

World Heritage Site
Shirakawa-go



Unearthing the Heartland of Japan

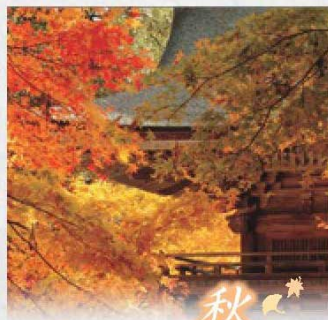
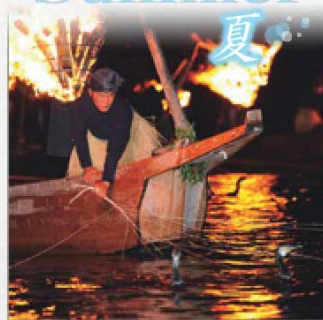
岐阜 GIFU

THE COMPLETE TRAVEL GUIDE

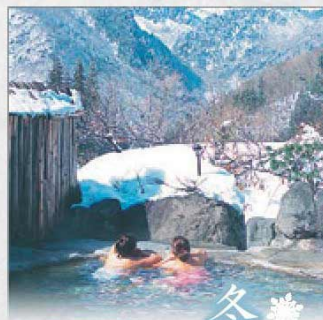
Spring
春



Summer



秋
Autumn



冬
Winter

Unearthing the Heartland of Japan **GIFU**

THE COMPLETE TRAVEL GUIDE

Set amongst gorgeous natural landscapes in the very center of Japan is Gifu Prefecture, a place steeped in tradition. Blessed with beautifully preserved castle towns, many and varied hot spring districts, and unique festivals that have lived on through the centuries, Gifu transports you back in time to the Japan of old. Its traditional crafts rank among Japan's very best, and its four seasons offer distinct and yet equally marvelous views that will soothe your soul and leave you wanting more! Just a short trip from Japan's largest metropolitan centers, Gifu is easily accessible and therefore a perfect addition to any itinerary. With this guide in hand, make your way here to experience the many delights of the Heartland of Japan!

Map Icons

- Bus Stop
- Post Office
- Picturesque Photo Spot
- 24-Hour Convenience Store
- Hot Spring Bath
- Cherry Blossoms
- Shinto Shrine
- Tourist Information Center
- Autumn Foliage
- Buddhist Temple
- Tourist Information Center with English Speaking Staff

The Component Elements of an Entry

A SIGHTS **1 Mino Washi Museum** 美濃和紙の里会館

The best place to go to learn all about the history of and production process behind Mino Washi, this museum also informs about washi paper more generally, introducing many of the different kinds made throughout Japan. You can also make your own Mino Washi here and get a seal for how difficult it is to do it well! 1851-3 Warabi, Mino City 9 am - 5 pm (Last entry: 4:30 pm) ¥600 (Middle and elementary school students: ¥250) Tuesday (Or the following business day instead when Tuesday is a holiday), December 29 - January 3. Days following national holidays (museum is opened if the following day is during the weekend) Mino-shi Station - Taxi: 20 min | 0575-34-8111 | <http://www.mino-city.jp/en/tourist/history01.html>

¥50 off admission fee (Valid until March 31, 2021)

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>A Category</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sightseeing Destination Hands-On Activity Restaurant/Food Stall Shopping Destination Accommodations | <p>B Essential Details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place/Address Time/Business Hours Price Closing Days Directions Telephone Mail Website | <p>C Conveniences/Facilities Available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hot Spring Credit Cards Accepted
V...Visa M...MasterCard
A...American Express
J...JCB D...Diners Club Parking Lot English Language Brochure English Language Menu Japanese-Style Futon Western-Style Bed Wi-Fi |
|---|---|---|

D Exclusive Rewards

For those facilities featuring this wrapped present icon, if you show the staff this guidebook, you will be rewarded with a gift, discount, or complimentary service! These rewards have an expiration date for some places and can be used at any time in the future for others, so please check which of these applies to your intended destination. Only available to travelers carrying non-Japanese passports with "Temporary Visitor" entry status (and to Japanese nationals with permanent residency in a foreign country).

This travel guide introduces a selection of the fabulous tourist destinations, activities, restaurants, and accommodations that visitors are able to enjoy here in Gifu Prefecture. It is targeted primarily at independent travelers making use of the public transportation system, though one section towards the end of the book is dedicated to rental car road trips. The guidebook takes a seasonal approach to sample itineraries; those presented here are more realistic than a generic itinerary that ignores the fact that most destinations have specific times of the year during which they are particularly appealing. Please thus use these model courses as a basis for building your own. Now then, before proceeding on to the meat of this book, please first read through the following cautionary notes:

- Please be advised that the contents of this guide are current as of September, 2016 and are therefore subject to change.
- All telephone numbers are listed in the form appropriate for domestic dialing; when calling from abroad, dial the International Direct Dialing Number of your country, then "81" (Japan's country code), and finally the telephone number EXCLUDING the initial "0".
- Some facilities do not have foreign language support by telephone, but if you wanted to make a reservation at one such place, for example, you might get someone to call on your behalf (even after arriving in Japan).
- Some website links provided are for Japanese sites; that said, these could still be a great resource, as photos on the websites could give you a good idea of what to expect.
- Time estimates for travel cover the amount of time actually spent riding a train, bus, or other vehicle; they do not include transfer time (if a transfer is necessary), which can vary in length.
- As a general rule (with a few exceptions), directions are provided from the transportation hub(s) of the area; it may be possible, however, to reach your destination without having to disembark at the nearest hub. If you compare the directions provided for a specific destination (i.e. the train/bus line to be taken) with the general directions to the relevant hub from, say, Gifu City, you should be able to determine if there is a need to transfer at that hub or not, thus (possibly) saving yourself some time!
- Not every bus along one route stops at every stop, so it would be wise to confirm with the driver that the bus will indeed stop where you intend on getting off (simply read aloud the name of the stop). Additionally, there are times when the upcoming bus stop is only displayed in Japanese, so to be on the safe side, convey your destination to the driver in advance.
- As a rule, lodging prices provided here represent the charge per person, assuming a party of two (this is standard practice in Japan); this individual rate generally changes depending on the total number of people in a party.
- If no closing days are specified for a particular site, this could mean either that the site is open every day of the year or that it closes on irregularly scheduled days.
- Conventions for the transliteration of Japanese into the Roman alphabet are fairly inconsistent when it comes to names of landmarks (rivers, bridges, etc.) and place names. For this reason, you may come across slightly different spellings or forms (e.g. "Miya River" instead of "Miyagawa River," since "gawa" means "river" in Japanese) than are provided in this book. Frequency of use and ease of readability are two elements that have been considered in the choice of form presented here, but be conscious that others do exist.
- Unless indicated otherwise, all prices include tax.

With all of this in mind, then, go ahead and dive into the wonderful world of Gifu!

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The Broader Region Surrounding Gifu

To Central Gifu City

Departing from Nagoya

JR Nagoya Station → JR Gifu Station
[JR Tokaido Main Line Rapid • 18 min • ¥470]

Departing from Central Japan International Airport

Central Japan International Airport → Meitetsu Gifu Station
[Meitetsu Limited Express • 1 hr 20 min • ¥1,340]
[Meitetsu Airport Rapid Ltd. Exp. μ-SKY (read "mu-sky") • 1 hr • ¥1,700]

Departing from Tokyo

Tokyo Station → JR Nagoya Station → JR Gifu Station
[JR Tokaido Shinkansen • 1 hr 40 min] →
[JR Tokaido Main Line • 18 min • ¥11,310 in total]
~ Or ~

Tokyo Station (Nihonbashi Exit) → JR Gifu Station (North Exit)
[JR Tokai Bus "Dream Nagoya" • 8 hr • ¥6,580]

Departing from Osaka

Shin-Osaka Station → JR Nagoya Station → JR Gifu Station
[JR Tokaido Shinkansen • 50 min] →
[JR Tokaido Main Line • 18 min • ¥7,210 in total]

To Shirakawa-go

Departing from Nagoya

Meitetsu Bus Center → Shirakawa-go
[Gifu Bus on the Shirakawa-go Express Line • 3 hr • ¥3,900]
Customers cannot be accommodated when seats are full, so prior reservations are highly recommended. Two buses per day.
(☎058-240-0489)



To Hida Takayama

Departing from Gifu City

JR Gifu Station → Takayama Station
[JR Takayama Main Line Limited Express Wide View Hida • 2 hr • ¥4,940]
~ Or ~

Meitetsu Gifu Station Bus Terminal → Takayama Nohi Bus Center
[Nohi Bus/Gifu Bus on the Takayama-Gifu Line • 2 hr • ¥2,570]

Departing from Nagoya

JR Nagoya Station → Takayama Station
[JR Limited Express Wide View Hida • 2 hr 30 min • ¥6,030]
~ Or ~

Meitetsu Bus Center → Takayama Nohi Bus Center
[Nohi Bus/Meitetsu Bus/JR Tokai Bus on the Takayama-Nagoya Line • 2 hr 30 min • ¥2,980]

Departing from Tokyo

Tokyo Station → JR Nagoya Station → Takayama Station
[JR Tokaido Shinkansen • 1 hr 40 min] → [JR Limited Express Wide View Hida • 2 hr 20 min • ¥14,920 in total]

Tokyo Station → JR Toyama Station → Takayama Station
[JR Hokuriku Shinkansen • 2 hr 8 min] → [JR Limited Express Wide View Hida • 1 hr 30 min • ¥15,830 in total]
~ Or ~

Shinjuku Expressway Bus Terminal → Takayama Nohi Bus Center
[Nohi Bus/Keio Bus on the Takayama-Tokyo(Shinjuku) Line • 5 hr 30 min • ¥6,690]

Departing from Osaka

Shin-Osaka Station → JR Nagoya Station → Takayama Station
[JR Tokaido Shinkansen • 50 min] → [JR Limited Express Wide View Hida • 2 hr 20 min • ¥10,810 in total]
~ Or ~

Osaka Namba Station West Exit → Takayama Nohi Bus Center
[Nohi Bus/Kintetsu Bus on the Takayama-Kyoto/Osaka Line • 5 hr 32 min • ¥3,300]

Note: All times and prices indicated are variable, are dependent on a variety of factors (such as the time of year), and are subject to change.



Contact Information

Central Japan Railway Company (JR Central)

☎ <http://english.jr-central.co.jp>

Nagoya Railroad (Meitetsu) ☎ <http://www.meitetsu.co.jp/eng/>

Nohi Bus ☎ <https://www.nouhibus.co.jp/english/>

The Broader Region Surrounding Gifu

石川 / Ishikawa



Kenroku-en Garden
Thought to be one of the finest gardens in Japan, Kenroku-en is a spacious area complete with ponds and tea gardens that is rife with seasonal beauty.



Omi-cho Market
Almost 300 years old, this marketplace is the perfect place for purchasing fresh fish or any of Ishikawa Prefecture's many unique products.

富山 / Toyama



Tateyama Kurobe Alpine Route
This route takes those who pass through it on a journey through the Northern Japanese Alps, which includes mountains over 3,000 meters tall. Marvel at the many wonders of Mother Nature that can be seen here, including great valleys of snow.



Gokayama
This UNESCO World Heritage Site is home to many *gassho-zukuri*-style thatched roof houses that can only be seen in certain areas that experience heavy snowfall.

長野 / Nagano



Matsumoto Castle
One of but five castles in Japan to be considered a National Treasure, this castle is known for its black exterior. Completed in the late 16th century, it remains largely unchanged from its original state.



Kamikochi
This highland valley deep in the mountains of the Northern Japanese Alps is often lauded as one of the greatest treasure troves of natural beauty in all of Japan, and plays host to great plant and animal biodiversity.

福井 / Fukui



Tojinbo
Stretching for over one kilometer, these precipitous cliffs were formed by volcanic activity millions of years ago, and are thought to be one of Japan's most beautiful natural wonders.



Awara Hot Spring
As Fukui's foremost hot springs district, it boasts many scenic areas that are unique to hot springs towns. Explore this location as you enjoy the feel of stone pavement beneath your feet and the fragrance of steaming hot spring water in the air.

静岡 / Shizuoka



Mt. Fuji
Often seen as a subject in paintings or spoken of in poetry and song, this mountain is the tallest in Japan and is the very symbol of the nation itself.



Lake Hamana
This large natural lake is the ideal location for enjoying water sports or collecting shells at low tide, and its intricate coastline makes for gorgeous scenery.

愛知 / Aichi



Nagoya Castle
Originally constructed in 1612 and then largely destroyed in the fires of the Second World War, the remnants of the original were carefully integrated into its reconstruction.



Shopping in Sakae
The single most prosperous area in Nagoya, Sakae is home to many famous department stores, entertainment spots, and restaurants. With a vibrant night life and a varied assortment of shops, Sakae is a must for anyone looking for a taste of city life.



滋賀 / Shiga



Lake Biwa
With a surface area of over 670 kilometers squared, Lake Biwa is the largest lake in Japan. The nature surrounding it thrives, and its many stunning vistas make it quite the picturesque location.



Nagahama
Most well known for its "Kurokabe Square," a distinctly atmospheric historic district that houses a wide variety of glass galleries and workshops, and restaurants that serve local cuisine.

三重 / Mie



Ise Grand Shrine
Hidden away deep in the forest, this Shinto shrine dedicated to Amaterasu-omikami, goddess of the sun and patron deity of the Japanese imperial family, has existed for millennia.



Kumano Kodo
This series of pilgrimage routes that cover Japan's Kii Peninsula connects many of the sacred sites in this area, and were together designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

The Different Regions Within Gifu

Located precisely in the center of the country, Gifu Prefecture has long been an important crossroads of east and west Japan. The culture of Gifu has therefore been heavily influenced by both, resulting in a great diversity of traditions nurtured here. Gifu is also a land of varied terrain, from the majestic mountains of Hida to the north - which stretch to heights of up to 3,000 meters above sea level - to the fertile, expansive plains and riverlands of Mino to the south - which are located right at sea level. Gifu Prefecture is broadly divided into these two regions, which used to exist independently - as Hida Province and Mino Province - before Japan's adoption of the prefectural system. The Mino region - a term often used to refer to the entire southern half of Gifu Prefecture, corresponding to the territory of Mino Province - is today further divided into four sub-regions: the western region of Seino, the eastern region of Tono, the central region of Chuno, and the Gifu region that encompasses the capital of Gifu City. Take particular care not to confuse the Hida region and the Mino region with Hida City and Mino City!

GUJO 郡上 P58
The site of one of Japan's most famous summer dance festivals, the Gujo *Odori*.

MINOKAMO 美濃加茂 P72
A place where Edo period townscapes remain preserved.

SEKI 関 P68
The blade capital of Japan and its historical center of sword production.

MINO 美濃 P64
Home of Mino *Washi*, one of the most celebrated types of traditional Japanese paper.

GIFU 岐阜 P52
Home to the spectacle of cormorant fishing, a tradition that has continued on the Nagara River for 1,300 years.

OGAKI • SEKIGAHARA 大垣 関ヶ原 P90
The "water capital" of the region and the site of Japan's most famous battle.

YORO 養老 P86
A place of rejuvenating natural beauty and stunning postmodern art.

SEINO REGION

GIFU REGION

CHUNO REGION

TONO REGION

HIDA REGION

Key locations: Gifu, Mino-shi, Seki, Tarumi, Ibi, Nagatsugawa, Gero, Ena, Tajimi, Toki, Mizunami, Nagoya.

Railways: JR Chubu Main Line, JR Taika Line, JR Tokaido Main Line, Yoro Railway, Sekigahara Railway, Tsurumi Railway, Nagatsugawa Railway, Akechi Railway, Meitetsu, Tokaido Shinkansen.

Other features: Nagatsugawa Ski Resort Areas in Gujo, Nagatsugawa Railway, Gero Hot Spring, Ena Valley, Chiune Sugihara Memorial Hall, Mino-Ota, Mitake, Tajimi, Tokishi, Mizunami, Akechi, Nakatsugawa, Magome-juku, Ena, Gifu, Seki, Mino-shi, Tarumi, Ibi, Nagatsugawa, Gero, Ena, Tajimi, Toki, Mizunami, Nagoya.

SHIRAKAWA-GO 白川郷 P36
A UNESCO World Heritage Site deep in the mountains that boasts an idyllic village of *gassho-zukuri* thatched roof houses.

HIDA 飛騨 P32
A city with distinctly Japanese townscapes, particularly in the white-walled storehouse district of Furukawa.

OKUHIDA HOT SPRING VILLAGES 奥飛騨温泉郷 P28
Five *onsen* districts nestled in nature that, together, boast the most open-air hot spring baths of any region in Japan.

TAKAYAMA 高山 P20
Internationally famous for its picturesque old quarter and home to one of Japan's most beautiful festivals.

GERO 下呂 P44
An *onsen* paradise which has historically been counted among Japan's Three Great Hot Springs.

NAKATSUGAWA 中津川 P78
Famous for the old post town of Magome and its superb *wagashi* Japanese sweets.

ENA 恵那 P82
Home of Ena Valley, a site of great natural beauty through all four seasons.

TAJIMI • TOKI • MIZUNAMI 多治見 土岐 瑞浪 P76
The production centers and home of Mino *Yaki*, the dominant type of pottery in Japan.

WINTER [Dec ~ Feb]



Day 1

JR Nagoya Station

Limited Express Wide View Hida (1 hr 40 min)

Gero Station

Stroll the streets of Gero's hot spring district

Gero Station

Limited Express Wide View Hida (45 min)

Takayama Station

Stay in Takayama

Day 2

Takayama Sake Brewery Tours

Takayama Nohi Bus Center

Nohi Bus (50 min)

"Shirakawa-go" bus stop

Explore the village of Shirakawa-go

Stay at the TOYOTA Shirakawa-go Eco-Institute

Winter in Japan is the absolute best time to enjoy hot springs! Have a soak in Gero's mineral-rich spring water that will refresh your body and mind. Outdoor hot spring baths are especially relaxing in the winter, with the water acting almost as a shield against the crisp air!



P20

Enjoy a Japanese-style breakfast with some *hoba* miso, a local specialty dish in which miso paste and assorted vegetables are grilled over a magnolia leaf.



Takayama is rich in sake breweries with a long history of excellence. In the winter, each one of them opens its doors to the public and encourages people to both sample its new sake and have a look around the brewery itself.

P22

See Shirakawa-go at its best, buried deep in snow and shining at night under the lights of the famous illumination event!

P39



P40



P44

Day 3

Enjoy an outdoor nature activity at the TOYOTA Shirakawa-go Eco-Institute

"Shirakawa-go" bus stop

Nohi Bus (50 min)

Takayama Nohi Bus Center

Nohi Bus (1 hr)

Hirayu Bus Terminal

See the beauty of the Hirayu Great Waterfall frozen and illuminated!

Stay in the Okuhida Hot Spring Villages

P31

Day 4

Look upon the grand Japan Alps after taking the Shinhotaka Ropeway to the top of Mt. Shinhotaka

Nohi Bus (1 hr 30 min)

Matsumoto (Nagano Prefecture)

One of Japan's very best castles

Matsumoto Castle is designated a National Treasure and is one of the most beautiful castles in all of Japan. Come enjoy the castle and the rest of the pleasant city!



P40

This grand waterfall transforms into a pillar of ice because of the cold. Mid-February marks the beginning of the Ice Festival, during which the waterfall is illuminated to stunning effect.



P30

There are many hot spring baths in the area that you can just drop by and bathe in, regardless of the hotel at which you are staying. Going around and trying out a bunch of these *onsen* baths is one fantastic way to enjoy the region!



Dip some scrumptious Hida beef in hot water a few times and enjoy it *shabu-shabu* style, a very common way of eating beef in the region! After the meat's color changes, dip it in a sauce of your choosing and eat it right up!



P30

The trek through the sky in a cable car (split up into two trips) offers gorgeous views of the valley below and the mountains above. The panoramic view from the top is not to be missed!

If you want to delve deeper into Gifu...

Shop for ceramics in Tajimi!

Tajimi is famous for its superb pottery, so it is a perfect place to visit if you want to get your hands on some beautiful, traditional Japanese tableware!



P76

SPRING [Mar ~ May]



Day 1

- JR Nagoya Station**
JR Chuo Main Line (1 hr 15 min)
- Nakatsugawa Station**
Kita Ena Bus (25 min)
- "Magome-juku" bus stop

Stroll through the old post town of Magome

- "Magome-juku" bus stop
Kita Ena Bus (25 min)
- Nakatsugawa Station**
Kita Ena Bus (1 hr)
- "Kashimo Sogo Jimusho-mae" bus stop
Nohi Bus (35 min)
- Gero Station**

Appreciate the transient beauty of Japan's most famous flower at the Nawashiro-zakura Cherry Trees

Stay in Gero Hot Spring
Known across Japan for its "water of beauties," Gero is a perfect place for you to spend some quality relaxation time.

This former post town, where many inns were located and where many travelers stayed for the night, is built along a 600 meter-long stone-paved path that makes for fantastic photos!



Soba (buckwheat noodles) are a specialty of the Magome area.



The cherry blossoms' peak season is from early to mid-April, and their reflection in the pond next to them is one of the most unique and striking elements of any sakura-viewing spot in Japan!

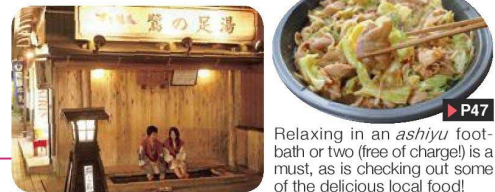
Day 2

Explore the streets of Gero's hot spring district

- Gero Station**
Limited Express Wide View Hida (1 hr)
- Hida-Furukawa Station**

Hida Satoyama Cycling

Stay in Hida City
A place where the old traditions and respect for nature are very much alive



Relaxing in an *ashiyu* foot-bath or two (free of charge!) is a must, as is checking out some of the delicious local food!



Have fun cycling while gazing at the beautiful Japanese countryside scenery all around you!

Day 3

Explore the town of Hida Furukawa

- Hida-Furukawa Station**
JR Takayama Main Line (16 min)
- Takayama Station**

Walk through the old quarter of Hida Takayama

Stay in Takayama

Day 4

- Takayama Nohi Bus Center**
Nohi Bus (50 min)
- "Shirakawa-go" bus stop

Explore the village of Shirakawa-go



Japanese traditional folk crafts make splendid gifts to take home!

Nohi Bus (1 hr 15 min)

Kenroku-en, one of Japan's Three Great Gardens

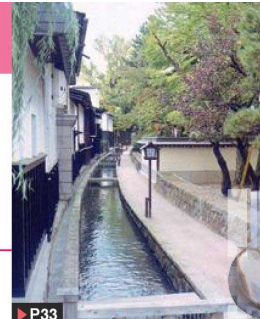
Nearby Kenroku-en, you will find sites such as Kanazawa Castle and the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa.



If you want to delve deeper into Gifu...

Admire Gifu Park's gorgeous cherry trees

These blossoms reach their peak in early April, and the cherry trees lining the Nagara River are a sight to behold as well!



Famed for the *okoshi-dako* Shinto ritual - part of the Furukawa Festival held every April - and the white-walled storehouses pictured here lining the canal.

You can get some delicious locally-made ice cream made with thick, rich milk.

Sink your teeth into some of the highest-grade Hida beef at any number of restaurants in town.



Elegantly constructed merchant houses line both sides of Takayama's old quarter, making this part of town particularly popular with tourists both from in Japan and from abroad. Springtime here is synonymous with the Takayama Spring Festival, and the cherry blossoms that decorate the town reach their peak from mid to late April.



Ogimachi is a village in which old houses constructed in the *gassho-zukuri* style remain to this day. Their value is recognized far and wide, and Shirakawa-go is even designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

SUMMER [Jun ~ Aug]



Day 1

- JR Nagoya Station
JR Tokaido Main Line (18 min)
- JR Gifu Station
Gifu Bus (15 min)
- "Gifu Koen/Rekishi Hakubutsukan-mae" bus stop

Gifu Castle

Gifu Castle looming above the plains below at the top of Mt. Kinka. You can take a cable car most of the way up the mountain or hike on foot.



P54

P55

These cool and refreshing *mizu-uchiwa* make for perfect souvenirs!

Watch the spectacle of cormorant fishing on the Nagara River

Stay in Nagaragawa Hot Spring

Enjoy the iron-rich, cloudy water that is characteristic of the *onsen* here.



P53



Nagaragawa Cider, made using the Nagara River's delicious, pure water

The tradition of *ukai* cormorant fishing has been preserved in Gifu City for 1,300 years and is the highlight of the summer season.

Day 2

- JR Gifu Station
JR Takayama Main Line (35 min)
- Mino-Ota Station
Nagaragawa Railway (17 min)
- Hamono Kaikan-mae Station
- Hamono Kaikan-mae Station
Nagaragawa Railway (65 min)
- Gujo-Hachiman Station

Jump right in and try your hand at the Gujo Odori Dance

Stay in Gujo Hachiman



P68

P71

Seki is a town famous for blades of all kinds, dating back to when it was the center of sword-making in Japan.

Unagi eel is a local delicacy in Seki and *ayu* sweetfish is a specialty of Gujo, so be sure to try them out!

Anybody is welcome to participate in this, one of the most famous *bon-odori* dances in Japan!



P58

Day 3

- Gujo Hachiman Jokamachi Plaza
Gifu Bus (1 hr 40 min)
- "Shirakawa-go" bus stop
- Explore the village of Shirakawa-go
- "Shirakawa-go" bus stop
Nohi Bus (50 min)
- Takayama Nohi Bus Center
- Limited Express Wide View Hida (45 min) from Takayama Station
- Gero Station
- Stroll the streets of Gero's hot spring district
- Stay in Gero Hot Spring
P49



P36

The view of the thatched roof houses against the countryside green is a sight you will never forget!



Make use of a "Yu-meguri Tegata" pass to try out a variety of hot spring baths in the area.

Day 4

- Gero Station
Nohi Bus (1 hr)
- "Gandate Koen Iriguchi" bus stop
- Go waterfall-hopping in Osaka Falls
- "Gandate Koen Iriguchi" bus stop
Nohi Bus (1 hr)
- Gero Station
Limited Express Wide View Hida (55 min)
- Mino-Ota Station



The perfect time of year for tomatoes, one of Gero's delicacies!



P51

A cluster of over 200 waterfalls formed by the eruption of Mt. Ontake long ago

How about a healthy meal after your trek?



Explore the old post town of Ota-juku on the Nakasendo route



P72

The atmosphere of an Edo period (1603 ~ 1868) town remains to this day.

Nagoya

Kyoto

If you want to delve deeper into Gifu...

- Mino-Ota Station
JR Takayama Main Line (35 min)
- JR Gifu Station
JR Tokaido Main Line (10 min)
- Ogaki Station
JR Tokaido Main Line (15 min)
- Sekigahara Station

Walk the historic battlefield of Sekigahara!

The site of Japan's most famous battle 400 years ago that determined the path the country would follow, Sekigahara sees many tourists interested in Japanese history.



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AUTUMN [Sep ~ Nov]



Day 1

JR Nagoya Station

JR Chuo Main Line
(1 hr)

Ena Station

Explore Ena and enjoy the beauty and many colors of Ena Valley's fall foliage

Ena Station

JR Chuo Main Line
(10 min)

Nakatsugawa Station

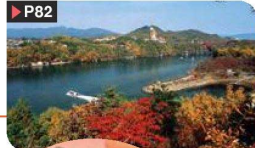
Kita Ena Bus (25 min)

"Magome-juku" bus stop

Stroll through and stay in Magome-juku

P81

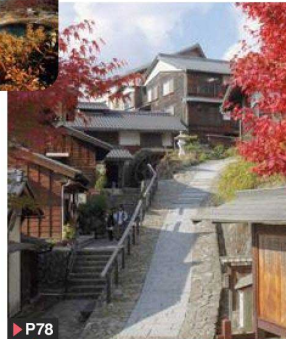
The colors of Ena Valley reach their peak between early to mid-November, and the combination of the red and yellow-draped mountains and the blue lake makes for a beautiful sight.



