



## Come live in Aso.

Aso City is a place full of wonder and delight, from the clear breezes that blow over Aso's majestic landscape, to its delicious foods and abundant hot springs. Those who have moved here spend their days enjoying Aso with bright smiles on their faces.

Everyone has different reasons for coming, but many come to Aso and end up finding a life full of meaning and satisfaction.

Want to find out more about the people-friendly city of Aso and take a peek at what life is like here?



For consultation and inquiries about moving to Aso

**Machizukuri Section, Economy Department, Aso City**  
504-1 Miyaji, Ichinomiya-machi, Aso City, Kumamoto Prefecture 869-2695  
Phone: 0967-22-3318 / Fax: 0967-22-4566  
Email: machizukuri@city.aso.lg.jp

FY2022 Kumamoto Prefecture Collaborative Environment Improvement Support Project

Aso City Official HP



ASO is GOOD!  
[Aso City Tourism Association Website]



Aso City Instagram  
@asostagram



# 阿蘇で暮らす。

Live in Aso.



自分らしく  
暮らせる場所。

A place where you can be yourself.

## Find a new life for your family in Aso

All About Aso City / A Relaxing Town to Raise a Family /  
Finding Work Post-Relocation / Living in Aso City (Info for Residents) /  
Aso Area Map / Live in Aso - Interviews with People Who Moved to Aso

# Live in Aso.

This beautiful landscape  
can be your new home.

More than anything, Aso is an outdoor paradise, with mountains, vast grasslands, and spectacular views. People tend to think that living in countryside requires sacrifices to convenience, but Aso is quite well-equipped to offer its residents convenience and comfort.

On days off, you can enjoy a hike or visit a quiet cafe. Here are some thoughts from people who relocated to Aso. We hope their opinions will help you get a better idea of what your life in Aso would be like.

Aso isn't just for tourists. Here's all you need to know about life in Aso.

# ALL ABOUT ASO CITY

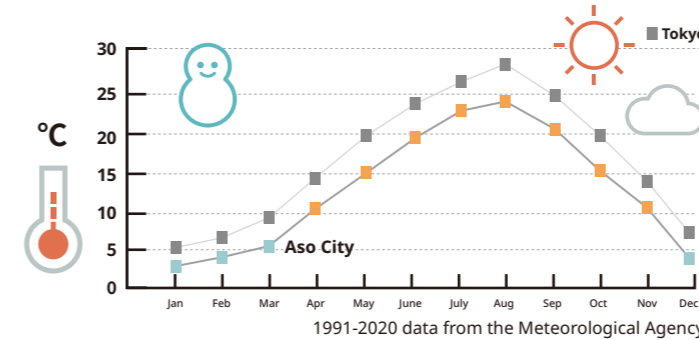
What info do you need when you're thinking about moving?

It's easy to find all kinds of data on the internet nowadays, but here's a basic overview of Aso City.

Compared to Tokyo

## Average Temperatures in Aso

The average annual temperature in Aso is 13°C, which is on the cool side throughout each of the four seasons. Temperatures go below freezing in the winter and snow accumulates sometimes.



How does rent in Aso compare to where you live now?

## Private Residential Rent Prices (by Floor Plan)

- 2 bed + living, dining, kitchen from ¥54,000
- 1 bed + living, dining, kitchen from ¥50,000
- 2 bed + dining, kitchen from ¥45,000
- 1 bed + dining, kitchen from ¥35,000
- 1 bed + kitchen from ¥35,000



(prices taken from listings from 4 private real estate companies, as of March 2023)

Buying an old home and renovating it is also a great idea!  
See page 7 for our Vacant House Database!

Wide-ranging childcare support

## Schools & Day Care Centers

### 10 Day Care Centers

- ◆ Sakanashi ◆ Miyaji
- ◆ Rindo ◆ Uchinomaki
- ◆ Otohime ◆ Yamada
- ◆ Namino ◆ Kumamoto YMCA Akamizu
- ◆ Kumamoto YMCA Nagakusa
- ◆ Kumamoto YMCA Ogaishi

### 5 Elementary Schools

- ◆ Ichinomiya ◆ Aso
- ◆ Aso Nishi ◆ Uchinomaki
- ◆ Namino

### 3 Junior High Schools

- ◆ Ichinomiya
- ◆ Aso
- ◆ Namino

### 4 Certified Child Centers

- ◆ Kojo Nursery ◆ Aso Hikari Kindergarten
- ◆ Aso Chuo Kindergarten
- ◆ Kumamoto YMCA Kurokawa Nursery

All daycare and certified child centers in Aso City have beds for napping.

In public school rankings published in a private survey  
Aso was **#1 in Kyushu** for both elementary and junior high schools and was in the **top 10 nationally** for ICT equipment availability!

