

Kunisaki Peninsula

The Kunisaki Peninsula is located in the northeastern part of Oita prefecture and is known for its lush forests, sparsely populated farmlands, and ancient religious culture. Natural landmarks include the Katsura River, which flows from Mt. Futago—the highest point on the Kunisaki Peninsula—through Bungotakada and into the Suonada Sea, and Mt. Futago (721 meters), which was a site of ancient worship.

Municipalities on the peninsula include Bungotakada to the northwest, and then moving clockwise, Kunisaki (home to Oita Airport), Kitsuki, and Hiji. Communities in this part of Japan share a distinctive culture influenced by Rokugo Manzan, a local religion combining mountain worship, Shintoism, and Buddhism, which started in the Nara period (710–794) and continued to flourish into the Heian period (794–1185). A number of temples and Buddhist statues relating to Rokugo Manzan dot the Kunisaki Peninsula including Futagoji Temple and the Buddhist stone carvings known as Kumano-Magaibutsu. Another important religious landmark is Usa Shrine, a large Shinto shrine founded in the Nara Period and located in the city of Usa. Although Usa is not located on the Kunisaki Peninsula, as a neighboring city it is connected to the peninsula in terms of culture. With so much to see in the area, traveling by car and taking several days to explore the peninsula is highly recommended.