P82



The *kurikinton*, a delectable Japanese sweet made using chestnuts, is one of the main delicacies of the region. Only available during the autumn season!



P78

The architecture and layout of this old post town, with its steeply sloped stone path, really bring out the charms of autumn!

Day 2

"Magome-juku" bus stop

Kita Ena Bus (25 min)

Nakatsugawa Station

Kita Ena Bus (1 hr)

"Kashimo Sogo Jimusho-mae" bus stop

Nohi Bus (35 min)

Gero Station

Shop at the Ideyu Morning Market in Gero

Gero Station

Limited Express Wide View Hida (45 min)

Takayama Station

Walk the old quarter of Hida Takayama

Takayama Nohi Bus Center

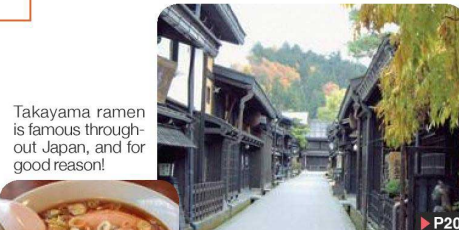
Nohi Bus (1 hr)

Hirayu Bus Terminal



P48

At the morning market, you can get your hands on a variety of fresh vegetables, local specialty products, and more!



P20



P23

Takayama ramen is famous throughout Japan, and for good reason!

The elegance of Hida Takayama's old quarter attracts visitors from around the world! Autumn colors are at their best between late October and early November.

Stay in the Okuhida Hot Spring Villages

A region made up of five fantastic hot spring districts, Okuhida is a wonderful place to relieve yourself of the stress of travel.

P31

Day 3

Look upon the grand Japan Alps from the heights of Mt. Shinhotaka's peak!

"Shinhotaka Ropeway" bus stop

Nohi Bus (1 hr 30 min)

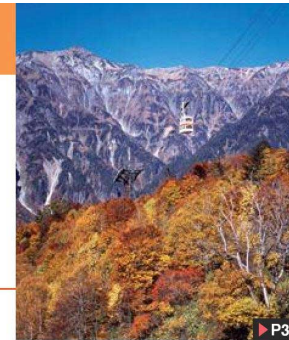
Takayama Nohi Bus Center

Nohi Bus (50 min)

"Shirakawa-go" bus stop

Explore and stay in Shirakawa-go

P43



P30

The Northern Japan Alps glittering like a sea of gold is truly a sight to behold. Peak season is during the month of October, though different areas change color at different times because of the difference in altitude!



P36

The best time to take in the autumn colors in Shirakawa-go is between late October and mid-November.

Day 4

"Shirakawa-go" bus stop

Gifu Bus (1 hr 25 min)

Gujo Hachiman Jokamachi Plaza

Stroll through Gujo Hachiman

Gujo-Hachiman Station

Nagaragawa Railway
(45 min)

Mino-shi Station

Explore Mino City



P60



P66

Oyada Shrine is one of the most handsome destinations in the entire prefecture during the fall season! The giant maple trees engulfing the shrine and its surrounding areas reach their reddish peak during mid to late November.

Nagoya

Kyoto

If you want to delve deeper into Gifu...

Mino-shi Station
Nagaragawa Railway (30 min)

Mino-Ota Station
JR Takayama Main Line (35 min)

JR Gifu Station
JR Tokaido Main Line (10 min)

Ogaki Station
Yoro Railway (25 min)

Yoro Station

Take a trip to the Yoro Waterfall

This waterfall is located deep within Yoro Park, a beautiful natural area that boasts an incredible number of maple trees leading up to the powerful waterfall.



P86

岐阜の伝統工芸

Traditional Crafts of Gifu

Experience the Ancient Crafts of Gifu Prefecture

There is a long history of thriving craft industries here in Gifu Prefecture. Ceramics in the Tono region, woodcraft in Ogaki and the Hida region, Mino *Washi* paper, and Seki cutlery are among the most distinctive local industries found in Gifu. The skills and expertise of the artisans – who have passed down the techniques and technologies of these exceptional products for generations – remain treasured by many to this very day.



Mino Washi Paper

Mino *Washi* owes its creation to the naturally rich environment of the Mino region and the ingenuity of the local people. With recent industrial expansions, a much wider variety of products (including placemats, lamps, and other accessories) are being produced now more than ever before. In 2014, one of the techniques of making Mino *Washi* by hand was designated as an UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, helping it attract international attention.

Learn about Mino City ▶ P64

Woodcraft

With forests occupying more than 80% of the land, Gifu's abundant resources and wealth of unique craftsmanship has resulted in a variety of wood products being produced in the region. Traditional techniques have been passed down through generations resulting in advanced carpentry skills that are used to make a wide range of wooden products today, from the finger-jointed masu boxes of Ogaki to the furniture of the Hida region.

Learn about Ogaki City ▶ P90

Learn about the Hida Region ▶ P20~



Mino Ware

Learn about Tajimi, Toki, and Mizunami ▶ P76

Mino Ware ("Mino *Yaki*" in Japanese) is a style of ceramic ware produced in the cities of Tajimi, Toki, and Mizunami. Pottery production in this area goes back 1,300 years, and items such as tableware, tiles, and industrial ceramic products began to be mass produced in the 1930's. Mino Ware boasts more than a 50% share of all pottery goods produced in Japan.



Seki Cutlery

Learn about Seki City ▶ P68

Seki cutlery has a long history that dates back some 780 years, and Seki itself originally prospered as a major sword-production area. This was possible because all of the essential elements needed for sword making were found naturally in the surrounding environment. The history and tradition of swordsmithing has been passed down to the present day, helping Seki become known as the largest cutlery production area in Japan – famous for their high-quality knives and scissors.



Experience Gifu's World-Acclaimed Heritages

In December of 2016, thirty-three traditional float festivals all over Japan were designated as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritages. Three of the 33 festivals - the Takayama Festival, Furukawa Festival, and Ogaki Festival - are located in Gifu. In addition to the three festivals, Gifu Prefecture is home to other world-class heritages such as Shirakawa-go Village and *Hon-Minoshi* Japanese paper. Make sure and tour around these world-class heritages; you won't be disappointed with the tradition and culture they contain!

Yama, Hoko, and Yatai Float Festivals of Gifu Prefecture Designated as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritages!

Takayama Festival

Exquisitely Crafted Floats Color Takayama's Historical District



Spring Festival: April 14 ~ 15
Autumn Festival: October 9 ~ 10

The Takayama Festival is one of Japan's Three Most Beautiful Festivals and is held twice a year: in the spring and autumn. The *yatai* floats, thought to have been created in 1718, utilize the master-level craftsmanship of the Hida region to the utmost degree (best seen in the *karakuri* marionette dolls and the ingeniously engineered *modoshi guruma* wheels). There are 23 festival floats - 12 in the spring and 11 in the autumn - that color Takayama's historical district with gorgeous, vibrant colors.

▶ P21 UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage

Furukawa Festival

The Historical Spectacle Filled with Raw Emotion and Intensity



April 19 ~ 20

The Furukawa Festival is an annual celebration held by Keta Wakamiya Shrine. It is comprised of three elements: the *omikoshi* portable-shrine procession, the intense *Okoshi-daiko* (literally meaning "drum of awakening") performance, and the peaceful *yatai* festival float parade. The highlight of the festival is the *Okoshi-daiko* performance where different districts - each with their own *tsuke-daiko* drums - compete late into the night in order to get as close to the gigantic *Okoshi-daiko* drum as possible.

▶ P32 UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage

Ogaki Festival

Experience the History of Cultural Exchange



Saturday and Sunday right before May 15

The Ogaki Festival is a rare instance in Japan where the *yama* floats from both the townspeople and a past feudal lord are displayed together. The central location of the Mino region in Japan plays an important role in the festival because one can see connections to both eastern and western festival cultures: the *karakuri* marionette dolls of the *yatai* floats were influenced by the Chukyo region's *yama* float processions, while the child *kabuki* performances were inspired by those of the Kinki region.

▶ P90 UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage

Enjoy Breath-Taking Scenery While Connecting With Local History and Culture

Shirakawa-go World Heritage Site

A Japanese Village Unchanged by Time Where Man and Nature Coexist Peacefully



Shirakawa-go has been designated as a World Cultural Heritage Site by UNESCO since 1995, and the thatched roof houses - which give insight into the lifestyle of Japanese people long ago - are the symbol of the village with some of them holding over 300 years of history. The village and surrounding scenery changes with each passing season, allowing for a different experience each time one visits.

▶ P36 UNESCO World Cultural Heritage

Hon-Minoshi Japanese Paper

Genuine Washi Paper Shaped by Over 1,300 Years of History



Hon-Minoshi was designated as an UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2014 for being one of Japan's Great Techniques for Hand-Making *Washi*. Only ten percent of Mino *Washi* products produced can meet the severely strict standards for becoming *Hon-Minoshi*. When creating *Hon-Minoshi*, artisans strive to create the paper in a way that filters light as beautifully as possible, and the soft, pure-white color of the paper is the result of their supreme craftsmanship - it is also considered the paper's defining characteristic.

▶ P64 UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage

Ayu of the Nagara River System

The Intimate Relationship Deeply Rooted into Everyday Life Here in Gifu



The Nagara River is a symbol of Gifu Prefecture and was chosen as one of Japan's 100 Most Famous Bodies of Water. The *Ayu* sweetfish that thrive in the river are deeply connected to the local economy, history, and culture. This mutual relationship - which is referred to as the *Satokawa* system - between the locals, the river environment, and the fishery organizations, is highly praised and was designated as a GIAHS (Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System) in 2015.

▶ P53 Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System

Chiune Sugihara

A Humanitarian and the Pride of Gifu Prefecture



Chiune Sugihara was a Japanese diplomat during World War II who saved the lives of thousands of Jewish refugees that were fleeing Nazi persecution by issuing them transit visas through Japan. At the Chiune Sugihara memorial hall in Yaotsu-cho, there is a reconstruction of the office in which Chiune Sugihara made the historic decision to issue the transit visas as it appeared during World War II. http://www.sugihara-museum.jp/index_en.html

Sodai Yosui

The Canal Created With Human Ingenuity



Sodai Yosui is designated as a Heritage Irrigation Structure (HIS) because of the fact that it is both over 100 years old, and a structure of historical and technological value. This 17-kilometer irrigation canal was built over the course of ten years (construction first began in 1663) with the sheer effort of three private residents. The creators used their own personal funds and received no assistance from the central government or local lords.

Heritage Irrigation Structure



[TAKAYAMA]: THE ESSENTIALS 高山

<https://www.hida-kankou.jp/kanko/foreign/en/>

GETTING HERE

- Meitetsu Bus Center (Nagoya) → [Nohi Bus/Meitetsu Bus/JR Tokai Bus on the Takayama-Nagoya Line • 2 hr 40 min • ¥2,980] → Takayama Nohi Bus Center ~ Or ~
- JR Nagoya Station → [JR Limited Express Wide View Hida • 2 hr 20 min • ¥6,030] → Takayama Station

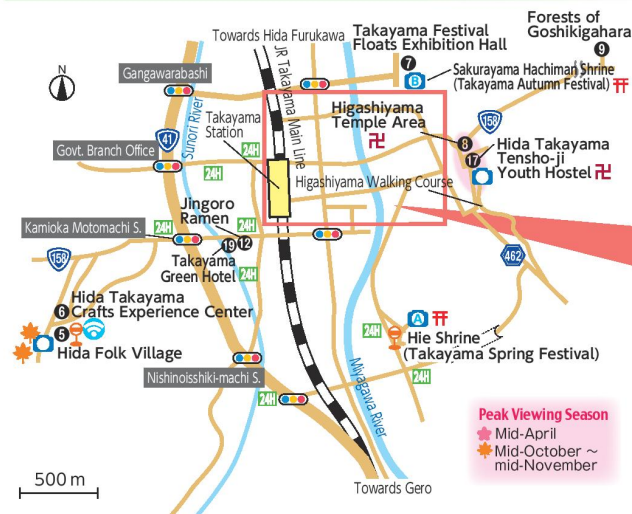
MAIN FEATURE

1 The Old Quarter of Takayama

Known by the name "Sanmachi," the old quarter of Takayama consists of three streets in the center of town that preserve much of the look and feel of the castle town as it was hundreds of years ago. Located within a 10 minutes' walk of Takayama Station, the old quarter is easily accessible and has become one of the must-see destinations in Gifu Prefecture. Old merchants' houses and sake breweries line both sides of the streets, lending the area a very traditionally "Japanese" atmosphere and architectural style.

From the *sugidama* balls of cedar that hang from the breweries to signify the arrival of a new sake brew to the *koshi* latticed doors and windows that grace the housefronts, Takayama's old quarter has much of which to boast. Indeed, Sanmachi is designated a "Nationally Recognized Important Historical Building Preservation Area" and is the heart of Takayama tourism. The striking black luster of these buildings, which one immediately notices, tells a tale of just how prosperous Takayama was: the wealthy merchants who lived in the area used the best quality wood in the construction of their houses, even though use of such timber was forbidden. Thus, they painted their homes black with soot so that this act would go unnoticed!

Among the many shops you can enjoy in Sanmachi are cafés, gift shops, and restaurants of many varieties. In addition, snacking on a local delicacy such as Hida beef sushi while strolling the town is certain to satisfy your stomach and your soul and is the recommended way to explore the town! The wisteria flowers that adorn the eaves of the old houses in the springtime give Takayama's old quarter an even more refined air, if indeed that is possible, so the spring is a particularly recommended time to visit.



Takayama City is a basin-shaped region that, as the largest city area-wise in all of Japan, is roughly the same size as Tokyo itself! High above sea level, the city sees plenty of snowfall, though the mountainous areas on the outskirts of the basin experience much more of it than does the downtown center. The historical part of Takayama was initially built up by the Kanamori clan which ruled over the region beginning in 1586 and which poured its resources into promoting culture and industry in the castle town that was established. When Japan entered the Edo period (1603 - 1868), Takayama came under the direct rule of the Tokugawa shogunate military regime, which protected commerce in the region, allowing it to flourish like never before. Central Takayama today retains much of its elegant architecture and flavor from that age of prosperity, causing many to call it a "Little Kyoto." Outside the city center, however, lush nature dominates the landscapes. It should be noted that Takayama is often referred to as "Hida Takayama," a remnant of the age in which the entire northern part of modern-day Gifu Prefecture was known as Hida Province (not to be confused with Hida City!).

TAKAYAMA

Takayama Festival



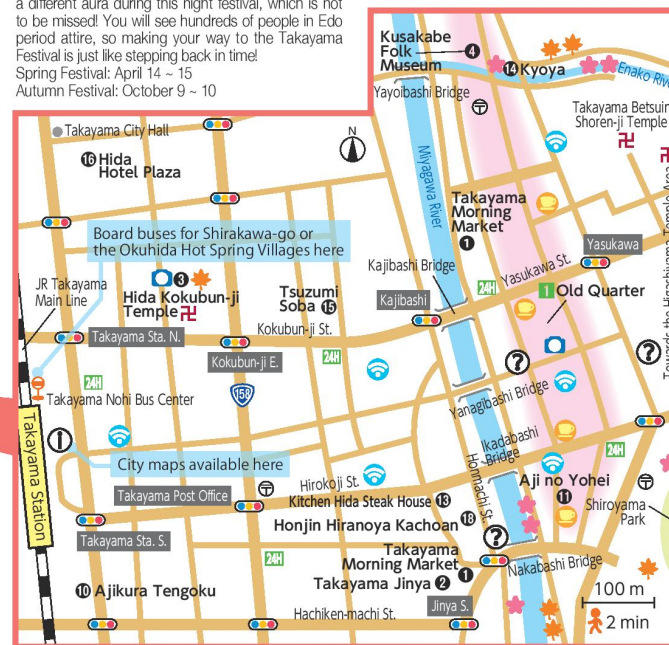
A twice-a-year spectacle that is held during spring and autumn, the Takayama Festival is also known as the Sanno Festival (spring) - the annual festival of Hie Shrine - and the Hachiman Festival (autumn) - the annual festival of Sakurayama Hachiman Shrine. It is counted as one of Japan's Three Most Beautiful Festivals, thanks in part to the splendor of the festival floats, or *yatai*, that are displayed and pulled around the town. These floats - 23 in all - are fantastic works of craftsmanship that speak to just how distinguished the wood and metal workers were in Takayama. Each district of the town has its own *yatai*, and the craftsmen held nothing back when constructing them, aiming to make the most glorious float of them all! You can really appreciate the exquisite craftsmanship when seeing the floats up close. Other highlights of the Takayama Festival are the *karakuri* marionette performances that are featured on some of the floats and the night festival, which gives you a chance to marvel at the *yatai* in an entirely different light; adorned with hundreds of glowing lanterns, each float takes on a different aura during this night festival, which is not to be missed! You will see hundreds of people in Edo period attire, so making your way to the Takayama Festival is just like stepping back in time!

Spring Festival: April 14 - 15
Autumn Festival: October 9 - 10

SPOTLIGHT Sarubobo



One of the most famous and most popular souvenirs of Gifu Prefecture is the sarubobo doll; it originated here in Hida Takayama and you will find it almost everywhere you go in the area. The name sarubobo was created by combining the Japanese word for monkey: "saru," with the word from the local Hida dialect for baby: "bobo" (the red face of the doll also reminded people of that of a Japanese macaque). Thus, the name sarubobo came to be. Since times of old, the color red was thought to have the power to ward off evil spirits and to stave off epidemic diseases, so *sarubobo* dolls have historically been used as protective charms. The people of Takayama would make the dolls and give them to loved ones in order to protect their children or to wish for a good marriage match or a safe childbirth. Of course, *sarubobo* are exceedingly cute and unique, making them popular items to bring back home regardless of the deeper meaning that they possess!



[TAKAYAMA] 高山



1 Takayama Morning Market 朝市



Back in the Edo period, rice and flower markets were held in Takayama, laying the foundation for the morning markets that would eventually emerge and become a fixture of the Takayama experience. It was after the establishment of these first markets that farmers began to bring vegetables and other fruits of their labor to be sold, and from then on the scale of the markets only continued to grow. At present, there are two separate morning markets that open every day in Takayama, one along the Miyagawa River and one in the plaza in front of the Takayama Jinya. At each of these locations, around 40 ~ 50 stalls are set-up, though that number may decrease significantly during the winter or on rainy days. Among the products you can buy here are freshly picked fruits and

vegetables, pickled goods and Japanese sweets, flowers, folkcraft goods, and more! Coming to the morning market is also a nice way to interact with the locals and learn a bit about them and their culture.

📍Miyagawa Market: Shimo-sannomachi, Takayama City; Jinya Plaza Market: 1-5 Hachiken-machi, Takayama City

🕒7 am ~ 12 pm (November ~ March: 8 am ~ 12 pm) 📞None 📍Takayama Station → [10-minute walk]

✉nakabashi.info@gmail.com (Nakabashi Tourist Information)

🌐http://www.hida.jp/english/activities/sightseeing-information/morning-market



2 Takayama Jinya 国史跡 高山陣屋



As a domain under the direct control of the Tokugawa shogunate during the Edo period, Takayama was home to a magistrate, or governor, sent from the capital of Edo to administer the rule of government in Hida Province. The Takayama Jinya, a historical government house, is where this magistrate lived and worked. Along with conducting legal trials and sentencing criminals, one of the main duties of the magistrate and his subordinates was collecting taxes, which in that time came in the form of barrels of rice. Thus we have the rice storehouse located right next to the main building, which is one of the largest such storehouses in all of Japan. Because of the economic influence of the Hida area, with its abundant forest and natural metal resources, the Takayama Jinya was among the most important magistrate offices in the country. And of the 60 or so offices that were of that same top rank during

the Edo period, the Takayama Jinya is the only one still standing, making it truly one-of-a-kind! You can tell a lot about Japanese society as it used to be by exploring the Jinya. For example, the tatami straw mats are indicative of the hierarchical structure that existed, as the mats in the rooms where lowly subordinates worked have no decorative fringes, the mats in the rooms where mid-level workers carried out their duties have black fringes, and the mats in the rooms where high ranking officials - such as the magistrate himself - worked have colorful fringes featuring the Tokugawa family crest. 📍1-5 Hachiken-machi, Takayama City 🕒8:45 am ~ 5 pm (August: until 6 pm, November ~ February: until 4:30 pm) 🎫¥430 (High school students and younger: free admission) 📅December 29, December 31 ~ January 1 📍Takayama Station → [10-minute walk]

☎0577-32-0643 🌐http://www.pref.gifu.jp/foreign-languages/English/tourism/takayama

Takayama's Sake

There is a saying in Japan that "where there is cold, there is good sake," which gets to the very heart of what is required in the sake production process. In addition to cold weather, clean water and high-quality rice are also prerequisites, and Hida Takayama boasts all of these in plenty. Since the mid-Edo period, sake production has flourished in this town, and while many more breweries used to exist in the past, there are still a number that continue to this day. Each brewery produces its own unique sake, which visitors can sample and/or purchase when they stop in for a peek. Japanese sake is made during the winter months, and throughout this period,

Takayama's breweries open their doors to the public and show visitors where all the magic happens. From mid-January to late February, they take turns offering these "Sake Brewery Tours," with one brewery every week holding them. Getting to see where sake is made is a rare opportunity, so be sure not to pass up this chance if you come to Takayama in the winter!



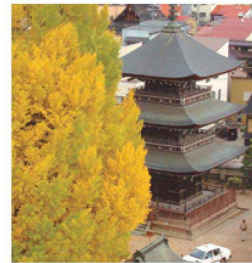
Munch While You Stroll!



Of the many ways to enjoy the old quarter of Takayama, a highly recommended one is to sample some of the many foods available at stalls and in shops while exploring the area on foot! Hida beef, for example, is available in many different shapes and forms, from *gyukushi* grilled skewers to *gyuman* beef-filled steamed rice buns to mostly-uncooked Hida beef sushi! You can also get delicious *mitarashi dango* - sticky rice balls skewered and painted with a sweet soy sauce - and a free taste of fragrant, concentrated miso soup at a miso shop. Finally, there's nothing quite like ice cream on a hot summer's day, so whatever the season, be sure to satisfy your taste buds as you stroll the town!



3 Hida Kokubun-ji Temple 飛騨國分寺



The oldest temple in Takayama City, Hida Kokubun-ji Temple is worth a visit...even if you don't actually enter the temple! The Main Hall of the temple, over 1,200 years old, is a designated national Important Cultural Property, and adjacent to that is a three-story pagoda that is a prefectural Important Cultural Property. But perhaps most stunning is the massive ginkgo tree set within the temple grounds opposite the pagoda, said to be 1,200 years old itself. A designated Natural Monument of Japan, this tree shows a different side of itself every season, especially during the fall when it turns a brilliant yellow. 📍1-83 Sowa-machi, Takayama City 🕒9 am ~ 4 pm 🎫¥300 (Middle and elementary school students: ¥250) 📅December 31 ~ January 1 📍Takayama Station → [5-minute walk] ☎0577-32-1395 🌐http://hidakokubunji.jp(JPN)



4 Kusakabe Folk Museum 日下部民藝館



Representative of the typical construction of merchants' houses in the Edo period, the Kusakabe Folk Museum has been designated a national Important Cultural Property. Its architectural beauty is such that American oil magnate John D. Rockefeller reportedly desperately wanted to buy the house and transport it back to the United States!

📍1-52 Oshin-machi, Takayama City 🕒9 am ~ 4:30 pm (December ~ February: until 4 pm) 🎫¥500 (Middle and elementary school students: ¥300) 📅December ~ February: Tuesday 📍Takayama Station → [20-minute walk] ☎0577-32-0072 🌐http://www.kusakabe-mingeikan.com/english.html



¥50 off admission fee (No expiration date)



Takayama Ramen

Said to have originated in street stalls long ago, Takayama ramen is a unique kind of ramen cherished by the locals. Also known by the name "*chuka* soba," which means "Chinese buckwheat noodles," Takayama ramen is actually not made out of buckwheat and is therefore NOT actually soba! A couple of the defining characteristics of this delicious regional dish are as follows. **Light soup with soy sauce base:** Unique among ramen is the process by which Takayama ramen's soup is made: the soy sauce is boiled in the pot together with the broth made from chicken and pork bones. With other kinds of ramen, the broth is prepared separately and poured on top of the noodles and soy sauce just prior to serving. Because of this special cooking method, Takayama ramen has an extremely unique quality: its taste changes slightly depending on how long the soup stock has been boiling!

Curly noodles: Compared with most other types of ramen, *chuka* soba's noodles have more volume to them because they are wavy as opposed to straight. This means that the noodles trap the soup and its taste more effectively, adding more flavor to every bite! And finally, the curly form gives Takayama ramen a somewhat different texture than other types when slurped!

[TAKAYAMA] 高山



5 Hida Folk Village 飛騨民俗村 飛騨の里



A beautiful open-air museum with lush, verdant scenery, the Hida Folk Village is home to over 30 structures that represent the various styles of houses found in the Hida region throughout its history. Including *gassho-zukuri* thatched roof houses typical of Shirakawa-go, many of these houses are hundreds of years old and were moved to and reassembled in the Folk Village for preservation purposes. Indeed, the aim of the Hida Folk Village is to give visitors a glimpse into the old lifestyle of Hida locals, and what better way to accomplish this than to transport them to a setting that recreates the original environment! In addition to the houses themselves, many old articles of daily use are exhibited here. Furthermore, you can watch demonstrations of various crafts, such as pottery and woodworking, at locations throughout the village. With no reservation required, you can also try your hand at making some of these crafts yourself (the exact menu of hands-on activities available depends on the day)! Finally, the Hida Folk Village has illumination events during the peak season of autumn and during the winter, making the landscape even more magical!

📍 1-590 Kamioka Motomachi, Takayama City 🕒 8:30 am ~ 5 pm 🎫 ¥700 (Middle and elementary school students: ¥200) 📞 None 📍 Takayama Nohi Bus Center → [Sarubobo Bus · 10 min] → "Hida no Sato" bus stop ☎️ 0577-34-4711 🌐 <http://www.hidanosato-tpo.jp/english12.htm>

📷 Picture postcard (Valid until March 31, 2021) 📍 📞 🌐



6 Hida Takayama Crafts Experience Center 飛騨高山 思い出体験館



This workshop is the place to go for hands-on activities, as you can try mastering one of 10 different crafts (no reservation required). From *sarubobo* dolls representative of Takayama (🎫 ¥1,500) to your own set of chopsticks and case (🎫 ¥1,400), there is an exciting variety of items to be made here. And few things make better mementos than those made with your own two hands, so stop by here before or after making your way to the Hida Folk Village located right nearby! 📍 1-436 Kamioka Motomachi, Takayama City 🕒 10 am ~ 4 pm (Reception time) 📞 Thursday (During the busy season: none)

📍 Takayama Nohi Bus Center → [Sarubobo Bus · 10 min] → "Hida no Sato" bus stop ☎️ 0577-34-4711 (Hida Folk Village) 🌐 <http://www.omoidetaiken.jp/JPN>

📷 ¥100 off an activity of your choice (Valid until March 31, 2021) 📍 📞 🌐



7 Takayama Festival Floats Exhibition Hall 高山祭屋台会館



This museum displays some of the gorgeous *yatai* festival floats, national Important Cultural Properties, that are actually used during the Takayama Festival. Awarded a 2-star rating by the Michelin Green Guide Japan, the Exhibition Hall is affiliated with the adjacent Sakurayama Nikkoku Museum, where you can wonder at a 1/10 scale replica of the World Heritage Site Toshogu Shrine located in Nikko. For those who are unable to make their way to Takayama during the days in which the festival is held, a trip to the Takayama Festival Floats Exhibition Hall is highly recommended! 📍 178 Sakura-machi,

Takayama City 🕒 9 am ~ 5 pm 🎫 ¥900 (High school students: ¥550, Middle and elementary school students: ¥450) 📞 None 📍 Takayama Station → [20-minute walk] ☎️ 0577-32-5100 🌐 <http://www.hidahachimangu.jp/english/index.html#sec04>

📷 Picture postcard (Valid until March 31, 2021) 📍 📞 🌐



8 Higashiyama Temple Area 東山寺町

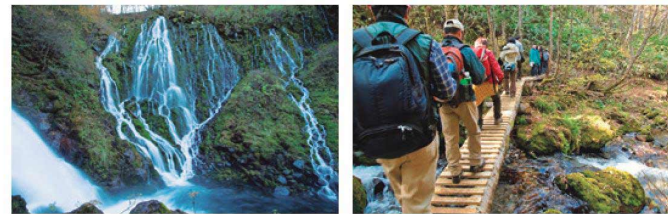


Set in the mountain foothills to the east of Takayama's old quarter is the Higashiyama Area, in which there is a high concentration of Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines. This area was first built up during the Warring States period of Japanese history (mid-15th century to the early 17th) by Nagachika Kanamori, who ruled over Hida Province at the time. When he built the castle town near Takayama Castle, he also decided to move existing temples and shrines to, and build new ones at, the foot of the mountain, modeling the area after the Higashiyama district of Kyoto from which it gets its name. Each and every temple and shrine has a long and distinguished history, and many important people with connections to Takayama are buried here. Located a short distance away from the center of town, the Higashiyama Temple Area is a very quiet place steeped in nature where you can enjoy a tranquil stroll, appreciating the beauty of the temples lining the walking path. Designated an Important Cultural Property of both the prefecture and the city, the Higashiyama Area represents another beautiful side of Takayama and is, along with the old quarter, a central reason as to why Takayama is known as a "Little Kyoto."