**0** kids on wait list for day care!  
**School buses available for elementary and junior high school students!**

Fewer children in recent years means that the number of schools in Aso have gradually decreased. To counteract this, school buses have made it easy to get to school even for students that live far away. There are also many day cares and certified child centers, meaning there is no wait to register your child. For families where both parents work, this helps take some of the stress out of raising children.  
(School buses are generally available for children living 4 km or further from elementary school and 6 km or further from junior high school.)

See page 3 for family and education info

## Getting Here

**By car**

- Kumamoto IC → Route 57 → About 50 min → Aso City
- Hita IC → Route 212 → About 1 hr 40 min → Aso City

**By rail**

- Kumamoto Station → JR Hohl Main Line Trans-Kyushu Express → Akamizu Station → About 59min
- Akamizu Station → About 8min → Aso Station
- Aso Station → About 4 min → Miyaji Station

**By plane**

**By car from Aso Kumamoto Airport**

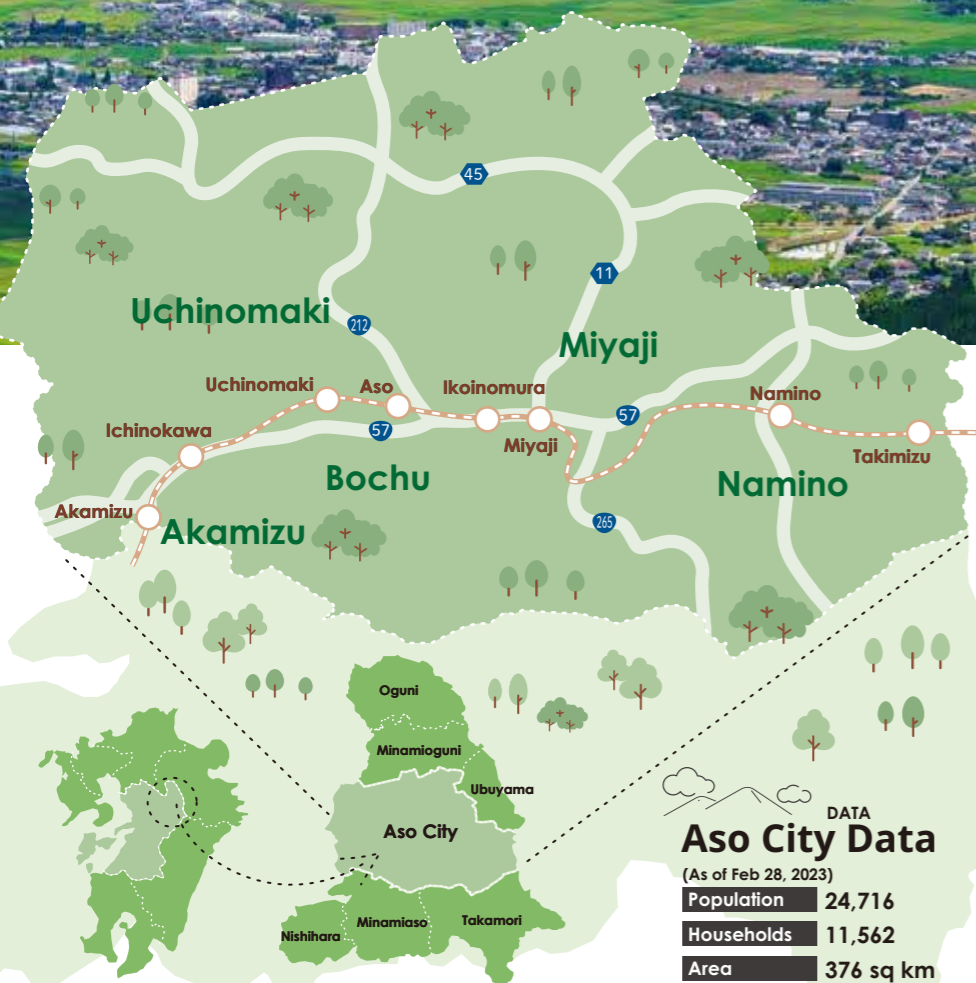
- Aso Kumamoto Airport → Routes 36, 443, 57 → About 30 min → Aso City

**By bus from Aso Kumamoto Airport**

- Aso Kumamoto Airport → Kyushu Sanko Bus Limited Express Yamabiko (for Oita) → Aso Station → About 60 min

### Times from various areas to Aso Kumamoto Airport

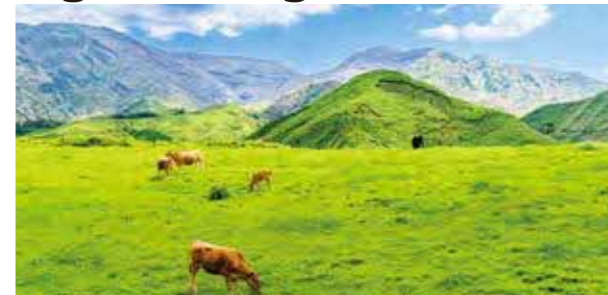
- From Haneda Airport ----- about 1 hr 55 min
- From Narita Airport ----- about 2 hr 20 min
- From Chubu Airport ----- about 1 hr 35 min
- From Itami Airport ----- about 1 hr 20 min



