

PLAZA NEWSLETTER (April 2024)

The weather is gradually getting warmer, and it is now the season to go outside and enjoy cherry blossom viewing. In Kumamoto Prefecture, this year's cherry blossoms are expected to bloom on par with or earlier than usual. We hope you will enjoy "Hanami", one of Japanese culture.

The Plaza received 70 consultations in February. We share some of them with advice from us.

※Some content has been edited so that individual are not identified.

Q : I will graduate from University this March, but I am still looking for a job.

I need to have my status of residence changed, but I cannot get a "letter of recommendation for continued employment activity" from my university as required by the Immigration. What should I do?

A : Plaza confirmed this with the immigration, and they responded that you should try to explain verbally why you cannot submit this document when you apply for a change of status.

Q : Please can you tell me what the letter sent to my home in Tokyo, says. I plan to stay in Japan for about 6 months on a working holiday. My status of residence is Specified Activities.

A : We found the letter was a notice and contained a payment slip for national health insurance premiums. National Health Insurance is basically required for those staying in Japan for more than 3 months so this consultant is also eligible for this insurance. (Those staying in Japan for more than 3 months but for medical purposes are not eligible.) Premiums must be paid by the date indicated on the payment slip.

Q : I would like to switch my Chinese driver's license to a Japanese one. I would also like to practice driving as I have not driven for a while. Please let me know where I can do this.

A : To switch licenses, you must make an appointment at a license center and take a written and skills test. The earliest reservation status is three months away at this time, so if you are thinking of switching, make your reservation as soon as possible. Driving practice is also available at the "Toyofuku Driving School" in Oyama, Higashi-ku (for a fee).

Q : I am currently married and living in Japan. I will be selling a condominium I had purchased in my home country before I got married and the money will be transferred to a Japanese bank. How will it be taxed?

A : Free tax consultation at Kumamoto City Hall was guided. Reservations are required. (☎ 096-234-7499)

If you have any problems, please contact the Kumamoto Consultation and Support Plaza for foreign residents.

Popular Hanami Spots in Kumamoto

The cherry blossom season is finally approaching! We are looking forward to seeing the cherry blossoms on Miyukizaka near the International Center bloom. This time, we introduce popular hanami spots in Kumamoto Prefecture. We hope you will have a chance to enjoy the cherry blossoms!

① Ichifusa Dam Lake area (Mizukami Village)

The Ichifusa Dam Lake is one of the most famous cherry blossom viewing spots in the prefecture, with cherry trees blooming along a 14km perimeter of the lake which has a large fountain in the center.

② Kumamoto Castle Ninomaru Park (Chuo-ku, Kumamoto City)

About 800 cherry trees, including Someiyoshino and Yamazakura, can be seen here.

③ Kikuchi Park (Kikuchi City)

About 3,000 cherry trees, including Someiyoshino and Yamazakura, fill the mountain. During the festival, the cherry blossoms are lit up at night, creating a different atmosphere from that of the daytime.

④ Tachioka Nature Park (Uto-City)

Approximately 2,000 cherry trees line the park around Tachioka and Hanazono Pond.

⑤ Jagatani Park (Tamana City)

Approximately 5,000 cherry trees will cover entire park when in full bloom.

⑥ Hitoyoshi Castle Ruins (Hitoyoshi City)

The cherry blossoms along the Kuma River contrast beautifully with the stone walls, creating a charming atmosphere.

⑦ Okadake Park (Uki City)

Cherry blossoms blooming at an altitude of 600m are outstandingly beautiful and match the surrounding vistas.

⑧ Kengan Self-Defense Forces Street (Higashi-ku, Kumamoto City)

When in full bloom, the approximately 800m long rows of cherry trees are magnificent and a delight to the eyes.

⑨ Sakuragaoka Ground (Hikawa Town)

Cherry blossoms are in full bloom on the promenade around the grounds and will be enjoyed at night with the ground night lights.



Charichari

Charichari is a shared bike service that allows you to ride a red bike "Charichari" around the city at any time. You may have seen the Charichari ports throughout the city. There is also a port in front of the Kumamoto City International Center, but since there are often no bikes left during the day, some may not even realize there is a port. It is very simple to use.

- ① Download the Charichari app
- ② Use the app to read the QR code attached to a bike parked at the port.
- ③ Unlock the bike and it's ready for a ride.
- ④ When returning to the port, press the knob to lock it.
- ⑤ Confirm that the ride has ended in the app.