📍 Tensho-ji-machi and elsewhere, Takayama City 📍 Takayama Station → [20-minute walk] 📞 nakabashi.info@gmail.com (Nakabashi Tourist Information) 🌐 <http://www.hida.jp/english/activities/sightseeing-information/higashiyama-temple-area-higashiyama-walking-course>



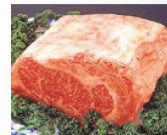
9 Forests of Goshikigahara 五色ヶ原の森



Located at the southern edge of the Chubu-Sangaku National Park are the forests of Goshikigahara in the foothills of Mt. Norikura. A vast wooded area of around 3,000 hectares, Goshikigahara is a gem of nature that was chosen as one of the "Gifu Brand New Treasures." For many years, Goshikigahara remained untouched by human hands, thereby preserving its lush natural environment and biological diversity. Visitors can enjoy a trek through and along the many mountain streams, wetlands, and moors that dot the area under the supervision of the local guides. From early summer to late autumn, come experience the beauty of Gifu Prefecture's wild natural environment here in Goshikigahara! Reservations required at least 10 days in advance. Time required: 8 hours (Including time for lunch and breaks)

📍 471-3 Nyukawa-cho Kute, Takayama City 🕒 7 am ~ 4 pm 🎫 ¥9,000 📞 Wednesday, November 1 ~ May 19 📍 Takayama Station → [Taxi · 30 min] ☎️ 0577-79-2280 🌐 <http://www.hida.jp/english/activities/sightseeing-information/goshikigahara-plateau>

Hida Beef



Hida beef is a designation awarded to Japanese Black cattle of the highest quality that is bred in the Hida region of Gifu Prefecture and that meets the strictest of standards. Recognized as Japan's best beef multiple times, the name "Hida beef" is synonymous with succulent taste and exquisite, marbled texture. The soft, pink meat will melt in your mouth and can be enjoyed in many forms, from steak to *shabu-shabu* style, which involves dipping thin slices into hot water for a few seconds to cook them. When eating Hida beef, you can almost taste the time and labor that went into caring for the cattle, resulting in this meat that is among the most delicious foods in Gifu.

[TAKAYAMA] 高山

10 Ajikura Tengoku 味蔵天国



This restaurant is run by the Central Union of Agricultural Co-operatives of Japan and stocks the very best in Hida beef.
 4-147 Hanasato-machi, Takayama City
 11 am ~ 2 pm, 5 pm ~ 9 pm **X** Tuesday
 Takayama Station → [2-minute walk]
 0577-37-1129
<http://www.ajikura.jp> (JPN)

Free dessert for those dining here (valid for up to 5 people) (Valid until March 31, 2021)

11 Aji no Yohei (Funasaka Sake Brewery) 味の与平 (船坂酒造店)



Run by the Funasaka Sake Brewery, Aji no Yohei is a restaurant where you can enjoy Hida beef and locally grown vegetables while enriching your meal with some of the brewery's finest sake.
 105 Kami-sannomachi, Takayama City 11:30 am ~ 2:30 pm (Last order), 5 pm ~ 8 pm (Last order) **X** No set closing day (closed during dinner time Sunday - Thursday in the winter)
 Takayama Station → [15-minute walk] 0577-32-0016
<http://www.funasaka-shuzo.co.jp> (JPN)

Original small sake cup (Valid until March 31, 2021)

12 Jingoro Ramen 甚五郎らーめん



At this Takayama ramen shop, the ramen soup base - made by boiling chicken and pork bones to bring out their flavor and then adding a special homemade soy sauce - is delightfully rich and yet not too heavy. The thinly pulled, curly noodles and tender roasted pork fillets that absorb the surrounding flavors add the finishing touches to this ramen, whose parts mesh perfectly with one another.
 2-132-1 Nishinoishiki-machi, Takayama City 10:30 am ~ 3 pm, 8 pm ~ 2 am **X** Closed during dinner time on Sundays and Mondays
 Takayama Station → [8-minute walk] 0577-34-5565

One bowl of rice and pickles with every order during lunchtime (Valid until March 31, 2021)

13 Kitchen Hida Steak House ステーキハウス キッチン飛騨



With a brickwork façade that you won't likely miss, Kitchen Hida is a Hida beef specialty restaurant with 50 years' history serving the best in Japanese beef. Be sure to stop by for a truly delicious experience!
 1-66 Honmachi, Takayama City 11:30 am ~ 2:45 pm (Last order), 5 pm ~ 7:45 pm (Last order) **X** Wednesday Takayama Station → [10-minute walk] 0577-36-2911
<http://www.kitchenhida.com/english>

One drink (Valid until March 31, 2021)

14 Kyoya 京や



At this restaurant, you can enjoy the flavors of Hida beef, other regional cuisine, and fresh seafood shipped straight from the Japan Sea, all in a beautiful interior space that retains its 160-year-old charm.
 1-77 Oshin-machi, Takayama City 11 am ~ 9 pm (Last order) **X** Tuesday Takayama Station → [15-minute walk]
 0577-34-7660
<http://www.kyoya-hida.jp> (JPN)

One small glass of homemade perilla juice (No expiration date)

15 Tsuzumi Soba つづみそば



Ever since its founding in 1956, this shop has been protecting the famed tradition of Hida's "chuka soba," otherwise known as Takayama ramen. The soup - created by boiling chicken and pork bones and vegetables and adding to this a dried sardine-based broth - is a fragrant delicacy that is sure to please. Unlock the pockets of rich flavor in this light ramen soup when dining at Tsuzumi Soba!
 62 Asahi-machi, Takayama City 11:30 am ~ 2 pm, 5 pm ~ 9 pm (Sunday: 11 am ~ 2 pm) (Or until supplies last) **X** Tuesday Takayama Station → [6-minute walk] 0577-32-0299
<http://j47.jp/tsuzumi> (JPN)

One boiled or raw egg with an order of noodles (Valid until March 31, 2021)

16 Hida Hotel Plaza ひだホテルプラザ



This hotel prides itself on its complete array of facilities, from the two large communal *onsen* baths to the three restaurants featuring Japanese, Western, and Chinese cuisine.
 2-60 Hanaoka-machi, Takayama City
 1 night + 2 meals: from ¥12,960
 Takayama Station (NORIKURA Gate) → [5-minute walk]
 0577-33-4600
<http://www.hida-hotelp Plaza.co.jp/english>

Small gift (Valid until March 31, 2021)

17 Hida Takayama Tensho-ji Youth Hostel ひだ高山天照寺ユースホステル



A youth hostel located in the annex to a Buddhist temple with over 800 years of history. Tensho-ji is found in the heart of the Higashiyama Temple Area, an elevated position that offers fantastic views all around.
 83 Tensho-ji-machi, Takayama City 1 night (No meals included): from ¥2,800 Takayama Station → [20-minute walk]
 0577-32-6345
<http://www.tenshoji.jp/english/about.html>

Drip coffee and tea bags (Valid until March 31, 2021)

18 Honjin Hiranoya Kachoon 本陣平野屋 花兆庵



At this *ryokan* that offers the best in hospitality, you can enjoy delicious meals brought out dish by dish and served in tableware to match the season.
 1-34 Honmachi, Takayama City
 1 night + 2 meals: from ¥25,920
 Takayama Station → [7-minute walk]
 0577-34-1234
<http://www.honjinhiranoya.co.jp/english>

Complimentary *yukata* rental for those who request one when making their reservation (Valid until March 31, 2021)

19 Takayama Green Hotel 高山グリーンホテル



Combining the functionality of a city hotel with the atmosphere of a traditional Japanese *ryokan* inn, the Takayama Green Hotel is a resort hotel perfect for a relaxing stay in Takayama.
 2-180 Nishinoishiki-machi, Takayama City
 1 night + 2 meals: from ¥11,880
 Takayama Station (HAKUSAN Gate) → [6-minute walk]
 0577-33-5500
<https://www.takayama-gh.com/translation>

Mineral water for staying guests (No expiration date)

Visit the website of the Hida Takayama Ryokan & Hotel Association in order to reserve accommodations: <http://www.takamaryokan.jp/english/>



[OKUHIDA HOT SPRING VILLAGES]: THE ESSENTIALS 奥飛騨温泉郷

<http://www.okuhida.or.jp/en/>

GETTING HERE

Takayama Nohi Bus Center → [Nohi Bus on the Hirayu/Shinhotaka Line · 1 hr · ¥1,570] → Hirayu Bus Terminal ("Hirayu Onsen" bus stop)

MAIN FEATURE

The Five *Onsen* Towns of Okuhida

Hirayu Hot Spring:

Said to have been discovered by the feudal lord Takeda Shingen in the Warring States period (mid-15th century to the beginning of the 17th), Hirayu is now a central hub for tourism in and between Okuhida, Kamikochi (in Nagano Prefecture), and Mt. Norikura. Visitors can enjoy various types of hot spring water here.

Shinhirayu Hot Spring:

Located in central Okuhida, Shinhirayu boasts an elegant atmosphere and elaborately designed open-air *onsen* baths that are favorites of visitors to this region. The hot spring water has proved effective at relieving fatigue and wiping away one's stress!

Fukuji Hot Spring:

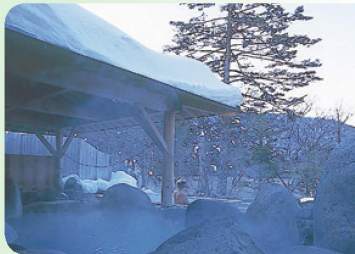
A secluded area that captures the charm of the Hida region even more than the other Hot Spring Villages. In Fukuji, you can also find bicarbonate *onsen* baths that will make your skin as smooth as silk!

Tochio Hot Spring:

Most of the accommodations in this village are guest houses, lending Tochio a very homely air. The deeply personal hospitality that is found at these inns and the velvety quality of the hot spring water make Tochio an extremely appealing destination.

Shinhotaka Hot Spring:

Of the villages in Okuhida, Shinhotaka is located deepest in the mountains, and for this reason the area is rich in open-air hot spring baths from where you can take in the beautiful mountain scenery. The clear, colorless, odorless hot spring water is about as easy on the skin as *onsen* come!



SPOTLIGHT

Okuhida's Winter Festivities



With its cold and snowy winters, the Okuhida Hot Spring Villages are the stage for a number of festivals and events that highlight the charms of this winter wonderland. From frozen waterfalls to snow huts and sculptures, there are many unique sights across the five villages that you can only enjoy in a region such as this. In addition, many of these sights are illuminated at night, bringing them vividly to life amongst the darkness of winter!

Major Events:

Aodaru Illumination (Late December ~ late March), Taruma Kanekori Illumination (Late December ~ end of February), Tochio Hot Spring Winter Illumination (Late December ~ end of February), Hirayu Waterfall Ice Festival (February 15 ~ 25), Nakao Kamakura Festival (February 1 ~ 14)

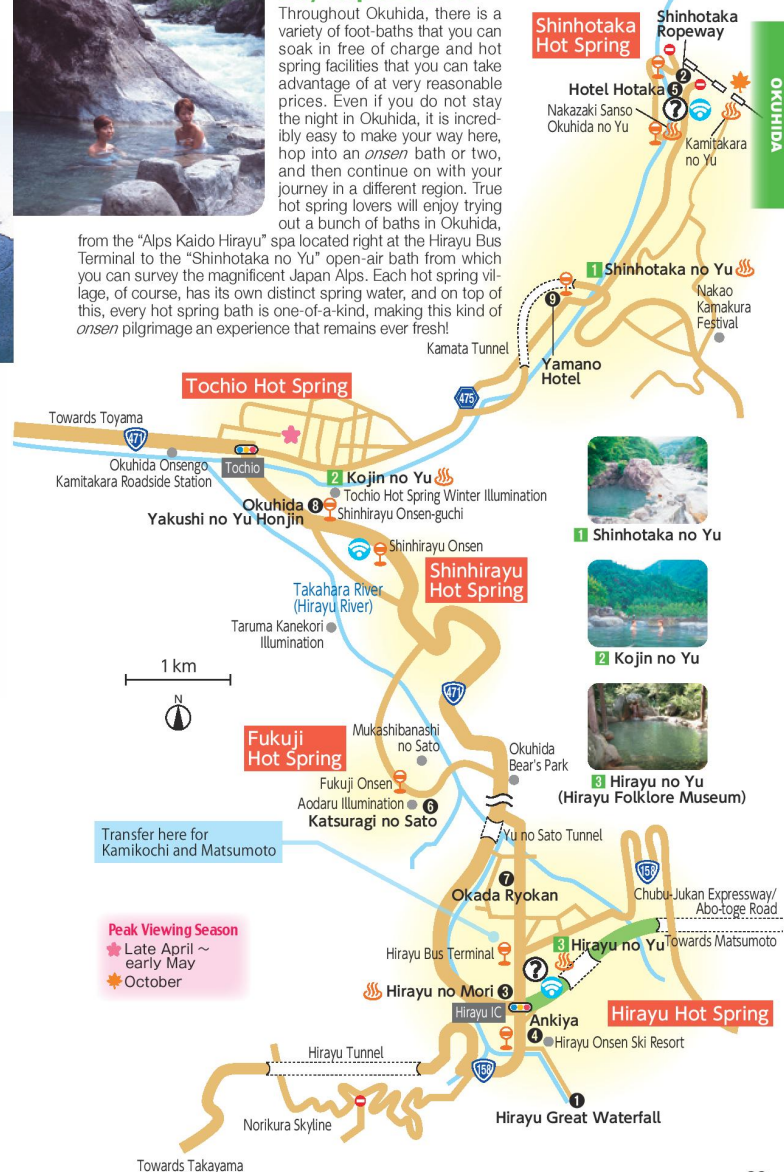
The magnificence of the Northern Alps takes on a different look and feel every season of the year, and it is this grand natural environment that encircles the Okuhida area of Takayama City. Okuhida is composed of five distinct hot spring villages: Hirayu, Shinhirayu, Fukuji, Tochio, and Shinhotaka. These villages all have their own unique charms in addition to their own particular types of *onsen* water. A hot spring area with much history, Okuhida is blessed with an abundance of spring water bubbling forth from the earth, and because of this there are more open-air hot spring baths here than anywhere else in Japan! It is the perfect place to experience traditional Japanese hospitality and the old way of life at a simple, tranquil inn tucked away in the valleys between the mountains.



Day Trip to *Onsen*

Throughout Okuhida, there is a variety of foot-baths that you can soak in free of charge and hot spring facilities that you can take advantage of at very reasonable prices. Even if you do not stay the night in Okuhida, it is incredibly easy to make your way here, hop into an *onsen* bath or two, and then continue on with your journey in a different region. True hot spring lovers will enjoy trying out a bunch of baths in Okuhida,

from the "Alps Kaido Hirayu" spa located right at the Hirayu Bus Terminal to the "Shinhotaka no Yu" open-air bath from which you can survey the magnificent Japan Alps. Each hot spring village, of course, has its own distinct spring water, and on top of this, every hot spring bath is one-of-a-kind, making this kind of *onsen* pilgrimage an experience that remains ever fresh!



[OKUHIDA HOT SPRING VILLAGES]

奥飛驒温泉郷



1 Hirayu Great Waterfall 平湯大滝



Selected as one of Japan's 100 best waterfalls, the Hirayu Great Waterfall is a 64-meter tall, 6-meter wide beauty of nature. In February, it is illuminated after freezing over, creating a giant pillar of ice that is the center of one of the region's main winter festivals, the Hirayu Waterfall Ice Festival! **📍**Hirayu, Okuhida Onsen-go, Takayama City **🚶**Takayama Nohi Bus Center → [Nohi Bus on the Hirayu/Shinhotaka Line · 52 min] → "Otaki-guchi · Kyampujo-mae" bus stop → [20-minute walk] **☎**0578-86-2111 [Takayama City Kamitakara Region Office] **🌐**<http://www.okuhida.or.jp/en/archives/1804>



2 Shinhotaka Ropeway 新穂高ロープウェイ

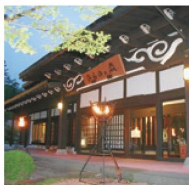


The only two-tiered gondola in all of Japan, the Shinhotaka Ropeway takes visitors to a height of 2,156 meters in 25 minutes, broken down into two trips. Unlike some other destinations such as the Alpine Route, this ropeway is in-service year-round, offering spectacular views of each season's mountain scenery. In particular, the winter view - both from the windows of the gondolas and from the observation point at the top of the mountain - will make your jaw drop! As you might expect from its high altitude, the area around the ropeway sees meters of snowfall in the dead of winter, and you can enjoy a stroll through a "snow corridor" at the top of the mountain where walls of white surround you on both sides. Don't miss this beautiful location that has won a 2-star rating from the Michelin Green Guide Japan!

📍Shinhotaka Onsen, Okuhida Onsen-go, Takayama City **🕒**8:30 am ~ 4 pm (Times may change depending on the season) **🎫**Roundtrip: ¥2,900 **🚫**None (There may be occasions when the ropeway is closed for inspection) **🚶**Takayama Nohi Bus Center → [Nohi Bus on the Hirayu/Shinhotaka Line · 1 hr 30 min] → "Shinhotaka Ropeway" bus stop **☎**0578-89-2252 **🌐**<http://shinhotaka-ropeway.jp.e.uk.hp.transer.com>



3 Hirayu no Mori ひらゆの森



A multi-purpose lodge where you can enjoy shopping, dining, hot springs, and recuperative walks through nature that the Japanese refer to as "forest baths." There are a total of 16 open-air *onsen* baths at Hirayu no Mori, making it an ideal destination for refreshing oneself! **📍**763-1 Hirayu, Okuhida Onsen-go, Takayama City **🕒**10 am ~ 9 pm (Last entry: 8:30 pm) **🛀**Hot spring entry fee: ¥500 (Children: ¥400) **🚫**None (April, September, and December: closed on certain days for maintenance) **🚶**Hirayu Bus Terminal → [3-minute walk] **☎**0578-89-3338 **🌐**<http://hirayunomori.co.jp/contents/english>



4 Ankiya あんき屋



Come enjoy some *teppanyaki* cuisine cooked on an iron griddle or the weekly lunch specials that are favorites of the locals! And the distinctly Japanese interior will further add to your enjoyment, making Ankiya the complete package!

📍768-36 Hirayu, Okuhida Onsen-go, Takayama City **🕒**11 am ~ 9 pm (Winter: from 8 am, Wednesday: until 5 pm) **🚶**Hirayu Bus Terminal → [15-minute walk] **☎**0578-89-2755 **🌐**<http://hirayunomori.co.jp/contents/english/dining01.html>

🎁 One soft drink (Valid until March 31, 2021)



5 Hotel Hotaka ホテル穂高



The closest hotel to the Shinhotaka Ropeway, Hotel Hotaka boasts a beautiful open-air garden hot spring bath that looks out onto the Northern Japan Alps.

📍Shinhotaka Onsen, Okuhida Onsen-go, Takayama City **🎫**1 night + 2 meals: from ¥13,110 **🚶**Takayama Nohi Bus Center → [Nohi Bus on the Hirayu/Shinhotaka Line · 1 hr 30 min] → "Shinhotaka Ropeway" bus stop **☎**0578-89-2200 **🌐**http://www.hotel-hotaka.jp/ig_en

🎁 Discount coupons for nearby tourist destinations (Valid until March 31, 2021)



6 Katsuragi no Sato かつら木の郷



This *ryokan* takes great pride in the hot spring water that bubbles up from the ground on the premises itself. Enjoy Hida beef cuisine in the traditional style - over an *irori* sunken hearth!

📍10 Fukuji, Okuhida Onsen-go, Takayama City **🎫**1 night + 2 meals: from ¥21,600 **🚶**Takayama Nohi Bus Center → [Nohi Bus on the Hirayu/Shinhotaka Line · 70 min] → "Fukuji Onsen" bus stop **☎**0578-89-1001 **🌐**http://www.hitou.or.jp/en/hymbrrsv/hymbr_pg01.html?yc=gk155

🎁 One cup of coffee or juice in the lobby (No expiration date)



7 Okada Ryokan 岡田旅館



With hot spring baths drawing water from four sources in Hirayu that have slightly different mineral properties, this *ryokan* is a place where you can enjoy *onsen* to its fullest.

📍505 Hirayu, Okuhida Onsen-go, Takayama City **🎫**1 night + 2 meals: from ¥12,750 **🚶**Hirayu Bus Terminal → [3-minute walk] **☎**0578-89-2336 **🌐**<http://www.okadaryokan.com/> (JPN)

🎁 One packet of hot spring mineral deposits per guest (Valid until March 31, 2021)



8 Okuhida Yakushi no Yu Honjin 奥飛驒薬師のゆ本陣



At this Japanese-style inn, you can enjoy two different kinds of *onsen* baths as well as steamed cuisine in the evening that is prepared using hot spring water.

📍208-48 Shinhirayu Onsen, Okuhida Onsen-go, Takayama City **🎫**1 night + 2 meals: from ¥12,000 **🚶**Takayama Nohi Bus Center → [Nohi Bus on the Hirayu/Shinhotaka Line · 75 min] → "Shinhirayu Onsen-guchi" bus stop → [1-minute walk] **☎**0578-89-2026 **🌐**http://www.yakushi-hj.com/ig_en/

🎁 Ticket for a complimentary coffee (Valid until March 31, 2021)



9 Yamano Hotel 穂高荘 山のホテル



With an unrivaled location overlooking the Northern Alps and one of the largest outdoor hot spring baths in the region, Yamano Hotel takes immense pride in everything it offers its guests. One more such source of pride is the food prepared in the kitchens, which overflows with seasonality and local flavor. **📍**577-13 Kansaka, Okuhida Onsen-go, Takayama City **🎫**1 night + 2 meals: from ¥16,350 **🚶**Takayama Nohi Bus Center → [Nohi Bus on the Hirayu/Shinhotaka Line · 1 hr 26 min] → "Yamano Hotel" bus stop; Alternatively: Takayama Station → [Shuttle bus at a small fee] **☎**0578-89-2004 **🌐**<http://shinhotaka-yamanohotel.jp/en>

🎁 Coffee in the lounge (No expiration date)

OKUHIDA



[HIDA]: THE ESSENTIALS 飛驒

<https://www.hida-kankou.jp/kanko/foreign/en/>

GETTING HERE

Takayama Station → [JR Takayama Main Line • 16 min • ¥240] → Hida-Furukawa Station

MAIN FEATURE

The Furukawa Festival and Its Soul-Stirring *Okoshi-daiko*

The town of Hida Furukawa may trump all other destinations in Gifu when it comes to the number of truly unique festivals and events that are held here. Chief among these is the Furukawa Festival, which takes place every year on April 19th and 20th. With over 400 years of history, this Shinto ritual is considered one of Japan's Three Great "Naked Festivals," though not to worry, the men are in fact half-clad in loincloths! It is also a famous "fighting festival," a class of festivals in Japan that involves much colliding and competing for dominance. The festival also includes more traditional elements, such as the parade of festival floats and the procession of the *mikoshi* portable shrine that houses the deity being worshipped.



It is said that the Furukawa Festival represents both "stillness" and "movement," with the former embodied by the elaborate *yatai* floats and the calm *mikoshi* procession. This part of the festival has much in common with the famed Takayama Festival, including *karakuri* marionette performances. But one thing that you do not find in Takayama is the adorable children's kabuki that is performed on one of the nine *yatai*. The festival's "still" side can be enjoyed during both days, but the star of the show is undoubtedly the "movement" component that takes center stage on the night of the 19th.

From 9 pm to around 2 am, the spectacle of the *okoshi-daiko*, the "rousing" or "wakening drum," takes place. It is thought that long ago, the striking of this large drum served as a literal wake-up call for the townspeople, signaling the start of the festival. Both in that sense and in the more abstract sense of "rousing" the spirits of all in attendance, the naming of this stirring drum performance is spot-on! Soon after the beating of the drum begins, hundreds of half-clad men divided into many groups begin to rush towards the *okoshi-daiko*. The members of each group - which represent the town's different districts - hold a smaller drum called a *tsuke-daiko* tied to a long stick. The goal is to get one's *tsuke-daiko* as close to the *okoshi-daiko* as possible, resulting in the vigorous jostling, or "fighting," that is seen. Occupying that closest position is thought to bring good luck, and the men of Furukawa spend all night attempting to gain and hold that position as the *okoshi-daiko* parades through the town. A nationally designated Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property, the Furukawa Festival is the most important period of the year, and the chance to be one of the men beating the *okoshi-daiko* is a once-in-a-lifetime honor of which Furukawa men dream.



Peak Viewing Season
★ Mid ~ late April
★ Mid-October ~ early November

A town overflowing with traditional Japanese old-world charm, Furukawa is the heart and soul of Hida City. In many ways similar to Takayama, Hida Furukawa was, in the Edo period (1603 ~ 1868), a flourishing castle town populated by merchants and artisans. From Japanese candles to sake, a variety of traditional Japanese commodities have a long history of being produced here. Along the center of Furukawa runs a picturesque little canal that creates a delightful scene when viewed together with the *koshi* latticed window shades of the merchants' houses and the white-walled storehouses that have long been the sites of sake production. You can get a sense of the depth of Hida's history and culture by walking the town, which is neatly arranged in an easy-to-explore grid. Most of the time, Furukawa is a very tranquil, low-key town, but this all changes on April 19th and 20th with the arrival of the Furukawa Festival, a staple of Hida's spring season that is perhaps the most electric event in all of Gifu!



Town of White-Walled Storehouses Along the Seto River

Through Hida Furukawa flows the Seto River canal, which features prominently in the center of town. Home to around 800 brilliantly colored Japanese carp, the canal gives the streets of Furukawa a very tranquil feel, with a little flair added by the reds and yellows of the fish. The canal runs beside a string of distinctive white-walled storehouses that are a visually striking background to the flowing water and colored carp, making the old castle town of Furukawa - the other "Little Kyoto" of the Hida region in addition to Takayama - an exceedingly picturesque destination.