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## Sightseeing



### So many places to explore!

Aso City is blessed with numerous resources, including a magnificent landscape boasting one of the world's largest calderas, wide swaths of farmland, historical heritage sites like Aso Shrine, and a rich culture and folklore rooted in daily life. All of this contributed to Aso's certification as a UNESCO Global Geopark. The grasslands covering the Aso foothills and outer mountain ring of the caldera are home to grazing akashi cattle. Aso changes throughout the seasons, with golden landscapes of pampas grass in the fall, frozen waterfalls in the winter, and the revitalizing *noyaki* (controlled burns) in the spring. Every year, over 1.6 million visitors come to experience Aso.

## Agriculture



### Designated a GIAHS since 2013

The grasslands of Aso have been preserved for over a millennium through traditions of *noyaki* (controlled burns) and cattle grazing. Thanks to its grasslands, Aso is blessed with wonderful treasures such as diverse agriculture, rare flora and fauna, and traditional farming culture. As a result, in May 2013, Aso was certified as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS).

# Doing our best to help families raise children Aso City is perfect for raising a family.

There are many things to worry about when raising children, such as illness and injury. We support families by providing subsidies, support programs, and guidance so that you can raise your family in peace.



## Extra help for raising children in a new, unfamiliar place Child Rearing Support Center

This facility supports families raising children. Children and their guardians get to know each other better and can consult with childcare workers and public health nurses about their worries and concerns. Please feel free to use this service whenever you feel the need.

NEW  
2022.5  
OPEN

### Aso City Child Rearing Support Center Piyopipyo Hiroba

In addition to playground equipment such as a bouldering wall and a nursery, the facility is also equipped with a bathing area for infants and small children.

1594-3 Otohime, Aso City  
Mon-Sat 9AM-5PM  
☎ 32-3843

Scan here for more support center information ->



## With the community's help, parents aren't alone Family Support Center



Those who want help in taking care of their children (infants to elementary school age) (requesting members) and those who wish to provide said help (cooperating members) can join, and the cooperating members help requesting members for a fee. Both sides meet in advance to discuss preferences and conditions, so everyone using this service knows what to expect.

### Useful when:

- Day care is closed
- You have a wedding, funeral, or other engagement
- A parent is ill
- You want to have some time to yourself for hobbies or to relax

Aso City Family Support Center  
(Aso City Social Welfare Association)  
Address: 976-2 Uchinomaki, Aso City  
(in Aso Health and Welfare Center)

For more information->



Prior membership registration is required to use this service.



### Temporary Care

The Family Support Center is available for children who do not attend a daycare center or certified child daycare center and for whom it is temporarily difficult to care for at home.

### Extended Hours Childcare

Extended daycare hours are available if you need someone to watch your child before or after regular childcare hours.

7AM - 8:30AM  
6PM - 7PM

## Full support for working parents!

### Sick child care

This service offers temporary care for a child at the center when the child is undergoing medical treatment or recovering from an illness so they can't join group childcare, and a parent is unable to care for the child at home due to unavoidable circumstances.

### After-School Children's Club

For elementary school children whose parents are away from home during the day due to work, etc., this service gives these children the opportunity to grow and play by providing a place to stay after school hours in spare classrooms.

Welfare Division, Citizens Affairs Section

☎ 0967-22-3167



## Free to use Aso City Library

Hours  
Tue - Fri 9AM-6PM  
Sat, Sun 9AM-5PM

All books and materials in the Aso City Library collection are available for perusing and borrowing. Aso residents can request books and cross-loan books from other public libraries.



Closed:  
Every Mon, last day of the month,  
national holidays, New Year holidays (12/28-1/4)



Aso Library

The reading room overlooks the Five Peaks of Aso, allowing visitors to relax and enjoy the great views.

1976-2 Uchinomaki, Aso City 869-2301  
TEL:0967-32-0067



Ichinomiya Library

Five minutes from Miyaji Station, this cozy library is a great place to relax with a good book.

2383 Miyaji, Ichinomiya-machi, Aso City 869-2612  
TEL:0967-22-2916

## For anyone, anytime, anywhere Hinoyama Sports Club

### Aso City Comprehensive Regional Sports Club

In addition to popular programs such as walking and "short tennis," there are other programs such as golf in the great outdoors of Aso. Everyone is welcome to participate, regardless of experience or age.



Stay Active!



### 11 PROGRAMS

- Table tennis (standard, large ball)
- Golf (driving range, golf course)
- Short tennis ○ Walking ○ Badminton
- Pilates ○ Soft tennis ○ Soccer ○ Taekwondo
- Yoga ○ Classic ballet



Join as many  
and as often  
as you like!

