

# The Peach



# Cobbler



Vol. 3, Issue 2, May 2026



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## EDITORS NOTE

Happy May! Thank you for your continued support of the monthly OKAJet Newsletter.

My name is Elena Wilson, and I am the 2026-27 Media Liason and editor for the newsletter this year. This month we are bringing you a slightly shorter version of the newsletter as we prepare to re-vamp in July.

We would like to highlight our May Saturday Social which will be a walking tour of Tsuyama. For more details see page 11.

If you have any questions about this issue please feel free to reach out via our email, [newsletter@okayama-ajet.com](mailto:newsletter@okayama-ajet.com)!

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Lewis Spencer

# Pocketbook Travel Guide

Travel snippets for your weekends  
A Hidden Gem in Nara



This issue I'd like to share with you a hidden gem out in Nara Prefecture called Murou Art Forest. This spot is a perfect day trip to tack onto your Osaka / Nara / Kyoto area travel plans. It's a bit off the beaten path and the town of Murou is a cute place to explore before you leave!

Tucked into the little mountain town of Murou, Nara is a sculpture park with zen vibes. The sculptures are made with metal, wood and stone meant to enhance the beauty of the surrounding forests ( I really love that Japan has so many of these). It's a perfect place to ground with nature on the lawns or moss covered forest beds. We wandered through and sat amongst different sculptures and spots just to soak in the tranquility. The structures are all meant to be walked across, laid upon, marveled at and generally explored up close. The views from the Tower of the Sun, as well as the spiral bamboo forest that went underground, were my favorites. I highly recommend going there on a sunny day in particular because the sun lights up the structures from the inside and the



Murou Art Forest



surrounding nature is super vibrant, making their colors and textures pop against each other. Plus, if you enjoy a good hike like me there are hiking trails to and from the park, as well as a five story pagoda temple in the town of Murou!



### Full Day

- Leave from Kintetsu-Nara Station at 9:09 / 10 am.
- Arrive at Murou Art Forest at 10:50 / 11:50 am.
- Enjoy the art park!
- Leave the park at 3:30 and begin your trek back from the Murouji bus stop at 3:47
- Arrive back at Kintetsu Nara Station by 5:10

### Half Day

- Leave from Kintetsu-Nara Station at 8:07 or 9:09 am.
- Arrive at Murou Art Forest at 9:50 or 10:50 am.
- Enjoy the art park!
- Leave the park at 1:34 and begin your trek back from the Murouji bus stop at 1:47 pm.
- Arrive back at Kintetsu Nara Station by 3:20 pm.

This is very doable as a partial day trip or a full day trip!

I'm personally a slower traveler so I would start earlier in the morning that way I can stay without time constraints. I chose Kintetsu-Nara station as the start because it is closest to Nara Park. The last bus to the local station from the art forest is at 4:48 pm. The last recommended train from Muroguchiono Station to Kintetsu-Nara is 10:49 pm. The other option is to hike the 16km from the park to Muroguchiono Station, but I doubt that will ring well with many of you... Make sure to take food with you as there is no food at all by the park.





# But I Can't Drive! Map



Thanks for reading Pocketbook Travel Guide - a little guide of places across Japan worth sharing. See ya next time!  
- Alexa Davis

# Okayama Cafe Guide

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While you can always rely on your standard cafe chain, it's hard to beat the charm of a local shop. We asked you for your favorite cafes around Okayama. If you are looking to explore more of the prefecture through food and drink start your search with this guide! Special thanks to our contributing writers Hannah and Christina!



## Kurumi

Hours: 8 a.m.-5:30 p.m.,  
closed T

Address: 2 Chome-15-7  
Hokancho

Kurumi is a cute cafe and art gallery in Hokancho, Okayama City. Run by a mother and daughter duo, they serve tasty home-style food and cakes downstairs in the Showa era cafe space. Upstairs is a small gallery that shows great work from local and international artists and craftspeople.



The menu changes often to reflect what's in season, and the exhibitions tend to run for around a month. Kurumi is currently only open on weekends and holidays but will be expanding their opening hours sometime in May.

Walking: Yes      Price: ¥1000-2000

# Coffee Roastery Slow



Hours: 10 a.m.-6 p.m.,  
closed T-W

Address: 3603 Biseicho  
Kurotada, Ibara

Located in Bisei, Coffee Roastery Slow can be reached by car (or very determined cyclists). This hilltop cafe is tucked into the mountains along Ghibli-esque roads. True to the name, it is known for their coffees: single origin, blend coffees,

espresso, cafe au lait, along with their weekly specials. There is a range of beautiful sweet treats from white chocolate cheesecake to their seasonal shine muscat tart. The cafe has three floors of seating and they even host small events like yoga classes.

Walking: No      Price: ¥1000-2000

## 月と灯 tsuki to akari

Hours: 12-4 p.m., closed M-TH  
Address: Oda-gun, Yakage-cho,  
Yokotani 3556-2



This cafe has a super scenic location, overlooks a pond, and always has soft, twinkly music playing. There is also a temple walking distance away. The interior is light and whimsically decorated with moon and star

themed ornaments. The exterior is usually decorated with seasonal flowers. The menu offers a variety of seasonal cakes, soft drinks, teas, and coffee. This is a popular spot so you may have to queue for a seat!

