

Kyushu Olle Hiking Courses

Origins of the Olle Hiking Course

The term *olle* comes from the local dialect of Jeju Island in South Korea. In Korean, the word refers to a narrow path between a street and someone's doorstep. This idea evolved into a series of walking trails that cover the entire coast of the island. The course offers a variety of landscapes for visitors to enjoy, from beaches and small villages to farms and forests.

The Jeju Island Courses

On Jeju Island there are currently 26 walking routes—21 main routes and 5 subroutes—extending a total of 425 kilometers. The trails vary in difficulty, and hikers can pick which ones suit them best. Passbooks can be purchased from the Jeju Olle Information Center, and hikers may collect stamps along the route, receiving a certificate of completion if they finish all the routes.

The Kyushu Olle Courses

Kyushu Olle is the name of a network of 21 walking courses (as of February 2021) on the island of Kyushu that collectively form a sister version of the Jeju Olle. Kyushu Olle was originally created to attract visitors from South Korea and is designed to showcase seasonal views of the region throughout the year. To qualify as an official Olle course, each route is strictly regulated and monitored by the Olle organization in Jeju to ensure that the course is easy to follow and offers a variety of experiences. As with the Jeju Olle, a walking course passbook can be purchased in Kyushu, and hikers may participate in a stamp rally as they complete the courses.

All the Kyushu Olle courses together cover a distance of more than 200 kilometers and are recommended for intermediate to advanced walkers. The routes are signposted in various ways. Keep an eye out for the horse-shaped markers known as *kanse* with heads pointing in the direction of the course. Wooden arrows and arrows painted on stones also serve as pointers. Ribbons are placed every 100 to 200 meters to keep walkers on track, and rescue points are signposted at 300-meter intervals for safety. All signposts

are color-coded in blue and red. Blue indicates the standard walking course; red indicates a route deviating from the main course.