SPECIALTY PRODUCT

1 Japanese *Warosoku* Candles

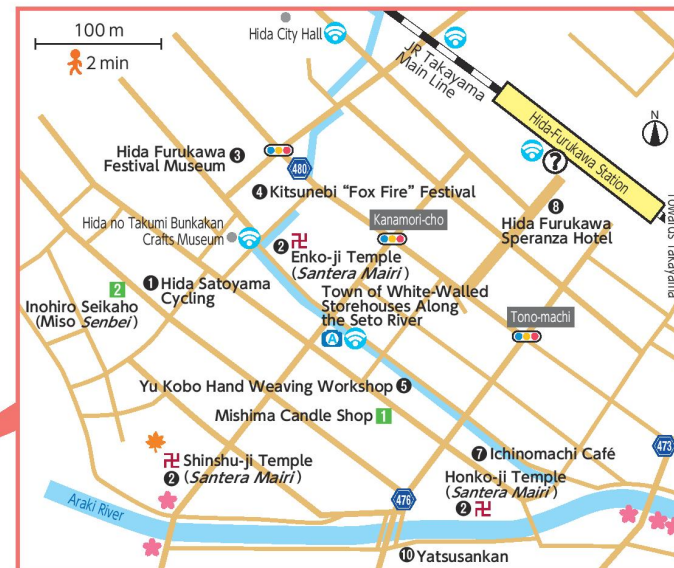
At the Mishima Candle Shop in Furukawa, traditional Japanese *warosoku* candles have been made since the Edo period using techniques introduced from China. Handmade *warosoku* are rare in Japan and make fantastic gifts. Japanese candles differ from western candles in several ways: they last longer, are made such that the wax forms concentric rings around the core, and produce flames that flicker even in the absence of wind because of how the wicks are made. At Mishima, they produce uniquely patterned candles in addition to the more traditional plain red and plain white ones! ☎9:30 am ~ 5 pm ☒Wednesday(there may be irregular closures)



LOCAL SPECIALTY

2 Miso *Senbei*

You can get your hands on some delicious baked *senbei* rice crackers made using miso at the Inohiro Seikaho shop in Furukawa. They make their own miso here, fermenting it in one of the white-walled storehouses for three years, resulting in a sweet and salty taste that will keep you wanting more! They are best when fresh out of the oven, and you can get some piping hot crackers if you make your way to the shop! ☎8 am ~ 8 pm ☒January 1



Detailed MAP ▶ https://www.hida-kankou.jp/kanko/foreign/en/plan-your-visit/pdf/Hida_Furukawa_Sightseeing_Map.pdf

HIDA

[HIDA] 飛驒



1 SATOYAMA EXPERIENCE



One of the top "things to do" in all of Japan - according to Trip Advisor - a tour offered by Satoyama Cycling gives visitors the opportunity to get close to the "real" Japan by enjoying a ride through the countryside scenery, interacting with Japanese locals, and maybe even sampling some delicious locally grown fruit! With a knowledgeable guide at the helm, take in the outdoors of Hida Furukawa and learn about the Japanese *satoyama* - the ideal of a rural village existing in harmony with its surrounding natural environment - on a tour suited to your pace. ⑨8-11 Ninomachi, Furukawa-cho, Hida City ②9 am ~ 6 pm ④Standard course:

¥7,600, Half-course: ¥4,900 (Children 12 and under: 50% off) ③Hida-Furukawa Station → [7-minute walk] ①0577-73-5715 ⑤https://satoyama-experience.com/cycling



2 Santera Mairi "Three Temples Pilgrimage"



The *Santera Mairi*, held on January 15th, is another unique festival with a history of over 300 years. It is well-known nationwide as a festival where young people's prayers for finding love and for luck in marriage come true! Originally, though, it had none of this connotation, and was simply a pilgrimage to each of the three Buddhist temples in Furukawa. There are many charms to the festival, from the giant Japanese candles and snow candles that line the snowy streets to the 1,000 candles that are placed along the Seto River canal by worshippers. These last candles are either white - signifying a prayer for fortune in love - or red - representing thanks for love found during the year past!

⑨Central Furukawa-cho, Hida City ②From 12 pm actual time may vary ③Hida-Furukawa Station → [5-minute walk] ④0577-74-1192 (Hida Tourism Association) ⑤https://www.hida-kankou.jp/kanko/foreign/en/things-to-do/festivals



3 Hida Furukawa Festival Museum 飛驒古川まつり会館



Though it cannot compare to attending the Furukawa Festival in person, the detailed glimpse into the goings-on of the festival that you get at this museum is the next best thing. Here, you can look upon a *yatai* float used during the festival, see a *karakuri* marionette demonstration, and watch a 3-D video that actually brings you closer to the *okoshi-daiko* action than if you were there in the flesh! This museum is a fabulous substitute that will make

you want to come back to Furukawa to experience the real thing! ⑨14-5 Ichinomachi, Furukawa-cho, Hida City ②9 am ~ 5 pm ④¥500, Middle and elementary school students: ¥300 ⑤None ③Hida-Furukawa Station → [5-minute walk] ①0577-73-3511 ⑥http://www.okosidaiko.com/ (JPN)

①10% off admission fee (No expiration date) → [5-minute walk] ①0577-73-3511 ⑥http://www.okosidaiko.com/ (JPN)



4 Kitsunebi "Fox Fire" Festival ぎつねまつり



A re-enactment of a local nursery tale, the *Kitsunebi* Festival is yet another of Hida Furukawa's fascinating and alluring annual events. *Kitsunebi* is a phenomenon of ghostly lights seen at night, literally meaning "fox fire" in English, and is comparable to the will-o'-the-wisp of European folklore. In local Hida folklore, the *kitsunebi* is said to be the torch light from a wedding procession of foxes. This festival re-creates the procession and following marriage ceremony, turning the town of Hida Furukawa into the mystical stage of a fairy tale on the 4th Saturday of September. Those who catch a glimpse of the foxes' marriage ceremony are said to be blessed with a bountiful harvest, booming business, and safety for their families, so make your way to Furukawa, get some fox-themed face paint applied, and take in the spectacle!

⑨Central Furukawa-cho, Hida City ②Wedding procession: 6:30 pm actual time may vary ③Hida-Furukawa Station → [5-minute walk] ④0577-74-1192 (Hida Tourism Association) ⑤http://www.hida-kankou.jp/event/16/article/



5 Yu Kobo Hand Weaving Workshop 手織り 由布衣工房



Cloths and garments of all kinds, dyed using plants that have long been used as medicinal herbs, are woven by hand here at the Yu Kobo Workshop. Pick up some of their beautiful creations to take home!

⑨5-12 Ichinomachi, Furukawa-cho, Hida City ②9:30 am ~ 4:30 pm ③Hida-Furukawa Station → [5-minute walk] ④0577-73-7066 ⑤https://www.yuh-koubou.com



6 Rail-MTB Gattan Go!! レールマウンテンバイク ガッタンゴー!!



Cruise along abandoned railway tracks on a mountain bike! Choose from two courses: the Town Course, a perfect choice for families that will take you through tunnels, over bridges, and past locals' houses; and the Canyon Course, a route jam-packed with thrills that will have you cruising over a variety of tall bridges and old, iron bridges. The mountain bikes are electric assisted - and there are even wagon-styled carts - so those who aren't confident in their leg strength can enjoy the ride! Due to the popularity of this activity, it is recommended to reserve bikes in advance. ⑨1327-2 Azumo Kamiokacho, Hida City, Gifu ②April ~ September: 9:00 am ~ 4:30 pm, October ~ November: 9:00 am ~ 3:30pm

Registering at least 15 minutes before desired departure time is required. ④For two-person bike: from ¥3,000 ⑤Wednesdays ③Nohi Bus "Kyuokuhida Onsenouchi Eki" bus stop ⑥https://rail-mtb.com/en/

①Original button (Valid until March 31, 2021) ⑦



7 Ichinomachi Café 壱之町珈琲店



Elegant in its simplicity, this café operates out of a restored house that was built over 100 years ago. Enjoy a moment of blissful respite, listening to some jazz tunes as you savor a light meal. During your time here, English-speaking staff will tend to your every need.

⑨1-12 Ichinomachi, Furukawa-cho, Hida City ②10 am ~ 5 pm ④Tuesday ③Hida-Furukawa Station → [8-minute walk] ④0577-73-7099

①¥50 off the bill (Valid until March 31, 2021) ⑦



8 Hida Furukawa Speranza Hotel 飛驒古川スペランツァホテル



With immediate access to the train station, this hotel also offers a variety of reasonably priced plans that allow guests to fully enjoy the flavors of high-quality Hida beef.

⑨10-33 Kanamoricho, Furukawa-cho, Hida City ②1 night + 2 meals: from ¥10,000 ③Nearby Hida-Furukawa Station ④0577-73-7001 ⑤http://www.hida-sp.com (JPN)

①Yukata (summer kimono) rental of your choice (Valid until March 31, 2021) ⑦



9 Hotel Kikori ホテル季古里



A quiet hotel deep in the mountains, Hotel Kikori offers beautiful views of the snowy winter landscape and open-air hot spring baths from which to enjoy them! Additionally, guests can use the annexed *onsen* health spa at no additional charge, making this a perfect place to rejuvenate oneself! ⑨1400-1 Kurouchi, Furukawa-cho, Hida City ②1 night + 2 meals: from ¥10,800 ③Hida-Furukawa Station → [Courtesy car (Reservation required) • 15min] ④0577-75-3311 ⑤http://www.hotelkikori.com (JPN)

①One cup of coffee (Valid until March 31, 2021) ⑦



10 Yatsusankan ハツ三館



A famed, gorgeous *ryokan* that represents the best of Hida City's warm hospitality and style of living. At Yatsusankan, you can step back in time and experience "old Japan" as it used to be and as it lives on in wonderful inns such as this.

⑨1-8-27 Mukaimachi, Furukawa-cho, Hida City ②1 night + 2 meals: from ¥20,520 ③Hida-Furukawa Station → [7-minute walk] ④0577-73-2121 ⑤http://en.823kan.com

①Original postcard (No expiration date) ⑦



[SHIRAKAWA-GO]: THE ESSENTIALS 白川郷

<http://ml.shirakawa-go.org/en/>

GETTING HERE

- Meitetsu Bus Center (Nagoya) → [Gifu Bus on the Shirakawa-go Express Line • 2 hr 30min • ¥3,900 • reservations required] → "Shirakawa-go" bus stop
~ Or ~
- Takayama Nohi Bus Center → [Nohi Bus on the Shirakawa-go/Kanazawa Line • 50 min • ¥2,470] → "Shirakawa-go" bus stop

MAIN FEATURE

World Heritage Site: The Timeless Village of Shirakawa-go

Recognized as a World Cultural Heritage Site in 1995, Shirakawa-go and its brother Gokayama in Toyama Prefecture were highly praised for preserving rare and yet essential elements of traditional Japanese culture. The *gassho-zukuri*-style thatched roof houses were an important element, but so was the entirety of the traditional countryside scenery among which the houses stand. The interplay between the houses and the landscape - from the rice paddies to the footpaths running between them - is the true appeal of Shirakawa-go.



There are also elements of the culture (including the architecture) of Shirakawa-go that are unique to heavy snowfall regions, and so the preservation of this snow culture is another of the village's many charms. The word *gassho* means "joining one's hands together in prayer," and so it is the shape that this image brings to mind - and its resemblance to the shape of the steeply inclined thatched roofs - that inspired the term *gassho-zukuri* (*zukuri* means "construction").



One important reason why these old houses have survived to the present day is the system known as *yui* in which the villagers help each other re-thatch the roofs. The re-thatching process is a daunting task, but with the help of hundreds of other villagers, one's roof can be redone in a relatively short time. Working together for the sake of others has fostered greater friendship and closer relationships between the village residents, another reason why the tradition of *yui* continues to be embraced. This cooperative spirit is representative of the Shirakawa-go philosophy and is another important reason why the village was honored with World Heritage status.

1 Doburoku Festival

In mid-October, the *Doburoku* Festival is held in Shirakawa-go so that the locals can pray to the gods for a bountiful harvest, safety for their families, and the peace of the village. It takes place at three Shinto shrines in Shirakawa-go (one per day, however, as the venue rotates between the three), where the traditional *shishi-mai* lion dance is performed, folk tales are sung, and *doburoku* (see next page for description) is presented both as an offering to the gods and to visitors in attendance! *Doburoku* is specially brewed for this event, the likes of which are not seen elsewhere in Japan.
⑩ <http://shirakawa-go.org/kankou/guide/487/> (JPN)



The isolated countryside area of Shirakawa-go is nestled in a mountainous region that is among the few in Japan to see extremely heavy snowfall. This snowfall - sometimes accumulating up to two meters - has shaped the architecture, culture, and history of the village, as well as its traditions that continue to this day. One of the most distinct products of this long interaction with snow is the *gassho-zukuri*-style thatched roof house that one finds in the village of Ogimachi, the heart of Shirakawa-go. Over 100 such houses remain in the village, and many locals still make their homes in these houses, as people did more than 300 years ago. It is because of these splendid houses that Shirakawa-go was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and you can even stay overnight in some of these houses that are now being used as inns. People say that Shirakawa-go is a place right out of a fairy tale book, and this is true no matter the season, though it may be especially applicable to the village's almost mystical wintertime landscape.



[SHIRAKAWA-GO] 白川郷

The A to Z of *Gassho-zukuri* Houses

It is said that the *gassho-zukuri* thatched roof architectural style originated in the early Edo period (1603 – 1868), when there was extremely high demand for silk and therefore for silkworm breeding. The move towards installing shelves in the attic, where the silkworms would be cultured, can be thought of as the starting point of the *gassho-zukuri* tradition. In order to create an environment suitable to nurturing silkworms, the attic needed to be made into a wide, spacious area with plenty of light entering from outside as well as good ventilation. The result is the grand attic that you will see when you make your way to Shirakawa-go! The following are some other distinguishing characteristics of these unique houses that dot the landscape of Ogimachi:

All of the thatched roof houses in the village face the same direction

The roofs themselves always face east and west so that, during the winter when they are buried under heavy snow, they get as much sunlight as possible, causing the snow to melt more quickly. Additionally, the attic windows always face north and south so that wind is able to pass through the house, allowing for the best ventilation possible.

The roofs are inclined at a steep 60-degree angle

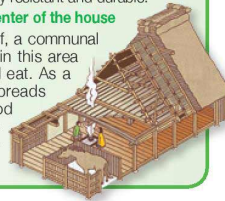
Because of the amount of snowfall in the region, the roofs are set at such steep inclines in order to lessen the pressure exerted by the snow. The steeper angle causes snow to slide off the rooftops more easily, enabling the roofs to last through the harsh winters with less wear and tear. They used to be re-thatched only once every 30 – 40 years, so they needed to last for that length of time.

There are no nails and almost no metal used in their construction

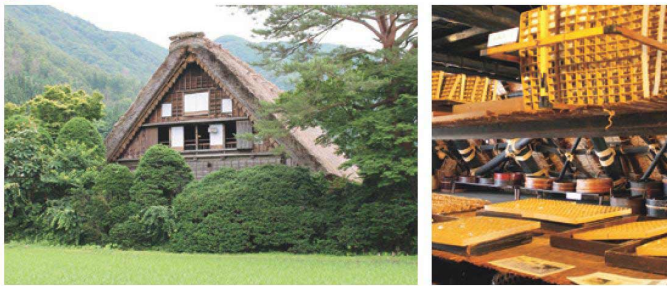
Instead, natural materials such as straw-braided rope and *naso*, a term used for softened tree branches, are used for tying everything together. Strong against the weight of snow, these natural fibers also give far more easily than do nails, adding a degree of flexibility to the roofs that other kinds lack. As a result, the roof and the house as a whole are able to sway slightly with strong winds, earthquakes, and the like, making them extremely resistant and durable.

An *irori*, a sunken hearth in the floor, is generally placed in the center of the house

Because the entire extended family used to live under one roof, a communal sitting area was often built in the heart of the 1st floor, and in this area would be a hearth around which the family would gather and eat. As a side effect, the smoke produced from the hearth rises and spreads throughout the house, turning the wood black. This is a good thing, however, as this smoke makes the wood more supple and pest-resistant and strengthens the straw rope knots keeping the house together!



1 Wada House 和田家



The only *gassho-zukuri* house in Shirakawa-go that has been designated an Important Cultural Property by the Japanese government, the Wada House is also among the oldest and largest in town. Built over 300 years ago, this grand house has been passed down generation after generation through the Wada family. In the past, the village leaders/checkpoint officials who oversaw traffic through the region used to come from this family line and therefore lived in this house, imbuing it with a sense of historical importance to add to its already significant grandeur. The house is large enough that, while the greater part of it is used as a museum, the remaining portion serves as the home for this generation's Wada family. As with other thatched roof houses in the village, the Wada House was also a place where gunpowder was made and silkworms were cultured. In fact, you can actually see the process of silkworm breeding in person, as they still culture real silkworms in the Wada House during the summer. In the museum, you can look at old tableware, tools used for silkworm breeding, and other artifacts that have been passed down through the generations. 997 Ogimachi, Shirakawa-mura, Ono-gun 9 am – 5 pm ¥300 (Elementary school students: ¥150) "Shirakawa-go" bus stop → [3-minute walk] 05769-6-1058



2 Shirakawa-go Winter Illumination 白川郷ライトアップ



Perhaps one of the most well-known events in Gifu Prefecture is the illumination of Shirakawa-go that takes place during seven select days in January and February every year (the dates change, so please consult the below link or other websites for more details). Of course, during this winter period, the town of Ogimachi is covered with a thick blanket of snow, which makes the area glisten under the illuminating lights. The image of the magnificent thatched roofs covered with snow above the dimly lit windows of the houses is one of the prides of Gifu, and

an incredible number of visitors make their way here to see this very sight! Note that there is no public transportation available out of Shirakawa-go after the illumination start time, so be sure to either book accommodations in or nearby the village or reserve a taxi to take you back to Takayama or elsewhere. 9 Ogimachi, Shirakawa-mura, Ono-gun 05769-6-1013 (Shirakawa-go Tourist Association) http://lightup.asia/?lang=en



3 Shiroyama Viewpoint 城山天守閣展望台



While the thatched roof houses of Shirakawa-go are of course magnificent up close, taking a step back and taking in the whole picture reveals yet another level to the idyllic beauty of the village. The Shiroyama Viewpoint is located on a hill overlooking Ogimachi and is the place to go for this famous view. A fantastic vantage point for photos, the Viewpoint is also home to the restaurant "Tenshukaku." Soak in the brilliant scenery of Shirakawa-go, which takes on a different flavor every season of the year, at this popular spot.

2269-1 Ogimachi, Shirakawa-mura, Ono-gun
"Shirakawa-go" bus stop → [15-minute walk]
05769-6-1728 (Tenshukaku)



4 Jin Homura Museum of Art 焰仁美術館



A famous painter in Japan, Jin Homura has produced one original work of art after another, some of which were created in his workshop here in Shirakawa-go. In addition to the workshop, he also established this museum, where many of his works are displayed. The sight of vividly colored paintings adorning the interior of a *gassho-zukuri* house is quite a rare one, making the Jin Homura Museum of Art a unique, and a uniquely Shirakawa-go, destination. 2483 Ogimachi, Shirakawa-mura, Ono-gun 9 am ~ 4 pm ¥300 (Students of high school age or older: ¥200, Middle and elementary school students: ¥100) Wednesday "Shirakawa-go" bus stop → [15-minute walk] 05769-6-1967 http://www.hidatakayama.ne.jp/~homura/(JPN)



5 Gassho-zukuri Open-Air Museum 野外博物館 合掌造り民家園



Located just across the river from the heart of Ogimachi is this Open-Air Museum, which showcases the traditional way of life that people enjoyed in the past. Featuring 25 *gassho-zukuri* thatched roof houses, some of which have been moved and reassembled here for preservation purposes, the museum is a great place to explore before or after visiting the heart of the village itself. From soba noodles to straw crafts to *ta-ke-tonbo*, a propeller-like toy made of bamboo that flies when you spin it between your palms, you can make all sorts of items that are representative of the old

lifestyle of the area (additional fees apply for each hands-on activity). 2499 Ogimachi, Shirakawa-mura, Ono-gun 8:40 am – 5 pm (December – February: 9am – 4pm) ¥600 (Primary and secondary school students: ¥400) None (December – March: Thursday) "Shirakawa-go" bus stop → [20-minute walk] 05769-6-1231 http://www.shirakawago-minkaen.jp/english/admin/



[SHIRAKAWA-GO] 白川郷



6 TOYOTA Shirakawa-go Eco-Institute トヨタ白川郷自然学校



In keeping with its theme of "Coexisting with Nature," the TOYOTA Shirakawa-go Eco-Institute offers a variety of programs meant to get its guests to think and learn about nature. As a facility that emphasizes awareness of the environment and the importance that it plays in human society, it is fitting that the institute is located so close to Shirakawa-go, where nature - particularly the harshness of winter - has shaped the culture of the village. You can enjoy hot springs as well as delicious French food. More than just a hotel, the Eco-Institute brings you closer to the Japanese countryside and encourages you to look at the natural world from the point of view of a Shirakawa-go local.

Nature Programs

April ~ November: Guided Nature Tour (9:30 am ~ 10:30 am • free for guests)

Explore the woods surrounding the Eco-Institute under the guidance of one of the knowledgeable "interpreters" who unravel the mysteries and wonders of nature for you!

December ~ March: Stroll through the Snowy Woods (8:30 am ~ 9:30 am, 10:30 am ~ 11:30 am • ¥1,000 per person)

Take a dive into the light, powdery snow of Shirakawa-go during the period from late December to mid-February, when the snow is still fresh. Alternatively, walk on top of the snow from late February on, after it has hardened enough to tread on. Get to places that you normally would not be able to reach otherwise, since the snow allows you to see the world from a perspective more than a meter higher off the ground than you are used to!

📍223 Magari, Shirakawa-mura, Ono-gun 🕒1 night + 2 meals: from ¥10,900 📞"Shirakawa-go" bus stop → [Courtesy car • 10 min] ☎05769-6-1187 🌐https://toyota.eco-inst.jp/?SLANG=ja&TLANG=en&XMODE=0&XCHARSET=utf-8&XJSID=0



Staying at a Guest House in Shirakawa-go

Almost all of the locations offering accommodation in Shirakawa-go are guest houses run by the families that live in them, so you can enjoy the experience of staying a night (or more!) at one of the famed thatched roof houses in the village! An altogether different feeling from staying at a large hotel or even at a traditional Japanese *ryokan* inn, lodging at a guest house has its own unique charms, especially when it is located in the heart of World Heritage Site Shirakawa-go!

Inexpensive option: At most of the guest houses in the village, a one-night stay with two meals included costs under ¥10,000, an extremely reasonable price.

Delicious local food: Nestled in the mountains right next to a river, you will be served plentiful amounts of fresh mountain herbs and river fish when staying at a guest house in Shirakawa-go. Enjoying local cuisine is one of the great pleasures of travel, and you are sure to be thoroughly satisfied in that regard.

Fantastic location: Quite simply, the chance to stay over in an isolated, quaint village such as Shirakawa-go is not the kind of opportunity you get often. Lodging in the village, which was meant to function in tune with nature, is an exceedingly calming experience that you are not likely to forget anytime soon! Staying at a guest house also affords you the chance to interact with some locals, as well as possibly travelers from other places. This kind of cultural exchange is another facet of the guest house experience that you rarely get in more traditional accommodation facilities.

How to book accommodations:

1. Contact the guest house of your choice directly by phone (Japanese only in some cases)
2. E-mail (recommended) or fax the Shirakawa-go Tourist Association with your reservation request (English OK)
E-mail: info@shirakawa-go.gr.jp
Fax: 05769-6-1716
☎05769-6-1013 (9 am ~ 5 pm • Japanese only)
🌐(Information on accommodations)http://shirakawa-go.gr.jp/en/stay/



7 Myozen-ji Temple and Museum 明善寺土館



Built around 230 years ago, Myozen-ji Temple is one of the few Buddhist temples in Japan that are of the *gassho-zukuri* thatched roof construction style. The *shoromon* bell tower gate was built in 1801 by one of the craftsmen of Hida renowned for their excellence, and its two-story structure characteristic of the late Edo period is a highly distinctive element of great architectural interest. Because of its unique attributes, Myozen-ji has been designated an Important Cultural Property of the prefecture. Adjacent to the temple is the local museum that displays old farming tools, furniture, kitchenware, and other remnants of an age gone by.
📍679 Ogimachi, Shirakawa-mura, Ono-gun 🕒8:30 am ~ 5 pm (December ~ March: 9 am ~ 4 pm) 🎫¥300 (Middle and elementary school students: ¥100) 📞"Shirakawa-go" bus stop → [10-minute walk] ☎05769-6-1009



8 Shirakawa-go no Yu 白川郷の湯



The sole hot spring facility within the village of Ogimachi, Shirakawa-go no Yu is the perfect place to enjoy a relaxing hour or two, looking out over the village and the Sho River from the warmth of an open-air *onsen* bath! Rooms are also available for lodging, so this is another option for those interested in staying overnight in Shirakawa-go. In addition to the open-air baths, the facility has indoor baths, whirlpool baths, and two types of saunas that switch every day between male and female-use. The *onsen* water is of the salt spring type, containing sodium chloride that is said to have healing effects on those afflicted with nerve or joint pain, chronic digestive diseases, poor circulation, and more!
📍337 Ogimachi, Shirakawa-mura, Ono-gun 🕒7 am ~ 9 pm 🎫¥700 (Elementary school students: ¥300) 📞None 📞"Shirakawa-go" bus stop → [1-minute walk] ☎05769-6-0026 🌐http://www.shirakawagou-onsen.jp/english.html



¥100 off admission (Valid until March 31, 2021)



9 Genki na Yasaikan 元気な野菜館



Fresh vegetables harvested in Shirakawa-go and edible wild plants are available at this local produce market, as are various other regional products. You can also get your hands on some homemade, pre-packaged side dishes and sweets that have become favorites of visitors.

📍2483 Oro, Ogimachi, Shirakawa-mura, Ono-gun 🕒11 am ~ 5 pm 📞Tuesday ~ Thursday 📞"Shirakawa-go" bus stop → [10-minute walk] ☎05769-6-1377



10 Jiba Studio Gallery じ・ば工房



The "Jiba" in this shop's name has several layers of meaning; the first is a reference to *jiba sangyo*, the term in Japanese for "local industry." The second, if you separate it into "ji" and "ba," is a combination of sounds taken from the terms for "grandpa" (*jiisan*) and grandma (*obaasan*). You can think of the Jiba Studio Gallery, therefore, as a kind of mom-and-pop store that specializes in local products of Shirakawa-go! As a workshop in addition to a store, the Jiba Studio Gallery creates a lot of what it sells, and you can also try your hand at making some of these items with a reservation (by phone • Japanese only). From making straw *zori* sandals and wooden coasters to dyeing cloth and weaving, there are lots of hands-on activities that you can enjoy (at a fee).
📍6 Iijima, Shirakawa-mura, Ono-gun 🕒9 am ~ 5 pm 📞Monday 📞"Shirakawa-go" bus stop → [15-minute walk] ☎05769-6-1330

[SHIRAKAWA-GO] 白川郷



11 Bunsuke 文助



This restaurant is highly reputed for the freshness of its fish, as each order is prepared starting with a live one. Along with the grilled fish that is Bunsuke's specialty, the rice served here is also homegrown, delivering a memorable, eco-friendly dining experience. ☎1915 Ogimachi, Shirakawa-mura, Ono-gun ☎11 am ~ 3 pm (Reservations required after 3 pm) 📍"Shirakawa-go" bus stop → [7-minute walk] ☎05769-6-1268



10% off the bill (Valid until March 31, 2021)



12 Hina コーヒー屋 鄙



Boasting a wonderfully calming ambience with classical music playing in the background, Hina uses spring water from deep in the mountains in all of its coffee and tea.

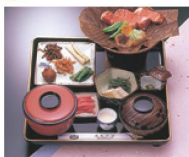
☎1178 Ogimachi, Shirakawa-mura, Ono-gun ☎9:30 am ~ 5 pm
 ☒Wednesday, 1st & 3rd Thursday of the month
 📍"Shirakawa-go" bus stop → [2-minute walk]
 ☎05769-6-1150



Candy treat (No expiration date)



13 Kita no Sho 基本の庄



In this 250 year-old *gassho-zukuri* house looking out over the Sho River, you can satisfy your hunger with cuisine typical of a *satoyama* village, one which is located in the mountains and that exists in harmony with its natural environment. Hida beef miso steak and the salt-grilled char fish set menu are among the most popular choices. This restaurant fills up quickly, so a reservation is recommended. ☎2671-1 Ogimachi, Shirakawa-mura, Ono-gun ☎11 am ~ 2 pm (time changes depending on the day) 📍"Shirakawa-go" bus stop → [15-minute walk] ☎05769-6-1506 ☎http://www.hidakayama.ne.jp/kitanosyo/index.html



One free confection (Valid until March 31, 2021)



14 Nomura 乃むら



Using locally grown buckwheat ground in a homemade stone mortar and spring water taken from the sacred Hakusan mountain range, Nomura makes its deliciously chewy soba noodles that are sure to please.

