

## Komezuka

Volcanic activity has changed the Aso caldera's landscape constantly over the years. The area around the Komezuka volcano is much younger than other parts of the caldera. The surface beneath what is now rolling grassland was created around 3,000 to 4,000 years ago by lava flow from three volcanoes: Komezuka, Ojodake and Kishimadake.

Nearby Kusasenri was the result of a powerful Plinian eruption, the same kind of explosive event that buried the ancient city of Pompeii. By contrast, Komezuka and the surrounding area were formed by a relatively mild Strombolian eruption, with sporadic ejections of cinders and lava bombs. The short, fluid lava flows produced by this event contributed to the smooth, rolling contours of these plains.

Komezuka is one of Aso's most geographically distinctive volcanoes—an almost perfectly symmetrical conical hill of volcanic rocks built around a volcanic vent. It is also one of Aso's youngest volcanoes, having taken its current shape some 3,000 years ago. The gentle slopes are covered in green grass in spring and summer. Though it may seem inviting, hiking up Komezuka is prohibited in order to protect the volcano's surface.