

Shimabara Peninsula Geopark Leaflet: Route 5 – People's Lives and Struggles

Ever since people began to live on the Shimabara Peninsula, there has been conflict between them. This route, which follows the path of sites across the north of the peninsula, illustrates the connection between history and geography.

Yamada Castle Ruins

Conflict over control of the peninsula's rich farmland was common until the Shimabara Rebellion in 1638. The powerful Ōtomo clan had built a castle here in 1372, using the hill created by the flow of the river to secure an easily defensible position in their attempt to take over the peninsula.

Moriyama Ōtsuka Tomb

Huge burial mounds called *kōfun* were built in ancient Japan between about 300 and 540 CE. This *kofun*, one of the largest in Nagasaki Prefecture, is an archaeological treasure. Local residents created a graveyard on top of the tomb.

Kunimichō History Museum

This building, formerly a junior high school, was turned into a museum that now displays artifacts discovered across the Shimabara Peninsula.

Site of the Battle of Okitanawate

During the Sengoku period (1467–1568), clans across Japan battled for regional supremacy. In 1584, the combined forces of the Arima and Shimazu clans, numbering only 8,000 soldiers, defeated the 50,000-strong army of the Ryūzōji clan. The Arima and Shimazu cleverly used the hilly terrain of Okitanawate to give themselves the advantage they needed to win.