☎779 Ogimachi, Shirakawa-mura, Ono-gun
 ☎11 am ~ 4 pm (Or until supplies last)
 ☒Wednesday 📍"Shirakawa-go" bus stop → [10-minute walk]
 ☎05769-6-1508



15 Ochudo 落人



A thatched roof house turned into a café, Ochudo is a great place to rest after strolling the village. Here, they use natural spring water and provide a selection of dishes that bring out the natural flavors of the ingredients to their fullest.

☎792 Ogimachi, Shirakawa-mura, Ono-gun
 ☎11 am ~ 5 pm
 📍"Shirakawa-go" bus stop → [10-minute walk]
 ☎05769-6-1603, ☎090-5458-0418



Zenzai red bean soup (Valid until March 31, 2021)



16 Gensaku 源作



This *gassho-zukuri* guest house boasts a very central location in Shirakawa-go and also allows guests the opportunity to eat around an *irori* hearth. The menu is heavily centered around local ingredients and features mouth-watering food such as Hida beef and deep-fried mountain herb tempura. ☎221 Ogimachi, Shirakawa-mura, Ono-gun 📍1 night + 2 meals: from ¥9,800 (October ~ March: an additional heating fee of ¥500 applies) 📍"Shirakawa-go" bus stop → [5-minute walk] ☎05769-6-1176



Small gift (No expiration date)



17 Hisamatsu 久松



A thatched roof guest house where you will be served regional cuisine that incorporates ingredients grown and caught locally. You can enjoy, as many Japanese did in centuries past, eating around a traditional *irori* sunken hearth that keeps the room warm especially during the winter months. ☎585 Ogimachi, Shirakawa-mura, Ono-gun 📍1 night + 2 meals: from ¥8,700 (Winter time: an additional heating fee of ¥500 ~ ¥700 applies) 📍"Shirakawa-go" bus stop → [13-minute walk] ☎05769-6-1151



Small gift (Valid until March 31, 2021)



18 Magoemon 孫右門



Old even by Shirakawa-go *gassho-zukuri* standards, Magoemon is a fantastic guest house whose black insides, turned that shade because of the smoke emanating from the hearth, speak to the long history of the structure. ☎360 Ogimachi, Shirakawa-mura, Ono-gun 📍1 night + 2 meals: ¥10,260 (October ~ April: an additional heating fee of ¥700 applies) 📍"Shirakawa-go" bus stop → [10-minute walk] ☎05769-6-1167



Afternoon refreshments (Valid until March 31, 2021)



19 Otaya 大田屋



In addition to running this *gassho-zukuri* guest house, Mr. Ota also raises Hida cattle on the side, so as a guest at Otaya, you can have the unique experience of helping, however slightly, to care for the animals. Additionally, there are other hands-on activities that you can enjoy, such as reaping and harvesting rice and pounding *mochi* rice cakes! ☎1807 Ogimachi, Shirakawa-mura, Ono-gun 📍1 night + 2 meals: from ¥10,500 (November ~ March: an additional heating fee of ¥500 applies) 📍"Ogimachi" bus stop → [3-minute walk] ☎05769-6-1425 ☎http://www.hidakayama.ne.jp/otaya/JPN



Medium beer or small bottle of sake (Valid until March 31, 2021)



20 Tosuke no Yu Fujiya 藤助の湯 ふじや



An old, elegant Japanese-style inn that was reconstructed here after being moved from elsewhere in the Hida region, Fujiya has private hot spring baths that can be reserved in addition to its regular, communal *onsen* baths. Located 20 minutes away from central Shirakawa-go by car. ☎325-1 Hirase, Shirakawa-mura, Ono-gun 📍1 night + 2 meals: from ¥16,200 📍"Shirakawa-go" bus stop → [Nohi Bus on the Shirakawa-go/Kanazawa Line towards Kanazawa · 15 min] → "Hirase Onsen" bus stop → [3-minute walk] ☎05769-5-2611 ☎http://www.tosuke-fujiya.com/en/



Post-breakfast coffee (Valid until March 31, 2021)



SHIRAKAWA-GO



[GERO]: THE ESSENTIALS 下呂

<http://www.city.gero.lg.jp/kankou/data/language/e/>

GETTING HERE

JR Gifu Station → [JR Takayama Main Line · Limited Express Wide View Hida · 1 hr 20 min · ¥3,360] → Gero Station

MAIN FEATURE

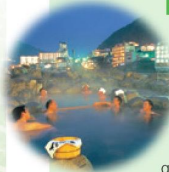
Gero: A Hot Spring Steeped in History and Legend

The spring water bubbling forth from beneath the Hida River has been known and used for its recuperative properties ever since the Tenryaku era (947 ~ 956), giving Gero Hot Spring over a millenium of storied history. It really came to the forefront of Japan's hot spring scene, however, during the Edo period (1603 ~ 1868) with the coming of esteemed Confucian scholar and philosopher Hayashi Razan. A distinguished servant of four successive shogun military commanders starting with Tokugawa Iyasu, Hayashi proclaimed the best *onsen* in the land to be Gero, Arima (in Hyogo Prefecture), and Kusatsu (in Gunma Prefecture). He based this list both on his own personal experiences and on hearsay from others, and with the weight of his word, this designation soon became fixed and accepted throughout Japan.

As legend has it, the "Medicine Buddha" Yakushi Nyorai, disguised as an injured egret, healed its wounds by going into the Hida River, thereby alerting the nearby villagers that there was something special about the water. This led to the discovery of the hot spring source in the river and thus the founding of Gero Hot Spring. The egret is therefore an important symbol in the history and heritage of Gero, and for this reason you will find its image all throughout the hot spring town. There is an abundance of public baths, spas, and *ashiyu* foot-baths in this district, making it the perfect location for a stroll in a yukata (summer kimono)! If you stay at a hotel or inn in Gero, you will be given a yukata there which you can wear outside; many places also offer rentals of colored yukata for women, to make the experience of the *onsen* district even more memorable!



1 "Funsenchi" Bath



Located right on the riverbed of the Hida River near the original hot spring source, the "Funsenchi" open-air *onsen* bath has become a symbol of Gero Hot Spring. This "fountain pool," as the Japanese goes, is free for anyone - of either gender - to enter. A bathing suit is required, however, given how revealed the bath is to its surroundings. It offers a view of Gero's hot spring town and the Hida River that is second to none, so do have a soak in it when visiting!



Embodiments of the egret motif that you will find in Gero include the "Shirasagi Monogatari" sweets - a popular Gero souvenir (right) - and the figures adorning the Gero Ohashi Bridge (above).



"Yu-meguri Tegata" Hot Spring Pass

Available for purchase at the Tourist Information Center next to Gero Station, at participating *ryokan* inns, and at souvenir shops, this Hot Spring Pass is the perfect solution for *onsen* lovers looking to try out a selection of different hot spring baths. The pass enables you to use the baths of any three *ryokan* of your choice from among the 20+ participating locations! You can keep the pass itself as a keepsake of your time in Gero! Valid for 6 months after purchase. ¥1,300



From Mt. Ontake towering at 3,067 meters to Hida Kanayama located at 220 meters above sea level, Gero City lies over a vast area with a topography of many ups and downs. For this reason, visitors can see both sakura cherry blossoms in the spring and autumn foliage for longer periods of time than they would be able to elsewhere, as different parts of Gero bloom and peak at different times. Gero City is most famous for Gero Hot Spring, one of Japan's Three Great Hot Springs. Gero Hot Spring is not just one hot spring that exists in Gero City; rather, the name encompassing the incredible number of different onsen that result from the spring water sprouting forth from the ground all over the city. Among these is Nigorigo Hot Spring, one of the few *onsen* in Japan located at high altitude that remains open throughout the winter season. Gero is also home to bountiful natural environments, so you can refresh your body and your soul by immersing yourself in nature and (literally) in hot springs!

SPECIALTY PRODUCT

"Ryu no Hitomi" Rice

A new strain of rice discovered accidentally in Gero in 2000, "Ryu no Hitomi" ("Eye of the Dragon") has garnered a slew of awards and a wealth of attention in just a short amount of time. With grains 1.5 times the size of other strains, higher elasticity and stickiness, a stronger fragrance, and an unusually sweet taste, "Ryu no Hitomi" is now definitively among the elite, premium rice brands in the country. Along with having won the grand prize at the annual International Contest on Rice Taste Evaluation, "Ryu no Hitomi" was also been chosen as the best rice in Japan in 2007, 2008, and 2010 in a contest that surveys the general Japanese public! Be sure to get your hands on some while in Gero!



Available at the souvenir shop Shirasagi Yokochō

780 Yunoshima, Gero City 9 am ~ 9 pm None 0576-25-4580



Detailed MAP ▶ <http://www.gero-spa.or.jp/english/map.html>

[GERO] 下呂

Gero's Famed "Water of Beauties"

The miracle effects of Gero's *onsen* water that make it worthy of one of Japan's Three Great Hot Springs:

- Gero's hot spring water has been shown to help in the treatment of rheumatism, motor dysfunction, neurosis, and neuroparalysis. In addition, it is thought to promote post-illness recuperation as well as overcoming one's fatigue. Its effects are such that places like hospitals and beauty salons have used the hot spring water from Gero in the treatments that they offer!
- The water makes one's skin velvety smooth and beautiful, which is why it is particularly popular among the ladies! Gero's is an alkaline hot spring that, with a pH of 9.2, has soap-like qualities that remove impurities and keratin from one's skin and leave it with a smooth finish. In order for this result to be achieved, however (this point will be repeated!), one should NOT shower again after getting out of the *onsen* bath!

The correct etiquette for taking a bath and tips for bringing out the full potential of Gero's water:

1. Wash your body thoroughly with soap before entering the bath. This is especially important for women in order to remove all makeup. This cannot be stressed enough, as if any amount of makeup remains, it will block the skin pores, thereby preventing the *onsen* water from doing its job.
2. Do not put the small towel you bring with you into the bath water. Instead, place it aside or atop your head.
3. After getting out of the bath, (as previously mentioned) do NOT take another shower or rinse yourself off. If you do so, the hot spring minerals will be washed away before they can act on your skin.
4. Similarly, avoid towel drying yourself off thoroughly. Instead, do so as lightly as possible in order to prevent the dissolved minerals from getting wiped off.

Notes of caution upon using hot spring baths:

- Limit yourself to three *onsen* baths per day.
- Stay immersed in a bath for no more than 10 minutes if it is very hot or 30 minutes if it is on the warm-but-not-hot side.
- Make sure to hydrate sufficiently before and/or after using the bath.



1 Gero Museum of Hot Springs 下呂温泉博物館



At this museum, one of the very few in Japan to specialize in hot springs, you can learn about them from both scientific and cultural perspectives! From the natural process by which *onsen* water spouts up from the ground to the different types of hot spring water that exist to the healing effects that they have, there is a whole lot to learn! You can also experience first-hand the benefits of hot spring water via a special "Yakushi no Ashiyu" foot-bath that consists of two tubs, one with hot spring water and one with ordinary, cold water. Just by walking through both tubs, your blood circulation will improve - one of the many health benefits of *onsen*!

📍 543-2 Yunoshima, Gero City 🕒 9 am - 5 pm (Last entry: 4:30 pm) 🎫 ¥400 (Elementary school students: ¥200, Children younger than school-age: free) 🗓 Thursday (Or the following business day instead when Thursday is a holiday), December 30 - 31 📍 Gero Station → [13-minute walk] ☎ 0576-25-3400 🌐 <http://www.gero.jp/museum/> (JPN)

🎁 10% off entrance fee (Valid until March 31, 2021)



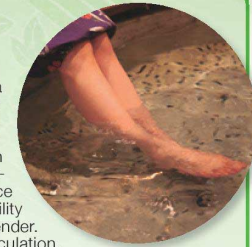
2 Onsen-ji Temple 下呂温泉 温泉寺



This temple enshrines the "Medicine Buddha" that, according to legend, first guided the village people to Gero Hot Spring's source, allowing them to discover the spring water and thus reap its healing benefits. Today, Onsen-ji is located far above the Gero Hot Spring district, and from the temple gates you can look upon the entire town and its surrounding mountainous scenery. Also, there are around 80 maple trees planted on the temple grounds, and during the autumn nights from mid to late November, you can enjoy a fantastical autumn illumination and a limited-time-only foot-bath as well! 📍 680 Yunoshima, Gero City 🕒 6 am - sunset 📍 Gero Station → [10-minute walk] ☎ 0576-25-2465 🌐 <http://www.onsenji.jp> (JPN)



Enjoying Gero's Many Ashiyu Foot-Baths



While it should be evident from the name alone, a foot-bath (called *ashiyu* in Japanese) is a hot spring bath meant for submerging solely one's feet. Having said this, the genius of the foot-bath is that, simply by relaxing your feet in the bath, you are able to warm your entire body! Other attractive points of the foot-bath are the ease with which you can enter it - since there is no need to take off your clothes - and the ability for anybody to use the bath together, regardless of gender.

Ashiyu have been shown to help improve blood circulation, relieve shoulder stiffness, and provide comfort to those who are sensitive to the cold. Because of all this, though your feet are the only body parts in the *onsen*, foot-baths induce a wider relaxing effect. In all, there are ten *ashiyu* in Gero's hot spring district (refer to map for precise locations), most of which are free

for anyone to use. Each has its own distinct character and flavor, so trying out a couple of them is a highly recommended way to enjoy the town! Note, however, that there are no towels available for use at any of the foot-baths, so be sure to bring one along if you intend to make use of the *ashiyu*!



"Venus no Ashiyu" Foot-Bath



"Yuaniya no Ashiyu" Foot-Bath



3 Gero Hot Spring Fireworks 下呂温泉の花火イベント



Every year in Gero, some of the most talented pyrotechnicians in the country put together stunning fireworks performances that light up the sky! Gero's specialty, it could be said, is musical fireworks, with the fireworks perfectly set to the timing of the tunes. The "Fireworks Story" performances that kick off each new year, while not musical, have particular themes that are embodied by the dazzling explosions of color in the sky, with a different theme every day.

• **Gero Hot Spring Winter "Fireworks Story"**

early January ~ March (Every Saturday): 8:30 pm ~ 8:40 pm

• **Gero Hot Spring Summer Musical Fireworks**

August 3: 8 pm ~ 8:45 pm

• **Gero Hot Spring Winter Musical Fireworks**

December (Every Saturday): 8 pm ~ 8:15 pm, December 24 (Special Christmas edition): 8 pm ~ 8:30 pm

📍 Along the banks of the Hida River near the Gero Ohashi Bridge, Gero City 📍 Gero Station → [3-minute walk] 🗓 During inclement weather or rising water level conditions ☎ 0576-25-4711 (Gero City Tourist Information Center • English OK) 🌐 <http://www.city.gero.lg.jp/kankou/data/language/e/>

GERO

Gero and Frogs...What's the Connection???

Just as with the egret motif mentioned previously, you will find images of frogs wherever you look in the town of Gero. However, the reason for the frog motif, unlike for the egret, is not all that profound! It's quite simple: the "ribbit" sound that a frog makes is, in Japanese, "gero!" You will even find a Kaeru ("Frog") Shrine in town filled with icons and depictions of frogs in every corner. Frog-themed souvenirs and cute frog illustrations of all kinds dot the townscape; the only things missing are real frogs themselves!



Kaeru Shrine

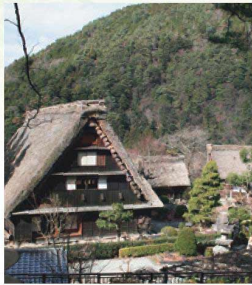
Frogs everywhere, including on manhole covers!



[GERO] 下呂



4 Gassho Village 下呂温泉 合掌村



An open-air museum that re-creates a village of thatched roof houses akin to World Heritage Site Shirakawa-go, the Gero Hot Spring Gassho Village offers a glimpse into the life-style of days long gone. The houses themselves, totaling ten, were moved from either Shirakawa-go or its companions in Gokayama (in Toyama Prefecture). Some houses display old tools and items, while others act as workshops where you can try your hand at crafts such as Japanese paper-making. But the most distinctive element of this museum is the Shirasagi-za Shadow Play Theater, where local legends are told in dynamic fashion by a theater troupe that specializes in *kage-e* shadow play. **📍**2369 Mori, Gero City **🕒**8:30 am ~ 5 pm **🎫**¥800 (Middle and elementary school students: ¥400) **🚶**Gero Station → [Nohi Bus on the Gassho Mura Line towards "Gassho Mura" • 6 min] → "Gassho Mura" bus stop **☎**0576-25-2239 **🌐**http://www.gero-gassho.jp/lg_en/

Receive lucky frog merchandise (Valid until March 31, 2021)



5 Ideyu Morning Market 下呂温泉 いでゆ朝市



Held every morning except during the winter, the Ideyu Morning Market is a great place to get some local sake, folk crafts, pickled goods, and other specialty products of Gero at good prices. It also represents a chance to interact with the locals manning the market stalls! **📍**Near the entrance to the Gassho Village **🕒**8 am ~ 12 pm **📅**December ~ early March, During inclement weather **☎**0576-24-1000 (Gero Onsen Tourist Association)



6 Nawashiro-zakura Cherry Trees 苗代桜



This famous cherry blossom location has a mystical allure that most other sakura viewing spots simply cannot match. The two sister Nawashiro-zakura Cherry Trees, both around 400 years old, are located right beside a rice paddy that, when flooded with water, produces a stunning crystal-clear reflection. Furthermore, when the trees are illuminated in the dark of night after the buds have begun to open, the sight becomes all the more captivating! The trees take their name from *nawashiro*, the Japanese word for "rice seedling nursery beds," because they bloomed right around the time when the villagers had to begin preparing those nurseries as they entered the rice-planting season. **📍**Wasa, Gero City **🚶**Gero Station → [Taxi • 20 min] **☎**0576-25-4711 (Gero City Tourist Information Center • English OK)

LOCAL SPECIALTY



keichan

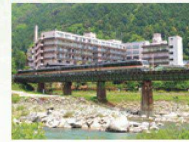
keichan is a local dish of Gero Hot Springs (and other places in Gifu as well) where chicken meat is mixed with a soy-sauce or miso-based tare sauce and then cooked on a hotplate with cabbage and other sorts of vegetables.

In Gero Hot Springs when barbecuing at home, making *keichan* is considered standard procedure. The fascinating aspect about *keichan*, however, is the fact that the taste and preparation method will vary depending on the restaurant or family that's making it, so be sure and discover a style that you like the best!

Keichan Sugi no Ko **📍**1311 Ogawa, Gero City, Gifu **🕒**11 am ~ 3:30 pm **📅**Monday **☎**0576-25-7011 **🌐**<http://www.suginoko.net>



7 Bosenkan 望川館



With a 3,630-square-meter Japanese garden perfect for taking a stroll and an open-air hot spring bath that holds 220 tons of water, this *ryokan* inn has many points in which it takes great pride.

📍190-1 Yunoshima, Gero City **🎫**1 night + 2 meals: from ¥14,040 **🚶**Gero Station → [15-minute walk] **☎**0576-25-2048 **🌐**<https://bosenkan.com/en/>

Colored yukata rental for women (Valid until March 31, 2021)



8 Hotel KUSAKABE Armeria 下呂温泉 ホテルくさかべアルメリア



You can get a complete view of downtown Gero City from our outdoor observation-deck baths because of the high elevation of our facility. Our hotel is equipped with great public spaces and quality services like an Aromatherapy spa, entertainment shows, and a Japanese-style bar.

📍1811 Kodon, Gero City, Gifu **🎫**One night with two meals from ¥20,800 **🚶**2-minute bus ride from Gero Station with our free shuttle bus **☎**0576-24-2020 **📧**info@armeria.co.jp **🌐**<https://www.armeria.co.jp/f/e/>



9 Kawakamiya Kasuitei 川上屋 花水亭



With a beautiful *sukiya-zukuri* architectural style that incorporates many features of traditional tea ceremony houses, this inn prides itself on its "pure Japanese" elegance. You can enjoy local ingredients as part of the *kaiseki* cuisine - a traditional Japanese meal served in many courses - presented in the evening.

📍30 Yunoshima, Gero City **🎫**1 night + 2 meals: from ¥25,000 (Tax not included) **🚶**Gero Station → [20-minute walk] or [Free shuttle bus available] **☎**0576-25-5500 **🌐**<http://www.kawakamiyakasuitei.jp/> (JPN)



10 Kissenkan Chikusuitei 吉泉館 竹翠亭



At this *ryokan*, you can enjoy *kaiseki*-style meals prepared specially with vegetables grown in the inn's own garden. The view from the outdoor hot spring baths is also superb.

📍1098 Kodon, Gero City **🎫**1 night + 2 meals: from ¥14,040 **🚶**Gero Station → [5-minute walk] **☎**0576-25-3327 **🌐**<http://www.kissenkan.com/> (JPN)

Original souvenir (Valid until March 31, 2021)



11 Ogawayaya 小川屋



This Japanese-style inn is located right in the heart of the Gero Hot Spring district and overlooks the beautiful Hida River. Perhaps the most unique element of this *ryokan* is its "Tatami-buro" hot spring bath, a large one around which Japanese tatami straw mats have been laid, something you rarely, if ever, see!

📍570 Yunoshima, Gero City **🎫**1 night + 2 meals: from ¥16,200 (Including tax and service charge) **🚶**Gero Station → [8-minute walk] **☎**0576-25-3121 **🌐**<http://www.gero-ogawayaya.net/english/>

10% discount at the gift shop for purchases of ¥2,000 or more (Valid until March 31, 2021)

GERO

[GERO] 下呂



12 Sasara 紗々羅



This hotel's wonderful Japanese-style rooms boast a fantastic view of the town of Gero and the mountains on the opposing riverside. Of the 44 rooms, a full 20 of them have their own private open-air hot spring baths attached, something that not many hotels can say!

📍1412-1 Mori, Gero City 📅1 night + 2 meals: from ¥17,280 (including tax and service charge) 🚶Gero Station → [13-minute walk] ☎0576-24-1777 🌐<http://www.sasara.co.jp/en/index.html>



Colored yukata rental for adult women (Valid until March 31, 2021)



13 Suihoen 水鳳園



An inn that pours its heart and soul into the Japanese cuisine served here. Additionally, among the guest rooms, nine of them - each with its own charms and distinct atmosphere - have attached open-air *onsen* baths. 📍2519-1 Mori, Gero City 📅1 night + 2 meals: from ¥15,950 (Tax not included) 🚶Gero Station → [15-minute walk] or [Courtesy car • reservation required] ☎0576-25-2288 🌐<http://www.e-onsen.co.jp/reservation2.html>



45 minutes' use of the "Mutsumi no Yu" private open-air hot spring bath for overnight guests (Valid until March 31, 2021)



14 Suimeikan 水明館



One of the largest *ryokan* in the entire Tokai region of Japan, Suimeikan boasts three large communal baths per gender, making it one of the ultimate accommodations for enjoying *onsen*. 📍1268 Kodan, Gero City 📅1 night + 2 meals: from ¥12,960 🚶Gero Station → [3-minute walk] ☎0576-25-2800 🌐<https://www.suimeikan.co.jp/english/>



One drink in the Lobby Lounge Evian (Valid until March 31, 2021)



15 Yunoshimakan 湯之島館



This is an old *ryokan* built in 1931 whose main building is registered as a national Tangible Cultural Property. With a 165,000-square-meter premises, Yunoshimakan is perched in the mountains looking down upon the entirety of Gero's hot spring district. 📍645 Yunoshima, Gero City 📅1 night + 2 meals: from ¥17,400 (including tax and service charge) 🚶Gero Station → [20-minute walk] or [Courtesy car] ☎0576-25-4126 🌐<http://www.yunoshimakan.co.jp/english/>



One tasting set per guest of three famous sake made in the Hida region (Valid until March 31, 2021)



16 Kokoro o Naderu Seijaku Miyako ころをなでる静寂 みやこ



This relaxing location tucked far away from the hustle and bustle of modern life is the perfect second home for people looking to get away. Dinner consists of delicious and creative course meals made from seasonal ingredients arranged in subtle but bold fashions. 📍2505 Mori, Gero City 📅1 night + 2 meals: from ¥21,600 (including tax and service charge) 🚶Gero Station → [Courtesy car • 5 min] ☎0576-25-3181 🌐<http://www.miyako21.co.jp/english/>



Complimentary morning coffee (Valid until March 31, 2021)

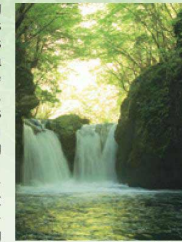


Gero Hot Spring official website

English language introductions of various inns in Gero are provided here, some of which you can make reservations for online. 🌐<http://www.gero-spa.or.jp/english/index.html>

Osaka Falls: One of Gifu's Greatest Gems of Nature

Located in an area slightly removed from Gero Hot Spring is Mt. Ontake, referred to sometimes as one of Japan's Three Sacred Mountains. Tucked away in the mountain's foothills in the district of Osaka-cho is Osaka Falls, an area blessed with a lush and lively natural environment. There are over 200 waterfalls here (216 over five meters in height, to be exact), making this the place with the most waterfalls in all of Japan! The majority of these were formed when Mt. Ontake erupted 54,000 years ago and its lava, flowing through the area and drastically changing the landscape, solidified into magma rock. With the passage of time, water has eroded this rock (an erosion that continues, albeit slowly, to this day!), resulting in the abundance of waterfalls. Each one has its own distinct look and refreshing feel, but aside from the waterfalls themselves, the rocks also take on very unique forms, making Osaka Falls a prime destination for basking in the wonder of Mother Nature! Selected as the very first "Gifu Brand New Treasure," Osaka Falls is well worth the trip from the center of Gero!



Mitsudaki Waterfall

🚶Gero Station → [Nohi Bus on the Gero Yuya Line towards "Himeshaga no Yu" • 1 hr] → "Gandate Koen Iriguchi" bus stop → [15-minute walk] 🌐<http://www.osaka-taki.com/en/index.php>

Osaka Falls Courses

There are a total of 13 courses in the Osaka Falls area that take you in different directions to different waterfalls in the vast premises. The courses have varying levels of difficulty, so there is something here for everyone to enjoy, regardless of age, physical stamina, or mountain climbing experience! Split into Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced levels, the courses require differing amounts of time and are priced differently, as delineated below. Note that all Intermediate and Advanced courses require the hiring of a guide. A few Beginner courses do as well, but most of them do not require a guide and are therefore free of charge. In all cases, however, a donation of ¥200 per person, which goes towards upkeep of the area, is requested at the entrance in Gandate Park. Reservation requests and inquiries should be made to the following: NPO Hida Osaka 200 Falls Office

E-mail: hidaosaka200taki@ever.ocn.ne.jp
 ¥¥1,500 ~ ¥9,000, depending on the course (Children: ¥500 ~ ¥2,500)
 ☎0576-62-2215 🌐<http://www.osaka-taki.com/en/contact/index.html>

Perfect for Beginners: The "Mitsudaki Course" (3 hours required)

One of the easiest and most accessible options, the "Mitsudaki Course" features a total of three waterfalls, including the Mitsudaki Waterfall that entrances visitors with its gallantly cascading triad of levels. After getting off the bus, take a moment to stop at the "Ichi no Torii" Shinto gate before continuing towards Gandate Park and this popular course. Note: though not required, it is possible to apply for a guide for the "Mitsudaki Course" as well as for other Beginner level courses (the above fee will apply).



Karatani Waterfall



Gandate Gorge



Akaganetoyo Waterfall



Himeshaga no Yu: Have A Dip in the Nearby Onsen Before Heading Back to Town!

