

After three years of hearing great reviews from friends all around Mie, I finally decided to go to Kumano to see the Kumano fireworks last weekend. I have always heard that the fireworks show in Kumano is one of the best anywhere in Japan, or even the world! But I was skeptical. I've seen lots of fireworks in my life, and I've always enjoyed them, but I couldn't imagine what would make the fireworks in Kumano much different than any of the other shows I'd seen.

We arrived in Kumano on the JR train just shortly after the fireworks show had started. The sounds of the fireworks exploding over the water were not like the sounds I had heard at fireworks shows before! We walked hurriedly towards the beach and I was surprised that I couldn't see many of the fireworks over the large wall that separated the road from the beach. When we walked through the large doors in the wall to get to the other side, I was so surprised to see fireworks that were going off on the surface of the water. I had only ever seen fireworks that were shot high into the sky, and exploded in full circles. This was the first time that I had seen fireworks in the shape of a half-circle, along the surface of the water. I was surprised that the Kumano fireworks show was divided into many smaller fireworks displays. Only one or two short displays from this fireworks show was about the same as the best fireworks I had ever seen at home in America. There were fireworks of different styles, shapes and colors that really impressed me. The best ones were shot from the side of Onigajyo, two large fireworks shot into the dark sky, that, after about 3 or 4 seconds, split into 20 or 30 tiny bursts of color. Some of the fireworks were so bright that the entire beach was lit up as if it were the afternoon!

After all of the fireworks were done, I stayed with my friends on the beach for a long time. My ALT friends from Kumano marked off an area of the beach and saved a spot for us, so even though we arrived late, we still had nice, spacious seats on the beach from which to enjoy the show. In total, there were about 20 or 30 people, mostly ALTs but some other friends as well. We stayed and talked on the beach until all of the other people had left, the food stalls were packed up and all of the lights were turned off. Finally, we packed up our own things, and split up to stay on the floor at the apartments of the ALTs who live near there.

It was a great experience, going to see the fireworks. I was lucky to have friends there who saved a place for me and also gave me a place to sit. We arrived late and left after the crowds, so I didn't feel overwhelmed by the crowds of people. It was a really great time. I used to be skeptical of people who told me that Kumano fireworks are really great. "What makes them so great?," I always thought. If you haven't seen them, I really recommend that you go to the Kumano fireworks someday. I think you'll agree that they really are amazing!