

## Cameron's Island Sightseeing in Yakushima

I recently decided to take a cheap flight to Kagoshima to have my first experience visiting Kyushu (I've finally visited every major island of Japan!). After arriving I immediately decided to explore so I took a boat to Sakurajima. This is a nearby island that can be seen from the city and was created by a volcano that is always active. I could see the smoke coming from the crater! Once I returned to Kagoshima I also hiked to see the night view of the city. Here I decided to relax and call my friends from England who were on their lunch break. However, I realized I was ruining the atmosphere for the couples on their romantic dates so I decided to quickly head back!

On the second day I took the ferry from the port to Yakushima. This was four hours long but the boat was huge and had lots of places to relax. It even had a fish tank with sea turtles inside!

After I arrived I immediately began my trip to see the famous cedar trees and mountain views. My first stop was Shiratani Unsui Gorge which was the inspiration for the film Princess Mononoke! It was very quiet so I was able to have a peaceful walk through the ancient forest without meeting any people. This place is known as a "power-spot" and I definitely felt recharged by spending time surrounded by such beautiful nature. Some of the giant trees were over 3000 years old and the forest floor was completely covered in moss. I don't think I've ever seen so much green in one place! That evening I stayed in a Mongolian style hut where I got some advice from the kind old man next door. He said he was worried because my schedule was very 忙しい and gave me a free miso flavored egg for breakfast. On my second day I visited another famous spot called Yakusugi Land. This time it was raining which made the forest look even more magical. The light reflecting off the dark wood and the water droplets covering the moss was stunning. There were also some rope bridges which crossed a huge gorge with a powerful river which seemed a bit scary because they bounced as I walked across!

Now it's been almost a year living in Japan, I've loved searching for more "wild" areas with fewer tourists and Yakushima was perfect. It's difficult to get to but worth the effort!