For more information ->



## Childcare & Education Support Programs and Subsidies

Support for larger families!

### Childcare Allowances

This allowance is provided to those who have lived in Aso City for at least one year and are raising three or more children, from birth of the child until the child turns three years old.

Eligibility: Residents of Aso City for at least one year, raising a third or later child under three years old.

Per child  
¥20,000 per month

Until the month of child's 3-year-old birthday

Welfare Division, Citizens Affairs Section

☎ 0967-22-3167



Support for up to 18 years!  
Free medical care for children

### Child Medical Expense Subsidy System

To make sure children grow up healthy, we subsidize medical expenses so that they can visit hospitals and other medical facilities without worrying about cost. Full subsidies are provided for the remaining cost of medical care not covered by insurance (all medical facilities including outpatient, inpatient, dental, pharmacies, etc.).

For children ages 0 to 18 **Free**

Learning opportunities for everyone

### Aso City Scholarship

This program was established to provide interest-free loans for school expenses to students who have difficulty in attending school for financial reasons, and to help educate the next generation to better contribute to society.

MONTHLY LOAN AMOUNTS

High school, etc. **¥15,000**

College, etc. **¥30,000**

Education Section, Education Department,  
Board of Education

☎ 0967-22-3229



▶ The satisfaction of working with nature

## Farming

When moving to a place known for its nature, many people want to give farming a try. Nothing comes close to the satisfaction of getting your hands dirty, caring for your crops, and harvesting the vegetables you've grown yourself. Aso is fit to grow a wide variety of crops, and Aso City also offers extensive support to people interested in starting a farm.



### Farming Support

#### Aso City New Farmer Subsidy

Covers 1/2 of expenses

**Max of ¥1.5 million**

(Single subsidy during farm plan period)

By subsidizing the costs involved in starting up a new farm (buying farm equipment and facilities), this program makes it easier for farmers to get off on the right foot and keep their operation stable. This in turn ensures that the region has new farmers able to support the local agriculture industry.

**Contact** Agricultural Policy Section  
☎ 0967-22-3274

#### Kumamoto Prefecture Support Center for New Farmers

This center holds seminars on the experiences of new farmers, teaches farming management and knowledge, and offers bus tours for on-site training for employment.



#### Farm Master Project

Farmers can study under Farm Masters (locals who are experts in various agricultural fields) to receive guidance on cultivation methods and rural life. The project provides comprehensive one-stop support for new farmers to start farming.



▶ Kick-start your business in Aso!

## Starting a Business

More and more people are considering moving to rural areas to start businesses. Both Aso City and the national government offer a variety of support programs for new residents. Starting a new business in a new location is one option worth considering.

### New Business Support

#### Aso City Shopping Area Revitalization (Vacant Store Matching) Project

**Max monthly subsidies of ¥50,000**

Covers 1/2 of rent for up to 3 years

Support is available to cover a portion of rent for those who are thinking of using a vacant shop in a shopping district to create a new business. The subsidy covers 1/2 of the rent a new tenant pays to the landowner, up to ¥50,000/month for a maximum of 3 years.

**Contact** Aso City Chamber of Commerce  
☎ 0967-32-0200

Scan here for more info



#### New resident & entrepreneur

#### Tomomi Okumura

(moved to Aso in March 2011)



When she first moved here, some of the locals and Hellowork helped her find work at an agricultural cooperative's collection center and at a hotel. After living here for a little, she began to realize that she wanted to focus more on spending time in the great outdoors rather than worrying about money. Ms. Okumura likes traveling and was familiar with dormitories and cheap accommodation systems used overseas, so she decided to open a guesthouse called Asora for visitors to Aso. Now, her guesthouse is used by many guests from all around the world.

Scan here for more info



What kind of jobs are there?

▶ Contact the Employment Support Desk for more info!

## Working for a Company

The Public Employment Security Office (Hellowork) can find job opportunities that match your skills and abilities.

You will work together with support staff familiar with work opportunities in Aso, making it much easier to find a new job after your move.

Here are some of the kinds of work available:

#### Medical Care & Welfare

Professional work, general office work, etc.

#### Tourism & Services

Cooking, customer service, etc.

#### Agriculture, Forestry & Livestock

Breeding, farm work, etc.

#### Sales



▶ Help others fall in love with Aso

## Tourism

Thanks to its tourist attractions like its bountiful nature and beautiful views, there are a lot of tourism-related work opportunities in Aso, including at hotels and ryokans, shops, and various activities.



#### Finding a new life after moving to Aso

#### Yusuke Watanabe

(returned to Kumamoto in 2016)

Yusuke returned to Kumamoto because of the Kumamoto Earthquakes. After working in entertainment in Tokyo, he came back because he wanted to help Kumamoto recover. Yusuke is now a member of the pro guide group Aso Be Tai where he provides guided nature activities. He lives in Kumamoto City but set up an office that he can live out of in Aso City, allowing him the freedom to choose where he wants to be.



