

Discover Your Favorite Giant Trees!

Aso-Kuju National Park, Kumamoto

Strolling around the majestic scenery and giant trees of Mt. Aso Somma



Mt. Aso, located almost in the center of Kyushu, is an active volcano with one of the world's largest calderas, stretching approximately 25 km from north to south and 18 km from east to west.

Surrounding Aso Five Mountains and Mt. Aso, the majestic landscape of Mt. Aso Somma, as well as the grassland landscape that spreads around its periphery, has become a popular tourist destination for tourists from Japan and abroad.

The grassland landscape is maintained through human intervention such as intentional burn. The mixture of secondary nature formed by human activity together with the rough natural landscape represented by volcanoes is a major feature of the Aso landscape.

Here is a course where you can drive around the five carefully selected trees that are worth seeing if you like giant trees, while enjoying the majestic scenery of the east side of Aso.



©Aso City

Access

• Start from Aso Kumamoto Airport

1

Cherry tree representing Minamiaso

The big cherry tree of Isshingyo (*Cerasus jamasakura*)

The big cheery tree of Isshingyo is one of the most famous cherry trees in Kyushu, and many tourists visit from all over Kyushu during the cherry blossom season.

According to tradition, during the period of the warring states, "Hoki no kami Korefuyu", a local military commander and lord of Yazaki Castle was killed in a battle with the Shimazu clan in 1580. The surviving wife and children planted a cherry tree sapling to mourn the spirits of the lord of the castle and his retainers. It is said that the name "Isshingyo" was derived from their single-minded (*isshin*) devotion.



©Kumamoto Prefecture Tourism Federation

Trunk girth 735 cm **Height** 14 m **Est. age** More than 400 years old **Protected designation** Trees of hometown Kumamoto **Address** 3226-1 Nakamatsu, Minamiaso village, Aso district, Kumamoto

4

Unique landscape known only to those in the know

Zelkova in Keyaki water source (*Zelkova serrata*)

It is probably the least well-known of the giant trees introduced here, but it forms a miraculous landscape that cannot be seen anywhere else. Spring water can be seen in many places around Miyahara, Oguni Town, where this zelkova tree is located. The tree stands over the spring water from above, making it look as if the water is gushing out from the zelkova tree. It was selected for the "Kumamoto Water and Green Landscape Award" in 2011.



Trunk girth 750 cm **Height** 18 m **Est. age** More than 300 years old **Address** 1684-5 Miyahara, Oguni-cho, Aso district, Kumamoto

2

Oddly shaped cedar in a forest on a hill

Takamori-don's cedars (*Cryptomeria japonica*)

Takamori-don's cedars, which have become well-known to the public after being featured on TV, are giant trees worth seeing.

Two cedar trees stand side by side, with many undulating branches extending in all directions, giving it an overwhelming presence.

Since the area is grazing land, a notice has been posted at the entrance to prevent livestock infectious diseases. When encountering cattle, take precautions to avoid startling them or accidents.



Trunk girth 570 cm (West tree stump) / 930 cm (East tree stump) **Height** 30 m **Est. age** More than 400 years old (according to tradition) **Protected designation** Natural Monuments of Takamori-cho **Address** 3341-1 Takamori, Takamori-cho, Aso district, Kumamoto

5

"Chichikobu-san" said to be 1000 years old

Big ginkgo tree in Shimojo (*Ginkgo biloba*)

The giant ginkgo in Shimojo is an old, large tree characterized by its many tillers and large branches, and the size of its crown stands out even from a distance. It is said to be the largest ginkgo tree in Kumamoto. The tree is illuminated every year during the yellowing season, making it a popular tourist spot in the town along with nearby Shimojo Falls. Locals call it Chichikobu-san, and it is said that drinking a decoction of the bark improved the production of breast milk.



Trunk girth About 1200 cm **Height** About 25 m **Est. age** More than 1000 years old **Protected designation** National natural monument **Address** Shimojo, Oguni-cho, Aso district, Kumamoto

3

The largest old zelkova tree in western Japan

Great zelkova in Takenokuma (*Zelkova serrata*)

As a national natural monument, this tree is surprisingly inconspicuous, but when you get close to it, you can see that the trunk of the tree is very thick. The tree is said to be well over 1,000 years old, making it one of the largest zelkova trees in western Japan and one of the oldest in the country.

The thick trunk is covered with moss, giving it the appearance of old age and signs of decline in places. In the early Showa period, the felling of the trees was brought up, but after a court case it was decided to preserve them.



Trunk girth About 1300 cm **Height** About 35 m **Est. age** More than 1000 years old **Protected designation** National natural monument **Address** Minamioguni-cho, Aso district, Kumamoto

Survey on Giant Trees

The Ministry of the Environment has been conducting Survey on Giant Trees and Forests since 1988 as a part of the baseline survey for conservation of natural environment, targeting trees of 130 cm above ground and with trunk girth of 300 cm or more. For information on giant trees and forests, please visit the website Database of the Giant Trees and Forests.

<https://kyoju.biodic.go.jp/>
(*Japanese text only)



National Association of the Forests and Big trees

If you are interested in giant trees and forests, check out the website National Association of the Forests and Big Trees! The association conducts the activities related to giant trees and forests, such as observing giant trees and forests, publishing the newsletter Big Trees and Forests, and organizing National Forum for talking about Giant Trees, etc.

<https://www.kyojyu.com/>
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Required time: about 6 hours by car
(Approximately 100 km)

Aso Kumamoto Airport

30-minute drive (25 km)

1 The big cherry tree of Isshingyo

15-minute drive (9.5 km)

2 Takamori-don's cedars

25-minute walk (1.5 km)

3 Great zelkova in Takenokuma

10-minute drive (4.5 km)

4 Zelkova in Keyaki water source

8-minute drive (4.2 km)

5 Big ginkgo tree in Shimojo

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Est. age More than 1000 years old

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Teno cedar tree (*cryptomeria japonica*)

The Teno cedar tree was a giant cedar tree representative of the landscape of Aso, growing on the grounds of Kokuzo Shrine, which is said to have a history of some 2000 years. It was designated as a national natural monument in 1924, and was widely known. However, the main trunk was broken off at about 11 m above ground by typhoon damage in 1991. Soil amendments and other measures were taken, but the tree unfortunately died. Currently, the remaining 2.5 m to 7 m of the tree has been cut down, covered with a shed and carefully pre-served.



2

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Aso Kumamoto Airport