Walking: No    Seating: 1hr limit    Price: ¥1000

## 瀬戸の子猫庫 **seto no ko neko-ko**



Hours: 8 a.m.-5 p.m.,  
closed W-TH

Address: 2405  
Oshimanaka, Kasaoka

This antique building has warm, dark wood with windows looking out onto the Seto Inland Sea. They have a pages long menu full of snacks, cakes, ice creams, cream soda, coffee, tea, and

meal sets. It's a must see site for cat enthusiasts with its very own Shrine of the Cat God. The cafe doubles up as a gallery showcasing handcrafted animal figures. On rainy days, cat outlines appear on the cobblestone outside the cafe.

Walking: No Price: ¥1000-2000

## **Fondant Miel**

Hours: 11 a.m-5 p.m., T-W-F-S

Address: 2 Chome-22-25 Central, Soja



Fondant Miel is only a short walk from Soja station. There is tatami style and counter seating. Their drinks menu is the highlight with a wide variety of options from hot or iced teas and lattes-including a highly recommended honey ginger latte-to coffees, and soft drinks like fresh orange juice or a banana smoothie.

As you walk in the first thing you see is their cake display, which generally has creatively flavored options like mont blanc, tarts, and caramel, matcha, or chocolate cheesecakes. The building is a renovated old, Japanese house - has a cosy, stylish atmosphere and seating styles to fit any vibe.

Walking: Yes Price: ¥1000-2000



# Saturday Social

Saturday, May 16 in Tsuyama

Meet at Tsuyama Station at Noon



# Share your experiences with new JETs!

Hi there, Karolina here, prefectural  
CIR/Okayama AJET Secretary!  
I`m currently preparing an information  
guide for new Okayama JETs.



Please share your experiences on the  
programme in the form above!  
There are 4 sections: Testimony, Desk  
warming, Travel spots, Resources  
A short entry is more than fine, and  
please feel free to only fill out the  
sections you would like to.

Anything will be a great help. Thank  
you!

# Events in Okayama

## 児島港ヨル市

### Kojima Port Night Market

Date: Sunday, May 3rd

More info: [日本語](#)

Location: Kojima Tourist Port

Time: 16:00 - 21:00

Admission: Free



## 全肉祭in岡山

### All Meat Festival in Okayama



Date: Saturday-Wednesday, May 2nd-6th

More info: [日本語](#)

Location: Okayama Dome Front Event Plaza

Time: 9:00 - 21:00

Admission: Free

## ハローキティ展 -わたしが変わるとキティも変わる Hello Kitty Exhibition

Date: Until Sunday, May 10

More info: [日本語](#)

Location: Okayama Prefectural Museum of Art

Time: 9:00 - 17:00 (during GW, 9:00 - 19:00)

Admission: Advance Tickets - ¥1800

Same Day - ¥2000



# 鏡野の夜空を埋め尽くす星空観察会 Stargazing event in Kagamino

More info: 日本語

Date: Saturday and Sunday, May 16<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup>  
Location: Mizunosato Okutsu Lake Visitor Center  
Time: 20:00 - 21:00  
Admission: ¥800



# 北長瀬バルーンガーデン Kitanagase Balloon Garden

More info: 日本語

Date: Sunday, May 24<sup>th</sup>  
Location: Kitanagase Mirai Fureai General Park Lawn Area  
Time: 7:00 - 9:00, registration starts at 6:00  
Admission: ¥3000 adults, ¥2000 children, cash only

# 倉敷Parole2026 Kurashiki Parole 2026

More info: 日本語

Date: Sunday, May 24<sup>th</sup>  
Location: Participating stores around Kurashiki Station  
Time: 12:00 - 18:00  
Admission: Cover charge at each participating establishment



# Teacher's Corner

Starting in July we will be highlighting moments in the classroom from the OKAJet community!

Did you have a lesson or game that went particularly well? Do you have a creative method for feedback or rewards?



Submit your stories to **[newsletter@okayama-ajet.com](mailto:newsletter@okayama-ajet.com)** and share the success! Special thanks to Chris for this suggestion!

# July's Theme: Leaver's Advice

We are saying goodbye to many members of our community! If you are in your final year on JET tell us your favorite moments, what you learned or any advice for continuing and incoming JETs. Please keep submissions to **500 words** and feel free to submit photos!



Please submit to:

**[newsletter@okayama-ajet.com](mailto:newsletter@okayama-ajet.com)**

Any submissions must be made by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month.

# Want to be part of the newsletter?

We are always looking for new talent and help at the newsletter, so if you have writers itch you want to scratch, or have some ideas for the newsletter look, please contact us at our email!

**[newsletter@okayama-ajet.com](mailto:newsletter@okayama-ajet.com)**



Additionally, if you have any suggestions or feedback for our newsletter, please fill out the form below!

**Newsletter Feedback/**  
**Suggestion Form**

# We're under construction!



The newsletter will be taking a break for the month of June so we can present you with the best version possible! Please stay up to date on our events through our Instagram and website.



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**See you next issue!**