#### New Resident Active in Tourism

#### Hideki Sakata

(moved to Aso in April 1993)

Hideki visited Aso where he tried out paragliding and fell in love with it. He then started working at a paragliding school that was in Uchinomaki at the time. He now runs Aso Nature Land, a company that offers over 10 different kinds of activities that make full use of Aso's fantastic nature.

Scan here for more info



Check here for the latest job listings >>



Hellowork Internet Service



# Enjoy the great outdoors in Aso

The most important thing when thinking about moving is finding a place to live. Looking for a place to rent is one good option, but other options include the Vacant House Database and public housing. Imagine what kind of life you'd like to lead, and find the right home for you.



## Use the Vacant House Database

This program helps match owners looking to rent out or sell property with people looking to buy or rent. Buy utilizing otherwise empty properties, this program helps promote relocation to Aso and revitalizes the local community. If you are interested in living in Aso or are looking for a relaxing and comfortable life in the countryside, please check out the database.

### How the Vacant House Database works:



Registration is required for those wishing to view or negotiate about a property (first time only). Contract negotiations may be conducted directly with the owner or mediated by a real estate agent, depending on the property.

## How about these places?



House at base of Mt. Aso, Fully furnished with onsen



Close to the station and hospital! Great for large families!

**Aso City Vacant House Database**  
Now listing vacant lots, shops, and apartment buildings!

Check us out on YouTube for the latest information and vacant house tours!  
WebTV Aso - Aso's Internet TV Station  
**Aso Iju no Susume**

**Machizukuri Section, Economy Department**  
Contact ☎ 0967-22-3318

Information up-to-date as of March 2023

## Live in public housing

Public housing is housing managed by the city and rented out at lower rates to low income individuals and families who can't find housing.

Please note that public housing has various conditions compared to private rental housing, and you cannot use public housing if you do not meet these conditions. Residents are selected through a periodic public lottery.

### Resident Qualifications (Partial List)

- ① Those who are clearly in need of housing at present.
  - ② Those who currently live with or plan to live with relatives. (There are special exceptions for single residents.)
  - ③ Those whose income is below the government-specified level.
  - ④ Those who are up to date in paying their city taxes, etc.
  - ⑤ Those who do not own a house.
- (Neither the applicant nor anyone planning to live with the applicant can own a house)

Contact

Housing & Environment Section, Public Works Department

☎ 0967-22-3169



Akamizu-Nishi Danchi Public Housing



## Use subsidies

For those thinking of buying and renovating a home

### Subsidy for Earthquake Retrofitting of Wooden Detached House

For owners of houses where construction started before May 31st, 1981, or for houses damaged beyond a certain level in the Kumamoto Earthquakes in 2016, this program partially covers the costs of earthquake proofing.

Example subsidies (Available subsidies subject to change)

Earthquake resistance inspection Up to 2/3 of cost	Earthquake proofing design and construction Up to 4/5 of cost	Earthquake proofing rebuild design and construction Up to 4/5 of cost
Max <b>¥88,000</b> per house	Max <b>¥80,000</b> per house	Max <b>¥80,000</b> per house

Contact

Housing & Environment Section, Public Works Department  
☎ 0967-22-3169



Subsidy amounts

Renovation Up to 1/2 of cost	Disposal of home items Up to 1/2 of cost
Max <b>¥500,000</b> per house	Max <b>¥100,000</b> per house

Contact

Machizukuri Section, Economy Department  
☎ 0967-22-3318

## Come visit and see!

### Oaso Genki Walk

Participants welcome from around the country!



The event is held every year on the first Saturday and Sunday of September. This walking event allows visitors to experience the atmosphere of the town by enjoying the scenery and breezes, tasting local vegetables, and visiting fresh cold springs.



### Experience Tour




Tours are conducted regularly that include walks through shopping areas, tours of vacant properties, and visits with other new residents.



# Aso City Area

# Map

Imagine a lifestyle in Aso.

 Elementary, junior high, and high schools



## Helpful Info for Aso City Residents

Find your best life in Aso!

These are some support programs Aso City enjoy:



### Fiber Network Program

Aso has built a fiber network for all residences within the city and also provides IP notification terminals and fiber internet services. The notification terminals keep you up to date on notifications from the city and are installed in all households for free.



### WebTV Aso

Broadcasting Aso info over the web! Videos come in all different categories, including local attractions, news, and events. The videos are viewable on smartphones, too, making it easy for anyone to check out what's going on in Aso City. Videos can also be viewed on the notification terminals installed in every household.



### Shared Ride Taxis

As bus routes have been discontinued over the years, this program was started to link areas without public transportation to public facilities, shopping areas, and medical institutions. Passengers first make reservations, then share taxi rides and split the cost. The service is convenient and safe.



