

Let's travel back in time
to an ancient hill fort of 1300 years ago

Kikuchi Castle



●For inquiries



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The sound of the drum from the Drum Tower

— an



Haizuka Observatory

A hillock which is the only place to enjoy a full view of the castle. Additionally, visitors can also enjoy a 360° panoramic view including Mt. Yahougatake to the north, Mt. Kinpouzan to the south and the outer rim of Mt. Aso to the east. There is also an observation deck equipped with tables and benches. From the front side visitors can view a large rock called Fudougan (the unmovable rock).



Choujayama Observation Square Rest Area

This rest area is located on a hillock whose name originated from the popular local Yonabaru Chouja folklore in Kikuchi Town of Yamaga City. The building resembles the aristocratic-style mansions of the Nara Era, while the surroundings are equipped with an observation deck and a resting place.



Onkosouseikan

This facility provides displays and videos on the era in which Kikuchi Castle was built along with the functions of the castle.

On the 2nd floor there is a resting area where visitors can view the entire garden.

Hours: 9:30~17:15

(last entry at 16:45)

Closed: Mondays (or the next day when a public holiday falls on Monday),
December 25-January 4

Entrance fee: Free

The Kikuchi Castle site grounds extend widely to Horikiri (approx. 55ha) and the outer rim in 1967, remains of 72 buildings have been reconstructed. The area was designated as a national park.



Tower can be heard among the rows of Ar ancient atmosphere is revived at Kikuchi C

lands are centered in Yonabaru, Kikuka Town in Yamaga City,
in Kikuchi City. The grounds consist of the main keep area
area (approx. 65ha). Since the launch of excavation activities
ings have been discovered in the area. Since 1994, these
ducted using materials produced in Kumamoto. In 2004, this
nal historical site.



Weapons of wa Itakura

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wide and 12.0m
7.2m inside). Th
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building also has t

Illustration of Kikuchi Castle (around year 698)

Buildings in red are
Material: Zenshu Kumamoto-Kent ad

Army Barracks and The Rice Storehouses Castle.



... were stored here?

... use-type building 6.9m long (approx. 5.5m x 18.2m inside) and its walls and floor are made of earth. It also has a board-thatched roof along with windows that open upward. It is thought that one of these buildings may have housed up to 50 soldiers.

Reservoir Remains



Administrative Building



The soldiers' place of rest

Army Barracks

This building is 7.8m wide and 26.6m long (approx. 5.5m x 18.2m inside), and its walls and floor are made of earth. It also has a board-thatched roof along with windows that open upward. It is thought that one of these buildings may have housed up to 50 soldiers.



Rice was stored here

The Rice Storehouse

This is a stilt house-type building 7.2m wide and 9.6m long (approx. 5.5m x 7.2m inside) that features the *azekura* log house construction method. In this method, walls are made by placing triangularly cross-sectioned planks on top of each other, alternating vertically and horizontally. This building is also equipped with devices to protect it from mice.



Octagonal Drum Tower

This is Japan's first excavated octagonal structure in ancient hill fort. This building has three layers and its pillars encircle the main column (90cm) three times. The building is 15.8m in height and has a tile roof which weighs 76 tons. A similar remains was discovered in Iseongsanseong Castle in the suburbs of Seoul, Korea.

completely reconstructed.

Kawachi, Kawade Shobo Shinsha
Illustrations: Makoto Itagaki

Why was Kikuchi Castle built?



Kikuchi Castle was built by the Yamato government during the latter half of the 7th century (about 1300 years ago). The political situation in East Asia at the time was extremely volatile. Japan, who had sent auxiliary troops to assist with the recovery of the friendly country Baekje, was defeated in 663 by the allied forces of Tang and Silla in the Battle of Hakesukinoe. As a result, Japan faced the sudden risk of war on its homeland. Consequently, in Kyushu, Ono Castle (Fukuoka Prefecture), Kii Castle (Saga Prefecture) and Kaneda Castle (Nagasaki Prefecture) were built to protect Dazaifu. Kikuchi Castle played the role of a support base, supplying these castles with food, weapons and soldiers.

The first wood strip excavated from ancient hill fort in Japan

Wood strip reveals the past...



Reservoir remains where the wood strip and construction materials were found

The reservoir remains are situated in a valley on the northwest side of the Choujabaru district and covers an area of 5,300m².

Many valuable artifacts such as wood strips and construction materials were found here.

A wood strip excavated from this remains has "秦人忍^{五斗}" written on it. This was a tag produced when a Hata clan member paid a rice tax of 5 to (an ancient Japanese measurement, approx. 60kg). From this it is also understood that Kikuchi Castle was not only a military facility, but also functioned as an administrative center for tax collection and other duties.

Round roof tile

The round roof tile (tanben-hachiyou-rengemon) found among the building remains is the oldest one in Kumamoto Prefecture, dating back to about 1300 years ago.



Wood strip excavated from the reservoir remains



The symbol of Kikuchi Castle commemorating the ancient times

Kikuchi Castle Onkosousei Monument

This monument was built in 1996 as a symbol of Kikuchi Castle.

In the center stands a soldier called sakimori, and at the front are his wife and child. On the west side is a high official from Baekje who monitored the construction of the castle, and on the east side is the priestess praying to Mt. Yahougatake. On the north side stand a pair of Chinese phoenix, Fenghuang.

On the dais wall are 3 poems by soldiers taken from Manyoshu (an ancient Japanese poetry record) and 6 reliefs explaining the history of the castle.



Ancient records mentioning Kikuchi Castle

Shoku Nihongi	Monmu Year 2 (698)	Dazaifu was ordered (by the government) to repair 3 castles; Ono Castle, Kii Castle and Kikuchi Castle.
Montoku Jitsuroku	Tennan Year 2 (858)	(February) (June) The drum in the Weapons Storehouse of Kikuchi Castle played by itself. (June) 11 of the warehouses storing checked crops at Kikuchi Castle were burnt.
Sandai Jitsuroku	Jogan Year 17 (875)	Flocks of crows had bitten off the thatch of storehouses and houses in the Kikuchi area.
	Gangyo Year 3 (879)	The drum in the Weapons Storehouse of Kikuchi Castle played by itself.

Come and visit Kikuchi Castle and the Kumamoto Prefectural Decorated Tumulus Museum



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