Right near the bus stop is a hot spring facility called "Himeshaga no Yu," perfectly situated so you can wipe away the fatigue of trekking through Osaka Falls! The *onsen* here is of a completely different kind than the water of Gero Hot Spring, and in fact, it is drinkable! Savor some food prepared with this *onsen* water in addition to soaking in the bath! 📍10 am ~ 9 pm 📄¥650 (Elementary school students: ¥300)

☒Wednesday
 ☎0576-62-3434



Mineral spring rice porridge





[GIFU]: THE ESSENTIALS 岐阜

<http://gifucvb.or.jp/en/>

GETTING HERE

- JR Nagoya Station → [JR Tokaido Main Line Rapid · 18 min · ¥470] → JR Gifu Station
- ~ Or ~
- Central Japan International Airport → [Meitetsu (Nagoya Railroad) Limited Express · 1 hr 5 min · ¥1,340] → Meitetsu Gifu Station



MAP of the Area Around Gifu Station ▶ P93

Detailed Bus Route Information:
http://www.gifucvb.or.jp/en/06_access/06_02.html

Kawara-machi District

Located right along the Nagara River in the immediate vicinity of the *ukai* boarding docks, the Kawara-machi district - whose name in fact means "riverside town" - is one of the oldest surviving areas of Gifu City. Here you find the *kashi* wooden latticed windows, which function like blinds, that you also see in the old quarters of Takayama and Hida Furukawa. Because of its vicinity to the river, Kawara-machi thrived as an important traffic center along the water transport routes, which resulted in an abundance of wholesale dealers of lumber and paper setting up shop here. Having largely escaped major damage through earthquakes and war that other parts of Gifu City sustained, much of Kawara-machi maintains its original structure and look, making it a great place to enjoy a stroll while soaking in the atmosphere of old Japan!



The capital of Gifu Prefecture, Gifu City is one with a long and proud history as the center of what was formerly Mino Province (not to be confused with Mino City!). Located in just about the geographical center of Japan, it has thus been a critical strategic hub throughout its history. Though a large city in its own right, Gifu attaches great importance to its considerable natural settings, from the sparkingly clear Nagara River that is the city's lifeblood to towering Mt. Kinka, atop which sits Gifu Castle. The sites to see in the city are fairly concentrated in location and are incredibly easy to get to by bus or taxi, making Gifu a pleasant destination to explore! The grandest spectacle that Gifu City has to offer is the 1,300-year-old tradition of cormorant fishing which, along with the city's many specialty goods such as Gifu lanterns and Japanese umbrellas, has attracted much attention from overseas.

MAIN FEATURE

1 Cormorant Fishing on the Nagara River



Gifu Prefecture prides itself on its pristine river water, and the Nagara River running through the center

of Gifu City is a prime example of this spectacular natural resource. Proof of the water's purity is the fact that *ayu* sweetfish, which can only live in extremely clean freshwaters, make it their habitat. The traditional method of catching these sweetfish, known as *ukai*, involves raising cormorant birds and training them to dive underwater to snatch up the fish from below. A thin rope is tied around each bird's soft, elastic neck so that it can catch many fish in there at once without actually swallowing them. This method has been in use in Gifu City for over 1,300 years and is a staple of the summer season, which over ten thousand travelers from around the world come to watch every year.

You can board a Viewing Boat and enjoy the scene up-close, as the fishing masters - who raise the cormorants like members of their own families - row down the Nagara River in their fishing boats with the birds in tow. Each fishing master - almost like a puppet master - manipulates about ten birds simultaneously, holding them on ropes and keeping a close eye on the proceedings. Because they know the birds so well, the masters can tell which birds are tired, and they adjust the looseness of the ropes accordingly so that the tired birds can swallow and feed on smaller fish while at the same time continuing to trap larger fish in their necks!

The climax of the event is called the *sogarami*, a formation in which the six fishing boats stagger themselves across the width of the river as they row downstream, working together to corner the *ayu* as they flee to shallower, upstream waters. This formation functions like a net, strategically eliminating any escape routes that the fish might have! The entire spectacle of *ukai*, from the torchlights in the darkness to the figure of Gifu Castle looming above, is a breathtaking experience to take in and makes you feel as if you have been sent back in time. Takes place every night between May 11th and October 15th.

①-2 Minato-machi, Gifu City (Boarding docks and Cormorant Fishing Viewing Boat Office) ② Viewing Boat boarding times: 6:15 pm, 6:45 pm, 7:15 pm; Cormorant fishing: 7:45 pm ~ 8:30 pm ③ ¥3,100 ~ ¥3,400 (Children 3 years old ~ elementary school age: ¥1,700) ④ JR Gifu Station → [Gifu Bus] → "Nagarabashi" bus stop or [Taxi · 15 min] ⑤ 058-262-0104 ⑥ <http://www.ukai-gifucity.jp/ukai/>

2 Nagaragawa Ukai Museum



A facility offering visitors an immersive look into the world of Gifu's famed *ukai* cormorant fishing, the Nagaragawa Ukai Museum is a must-visit destination, especially for travelers coming to Gifu during *ukai*'s off-season. With a beautiful theater introducing the traditional fishing method up-close, as well as other various interactive exhibits, it reveals the true essence of *ukai* in detail. Also on museum grounds is an observatory lounge from which guests can enjoy the breathtaking scenery of Mt. Kinka, Gifu Castle,

and the Nagara River. During the cormorant fishing off-season, cormorant fishing masters visit the museum and personally conduct demonstrations of their craft. ① 5-1-2 Nagara, Gifu City ② 9 am ~ 7 pm (October 16 ~ April 30: until 5 pm). Last entry: 30 min before closing ③ Exhibition admission fee: ¥500 (Children: ¥250) ④ Tuesday (Or the following weekday instead when Tuesday is a holiday; May 1 ~ October 15: none) ⑤ JR · Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus] → "Ukaiya" bus stop → [6-minute walk] ⑥ 058-210-1555 ⑦ <http://ukaimuseum.jp/> (JPN)

🎁 10% off admission fee (Children: ¥230; valid until March 31, 2021)



GIFU

[GIFU] 岐阜



1 Gifu Castle and Mt. Kinka 岐阜城と金華山



Completed in 1201, Gifu Castle looms large over Gifu at the summit of Mt. Kinka and is a symbol of the city. During the Warring States period (mid-15th to early 17th century), the castle came under the control of great feudal warlords such as Saito Dosan and Oda Nobunaga who, with the castle as their base of operations, to a great extent determined the fate and development of the region. Nowadays, the interior of the reconstructed castle (the original of which was destroyed during wartime) is used as a display area for various historical materials, documents, weapons, and the like. The top floor, a watchtower with a ledge running around its perimeter, is a fantastic vantage point from which to look down upon the city in a 360-degree panoramic view! From the sight of the Nagara River in the foreground to the magnificent mountain ranges and the metropolis of Nagoya in the distance, the landscape from Gifu Castle is simply stunning. The view makes it very plain why the castle's builders chose this as the location for their lookout point. Finally, at various points throughout the year including most days during the summer and weekends in early autumn, the castle remains open until 9:30 pm or 10 pm, presenting visitors with an entrancing nighttime view of the area below. In order to reach the castle, you can either take a 3-minute gondola ride on the Mt. Kinka Ropeway or hike your way up the mountain via one of the ten different trails of varying steepness. **📍** 18 Kinkazan Tenshukaku, Gifu City **🕒** 8:30 am ~ 5:30 pm (October 17 ~ March 15: 9:30 am ~ 4:30 pm, March 16 ~ May 11: 9:30 am ~ 5:30 pm) **🎫** ¥200 (Children 4 ~ 15 years old: ¥100); Ropeway fare: ¥620 one-way, ¥1,080 round-trip (Children 4 ~ 11 years old: ¥280 one-way, ¥540 round-trip) **🚉** JR • Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus] → "Gifu Koen/Rekishi Hakubutsukan-mae" bus stop **☎** 058-263-4853 (Gifu Convention and Visitors Bureau) **🌐** <http://www.city.gifu.jp/3537.htm>



Photo postcard (Valid until March 31, 2021)



Gifu and Oda Nobunaga

Oda Nobunaga was one of the greatest medieval warlords of Japan's Warring States period, a time of constant battle that lasted for over a century. Seeing this endless state of war around him, Nobunaga felt a strong urge to unite the lands as one and used his genius to turn this dream into reality. In Japan it was satirically said that "Nobunaga pounded the *mochi* rice cake symbolizing the nation, Hideyoshi kneaded it, and in the end Tokugawa sat down and ate it," a quip about the three great unifiers of Japan. In this way, Nobunaga is considered to be the initiator of the unification process and perhaps the one who contributed the most to its cause. For his innovative, outside-the-box policies and strategies that were ahead of his time and that proved extremely effective in bringing the lands under one rule, Nobunaga is arguably the most revered historical figure in all of Japanese history. And the area that he deemed best suited as the base from which to unite the country was none other than modern-day Gifu City and the surrounding Mino Province in which it was located! At the crossroads of east and west Japan, Mino was a junction so militarily and economically critical that, at the time, it was said that "those who control Mino control all the lands under the heavens." Nobunaga thus captured Mino and used Gifu Castle as his stronghold as he began his quest for unification. In fact, it was Nobunaga who changed the name of the area, previously "Inokuchi," to "Gifu!" Under his rule, modern-day Gifu City flourished, especially because of his "*Rakuichi-rakuza*" policy that encouraged free market trade among the townspeople. Today, the citizens of Gifu City continue to honor Nobunaga and his contributions to the city, such as through the Gifu Nobunaga Festival - the city's most important autumn festival held on the first full weekend of October. Parades of samurai and other historical figures, among additional events, keep his memory very much alive! Recently, some of the Gifu Buses circuiting the city have also been redesigned as "Nobunaga Buses," bearing his image proudly!



2 Gifu Great Buddha (Shoho-ji Temple) 岐阜大仏(正法寺)



Counted as one of Japan's Three Great Buddha Statues and designated a prefectural Important Cultural Property, the Gifu Great Buddha took 38 years to complete and boasts an extremely unique construction. The frame of the statue is constructed from bamboo and wood, which was then covered and hardened with clay and on top of that layered with Buddhist scriptures. Next, lacquer was applied to the surface many times over and, finally, the statue was gilded with golden leaves. Fascinatingly, this structure in a way represents the culture of Gifu, since bamboo and wooden crafts (the frame), pottery goods (the clay), Mino *Washi* Japanese paper (the sheets of scripture), and lacquer all were and continue to be specialty products of the region! One of the charms of the statue is that it looks down towards visitors to Shoho-ji Temple, meeting their gazes as if to comfort them. Most large Buddha statues are built with the head looking straight ahead to prevent cracks from opening in the back of the neck - something that tends to happen because of the added burden of the head facing downwards. The Gifu Great Buddha, however, was built with light enough components that the head was tilted with no adverse effects! Finally, this 13.7-meter tall statue has survived a magnitude 8+ earthquake (as well as air-raid bombings), prompting the hypothesis that the inclusion of the scriptures, written on flexible and durable Japanese paper, in its construction has made it extra-resilient! **📍** 8 Daibutsu-cho, Gifu City **🕒** 9 am ~ 5 pm **🎫** ¥200 (Children: ¥100) **🚉** JR • Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus] → "Gifu Koen/Rekishi Hakubutsukan-mae" bus stop → [2-minute walk] **☎** 058-264-2760 **🌐** http://www.gifucvb.or.jp/en/01_sightseeing/01_09.html



3 Ozeki Lantern 株式会社オゼキ



Depicting flowers on lanterns made of Japanese paper or silk, traditional Gifu *Chochin* lanterns are known far and wide as some of the best in Japan. At Ozeki, these lanterns are crafted by exceptional artisans and sold in the storefront. Also available here are more modern, fusion-type light sculptures known as "Akari" conceived and created by famed artist Isamu Noguchi. These fit with Western interior decorating sensibilities as well as Eastern, so you might consider picking one up when in Gifu City! **📍** 1-18 Oguma-cho, Gifu City **🕒** 9:00 am ~ 5:00 pm (May vary during the summer) **🗓** Weekends and holidays **🚉** JR • Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus] → "Media Cosmos Uguisudani Koko Guchi" bus stop → [5-minute walk] **☎** 058-263-0111 **🌐** <http://www.ozeki-lantern.com/> **🚗** V-M-A-J-D **📶** P



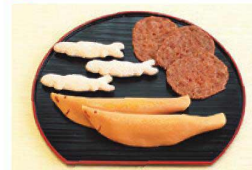
4 Sumii Tomijiro Uchiwa Shop 住井富次郎商店



The Gifu *Uchiwa* fan, a well-renowned piece of craftsmanship, is made by pasting *washi* paper to a bamboo frame and covering the entire surface with lacquer or persimmon juice, giving the round fan an appealing luster. A variation on this theme is the *mizu-uchiwa* "water fan" that is made with ultra-thin paper and painted over with a naturally-derived varnish. The result is a translucent fan that is slightly more resistant to water than ordinary *uchiwa*. First used during the Meiji era (1868 ~ 1912), *mizu-uchiwa* are said to have been dipped in water before being fanned, thus their name. The theory is that heat is removed from the surrounding air as the water evaporates, making the breeze created by the fan cooler! The story surrounding its original method of use might be no more than a fanciful tale, however, since even *mizu-uchiwa* get ruined if exposed to too much water. Potential buyers are thus highly discouraged from using them with water! Even so, they are still thought to have a cooling effect, albeit a psychological one stemming from their visually refreshing translucent appearance! Pick up a regular or water *uchiwa* at this shop in Kawara-machi! **📍** 46 Minato-machi, Gifu City **🕒** 7 am ~ 9 pm (October 16 ~ May 10: 9 am ~ 6 pm) **🗓** None (October 16 ~ May 10: Sunday) **🚉** JR • Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus] → "Nagarabashi" bus stop → [1-minute walk] **☎** 058-264-4318 **🌐** <http://www.ccn.aitai.ne.jp/~gf-uchiwa/> (JPN)



5 Tamaiya Honpo 玉井屋本舗 本店



An old Japanese confectionery that boasts more than 100 years of history, Tamaiya Honpo is the birthplace of one of Gifu's most representative sweets: the "Nobori-ayu." This confection, made from a Turkish delight-like *mochi* rice cake wrapped in castella sponge cake dough, brings to mind the image of an *ayu* sweetfish, which is its inspiration. A sweet perfect for both adults and children, it is also symbolic of Gifu City! **📍** 42 Minato-machi, Gifu City **🕒** 8 am ~ 8 pm **🗓** Wednesday **🚉** JR • Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus] → "Nagarabashi" bus stop → [1-minute walk] **☎** 058-262-0276 **🌐** <http://www.tamaiya-honpo.com/> (JPN)

V-M-A-J-D Only accepted for purchases ¥2,000 or more

GIFU

[GIFU] 岐阜

"But I Didn't Order Any Food..."



One of the most unique elements of Gifu City (and the nearby areas) has to do with its coffee shops; many of them, especially smaller ones run by individuals or families, offer a complimentary "morning service" special in which food is served with an order of a beverage! A phenomenon completely foreign to all other areas of Japan with the exception of parts of Aichi Prefecture, this "morning service" usually consists of a combination of toast, eggs, salad, and/or fruit. Amazingly, the only thing one has to pay for is the drink itself! Limited to the hours of the morning, this service is definitely an experience travelers should seek out during their trip to Gifu City! Note that the "morning service" is not available at all coffee shops and cafes and that, for those where it is available, the exact hours, price, and food offered will vary by establishment.

6 Kawaramachiya 川原町屋



This Japanese-style café makes its home in a refurbished old house that was used as a paper wholesaler shop long ago. The café is one of the multitude in Gifu that offers the "morning service" described above, and visitors can also purchase various charming Japanese trinkets and craft goods here.

☎28 Tamai-cho, Gifu City ☎9 am ~ 6:30 pm (During the cormorant fishing season: until 7 pm) May open at 10 am depending on the season ☒New Year's holiday season ☒JR・Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus] → "Nagarabashi" bus stop → [3-minute walk] ☎058-266-5144 ☎http://www.kawaramachiya.jp/ (JPN)

🎁 5% off the marked price for trinkets (Valid until March 31, 2021)



7 Kawaramachi Izumiya 川原町泉屋



This restaurant in the Kawara-machi district specializes in cuisine made with *ayu* and offers an array of mouth-watering set menus (ranging from ¥3,240 to ¥12,960 in price) that allow customers to savor sweetfish in a variety of forms! ☎20 Motoshima-cho, Gifu City ☎11:30 am ~ 2 pm, 5 pm ~ 7:30 pm (Reservations required in the evening during *ukai*'s off-season) ☒Wednesday, Sometimes closed in winter. No days off from July ~ August ☒JR・Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus] → "Nagarabashi" bus stop → [5-minute walk] ☎058-263-6788 ☎http://www.nagaragawa.com/eng/index.html

🎁 One complimentary dish with an order totaling ¥3,000 or greater (Valid until March 31, 2021)



8 Gifu Grand Hotel 岐阜グランドホテル



This is a fantastic urban resort hotel conveniently located near both the Nagara River and Mt. Kinka. The view from the hotel of Gifu Castle rising above Mt. Kinka is superb.

☎648 Nagara, Gifu City ☒1 night + 2 meals: from ¥14,946 (Tax and other charges included) ☒JR・Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus] → "Nagaragawa Onsen" bus stop → [2-minute walk] ☎058-233-1111 ☎https://www.gifugrandhotel.co.jp/en/

🎁 Complimentary mineral water (Valid until March 31, 2021)



9 Gifu Miyako Hotel 岐阜都ホテル



This hotel is a relaxing place where you can soothe your body and mind. From Japanese to Chinese to Western-style and more, there are various dining options in the hotel in addition to the Sky Bar that offers an unrivaled view of Gifu City from the top floor.

☎2695-2 Nagara Fukumitsu, Gifu City ☒1 night + 2 meals: from ¥14,800 ☒JR・Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus] → "Nagaragawa Koku-sai Kaigijo-mae" bus stop → [2-minute walk] ☎058-295-3100 ☎https://www.miyakohotels.ne.jp/gifu/english/index.html/

🎁 Receive one folding fan (with an Ayu Sweetfish design) per person (Valid until March 31, 2021)



10 Hotel Park ホテルパーク



As the closest hotel of them all to Gifu Castle, Hotel Park boasts an outdoor hot spring bath on its top floor from which you can gaze upon the castle and grand Mt. Kinka.

☎397-2 Minato-machi, Gifu City ☒1 night + 2 meals: from ¥12,000 (Tax not included) ☒JR・Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus] → "Nagarabashi" bus stop → [3-minute walk] ☎058-265-5211 ☎http://www.hotelpark.jp/english/

🎁 One 500 ml bottle of mineral water per guest (Valid until March 31, 2021)



11 Ishikin 石金



A hotel located alongside the beautiful Nagara River, Ishikin offers a spectacular view of the river and Mt. Kinka as well as traditional *kaiseki* multi-course meals.

☎112 Nagara, Gifu City ☒1 night + 2 meals: from ¥11,000 (Tax not included) ☒JR・Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus] → "Ukaiya" bus stop → [3-minute walk] ☎058-231-8156 ☎http://www.ishikin.co.jp/english/

🎁 Bath salts (Valid until March 31, 2021)



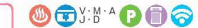
12 Juhachiro 十八楼



Recently selected as the second best *ryokan* over a century old in all of Japan, this inn has been around for more than 150 years and offers a traditionally Japanese accommodation experience. From the open-air *onsen* bath from which you can hear the sound of the flowing Nagara River to the lavish *kaiseki* banquets, Juhachiro is filled with charming elements that are sure to make your stay an extremely pleasant one.

☎10 Minato-machi, Gifu City ☒1 night + 2 meals: from ¥17,430 ☒JR・Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus] → "Nagarabashi" bus stop → [2-minute walk] ☎058-265-1551 ☎http://www.18rou.com/en/

🎁 "Nagaragawa Bi no Yakusen" medicinal bath salts (Valid until March 31, 2021)



13 Kinka 金んか



An old, storied *ryokan* featuring a luxurious, traditional Japanese restaurant, Kinka provides guests with delicious cuisine prepared using the famous products of Gifu Prefecture, from wild *ayu* sweetfish to Hida beef.

☎1-15 Omiya-cho, Gifu City ☒1 night + 2 meals: from ¥19,800 ☒JR・Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus] → "Gifu Koen/Rekishi Hakubutsukan-mae" bus stop → [1-minute walk] ☎058-262-2292 ☎http://www.kinkagifu.com/en/

🎁 Bath salts (Valid until March 31, 2021)



14 Usho no Ie Sugiyama 鶴匠の家 すぎ山



During the season in which it is carried out, you can watch the spectacle of *ukai* cormorant fishing unfolding from the comfort of your room at Usho no Ie Sugiyama! Meals here include *kaiseki*-style dining featuring seasonal ingredients and specialty products of Gifu Prefecture.

☎73-1 Nagara, Gifu City ☒1 night + 2 meals: from ¥15,120 ☒JR・Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus] → "Ukaiya" bus stop → [5-minute walk] ☎058-231-0161 ☎http://www.gifu-sugiyama.com/ (JPN)

🎁 One coffee voucher per guest redeemable in the lobby lounge (Valid until March 31, 2021)





[GUJO]: THE ESSENTIALS 郡上

<http://gujokankou.com/en/>

GETTING HERE

JR • Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus Hachiman Express Line • 1 hr 10 min • ¥1,520] → Gujo Hachiman Jokamachi Plaza

~ Or ~

JR Gifu Station → [JR Takayama Main Line • 35 min] → Mino-Ota Station → [Nagaragawa Railway • 1 hr 20 min • ¥1,850 in total] → Gujo-Hachiman Station

MAIN FEATURE

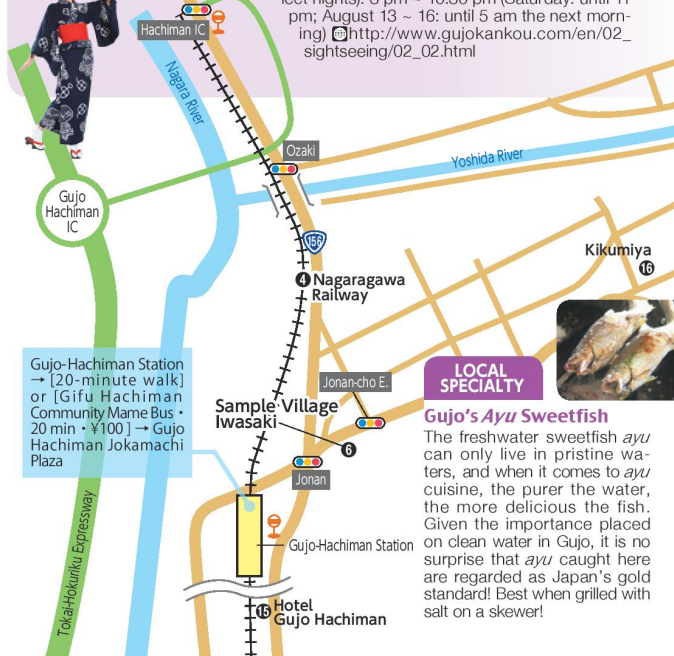
Gujo Odori Dance

The Japanese summer is marked by the *Obon* season in which Buddhist memorial services are held in order to honor the spirits of one's ancestors. Often accompanying these memorials are dance festivals featuring *bon-odori*, a traditional type of Japanese dance. Among them, the Gujo *Odori* stands tall above the rest. Counted as one of Japan's Three Great *Bon-odori* Dance Festivals, it is also the longest of them all, held over a period of 30+ nights (not all consecutive) throughout the summer.



The four-day period known as *tetsuya-odori*, or "all-night dancing," is the climax of the Gujo *Odori* during which dancing continues all the way into the wee hours of the morning! Ten numbers make up the Gujo *Odori* songbook, all of which are simple enough that anybody can jump in and participate, learning by watching other people dancing nearby. Wearing a yukata (light summer kimono) and geta (traditional Japanese clogs) is customary and highly recommended, but don't hesitate to enter the fray if you can't get your hands on them!

Various locations within Gujo Hachiman (Exact venue rotates) ☺ Mid-July ~ early September (Select nights): 8 pm ~ 10:30 pm (Saturday: until 11 pm; August 13 ~ 16: until 5 am the next morning) ☺ http://www.gujokankou.com/en/02_sightseeing/02_02.html



LOCAL SPECIALTY

Gujo's Ayu Sweetfish

The freshwater sweetfish *ayu* can only live in pristine waters, and when it comes to *ayu* cuisine, the purer the water, the more delicious the fish. Given the importance placed on clean water in Gujo, it is no surprise that *ayu* caught here are regarded as Japan's gold standard! Best when grilled with salt on a skewer!



Gujo City is located approximately in the center of Gifu Prefecture and is a mountainous region that sees a fair amount of snow in the winter months. At its heart is the castle town of Gujo Hachiman, famous far and wide for the Gujo *Odori* Dance, one of the most famous traditional dance festivals in all of Japan. Another pride of Gujo Hachiman is its food replica-making industry, the largest in the nation. Food replicas, which you will see adorning the shop windows of restaurants all over Japan, were born here in Gujo, and over 60% of them are still made here to this day! Another defining characteristic of Gujo is the immense respect with which the pure, natural waters in the area are treated, creating a truly remarkable harmony between the town and its water sources. Finally, with these brilliantly clear waters, Gujo is home to the best *ayu* sweetfish in the country! A stroll along the old streets and among the quaint town's many temples and shrines is a wonderful way to spend an afternoon during your trip to Gifu.

Water: The Pride of the Town



A Yoshida River



B Igawa Water Path

Throughout Gujo Hachiman, you will find small canals lining the roads that represent the strong bond that exists between the town, its inhabitants, and the clear water that is their lifeblood. Originally constructed for fire-prevention purposes, these canals to this day are used by the locals to wash laundry, rice, and vegetables right in front of their houses! That's how pristine the naturally flowing water is in Gujo City. Of course, keeping it this clean requires the cooperation of the entire town, so the fact that it has remained as pure as it is speaks to the vital role water has played in Gujo's history and culture.



Peak Viewing Season
★ Early ~ mid-April
★ Mid ~ late November

SPOTLIGHT



A Winter Sports Paradise!

A mere 30-minute drive away from Gujo Hachiman is Gujo's more mountainous region that is characterized by a high concentration of ski resorts! Since there is heavy snowfall in this area, 11 ski resorts are available to choose from, and each year over 1.5 million enthusiasts make their way here to take advantage of Gifu's cold winter season. In fact, Gujo has previously played host to the NSBA Snowboarding Championships, an official event on the World Snowboard Tour, which speaks the quality of both the snow here and the slopes themselves! Come enjoy winter sports in Gujo from December to March!