### PR & Website

Aso City publishes local information, events, activities, and more on its website and social media accounts aimed at both residents and those living outside of Aso.



PR Aso





The happiness of being  
with family, in a house  
you helped make

## New Resident Interview

# Live in Aso

All kinds of people visit Aso, fall in love with it, and end up coming here to live. We spoke with four residents who moved to Aso to talk about what made them choose Aso and to hear about what their new life is like here.

01

SAIKO NO IJYU IN ASO!

## One look at the landscape and his mind was made up: DIY Renovation in Aso

Yusuke Miura purchased a 70-year-old home and spent 8 months renovating it by himself. After moving from Fukuoka City to the Ichinomiya area of Aso City, Miura and his family are enjoying life in their unique house.

### Why did you decide to move and why did you pick this place?

During my pregnancy, there was so much stress from COVID-19 and not being able to go out. Even before we were married, we had talked about wanting to live in the countryside someday, and we began to seriously consider moving to a place where we could raise our children in a more relaxed manner.

We decided on this location because we fell in love with the views shown in the Vacant House Database. The assistant from the city was very helpful and introduced me not only to vacant houses but also to people who had moved to Aso previously and they told me about the difficulties they faced. One of the reasons we moved was because I could visualize my life here.

### Have you gotten involved in the community since you moved here?

As soon as we decided to move to the area, the seller took us out to greet the neighbors, and thanks to that, they warmly accepted our family. We are really close with our neighbors



and it is so nice to feel that they are watching my daughter grow up with us. It is a daily occurrence that someone drops off some vegetables, fruit, or snack for our daughter. As the "youngest" member of the community, I participate enthusiastically in several community events a year, such as noyaki (grassland burning), grass cutting, and cleaning the community center.

### How has your life changed since moving here?

New stores, new clothes, slightly more complicated relationships... Once I left the overstimulation of city life, I got less stressed and could spend my money only on things that were important to me. The view from my window changes a little bit each day, giving us time to feel the change of the seasons. In the future, we're going to rent out a campsite on our property, which we'll limit to one group per day. We're also planning to renovate the barn and turn it into a shop to sell home-roasted coffee and a gallery for my wife's ceramic art.

### DATA

**Yusuke Miura (38)**

**FAMILY MEMBERS:**  
Wife: Ayumi (37), Daughter (2)  
Pet: Dog, Cat

**STARTED LIVING IN ASO:** March 2021

**OCCUPATION:**  
Yusuke: Company employee (remote)  
Ayumi: Ryokan accounting, ranch restaurant, lodging



## I love it here! / ASO APPEAL

### My Favorite Spot



#1 is of course their house!

I go to an onsen called Hage no Yu in Oguni pretty frequently. I also like Kunugi Yu because it has a variety of private family baths. I also like that they completely change the water with each use.

### A Typical Day Off



I'm usually chopping wood, tending to my vegetable garden, or doing something at home or at a nearby farm. We built a chicken coop recently. We also spend time with our children.

## A peek at life in Aso! A Typical Day's Schedule

### 6AM Wake up, eat breakfast

Winter mornings begin with getting the wood stove ready, doing chores, then eating breakfast.

### 8AM Off to work and school

Daughter goes to daycare and parents head to work.  
Yusuke: Works from home  
Ayumi: Today, she's working at a ranch restaurant and lodging

### 12PM Lunch time

Yusuke: Lunch at home Does chores during downtime  
Ayumi: Gets lunch while working at restaurant

### 6PM Back home, dinner

Ayumi: Picks up Ito after work and makes dinner  
The family eats dinner together.

### 8PM Free time

After putting daughter to bed, Ayumi and Yusuke have free time to themselves.  
Yusuke: Plans for future projects, indulges in his hobbies, etc.  
Ayumi: Practices pottery, does office work, orders groceries online, etc.

### 12AM Bedtime



A single wood stove keeps the entire house warm!



## Message to prospective residents

### About housing (from Yusuke)

If you're thinking about renovating an old home, you should choose a contractor that you can trust, or participate in the construction yourself. I took the plunge and retired from my job to move to Aso. I was unemployed for a year and worked with a renovation specialist to demolish and renovate the house (the total cost was about 16 million yen, including the land, renovation, and living expenses). You'll grow attached to your home, and you'll be great at fixing things up and DIY'ing after you move in!

### About raising kids (Ayumi)

We live each day at ease here in the rich nature of Aso. Having to wait so long at city hall and the doctor's office and worrying about not being able to get our kid into daycare are things of the past. Aso City is particularly generous in its support for households raising children (p. 4), making it a great place to raise a family.



02

SAIKO NO IJYU IN ASO!

He first visited Aso as a disaster volunteer.

The locals were the reason he ended up living here.