Fees are calculated on a per-minute basis.
Basic bike : 6 yen per minute
Electric bike : 15 yen per minute



Payment methods must be registered prior to the first ride. In addition to various credit cards, you can also register for Paidy, atone and other post-payment virtual cards. Payment method can be changed later.

The weather is gradually warming up and nightfall is getting later. Charichari is very convenient with over 200 ports in Kumamoto City compared to the buses or trams as you do not need to worry about the timetables or understand the complicated bus networks.

This spring, take a ride a little farther afield on a Charichari and go to see the cherry blossoms!

A casual bike share that can be used from 1 minute.

Charichari

Look for the white line!



Basic bike ¥6/min

Electric Assist Bike ¥15/min

Easy to use, just 3 steps

- Step.1**
scan the QR code with the app to unlock the bicycle.
- Step.2**
Go to the nearest parking spot and start riding!
- Step.3**
Lock the bicycle and end the ride.

Charichari KUM

Get a free app download

Download from QR code!

Q Charichari
<https://charichari.bike/>

FAQ

Check from the QR code!

How to Use

Find a Port

Inquiry

Information on Kumamoto Consultation and Support Plaza for Foreign Residents

The Plaza offers professional consultations including legal affairs, residence status issues, housing and life affairs support in multiple languages. Consultants who speak English, Chinese, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Spanish and Nepali are available at the Plaza as the schedule below. We are pleased to announce that we have Taiwanese consultant newly joined from April!

April Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
01	02 • Chinese Consultation	03 • Immigrational Consultation • Vietnamese Consultation • Life Consultation in Chinese • German Consultation	04 • Korean Consultation	05 • Spanish Consultation • Life Consultation in Chinese • English Consultation	06	07 • Vietnamese Consultation • Life Consultation in Chinese
08 Closed	09 • Chinese Consultation	10 • Mental Health Counseling • Tagalog Consultation • Life Consultation in Chinese • German Consultation	11 • Korean Consultation	12 • Life Consultation in Chinese • English Consultation	13	14 • Life Consultation in Chinese • Educational Consultation
15	16 • Chinese Consultation	17 • Housing Consultation • Vietnamese Consultation • Life Consultation in Chinese • German Consultation • Life Consultation in Taiwanese	18 • Korean Consultation	19 • Life Consultation in Chinese • English Consultation	20 • Free Legal Consultation • Life Consultation in Chinese	21 • Immigrational Consultation • Vietnamese Consultation • Nepal Consultation
22 Closed	23 • Chinese Consultation	24 • Life Consultation in Chinese • German Consultation • One-stop Consultation Service for International Students	25 • Korean Consultation	26 • Life Consultation in Chinese • English Consultation	27	28 • Life Consultation in Chinese • Educational Consultation • Life Consultation in Taiwanese
29 Showa no hi ※National holiday	30 • Chinese Consultation	01	02	03	04	05
06	07	note: Consultations 1:00p.m~5:00p.m(apart from the ones below) • Life Consultation in Chinese 1:00pm ~ 6:00pm • Immigrational Consultation 1:00pm~4:00pm • Free Legal Consultation 2:00pm~4:00pm (Reservation required) • One-stop Consultation Service for International Students 1:00pm~4:00pm • Mental Health Counseling 3:30pm~5:30pm • Educational Consultation 10:00am~3:00pm				

※ Consultation service could be cancelled due to consultant's personal reasons. Please e-mail or call us beforehand to check if the consultant is available.

Kumamoto Consultation and Support Plaza for Foreign Residents' Facebook

We regularly update information useful to you.

Follow us and be one of the first one to be informed!



Plaza's FB

We are offering variety of information useful to your life. Please check us!



Our website



Our Life affairs guidance

Kumamoto Consultation and Support Plaza for Foreign Residents

Location: 2nd floor of Kumamoto City International Center

Address: 4-18 Hanabata-Cho, Chuo-Ku, Kumamoto City, 860-0806

Tel: 096-359-4995

E-mail: soudan@kumamoto-if.or.jp

Opening hours: Between 10 am and 6 pm

Closed on second and fourth Mondays and between December 29 and January 3

★ If second or fourth Monday is a national holiday, the plaza will be closed the following day instead.