☺ http://www.gujokankou.com/en/02_sightseeing/02_03.html

Detailed MAP ▶ http://www.gujohachiman.com/kanko/pdf/map_e_1.pdf

[GUJO] 郡上



1 Sogi Spring 宗祇水



A symbol of Gujo Hachiman, the Sogi Spring was one of the first springs, rivers, or underground sources of water to be selected as one of Japan's "100 Remarkable Waters." A communal watering spot, the spring is organized into several levels, each designated for a specific use. The first tub into which water flows after springing forth from the ground is used for drinking. The next downstream tub is for washing rice and cooling watermelons, then the following for washing vegetables and the like, and finally the last tub for washing linens using a bucket. In this way, there is a gradation established based upon the relative need for pure water (which decreases as you go downstream) for each activity listed. By abiding by these rules, the townspeople of Hachiman create a space in which they can all utilize the water efficiently and further foster public awareness of water's importance! There is also a mini-shrine at the mouth of the spring, which enshrines the spirit

of a water deity. 📍Honmachi, Hachiman-cho, Gujo City 📍Gujo Hachiman Jokamachi Plaza → [4-minute walk] ☎0575-67-1808 (Gujo City Tourism Federation) 🌐http://www.gujokankou.com/en/01_history/01_02.html



2 Gujo Hachiman Museum 郡上八幡博覧館



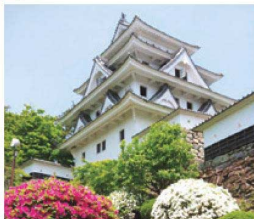
This museum, through its many exhibits about the history, culture, and lifestyle of Gujo, allows visitors to learn about the area in extensive detail. In addition to its displays, the museum also offers Gujo *Odori* dance lessons four times a day (at 11 am, 1 pm, 2 pm, and 3 pm), in which experienced participants of the nationally famous festival introduce the steps to a few of the more popular dance numbers. To see videos, search for "Gujo Hachiman Hakurankan" on YouTube. 📍50 Tonomachi, Hachiman-cho, Gujo City ☎9 am ~ 5 pm ¥450, or ¥650 with dual admission to Gujo Hachiman Castle (Middle and elementary school students: ¥310, or ¥350 also for the dual admission ticket) ✕December 24 ~ January 2 📍Gujo Hachiman Jokamachi Plaza → [5-minute walk] ☎0575-65-3215 🌐http://gujohachiman.com/e_gujohaku/



¥100 off admission fee (Adults only) (Valid until March 31, 2021)



3 Gujo Hachiman Castle 郡上八幡城



Though the original Gujo Hachiman Castle was demolished during the Edo period (1603 ~ 1868), the currently standing one is the oldest wooden reconstruction of a castle in the entire country. Considered one of the most beautiful and distinctive of all the mountain fortresses, it offers an entrancing view of the old castle town below. Unlike most other castles in Japan, which are surrounded by cherry trees that bloom in the spring, Gujo Hachiman Castle is engulfed by fiery red maple trees in the autumn, making that the best season to visit! The vivid fall colors bring the chalk-white of the castle into sharp relief, especially during the Autumn Illumination event when the mountaintop is lit against the dark sky! 📍659 Ichino Taira, Yanagimachi, Hachiman-cho, Gujo City ☎9 am ~ 5 pm (June ~ August: 8 am ~ 6 pm, November ~ February: 9 am ~ 4:30 pm) ¥310

(Middle and elementary school students: ¥150) ✕December 20 ~ January 10 📍Gujo Hachiman Jokamachi Plaza → [15-minute walk] ☎0575-67-1819 🌐http://www.gujokankou.com/en/01_history/01_03.html



4 Nagaragawa Railway 長良川鉄道



The only train line that runs through Gujo City, the Nagaragawa Railway is a relatively minor one whose stations are almost all unmanned. There are at most two trains running per hour on this railroad which is, in many ways, representative of traditional Japanese trains running through the countryside! As it travels along the Nagara River, the track is surrounded on both sides by beautiful nature, thereby providing a wonderful, scenic, relaxing ride through Gifu. Perhaps more than other trips taken via railway, traveling in a single-car train at a leisurely pace is an experience in itself, not simply a means of transportation! ☎0575-23-3921 🌐http://www.nagatetsu.co.jp (JPN)

Gujo's Food Replicas: Blending Art and Technology, the Old and the New



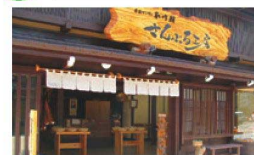
If you have ever traveled around Japan before, you undoubtedly will have seen the food replicas in the window displays of restaurants everywhere. There to entice customers and give them a concrete idea of what they can expect to be served, these replicas are a unique part of modern Japanese culture. Stunningly similar in appearance to the real thing, these replicas were first conceived right here in Gujo Hachiman! The father of food replicas - Takizo Iwasaki - was a native of this town, and it was here that he had his critical epiphany. As the story goes, as a child, Takizo saw a drop of hot wax fall from a candle into a puddle of cold water and was struck when, upon touching the surface, the drop bloomed into the shape of a gorgeous flower! This image would stay with him and become his inspiration as he aimed to develop a realistic way to mimic the appearance of food. Back in those early days, wax was thus used as the replica material, but today modern technology has taken on a much greater role. Vinyl resin is currently the preferred ingredient, as it is both longer-lasting and more malleable than wax! However, while technology has allowed food replicas to be more faithful to the original dish, today's replica-making workers are every bit the artists that workers were in the past. It takes over a decade to acquire the necessary repertoire of techniques, and the path to becoming a master is really no different than any traditional Japanese craft, from wood carving to lacquering. Working under a master and spending years perfecting the most basic of skills is required. In many ways, then, food replica-making is a true member of the long and proud tradition of Japanese crafts! At the same time, though it inherits this history, replica-making is innovative! Creating replicas that freeze moments in



time - such as a bowl of ramen spilling over - is a novel technique now so frequently used that replicas can almost be described as being more realistic than the real thing! In addition, replicas are not necessarily restricted to food; food replica masters will also take orders for prosthetic limbs, for example, adapting their skills to the needs of the world around them! A craft that is a fusion of many elements, then, replica-making is a great source of pride in Gujo City.



5 Sample Kobo さんふる工房



Housed in a 150-year-old building, this food replica shop is one of the most popular destinations in Gujo Hachiman. When you enter the store, a variety of food-themed replica goods greets you, making this an ideal place to buy souvenirs that are extremely memorable and easily portable! In the back of the store is the workshop where all the goods are made, and it is arranged so that customers can come into the room to catch a glimpse of the production process. Finally, you can also try your hand at making a food replica as they did in the old days, with wax (at a cost • reservation required)! 📍956 Hashimotocho, Hachiman-cho, Gujo City ☎9 am ~ 5 pm ✕New Year's holiday period (length of period varies) 📍Gujo Hachiman Jokamachi Plaza → [5-minute walk] ☎0575-67-1870 🌐http://www.samplekobo.com (JPN)



Chocolate replica keyholder with a purchase of ¥1,000 or more (No expiration date)



6 Sample Village Iwasaki サンプルビレッジいわさき



Creating food replicas from wax is an original Japanese craft that has been pursued since the Showa era (1926 ~ 1989). Sample Village Iwasaki was in fact the very first replica production company, started by the father of food replicas himself, Takizo Iwasaki. Here, you can purchase some wonderful, realistic replicas, watch the skilled workers making the replicas, and even try creating some yourself! From deep-fried vegetable tempura to lettuce, each type requires different techniques, so be sure to try a variety of them (at a cost • reservation required)! 📍250 Jonancho, Hachiman-cho, Gujo City ☎10 am ~ 4 pm (replica creation is until 3pm)

✕Tuesday, October: 1st Thursday, February: 1st Saturday, New Year's holiday season 📍Gujo-Hachiman Station → [5-minute walk] ☎0575-65-3378 🌐http://www.iwasakimokei.com (JPN)



One food replica keyholder for those signed up for the food replica workshop (Valid until March 31, 2021)



[GUJO] 郡上

7 Daihachi 大八



This restaurant is housed in an old *gassho-zukuri* thatched roof building and allows guests to savor the various flavors of Gujo City. From Hida beef and river *ayu* to edible wild plants and wild boar meat, you can experience the variety that comes with in the middle of a bountiful natural environment. 📍883-1 Sakanamachi, Hachiman-cho, Gujo City 🕒11 am ~ 2 pm, 4:30 pm ~ 10 pm (Summer: 11 am ~ 2 pm, 5 pm ~ 10 pm) 🗓️Irregular closing days during the week (Open on all weekends and holidays) 📍Gujo Hachiman Jokamachi Plaza → [2-minute walk] ☎️0575-65-3709 🌐https://ja-jp.facebook.com/gujo.daihachi (JPN)

🎁 One complimentary item off the menu (No expiration date) 📍 P M

8 Izumizaka 泉坂



This restaurant, set in a 100-year-old house, serves local cuisine such as Hida beef, *hoba* miso (miso paste and vegetables grilled over a magnolia leaf), and savory pancakes made with locally grown onions. Enjoy *teppanyaki*-style cuisine cooked on an iron griddle before your eyes! 📍177 Tonomachi, Hachiman-cho, Gujo City 🕒11 am ~ 2 pm, 4 pm ~ 9:30 pm 🗓️Tuesday 📍Gujo Hachiman Jokamachi Plaza → [2-minute walk] ☎️0575-67-0474 🌐http://izumisaka.com (JPN)

🎁 One soft drink or glass of wine (No expiration date) 📍 V M A U B P M

9 Sample Kobo Kitamachikan さんふる工房北町館



An extension of Sample Kobo's main shop, the Kitamachikan is a food replica-themed café whose soft-serve ice cream made with extremely rich milk is incredibly popular. You can also buy replica goods here in addition to at the main store. 📍7-9 Tonomachi, Hachiman-cho, Gujo City 🕒10 am ~ 5 pm 🗓️Wednesday 📍Gujo Hachiman Jokamachi Plaza → [1-minute walk] 🌐http://www.samplekobo.com (JPN)

🎁 One Chocolate replica keyholder with the purchase of ¥1,000 or more in food replica merchandise (No expiration date) 📍 P

10 Shinbashitei 新橋亭



A tasteful restaurant along the Yoshida River, Shinbashitei features seasonal cuisine, from wild sweetfish in the summer to *shishi-nabe* wild boar hot pot in the winter. 📍268-3 Sakuramachi, Hachiman-cho, Gujo City 🕒11 am ~ 2:30 pm, 5 pm ~ 8 pm 🗓️Irregular closing days 📍Gujo Hachiman Jokamachi Plaza → [5-minute walk] ☎️0575-65-2729 🌐http://sinbasitei.com (JPN)

🎁 ¥50 off for independent travelers (Valid until March 31, 2021) 📍 M

11 Sougian 宗祇庵



Sougian is located just above Sogi Spring, one of the very first water sources chosen for Japan's "100 Remarkable Waters" list. Our Sougian Parfait is very popular and features the image of a Gujo Odori dancer. Please relax and enjoy our tea, the beautiful scenery, and sounds of the running water from the neighboring river. 📍862-10 Honmachi, Hachiman-cho, Gujo City, Gifu 🕒11 am ~ 5 pm (last order at 4:30 pm) 🗓️Wednesdays 📍5-minute walk from Gujo Hachiman Jokamachi Plaza ☎️0575-67-9201

🎁 One green tea or roasted green tea with an order of dessert (Valid until March 31, 2021) 📍 M W

12 Takara Gallery Workroom タカラギャラリーワークルーム



It's said that Gujo Hachiman is the birthplace of silkscreen printing, and even now the tradition is continued and passed down as one of the local industries. We are a studio that was established in order to spread the word about this printing technique to as many people as possible, and provide a place where one can experience silkscreen printing firsthand. We offer printing workshops where you can create a *terugui* hand towel (a must-have accessory for the Gujo Odori) or tote bag by combining your favorite patterns and colors! Our workshop includes a small gift shop, where you can purchase an assortment of goods ranging from screen-printing items to hand towels and wrapping cloths that were created with a variety of dyeing methods. Reservations are required for printing workshops. 📍470-28 Shimadani Hachiman-cho, Gujo City, Gifu 🕒10 am ~ 5 pm 📍from ¥1,000 🗓️Wednesdays and the 4th Tuesday of the month 📍10-minute walk from Gujo Hachiman Jokamachi Plaza 📍info@takara-garo.com 🌐http://www.takara-garo.com/

13 Bizenya 備前屋



The oldest Japanese *ryokan* inn in Gujo Hachiman, Bizenya boasts a beautiful garden where guests can enjoy the changing colors of the seasons. 📍264 Yanagimachi, Hachiman-cho, Gujo City 📍1 night + 2 meals: from ¥13,000 (Not including tax and other charges) 📍Gujo Hachiman Jokamachi Plaza → [5-minute walk] ☎️0575-65-2068 🌐http://gujo-yo-bizenya.jp (JPN)

🎁 10% discount on the ¥13,000 lodging plan (Not including tax) (Valid until March 31, 2021) 📍 P I

14 City Hotel Yoshidaya シティホテル吉田屋



Located in the center of Gujo Hachiman, City Hotel Yoshidaya offers Western-style hotel rooms that are bright, clean, and comfortable, with three-quarter beds, baths, and wireless internet connections available. 📍160 Tonomachi, Hachiman-cho, Gujo City 📍1 night + 2 meals: from ¥15,000 (Not including tax) 📍Gujo Hachiman Jokamachi Plaza → [1-minute walk] ☎️0575-67-0001 🌐http://www.yoshidayaryokan.com/index_e.php

🎁 Complimentary morning coffee (Valid until March 31, 2021) 📍 V M A U B P M W I

15 Hotel Gujo Hachiman ホテル郡上八幡



Located right alongside the flowing Nagara River, Hotel Gujo Hachiman is one of the largest Japanese-style hotels in the area. Here, guests can enjoy free demonstrations of the Gujo *Odori* Dance and *taishu engeki* "theater for the masses." 📍208 Yoshino, Hachiman-cho, Gujo City 📍1 night + 2 meals: from ¥12,000 (Not including tax) 📍Gujo-Hachiman Station → [Taxi • 5 min] Pick up from Gujo Hachiman Station is available (reservation required) ☎️0575-63-2311 🌐http://www.japanican.com/en/hotel/detail/5490004/

🎁 500 ml bottle of natural mineral water from Gujo (Valid until March 31, 2021) 📍 V M A U B P M W I Only usable in front lobby and guest rooms

16 Kikumiya 菊美屋



At this Japanese-style *ryokan*, seasonal ingredients are used as part of the "macrobiotic" approach to dining which emphasizes grains supplemented with local vegetables. You can also enjoy sitting around a traditional *iroi* sunken hearth. 📍1082 Shimadani, Hachiman-cho, Gujo City 📍1 night + 2 meals: from ¥9,000 (Not including tax) 📍Gujo-Hachiman Station → [15-minute walk] ☎️0575-65-3367 🌐http://gujo.com/yado/kikumiya

🎁 Hot sake served in bamboo for groups of two or more (No expiration date) 📍 I



[MINO]: THE ESSENTIALS 美濃

<http://www.mino-city.jp/en/index.html>

GETTING HERE

- JR • Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus Gifu-Mino Line • 1 hr • ¥990] → "Udatsu no Machinami-dori" bus stop
~ Or ~
- JR Gifu Station → [JR Takayama Main Line • 35 min] → Mino-Ota Station → [Nagaragawa Railway • 37 min • ¥1,130 in total] → Mino-shi Station

MAIN FEATURE

Intangible Cultural Heritage: Mino Washi and the "Akari" Art Exhibition



Among the industries of Mino City, the one that stands head and shoulders above the rest is that of paper production. With a history of over 1,300 years here, paper-making is at the very heart of the city's culture, a fact that is seen clearly in the many paper-centric festivals and events. Japanese paper, or *washi*, is made from the bark of certain types of trees and is noticeably different from paper we are used to using that is made from wood pulp. Generally tougher, more fibrous, and softer, *washi* is a paper of extremely high quality that, throughout Japanese history, has been used in the making of many traditional crafts. And Mino *Washi*, counted as one of Japan's Three Great *Washi*, is among the best of them all! It is extremely thin when compared to its paper brethren, and yet despite this, it is immensely strong and difficult to tear. *Washi* was added to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list in November of 2014.

With such an outstanding paper-crafting industry, then, it is no surprise that traditional crafts making use of paper also flourished in the general region. Gifu *Chochin* lanterns, Gifu *Wagasa* Japanese umbrellas, and Gifu *Uchiwa* fans are all examples of famous products incorporating Mino paper into their construction, undoubtedly one reason why each of these is considered among the best in Japan. Though not as numerous as in the past, there remain many craftsmen producing paper in Mino City today, continuing to use the traditional techniques that made the product as famous as it is. Around the town, there are various shops selling Mino *Washi* goods, so you can pick up beautiful souvenirs that represent Mino's long history!

When it comes to showing off the incredible allure of Mino paper, nothing does so better than the Mino Washi "Akari" Art Exhibition that takes place every October on the old streets of Mino. Here, around 500 works of art, called "Akari," are accepted from artists all over the world and displayed here for all to admire. Each "Akari" makes use of the interplay between the Mino *Washi* and the light of which it is composed, giving birth to a warm, glowing sculpture that showcases the gentle translucency and texture of the paper. Held in the dark of night, this event is absolutely unforgettable, so come visit and experience first-hand the infinite possibilities of Mino *Washi*!



SPOTLIGHT

Mino Washi in Many Shapes and Sizes!

Thin, strong, and free from any blotchy imperfections, Mino *Washi* Japanese paper can be used to make anything imaginable, not just traditional Japanese handicrafts! From notebooks and postcards to lanterns, the paper comes in many forms at the various shops in town. Thanks to recent technological innovations, you can even buy socks and towels made from Mino *Washi*! Light, easy to pack, and a craftwork that represents Japanese aesthetics, this paper - in any configuration - makes the perfect gift to bring home!



With an old quarter to match any other, the city of Mino - not to be confused with the former Mino Province that encompassed the southern half of modern-day Gifu Prefecture - is famous for its *udatsu*-lined streets (described below). Most of the attractions in Mino City are concentrated in this easily walkable district, and in recent years more and more of the preserved merchant houses have been restored as shops and cafés, making this an area with great practical value for visitors as well as with deep cultural and historical value. That said, if you want to fully experience Mino's beautiful spring and autumn seasons, you should make your way slightly outside the old quarter to Ogura Park (for beautiful sakura cherry trees), Oyada Shrine, and the banks of the Nagara River. Well-known throughout Japan for the Mino *Washi* Japanese paper that has been produced here for 1,300 years, Mino City is also famous for the springtime's Mino Festival, the summer fireworks, and the Mino Washi "Akari" Art Exhibition held in the fall!

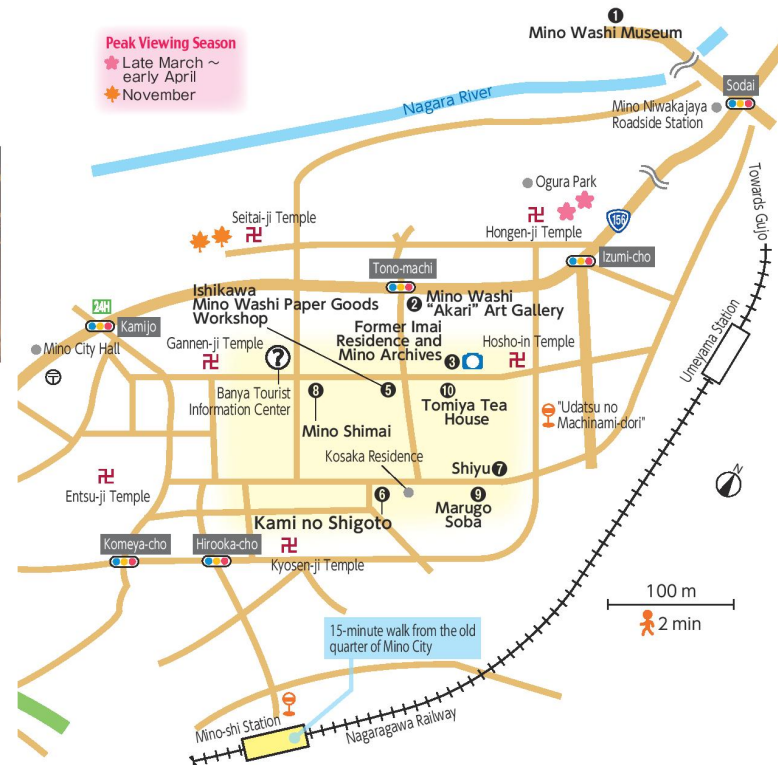
MINO



Udatsu-Lined Old Streets of Mino

This old quarter of Mino City is known far and wide for the handsome *udatsu* firewalls that rise above the roofs of the wealthy traders' houses. As an old, Edo period (1603 ~ 1868) town, Mino is composed of largely wooden buildings, making it extremely vulnerable to fire. From early on, then, the townspeople feared the spread of fire from one house to the next, and so they installed *udatsu* between the ends of adjoining roofs to contain one in case it broke out. But these firewalls have more than just a practical purpose; they also embody the competition that existed between the wealthy merchants of the town. As with the *yatai* floats used in the

Takayama Festival, Mino's *udatsu* are highly decorative and embellished as a result of the merchants' desire to outdo one another! A symbol of status and wealth, then, the *udatsu* is a unique architectural contrivance that speaks to the history of the town.



[MINO] 美濃



1 Mino Washi Museum 美濃和紙の里会館



The best place to go to learn all about the history of and production process behind Mino *Washi*, this museum also informs about *washi* paper more generally, introducing many of the different kinds made throughout Japan. You can also make your own Mino *Washi* here and get a sense for how difficult it is to do it well. **📍** 1851-3 Warabi, Mino City **🕒** 9 am ~ 5 pm (Last entry: 4:30 pm) **🎫** ¥500 (Middle and elementary school students: ¥250) **🗓** Tuesday (Or the following business day instead when Tuesday is a holiday), December 29 ~ January 3, Days following national holidays (museum is opened if the following day is during the weekend) **📍** Mino-shi Station → [Taxi • 20 min] **☎** 0575-34-8111 **🌐** <http://www.mino-city.jp/en/tourist/history01.html>

🎁 ¥50 off admission fee (Valid until March 31, 2021)



2 Mino Washi "Akari" Art Gallery 美濃和紙あかりアート館



A re-creation of the Mino Washi "Akari" Art Exhibition that graces the streets of Mino in October, this museum displays a selection of the gorgeous "Akari" paper light sculptures that have been shown off at the Exhibition. An eclectic variety of Mino *Washi* goods is also available in the museum's shop. **📍** 1901-3 Motozumi-cho, Mino City **🕒** 9 am ~ 4 pm (April ~ September: until 4:30 pm) **🎫** ¥200 **🗓** Tuesday (Or the following business day instead when Tuesday is a holiday), New Year's holiday season **📍** Mino-shi Station → [15-minute walk] **☎** 0575-33-3772 **🌐** <http://www.mino-city.jp/en/tourist/history02.html>

🎁 Gift such as facial oil blotting paper (Valid until March 31, 2021)



旧今井家住宅・美濃史料館

3 Former Imai Residence and Mino Archives

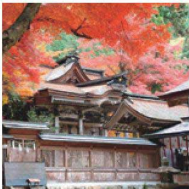


This grand residence of a once-prosperous merchant family, built in the late 18th century, is used today as a historical archive, housing materials pertaining to Mino City. It boasts grand *udatsu* firewalls decorating its roof that are among the oldest in existence. And a *sukankutsu* - a Japanese garden ornament and musical device - is located in the courtyard and soothes the soul of anyone who has a listen to its quiet, harp-like tune! **📍** 1883 Izumi-cho, Mino City **🕒** 9 am ~ 4 pm (April ~ September: until 4:30 pm) **🎫** ¥300 **🗓** December ~ February: Tuesday (Or the following business day instead when Tuesday is a holiday), New Year's holiday season **📍** Mino-shi Station → [15-minute walk] **☎** 0575-33-0021 **🌐** <http://www.mino-city.jp/en/tourist/construction01.html>

🎁 Gift such as facial oil blotting paper (Valid until March 31, 2021)



4 Oyada Shrine and Maple Valley 大矢田神社もみじ谷



A national Important Cultural Property, Oyada Shrine is enclosed by a forest of over 3,000 maple trees which itself is designated a Natural Monument of Japan. A deep crimson color in mid-November, the forest is one of the absolute best autumn spots in Gifu. Together, the shrine - with its stunning wooden carvings - and its forest compose one of Mino City's greatest power spots! On November 23rd, the Hinkoko Festival is held, a 500-year-old puppet performance (a national Intangible Folk Cultural Property) that represents the simple, non-embellished festivals that used to dot the Japanese countryside. **📍** 2596 Oyada, Mino City **📍** Mino-shi Station → [Gifu Bus on the Gifu-Mino Line or Makidani Line towards "Chuno Chosha" • 20 min] → "Chuno Chosha" bus stop → [Gifu Bus on the Takami Line towards JR Gifu Station • 8 min] → "Oyada Jinja" bus stop → [30-minute walk]



5 Ishikawa Mino Washi Paper Goods Workshop 美濃和紙雑貨体験ショップ石川紙業



Create your very own Mino *Washi* souvenir - such as dolls, plates, chopstick holders, pen stands, bookmarks, and chopstick envelopes - in a building that holds a history of 260 years. Our workshop is enjoyable for all ages, and items can be taken home immediately upon completion. Additionally, we have roughly 600 different types of handmade *washi* items - such as *washi* dolls and an assortment of lifestyle goods - on display that are available for purchase. **📍** 1909-3 Motozumi-cho, Mino City, Gifu **🕒** 10 am ~ 4 pm **🎫** chopstick-envelope workshops starting at ¥540 **🗓** Monday ~ Wednesday **📍** 10-minute walk from Mino-shi Station **📧** shigyo@t7.so-net.ne.jp **🌐** <http://www.ishikawa-shigyo.com/global/shop.html>

🎁 Small Gift (Valid until March 31, 2021)



6 Kami no Shigoto カミノシゴト



A Mino *Washi* specialty store, Kami no Shigoto offers only the best in all-natural Mino paper. Everything available here is personally made by paper artisans in Mino City, who combine carefully selected materials with their superb technique to give birth to gorgeous paper goods in many shapes and sizes. **📍** 2249 Aioi-cho, Mino City **🕒** 10 am ~ 5 pm **🗓** Monday ~ Thursday **📍** Mino-shi Station → [15-minute walk] **☎** 0575-33-0621 **🌐** http://www.iedashikou.com/1_100brand/en/index.html

🎁 5% off your purchase (Valid until March 31, 2021)



7 Shiyu 紙造



Located in an elegant building, this Mino *Washi* specialty shop sells paper-related goods of all sorts. In addition, there is also a café where you can relax after strolling the old streets of Mino, as well as a small gallery showcasing crafts and works of art not limited to Mino paper. **📍** 2296 Tokiwa-cho, Mino City **🕒** 10 am ~ 5 pm **🗓** Tuesday (Except when a holiday) **📍** Mino-shi Station → [15-minute walk] **☎** 0575-31-2023 **🌐** <http://www.shiyu.co.jp> (JPN)

🎁 Small gift (Valid until March 31, 2021)



8 Mino Shimai みの紙舞



This fabulous shop strives to bring Mino *Washi*, with its long 1,300 year history, into the 21st century. The creators at Mino Shimai have spent years developing new processing techniques in order to overcome *washi*'s weak points, namely its vulnerability to water and lack of durability. Having succeeded, they adapted the paper to modern sensibilities, all while making the most of the paper's tough yet delicate texture and quality. From dresses to socks to various other accessories, Mino Shimai offers paper goods that you might have to see to believe! **📍** 1917 Motozumi-cho, Mino City **🕒** 10 am ~ 6 pm **🗓** Tuesday **📍** Mino-shi Station → [15-minute walk] **☎** 0575-35-2822 **🌐** <http://minoshimai.jp> (JPN)



9 Marugo Soba そば切り まる伍

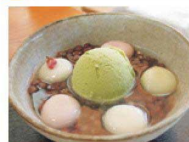


A handmade soba noodle shop, Marugo Soba even makes its own buckwheat flour. Enjoy a delicious meal in a 140-year-old former tradesman's house representative of the old quarter of Mino City. **📍** 2275-1 Tokiwa-cho, Mino City **🕒** 11:30 am ~ 3 pm (Or until supplies last) **🗓** Tuesday **📍** Mino-shi Station → [15-minute walk] **☎** 0575-33-3905 **🌐** <https://www.facebook.com/sobamarugo>

🎁 ¥50 off the bill (Valid until March 31, 2021)



10 Tomiya Tea House 茶房 とみや



This café featuring homemade Japanese-style sweets is located in Mino's old quarter and set in an old, former wholesale store that dealt in raw materials for paper. The confections made with *adzuki* red beans are among their most popular. You can also buy sweets to take home at this delicious shop! **📍** 1887 Izumi-cho, Mino City **🕒** 1 pm ~ 6 pm (Holidays: from 10 am) **🗓** Wednesday **📍** Mino-shi Station → [15-minute walk] **☎** 0575-33-4827

🎁 One complimentary Japanese sweet (Valid until March 31, 2021)

MINO



[SEKI]: THE ESSENTIALS 関

http://sekikanko.jp/ (JPN)

GETTING HERE

- JR • Meitetsu Gifu Stations → [Gifu Bus on the Gifu-Seki Line towards "Seki Higashiyama" • 50 min • ¥680] → "Seki city terminal" bus stop
~ Or ~
- JR Gifu Station → [JR Takayama Main Line • 35 min] → Mino-Ota Station → [Nagaragawa Railway • 17 min • ¥960 in total] → Hamono Kaikan-mae Station

MAIN FEATURE

Seki, the Sword Capital of Japan

For over 700 years, production of Japanese swords has prospered in Seki, placing the city at the heart of the culture and history of one of the most widely recognized symbols of Japan. The Japanese sword, an object as beautiful as it was deadly, is said to have appeared in Seki with the arrival of Motoshige, a legendary master swordsmith who moved to Seki after deeming it a worthy place to further his work.