## Just come visit! Keisuke posts his experiences on the web to entice new residents

### DATA

**Keisuke Ishigaki (38)**

**FAMILY MEMBERS:**  
Wife (32) Daughter (1)

**STARTED LIVING IN ASO:** April 2017

**OCCUPATION:**  
Representative partner, Asouto G.K.

### Interior



An old house transformed into an office!



## I love it here! / ASO APPEAL

### My Favorite Spot



This family of three lives in Akamizu, Aso City. The area has a good balance of nature and living, and is easy to live in for families raising children.

### A Typical Day Off



Visiting the Mt. Tango Lookout, which offers a panoramic view of the mountains of Aso and Uchinomaki. The view from the Sorafune Pier is truly spectacular.

## Message to prospective residents

I never thought I wanted to move, and definitely never thought I wanted to live in Aso, but thanks to fate, I ended up living here in Aso City with my family. If you are not sure, come visit here as many times as you can, and see what living here feels like. Once you experience the comfort of living here from the perspective of a resident, you'll be fine. Please feel free to contact me for advice on housing and work.

## A peek at life in Aso! A Typical Day's Schedule

### 6:30AM Wake up

Clean the house before daughter wakes up, then eat breakfast as a family

### 8:30AM Off to work/school

Keisuke and Sayuri take turns taking daughter to day care. After office work, Keisuke shows off properties in Aso City

### 12PM Lunch time

Cheap, tasty, and local! Aso Sogo Shokuhin Ichiba is one of my faves!

### 1PM Back to work

Meetings with prospective residents and handling check-in for lodgings

### 7PM Back home

Give daughter a bath and put her to bed. Spend time with family until bedtime

Cheap and tasty! A favorite lunch.





"I want to run my own lodging house."

I found a new dream for myself when I came to Aso

# 03

SAIKO NO IJU IN ASO!

## How to work in Aso while staying happy, fulfilled, and paid

Originally from Hiroshima, Ryo Doitani studied architecture at Kyushu University's Faculty of Engineering before going to work for a construction company in Fukuoka City. Doitani left his job after 9 months of excessive work, and moved to Kurokawa, Aso City when a friend hooked him up with a job working at a restaurant and harvesting tomatoes.

Doitani now holds down multiple jobs, including filming and editing for the Aso Telework Center, waiting tables at New Kusasenri and other nearby restaurants, and farming during the summer. "If you choose your work, you can increase your income and meet new people. More than anything, I'm glad to be free of pressure and stress," smiles Doitani.

"I thought about what I, with my background in architecture, could do for Aso, both as a place to live and as a tourist destination. So it became my dream to run my own lodging. Through his many jobs, Doitani has met many new people in a wide variety of professions. Step by step, he is steadily moving towards realizing his dream.

**DATA**

**Ryo Doitani (30)**  
**FAMILY MEMBERS:**  
 Single  
**STARTED LIVING IN ASO:**  
 June 2020  
**OCCUPATION:**  
 Staff at Aso Telework Center, restaurant wait staff, help on tomato farm

**A peek at life in Aso!**

**A Typical Day's Schedule**

- 8:15AM Wake up**  
Head to work at Aso Telework Center 10 min by car to work, with great scenery along the way
- 9AM Start work**  
WebTV Aso - Iju no Susume Interview and photograph residents renovating old homes
- 12PM Lunch time**  
Head to Imakin Shokudo, a shop listed on CatchMeal (a site that lists takeout spots in Aso)
- 1PM Back to work**  
Edit the video filmed earlier  
Keisuke puts out 1-2 videos a week
- 5PM End of work, next job at restaurant**  
Keisuke works at a local restaurant then goes home  
Time for drinking and hobbies until bedtime at midnight.

**ASO APPEAL**

**I love it here!**

**A Typical Day Off**

I am active in Aso Shayukai, a group of photography enthusiasts living in Aso. I made a friend who is over 40 years older than me.

**My Favorite Spot**

The meadow at Kusasenri. I love the view from the restaurant at New Kusasenri, where I work on weekends.

**Message to prospective residents**

"I know income is an issue you may worry about when moving to the countryside. I was the same way, but when I finally moved here, I found that there are many jobs because there is a serious shortage of labor everywhere. If you are interested in tourism, I recommend it because there is a lot of fascinating work here!"

# Aso City's Quirks

**01.**

**Aso is an active volcano!**  
**Sometimes volcanic ash falls in the city!**



Aso is one of few active volcanoes in Japan. When Aso gets especially active, eruptions can cause ash to fall in the city. When the ash mixes with rain, it can stick to gutters and clog drains, so it is a good idea to clean up as soon as possible after ash has collected.

**02.**

**Dry your clothes inside!**  
**Beware of ash from noyaki when drying clothes!**

Noyaki (controlled field burns) protect Aso's grasslands. When the grass burns, tiny pieces of burnt grass ash get picked up by the winds and fall back down in the city. If you try to pick up the ash, it instantly crumbles into pieces and leaves a black powder on your hand. It's best not to dry clothes or bedding outside on noyaki days.

