonijizaka slope, and Yamada's Arc of Triumph are deposits from the Kakuto pyroclastic flow that are 340,000 years old. The stones were extracted from a nearby mountain.

8 Kamo's giant camphor tree
The tree is thought to be 1,600 years old, featuring a root circumference of 33.5 meters, making it the largest tree in Japan. It is believed that the tree had already established itself in this area prior to the construction of the Kamo Hachiman Shrine. An autumn festival takes place each November.



Kamo Tourism and Communication Center
2308-1 Kamochokamigutoku, Aira
Phone: 0995-52-0748

Kamo Bussankan Kusukusukan
2539-1 Kamochokamigutoku, Aira
Phone: 0995-54-3099



9 Shinshoji Temple
Constructed in 1892, Shinshoji Temple stands as a unique stone temple. The lattice ceiling within the main hall features approximately 500 family crests belonging to the temple's parishioners.

2 The giant serpent of Lake Sumiyoshi and the gourd

A gigantic serpent that inhabited Lake Sumiyoshi compelled the villagers to sacrifice a young maiden every year. It is said that if the serpent's demands were not fulfilled, he would demolish the levees, causing flooding. One day, a traveling monk advised the villagers to fashion a doll from a gourd and present it as a substitute. Upon hearing this suggestion, the villagers clothed a gourd in the kimono of a young maiden and let it adrift on the lake. Although the enormous serpent made an effort to swallow the gourd whole, it slipped out of its grasp, and the serpent eventually died of exhaustion.

Camp Lake Sumiyoshi Camping Site

The campsite offers tents and bungalows, creating a tranquil setting to relax by the lake, surrounded by a calming natural landscape. It attracts families and groups and operates from July to August. You must complete your reservations by 17:00 the day before your planned visit. You can only use the fire during the site's designated opening period.

10 Chosa Hachiman Shrine's giant ginkgo tree
The ginkgo tree, believed to be 700 years old, stands at 21 meters tall and boasts a trunk circumference of approximately 5 meters. During autumn, the fallen leaves form a vibrant carpet of yellow, drawing many photographers.

11 Nabekura's rhododendron satsumense
The botanical name is rhododendron dilatatum var. satsumense, a species that is endemic to Kagoshima Prefecture. The rhododendron dilatatum is among the first to bloom, showcasing its flowers from late February to March. *It is illegal to pick rhododendron dilatatum.



12 Yoneyama Yakushi Temple
People believed that using or consuming the water from this well would provide protection against smallpox. During the smallpox outbreak in Kagoshima Prefecture, over 1,000 individuals frequented the well daily. The nearby Sakura Park is an often-overlooked gem that offers a stunning panoramic view of Kinko Bay.

Aira Footpath

Explore the rich natural surroundings on a short excursion

A footpath, which originated in England, is a sort of thoroughfare that allows people to walk while enjoying the scenery that has been present in the area for many years. The creation of these routes drew attention as a strategy to revive towns, and they are becoming more common in Japan. In Aira, too, the tourist association is leading the way in selecting paths that will help reinvent the city by emphasizing the appeal of many aspects, including the natural landscape.

There are additional routes besides these. Visit the Aira Tourism Association website for details.

Kamogo Country Route
★Time required: Approx. 3 and a half hours / 7.9 km

The route starts at Kamo's tourism center and leads you around Lake Sumiyoshi. The area near the starting site was a samurai settlement known as Kamogo. The layout of the plots and the samurai homes still bear witness to this today.

Water and Yukie's Tale Route
★Time required: Approx. 1 and a half hours / 4.5 km

The route passes through rural landscapes, running streams, and remnants of a once-thriving town. Enjoy your walk while pondering the accomplishments of Yukie Mizuguchi, the 15-year-old girl who created the Nakatsuno irrigation canal.

There's an active volcano in Aira!

Active volcanoes: Yonemaru and Lake Sumiyoshi

Lakes Yonemaru and Sumiyoshi are located on the border of a plain that spans along the northern coast of Kagoshima Bay and is made up of two maars that are nearly parallel east-west. Yonemaru Maar is a circular depression with a diameter of about 1 kilometer, whereas Sumiyoshi Maar is a lake with a diameter of around 500 meters. These areas have been classified as volcanically active by the Japan Meteorological Agency. The area between the two volcanoes is known as Aojiki, and it is also a volcano that erupted approximately 100,000 years ago.

*A maar is a circular-shaped volcanic crater. Created based on a map provided by the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan

The Jomon people: forest dwellers Maeda ruins

Along with over 110,000 acorns, a considerable number of woven baskets constructed from tree bark were unearthed at this archaeological site, which dates back around 4,500 years. These are incredibly rare, even in Japan, and they are attracting attention as clues to understanding people's lives at the time. Furthermore, the weaving technique is almost identical to that employed now, demonstrating people's technical proficiency. The Aira City History Folklore Museum displays the excavated artifacts.