

Experience the Excitement of Earth Sciences in the Itoigawa Geopark

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Since receiving Global Geopark Certification, the number of school trips to the Itoigawa Geopark has increased. In Itoigawa, school trips are centered on the Fossa Magna Museum (Earth Sciences) and the Chojagahara Archaeological Museum (History and Archaeology). Additionally, consultations are done with individual schools with regard to outdoor excursions, lectures, hands-on experiences, and other activities. Also, if the following study bases are expanded upon, school trip options can be offered even in rainy weather.

1. Study Bases

(1) The Fossa Magna Museum

An Earth Sciences Museum, it was totally renovated in March 2015 in order to better share the story told by the Itoigawa Geopark's land. Through a variety of exhibits including jade (science, hands-on experience, history, and legend), the Fossa Magna Theater, Dr. Edmund Naumann (the Father of Japanese Geology), stones, minerals, fossils, seismology and more, visitors can learn about the history of the Japanese Islands through resources found in Itoigawa. Video, hands-on exhibits, models, and more have been added to the museum. All panels and videos include English interpretation, allowing the museum to be enjoyed by an international audience. Exhibits are well-suited for study preparation or a concluding summary lesson. The museum also includes a lecture hall (80 seats), class room (80 seats), and a hands-on lab (40 seats), making it equally suited for lectures or hands-on learning. Small groups (5 ? 10) can also use the analytical electron microscope, polarizing microscope, petrographic saw, and other lab equipment. The museum also features the "Fossil Valley" outdoor limestone fossil-hunting exhibit where up to 60 visitors at a time can hunt for coral, sea lily, and similar fossils.

(2) Chojagahara Archaeological Museum (5 min walk from the Fossa Magna Museum)

Artifacts uncovered from the nearby Chojagahara Site (Middle Jomon Period, National Historical Landmark) are displayed at this museum. Chojagahara is the site of the world's oldest jade culture, and the museum features exhibits on the collection of jade stones from the coast and rivers, jadeworking, trade, seasonal food sources, pottery, dog?, and more. The Chojagahara Site, with reconstructed pit dwellings and dioramas, is only a five minute walk from the museum. The outdoor activity center beside the site seats up to 40 and can be used for fire-making, bead-crafting, and other hands-on activities.

2. Consultation

The above museums have 5 curators (3 Earth Science, 2 Archaeology). They are available for pre-visit consultation, guided tours and lectures, and hands-on activities. Certified Geopark Guides are also available to assist school trips. Contact the Fossa Magna Museum for more information about school trip consultation.

3. Itoigawa Area Access

Tokyo Station to Itoigawa Station (Hokuriku Shinkansen, 2 hours), Nerima IC to Itoigawa IC (Expressway, 4 hours), Itoigawa IC to Toyama IC (Expressway, 1 hour), Itoigawa IC to Nagano IC (Expressway, 1 hour), Itoigawa to Hakuba (National Route, 1 hour)

4. Public High School (Kanto Area Super Science High School) Example Course

Nagano-Itoigawa-Hokuriku Trip (1 day in Itoigawa). 9:30 a.m. Arrive at Fossa Magna Museum; 9:45-10:15 a.m. Lecture-"The Fossa Magna and the Japanese Islands" History of the Japanese Islands explained using field trip sites; 10:40-11:40 a.m. Fossa Magna Park, Inspection and sketching of the Itoigawa-Shizuoka Tectonic Line, study of connection with earthquakes, study of pillow lava and plate movement from sea to land; 12:00-12:45 p.m. Museum (Lunch and Break); 13:05-13:55 p.m. Seaside Stone Study, Stone Collection (Sedimentary, Volcanic, Metamorphic), Stone Labeling and Composition Study; 14:20-15:10 p.m. Fossil Hunting Coral, sea lily, etc. Students take home fossil collection case; 15:20-16:10 p.m. Museum Exhibit Tour (Review); 16:20 p.m. depart the Fossa Magna Museum

Keywords: Itoigawa Global geopark, School Excursion, Earth Science