**03.**

**Freeze alert!**  
**In winter, temperatures go below freezing and snow falls.**

People tend to think of Kyushu as warm year-round, but in Aso, the average temperature is around 13°C, making the climate relatively cool throughout the year. Temperatures go below freezing in the winter and snow accumulates sometimes. Be careful of frozen water pipes.

**04.**

**Each neighborhood has its own "ku-yaku:"**  
**community responsibility like grass cutting**

Each "ku" (neighborhood association) works together to look out for one another through activities like installing safety lights along school routes, helping with seasonal festivals, and cleaning up the neighborhood. Aso City recommends that residents join their ku.



**05.**

**Each working-age family member has a car!**

Even though most major routes have public transportation, cars are still the main means of transportation in Aso. Many people work in the suburbs or more distant areas, meaning one car per person rather than one car per family is the norm.

**06.**

**An rare place where entire towns live inside a caldera!**

The Aso Caldera stretches 25 km north to south and 18 km east to west. Inside the outer mountain ring of the caldera, you'll find highways, railroads, and 40,000 people, something you'll find nowhere else in the world.

**08.**

**Aso has twice the national average of rainfall!**

Aso City averages about 3,000mm of rain a year, almost twice the national average of 1,718mm. Rain is especially heavy during the rainy season and often leads to landslides and flood damage. Check your hazard map regularly and be prepared in case of emergency. On the other hand, these rains are what supply us with the abundant groundwater that bubbles up through springs all throughout Aso!

**07.**

**Fiber internet is available everywhere in Aso City**

**Get info from Aso City on your Notification Terminal - every house has one!**

Aso City has notification terminals that it uses to inform its residents about local and city-wide news. Terminals also act as video chat devices, and residents can make calls through terminals for free. The terminals also act as a disaster alert system and sound an alarm in case of fire or natural disaster.

# 04

SAIKO NO IJU IN ASO!

## Nature & Convenience

### To me, Aso is the ideal place to live.

"I love mountains, so I decided that I'd live at the base of a mountain when I retired." Nobuo Takashima moved from Chiba to Ichinomiya, Aso City with his wife in 2006. He wanted a place that is close to nature, yet not too cold in winter and convenient enough to live in. He spent a year and a half searching for a place to settle down, and the only place in Japan that met his criteria was Aso.

What Mr. Takashima particularly liked was the beauty of the grasslands. When he found out that landscape is maintained through noyaki (controlled burns), he began volunteering to help. "I get to enjoy views from places that aren't open to the public, and I felt a strong desire to help preserve this landscape and tradition."

In addition to helping the local community, Mr. Takashima also studied Aso's history and culture of Aso to serve as an Aso UNESCO Geopark and Aso Volcano Museum guide. Mr. Takashima is very active in helping convey Aso's appeal to people all around the world.

**The more you learn, the more love.**

**I want to tell everyone**

**about the wonders of Aso**

**Message to prospective residents**

The area is rich in nature, the air and water are pure, and the living is easy. Even now, 17 years after moving to Aso, I still consider Aso to be my ideal place to live. It's a place where you can contribute to the community by volunteering, such as through noyaki and helping keep this national park clean.

**A peek at life in Aso!**

**A Typical Day's Schedule**

- 6AM Wake up, eat breakfast**  
Each day starts with taking care of his 10 shelter cats.
- 9AM Leave for Geo Guide tour**  
Off to explore the Aso Caldera! Lunch with tour participants is a plus.
- 3PM Geo Guide tour end**  
It is Mr. Takashima's mission and pleasure to convince others of Aso's appeal.
- 7PM Dinner**  
After coming home, Mr. Takashima cleans up the yard and house and sits down for dinner with his wife.
- 11PM Bedtime**  
After dinner, Mr. Takashima relaxes by watching TV or listening to music.

**ASO APPEAL**

**I love it here!**

**A Typical Day Off**

The beautiful grasslands that stretch forever from Daikanbo to Kuju. I still remember how impressed I was when I saw them for the first time.

**My Favorite Spot**

Mr. Takashima loves to hike. So far, he has visited many mountains, including the Southern Alps in Nagano Prefecture and the Matterhorn in Switzerland.

**DATA**

**Nobuo Takashima (79)**  
**FAMILY MEMBERS:**  
 Wife (74)  
 Pets: 10 shelter cats  
**STARTED LIVING IN ASO:**  
 April 2006  
**OCCUPATION:**  
 Noyaki volunteer, Aso Geopark Geo Guide, Aso Volcano Museum tour guide

**09.**

**Downtown is foggy... But the view from above reveals a sea of clouds!**

The Aso area, home to one of the world's largest calderas, is one of Japan's top spots to see the unakai (sea of clouds) phenomenon because of its basin-like topography that traps fog. At ground level, the streets are covered in thick fog, but if you head to a higher elevation, you'll be greeted with a spectacular view.