

Where is this?

Up-and-Coming Destination: Hita Onsen in Kyushu!



HOUSEBOAT

Just an hour's drive from Fukuoka city and you will arrive at **Hita Onsen**, right beside Mikuma River in Oita Prefecture. Hita Onsen has been gaining attraction these days. What makes staying here so unique and charming must be the dinner cruises on a **houseboat floating on Mikuma River**, and **the cormorant fishing that takes place here**.

In summer, you could enjoy fireworks from a traditional Japanese room wearing yukata. In autumn, you can savor the food of Hita while a pleasant breeze blows by. In winter, eating hotpots on a snow-seeing boat complete with *shoji* (paper screen doors) and *kotatsu* (traditional Japanese table heaters) is very nice.

Among Hita's hot springs are the famous Amagase Onsen, which boasts a 1300-year history, and many hidden baths surrounded by nature.

Walking through the old historic townscape of Kumamachi and Mamedamachi on the riverside is also recommended.



HITA MAP



THE CORMORANT FISHING



Hita was one of Kyushu's most prosperous shogunate territories back in the Edo Period. Many powerful merchants amassed huge fortunes, and *hinaningyo* dolls obtained from Kyoto's best doll makers remain in their old houses. The most prominent example is the *hinakazari* at Hirose Museum, dating back to the Tenpo era. This is on display all year round, and is a highlight of the hinaningyo tour course. Such luxurious dolls as can be seen here are very rare even nationally.

Taking place every July, the Hita Gion Festival, a summer tradition of Hita, rids the city of diseases and disasters. Nine gorgeously decorated *yamaboko* (festival floats) go through each district praying for prosperity. The festival, which has been passed down for more than 300 years and stirs up a passion towards the region amongst its people, was designated as a national Important Intangible Folk Cultural Asset in 1996. In December 2016, *Yama, Hoko, Yatai, Float Festivals in Japan*, consisting of 33 festivals spread across 18 prefectures throughout Japan including the Hita Gion Float Festival, were credited for showcasing the diversity of Japan's regional cultures, and thus designated as an Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO.



Hitamabushi is a local dish using eels from Japan. It can be enjoyed in three ways: on its own, with garnishes such as *yuzu-kosho* (a paste made from yuzu and green pepper), or as *chazuke* (rice with tea or soup) with dashi poured on it.



Hitamabushi