

Project “X” Tours Japan Day by Day: DAY 2

10 MAY



Looking out the entrance of Izumi Shrine. PHOTO: Sean Savoy

Breakfast at hotel. After a brief orientation, depart by bus for Kumamoto. Visit Kumamoto Castle, which covers nearly one square mile. Enjoy lunch at Suizen-ji Park, one of the most beautiful formal gardens in Japan. The park hosts Izumi

Shrine. Then, continue by bus to visit Mount Aso in Aso Kuju National Park and surrounding farmlands. Mt. Aso is the largest volcano in Japan and among the largest in the world. Dinner and overnight at Aso Villa Park Hotel.

KUMAMOTO CASTLE

“Kumamoto Castle. Enormous and impressive – covering nearly one square mile.”

–Journal entry by Gary Buchanan



Kumamoto Castle. PHOTO: Robert Roy

Kumamoto Castle, with its signature curved stone walls, is one of the three premier castles in Japan. The history of the hilltop castle complex dates back to 1467, when its foundations were established.



Suizen-ji Joju-en Park. PHOTO: Ron Theriault

Kumamoto is also home to Suizenji Park (Suizen-ji Joju-en), one of the most beautiful formal gardens in Japan, less than two miles from the city's landmark castle, at a site selected in 1636 by Lord Hosokawa for its spring-fed pond whose water makes excellent tea.

The park, declared a national historic site of scenic beauty, hosts Izumi Shrine.

IZUMI SHRINE



Tour members enter Izumi Shrine grounds. PHOTO: Gary Buchanan

"Izumi Shrine in Suizen-ji Park. Beautiful architecture and gardens. Buddhist-Shinto mix of styles. Miniature Mt. Fuji in the park. Good vibes. Lots of large fish in the ponds."

—Journal entry by Gary Buchanan



Izumi Shrine. PHOTO: Gary Buchanan



Garden with replica of Mount Fuji,
Izumi Shrine. PHOTO: Gary Buchanan

ASO KUJU NATIONAL PARK

Mount Aso, in Aso Kuju National Park in the east of Kumamoto Prefecture, is the largest active volcano in Japan and among the largest in the world. Aso caldera holds five peaks and the small city of Aso. The crater of the peak at the center is still active, constantly sending up black smoke and rumbling underground. In and around the park are many hot springs.

"Aso Kuju National Park and surrounding farmlands that stretch to the horizon. Among the largest volcanoes in the world. However, it is raining and overcast, and we are only allowed to visit the museum, which nevertheless is also impressive. We viewed a film of the entire history and geophysical development of the Aso area."

—Journal entry by Gary Buchanan

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