Later during the Warring States period (mid-15th century to the beginning of the 17th), the katana ("swords") of Seki were highly praised and favored by many of the military commanders of the time. It was said the swords were "unbreakable, unbendable, and extremely sharp," and it was during this era that the name of "Seki" echoed to all corners of the land. The one credited with devising the technique used to make these highly regarded swords was the legendary swordsmith Kanemoto Magoroku, known far and wide - even to this day - as "Seki no Magoroku" ("Magoroku of Seki"), a name that also identifies the swords that he made. His *shio-zume* method of forging the blade, adopted by those around him, elevated the swords of Seki to even greater heights. Even after a new era dawned on Japan in which the use of swords was no longer permitted, Seki's focus on blade-making remained.

To this day, swords continue to be forged here by the sweat and hard work of many of Japan's greatest swordsmiths, albeit as works of art and nothing more. Every year, the people of Seki pay tribute to this history of excellence during the Seki Cutlery Festival, held the weekend before the national Health and Sports Day (the second Monday of October). During this event, you can watch sword-forging and blade-polishing demonstrations, marvel at cutting and sheathing performances, and look through Japanese sword exhibits, making it an event worthy of the name "Seki."

For inquiries about the Cutlery Festival:
☎0575-23-7704 (Tourism and Cultural Exchange Section, Seki City)



SPOTLIGHT

The Blades of Seki in Our Everyday Lives

One might think that, even though traditional Japanese swords are still being forged in Seki, the wisdom accumulated over these last 700 years is largely going to waste, as swords are no longer in popular demand. However, this could not be further from the truth! The people of Seki have applied their unrivaled knowledge of making high-quality blades - best embodied by the "Seki no Magoroku" swords - to the production of instruments that meet the demands of the modern-day world. Items such as cutlery, scissors, and razors made with a special Seki flair in the town's factories are shipped to all corners of the world, making "Seki" a name as respected as any other in the industry! You can get your hands on some of these top-quality goods at unbelievable prices at the Cutlery Festival (see above)!



Located at a strategic junction between east and west Japan, Seki City blossomed as many travelers passed through the town, making their way to and from the old capital of Kyoto and Hida Province. It is said that the name "Seki" comes from *sekisho*, the Japanese word for "barrier" or "checkpoint," since one was established in the city along this travel route. Seki has also thrived as Japan's greatest production center of blades since the Kamakura period (1185 - 1333), with countless excellent swordsmiths emerging from the area. Along with Germany's Solingen and England's Sheffield, Seki is considered one of the three great blade capitals of the world. Seki City's many other points of interest include its famous *unagi* freshwater eel and Oze *Ukai*, brother to the cormorant fishing tradition that takes place in Gifu City. Finally, an interesting tidbit: Seki is the exact geographic center of Japan and is also the center of the population, which is a theoretical point at which the country is balanced between north and south, east and west (assuming that each person has the same weight!).



The Traditional Art of Cormorant Fishing: Oze Ukai

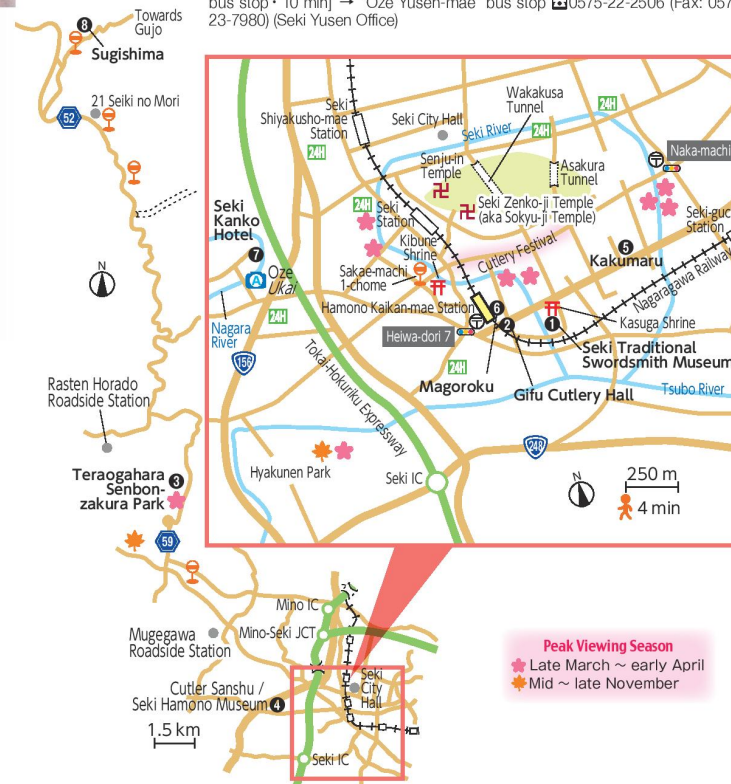
Just as in Gifu City, the old fishing method of *ukai* continues to this day in Oze, Seki City. Though it has not been performed for quite as long as it has in Gifu City, cormorant fishing still boasts a history of over a millennium on the Nagara River in Seki. The outfits of the *usho* fishing masters are unchanged since times of old, as are many of the elements

that make up *Oze Ukai*, which is designated a prefectural Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property. The three *usho* bear the designation "Cormorant Fishing Master of the Board of Ceremonies of the Imperial Household Agency," and watching them showcase their skill at handling the reins of the cormorants up close and personal from a houseboat is truly a pleasure and an honor.

While it will definitely lose out to Gifu City's *ukai* when it comes to fame, *Oze Ukai* is the more intimate of the two. With fewer crowds and boats, cormorant fishing here in Seki will give you a better chance to get close to the action for longer. It is also thought to preserve more of *ukai*'s original form than its brother in Gifu City; an example illustrating this is that neither the fishing boats nor the viewing boats are propelled by motors, offering an authentically old-fashioned experience that is sure to leave its mark. Seki's *Oze Ukai* is held over a five-month period, from May 11th to October 15th (prior reservations are strongly recommended).

☎ Boarding time: May ~ June: 6:50 pm, July ~ August: 7 pm, September ~ October: 6:40 pm

¥3,600 (Children: ¥2,500), May, June, and October: ¥3,400 (Children: ¥2,400) 📍 "Seki city terminal" bus stop → [Gifu Bus on the Seki Itadori Line towards "Horado Kiwi Plaza" bus stop • 10 min] → "Oze Yusen-mae" bus stop ☎0575-22-2506 (Fax: 0575-23-7980) (Seki Yusen Office)



SEKI

[SEKI] 関



1 Seki Traditional Swordsmith Museum 関鍛冶伝承館



This museum showcases the distinguished history of blade-forging as well as the many painstaking steps of the production process. The wealth of blade-related materials here ranges from a collection of important documents to exhibitions of traditional Japanese swords as well as modern blades. In addition to the *uchizome-shiki*, the ceremonial first forging of the year on January 2nd, you can watch the *tosho* master swordsmiths demonstrate the forging of a blade - pounding the raw steel and sending out flurries of sparks - on the 1st Sunday of every month (excluding January and October), and during the Seki Cutlery Festival.

9-1 Minami Kasuga-cho, Seki City 9 am ~ 4:30 pm 4
 ¥300 (High school students: ¥200, Middle and elementary school students: ¥100) X Tuesday, Day after national holiday 1 Hamono Kaikan-mae Station → [5-minute walk] 0575-23-3825 0 https://www.city.seki.lg.jp/kanko/0000001558.html P P



2 Gifu Cutlery Hall 岐阜県刃物会館



With a whopping 2,500 blade-related items used in everyday life, from knives to nail clippers, this shop offers the highest quality products at 10% - 20% off the market price. There is also an exhibit of the assorted edged products made in Seki City, and you can even try your hand at sharpening a kitchen knife the old-fashioned way, at no cost! 4-6 Heiwa-dori, Seki City 9 am ~ 5 pm X December 28 ~ January 1 1 Hamono Kaikan-mae Station → [1-minute walk] 0575-22-4941 0 http://www.seki-japan.com (JPN)

Small gift (Valid until March 31, 2021)



3 Teraogahara Senbon-zakura Park 寺尾ヶ原千本桜公園



Stretching for two kilometers from the Terao Pass is a long, graceful row of 2,000 sakura cherry trees that turn the area into a springtime paradise from early to mid-April. The view of the cherry blossoms, which you can enjoy from the comfort of a number of tea houses located along the road, is truly a sight to behold. 2 Taniguchi Azaterao, Mugegawa-cho, Seki City 1 Sakae-machi 1-chome bus stop → [Gifu Bus on the Seki Itadori Line towards "Horado Kiwi Plaza" bus stop • 25 min] → "Mugegawa Onsen" bus stop → [Taxi • 10 min] 0575-46-2311 (Mugegawa Branch Office in Seki) 0 http://seki-kanko.jp/modules/content/index.php?id=112 (JPN) P



4 Cutler Sanshu / Seki Hamono Museum 刃物屋三秀 / 関刃物ミュージアム



The Seki Hamono Museum at Cutler Sanshu is a museum that introduces the manufacturing process of Japanese swords, kitchen knives, and nail clippers that are made in Seki. The facility is equipped with a forge for crafting Japanese swords where one can view - or even experience hands on - traditional Japanese swordsmithing for an added cost (reservation required). In the store you can find our in-house "Seki Yoshihide" brand kitchen knives and scissors, as well as cutlery from a wide range of local manufacturers, available for direct purchase.

950-1 Oze, Seki City 8:30 am ~ 5 pm 1 Admission charge free X None 1 Seki city terminal → [Taxi • 10 min] 0575-28-5147 0 http://www.hamonoyasan.com/

Small gift (No expiration date)



Seki City and Its Mouth-Watering Unagi

Seki is renowned across Japan for its freshwater eel, and it is no coincidence that both sword production and eel consumption have been part of the town's history and culture for ages. Indeed, the two are closely tied, originally stemming from the needs of the swordsmith masters. It need not be said that swordmaking is a difficult undertaking; forging a blade necessitates sitting beside a blazing furnace for long periods of time as well as hammering away with heavy tools in order to mold the steel. Thus, as sword craftsmen started to migrate to Seki in the Kamakura period, they needed a reliable, local source of stamina to replenish their energy reserves! Rich in vitamins, *unagi* has been consumed for its nutritional value throughout Japanese history, and to this day it is considered the best food to eat during Japan's hot, draining summer months. *Unagi* was therefore the food of choice for Seki's swordsmiths, and what's more, they also saw it as an ideal dish to serve to customers and potential buyers! With this long history, the chefs of Seki have perfected *unagi* cuisine, and they continue to use the secret grilling techniques and sauce recipes that have been handed down here for generations!



5 Kakumaru 角丸



The eel grilled over a strong fire and glazed with a secret sauce at this restaurant will have your taste buds screaming for more! Elegant in its delicious simplicity, the standard order of *unagi-don* - grilled eel placed on top of a bowl of rice - is the way to go.

21 Higashi Monzen-cho, Seki City 11 am ~ 2 pm, 5 pm ~ 8:30 pm X Wednesday 1 Hamono Kaikan-mae Station → [Nagaragawa Railway towards Mino-Ota Station] → Seki-guchi Station → [15-minute walk] 0575-22-0415 0 http://userweb.mmtr.or.jp/kakumaru/ (JPN)

¥100 off the bill (Valid until March 31, 2021)



6 Magoroku 孫六



An *unagi* specialty restaurant, Magoroku only uses the best eel in its dishes: large, thick specimens with plenty of meat! This shop, located right across from the Cutlery Hall, takes great pride in the chewy texture of its grilled eel. 4-5-1 Heiwa-dori, Seki City 11 am ~ 2 pm, 4:30 pm ~ 8 pm X Wednesday evening, Thursday 1 Hamono Kaikan-mae Station 0575-22-0639 0 http://www.magoroku.net/ (JPN)

¥100 off an order of regular *unagi-don* eel over rice (Valid until March 31, 2021)



7 Seki Kanko Hotel 関観光ホテル



This hotel boasts guest rooms and large communal baths from which you can gaze out over the pristine Nagara River. It also places an emphasis on *ayu* cuisine during the summer cormorant fishing season. 91-2 Ikejiri, Seki City 1 night + 2 meals: from ¥12,960 1 Hamono Kaikan-mae Station → [Nagaragawa Railway towards Mino-shi, Mino Shirotori, or Hokuno Station • 3 min] → Seki Station → [Taxi • 10 min] 0120-753-277 0 http://www.sekikankohotel.jp (JPN)

Two bottles of "Koka no Shinsui" mineral water per room (No expiration date)



8 Sugishima すぎ嶋



With a total of six hot spring baths - including open-air and private ones - and exceptional meals featuring river fish and edible wild vegetation eaten around an *irori* hearth, this Japanese-style inn promises a wonderful lodging experience. 4838 Itadori, Seki City 1 night + 2 meals: from ¥18,576 1 Sakae-machi 1-chome bus stop → [Gifu Bus on the Seki Itadori Line towards "Horado Kiwi Plaza" bus stop • 1 hr] → "Horado Kiwi Plaza" bus stop → [Itadori Fureai Bus • 45 min] → "Itadori Suiso Mura" bus stop 0581-57-2532 0 http://www.sugishima.com (JPN)

"Koka no Shinsui" mineral water (Valid until March 31, 2021)





[MINOKAMO]: THE ESSENTIALS 美濃加茂

[http://minokamo-kanko.jp/\(JPN\)](http://minokamo-kanko.jp/(JPN))

GETTING HERE

JR Gifu Station → [JR Takayama Main Line · 35 min · ¥500] → Mino-Ota Station

MAIN FEATURE

A Place Outside of Time: Ota-juku on the Nakasendo

During the Edo period of Japanese history (1603 ~ 1868), there were five great routes, or highways, that spread throughout the heart of the land. One of these, which ran through central Japan and connected the cities of Edo and Kyoto, was the Nakasendo. Though much of this route has now been replaced by modern motorways, it has been preserved in near-original form in certain locations. One of these precious locations is Ota-juku, the 51st post town of the 69 along the route (in the Edo → Kyoto direction) where many a weary traveler rested for a night before continuing his long journey. In fact, it was located right before one of the three most difficult stretches along the road, and so in order to rest up for this challenge, greater numbers of travelers stayed overnight at the inns in town than likely would have otherwise! This, along with the fact that one of the Owari Domain's regional magistrate's offices was established here, illustrates why Ota-juku came to be such a cultural, economic, and political hub of the region.



It is a fantastic area in which to take a stroll, all while soaking in the old atmosphere exuding from the buildings. Among the notable points of interest here is the Ota-juku Official Subsidiary Inn - a national Important Cultural Property - that has maintained its original form. While the main Official Inn lodged feudal lords, direct retainers of the shogun, relatives of the Imperial family, and important figures in the military government, this Official Subsidiary Inn housed the lower attendants that joined them along their journeys. All that remains of the main inn, sadly, is one of its gates; that said, this one gate alone possesses substantial historical value and is a designated Tangible Cultural Property of Minokamo!

SPOTLIGHT

1 Gifu Seiryu-Satoyama Park

This facility is a re-creation of a traditional, idyllic Japanese countryside town as it was in the previous era, called Showa (1926 ~ 1989). Paying tribute to the architecture, customs, and forms of entertainment that characterized that era, the Showa Village brings you back to the 1950s and 60s and has turned into a popular site for tourists. Its wooden school buildings and expansive grassy fields imagine a Japan that is very different from what you will see today. The village is a place where both adults and children can enjoy a relaxing time, and there are various hands-on activities throughout the park that allow you to make something - from pottery to soba noodles to traditional Japanese wind chimes - and then take whatever you've made home with you as a souvenir (unless you've eaten it, of course)! It adjoins the "Nihon Showa Mura" Roadside Station, for those intending to travel via rental car! ♣2292-1 Yamanoue-cho, Minokamo City ♣ March ~ November: 9 am ~ 6 pm, January ~ February: 10 am ~ 5 pm, Bathroom: 10 am ~ 10 pm ♣ March ~ November: none, December ~ February: Wednesdays ♣ Free admission ♣ Mino-Ota Station → [Minokamo Atai Bus on the Bunka no Mori/Koen Line · 11 ~ 17min] → "Gifu Seiryu-Satoyama Park" bus stop ♣ Parking: 3,000 normal parking spaces and 50 large-sized spaces ♣ Child Services: 10 baby strollers, 11 wheelchairs, and 4 baby feeding rooms (no facilities for boiling water)



Facing the grand mountains of central Gifu Prefecture to the north and the Nobi Plain and majestic Kiso River to the south, the city of Minokamo is one with a bountiful natural environment. And with a milder climate than most other parts of Gifu, it is blessed with the perfect fertile terrain for fruit cultivation. In particular, persimmons and Japanese pears are widely grown and are popular throughout the region. Minokamo also has more and more industrial complexes cropping up every day and is a lively economic center. Deviating from this more modern image, however, Minokamo is home to Ota-juku, a historical post town with many inns located on the Nakasendo, which was one of the Five Routes of the Edo period through which most traffic passed. Ota-juku thus thrived as a transportation hub, and it maintains much of its old-world charm today. The Nakasendo Festival held in the spring is a tribute to this rich history and sees many visitors who make their way to step back in time!

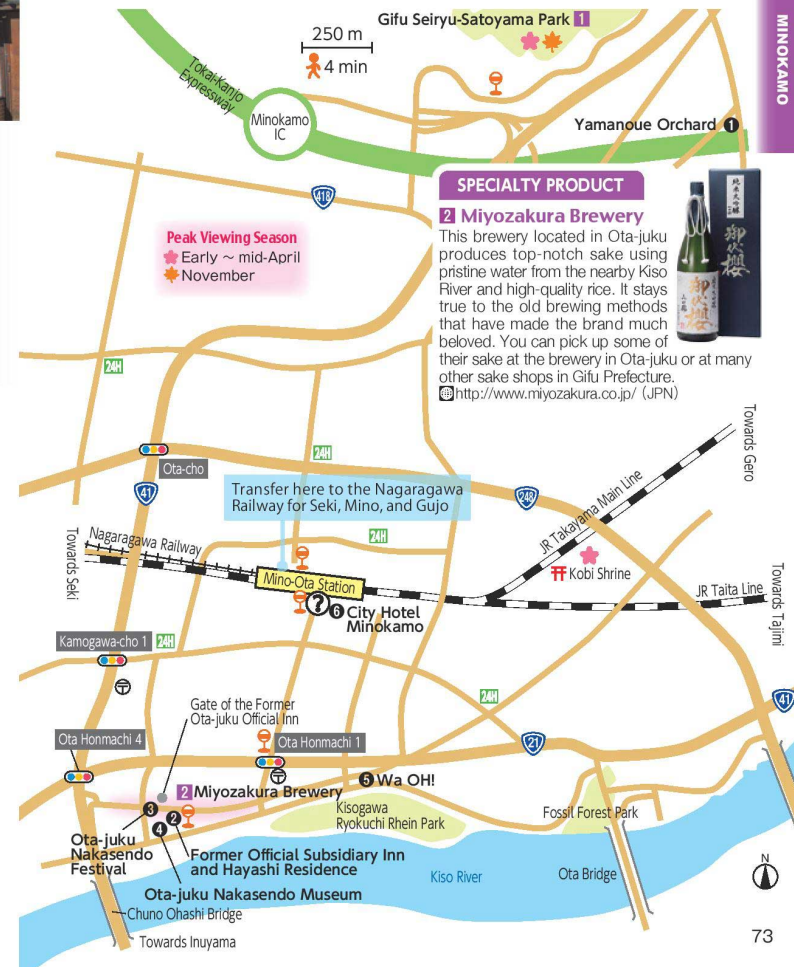
LOCAL SPECIALTY



"Dojo Hachiya" Persimmons

Native to the town of Hachiya, these persimmons, or *kaki*, are very highly renowned. When dried, they become sweet instead of astringent (as they are when fresh), and their quality is such that they used to be presented to the Imperial court (*dojo* refers to court nobles) long ago in the Heian period (794 ~ 1185) and then again throughout the Edo period. During the latter age, the town of Hachiya was even granted privileges such as decreed land taxes in exchange for these offerings! The "Dojo" in the name distinguishes these persimmons from others produced elsewhere, maintaining the status of Hachiya's persimmons as being a step above the rest. Somewhat more recently, these persimmons won a silver award at the World's Fair in Paris in 1900!

♣ <http://www.hachiyagaki.jp/> (JPN)



SPECIALTY PRODUCT

2 Miyozakura Brewery

This brewery located in Ota-juku produces top-notch sake using pristine water from the nearby Kiso River and high-quality rice. It stays true to the old brewing methods that have made the brand much beloved. You can pick up some of their sake at the brewery in Ota-juku or at many other sake shops in Gifu Prefecture.

♣ <http://www.miyozakura.co.jp/> (JPN)



[MINOKAMO] 美濃加茂



1 Yamanoue Orchard 山上觀光果樹園



The Yamanoue area of Minokamo City is located on elevated land and is blessed with plenty of sunshine throughout the year; during the winter, it is rare that even a little whiff of frost forms on the vegetation. These factors taken together make Yamanoue an ideal place to grow fruit, and Japanese pears and persimmons are among the town's foremost produce. It boasts the largest yield of pears, in particular, in the entire prefecture. At Yamanoue Orchard, you can enjoy picking pears and eating as many of them as you would like! Do so while looking out onto the Hida and Kiso rivers, two of Gifu's best. Grown with limited use of pesticides, the pears here are wondrously sweet and juicy when picked right off the trees; you may never want to eat pears from anywhere else ever again! Finally, fresh pears and persimmons are also sold separately at the orchard for those who want to take some home. ☎1093-78 Yamanoue-cho, Minokamo City ☎9 am ~ 5 pm (Last entry: 3 pm) 🍷 Pear picking (August

16 ~ early October): ¥1,000 (Elementary school students: ¥800, Children younger than elementary school age but over 2 years old: ¥600) 🚶 Mino-Ota Station → [JR Takayama Main Line towards Takayama · 4 min] → Kobi Station → [20-minute walk] ☎0574-25-4101 (Yamanoue Agricultural Cooperative Association) 📍

The Nakasendo: One of the Edo Five Routes

At the start of the Edo period, five great highways were constructed, connecting Nihonbashi - in the capital city of Edo (modern-day Tokyo) - with other parts of newly centralized Japan. Having just emerged from the tenuous Warring States period, Japan was enjoying its first years of unity. The Five Routes project was initiated by one of the three great unifiers of Japan, Tokugawa Ieyasu, who ushered in this new period of peace. He intended to use these highways as a means to maintain political control and to tighten his power grip on the country. Among the five, two highways directly linked Edo and the old capital of Kyoto: the Tokaido and the Nakasendo. While the former ran along the Pacific coastline, the latter (the longest of the five) ran through the inland mountainous parts of Japan's main island of Honshu (thus its name meaning "central mountain route"), and therefore through what is today Gifu Prefecture. Although the Nakasendo did not see as much traffic as the Tokaido, it was preferred by many because it did not require fording any rivers or parts of the sea and was less dangerous overall with fewer bandits. Indeed, the Nakasendo was often the chosen route when Imperial princesses were married off to noble houses and sent to join their new husbands, leading to its status as a "princess route." Along the highway sprung up many post towns highly concentrated with inns and with men and horses for hire who would carry luggage to another post town. 69 such towns were established, 17 of which are in modern-day Gifu. Many, such as Ota-juku and Magome-juku, have been extremely well-preserved, making them popular destinations among tourists.

Nihonbashi Bridge (Edo)

Tsumago-juku

Magome-juku ▶ P78

Oi-juku ▶ P84

Ota-juku

Sanjo Ohashi Bridge (Kyoto)



2 Former Official Subsidiary Inn and Hayashi Residence 旧太田脇本陣林家住宅



Built in 1769, this treasure of a house was used as the designated Official Subsidiary Inn of Ota-juku during the Edo period, providing accommodations for the various noble attendants who traveled with their lords and masters. It was also the home of the Hayashi family, whose head of household alternated holding the position of village chief with the owner of the main Official Inn. Including the inn's doors and windows, much of its construction is exactly as it was hundreds of years ago. Visitors can tour the inside at no cost. 📍3-3-34 Ota Honmachi, Minokamo City ☎9 am ~ 4 pm 📅 Monday (Or the following business day instead when Monday is a holiday), New Year's holiday season 🚶 Mino-Ota Station → [15-minute walk] ☎0574-25-2111 (Industrial Promotions Division, Minokamo City) ☎http://minokamo-kanko.jp/ 📍



3 Ota-juku Nakasendo Festival 太田宿中山道まつり



Re-enacting the many processions of Imperial princesses along the great highway as they departed home to join the houses of their newly betrothed husbands, the Ota-juku Nakasendo Festival is a delightful event with many attractions. Over 100 citizens dressed up as samurai and footmen attend five historical princesses wearing brilliantly colored garments as they parade their way around the old post town. Rifle squads, matchlock firing demonstrations, a bazaar, and various hands-on activities for children comprise the rest of this fun-filled event held on the 3rd Sunday in October. 📍Ota Honmachi, Minokamo City 🚶 Mino-Ota Station → [15-minute walk] ☎0574-25-2111 (Industrial Promotions Division, Minokamo City) ☎http://www.onsai-minokamo.com (JPN) 📍



4 Ota-juku Nakasendo Museum 太田宿中山道会館

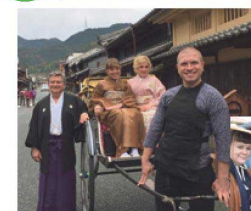


This free admission museum focuses on the history and culture of Ota-juku as well as of the Nakasendo more generally. Exhibition rooms inform visitors what post towns were actually like back in the Edo period and what a journey along the Nakasendo entailed at the time. There are also a dining area and a display/sales corner for local products located here, making it the perfect resting spot during one's stroll through Ota-juku. 📍3-3-31 Ota Honmachi, Minokamo City ☎9 am ~ 5 pm 📅 Monday (Or the following business day instead when Monday is a holiday), New Year's holiday season 🚶 Mino-Ota Station → [20-minute walk] ☎0574-23-2200 ☎http://kaikan.ootajuku.net (JPN) 📍

📄 Mini-poster made from *washi* Japanese paper or picture postcard depicting Ota-juku (Until supplies last) 📍



5 Wa OH! 和OH!



Based in the post town of Ota-juku on the Nakasendo, Wa OH! offers rickshaw tours of the area and a variety of Japanese cultural activities. Hop on a rickshaw and an English-speaking guide will take you on a leisurely tour of the post town, explaining its history and showing you the sights. They also provide activities for many ancient Japanese traditions, such as court music, soba-making, calligraphy, tea ceremony, flower arrangement, meditation, taiko drumming, and more. For more information or to make reservations, the Wa OH! office can be contacted directly (E-mail: rurumurakami@yahoo.co.jp). 📍2742 Shimo-kobi, Kobi-cho, Minokamo City ☎10 am ~ 4 pm 🚶 Mino-Ota Station → [15-minute walk] ☎0574-50-2428 📍

📄 Handmade *tsuko tegata* passport (Valid until March 31, 2021) 📍



6 City Hotel Minokamo シティホテル美濃加茂



Situated in the immediate vicinity of Mino-Ota Station, this hotel is in a prime location, perfect for a trip in Gifu Prefecture's Chuno region. With a tranquil and pleasant atmosphere, the City Hotel Minokamo is well reputed for providing a hearty breakfast and a dinner with varied sumptuous choices. 📍2565-1 Ota-cho, Minokamo City 📍1 night + 2 meals: from ¥9,720 📍Nearby Mino-Ota Station ☎0574-27-1122 ☎http://www.cityhotel-minokamo.jp/ 📍

📄 Complimentary mineral water and 10% off the standard room rate (Reservation required in advance; Discount cannot be combined with any others) (Valid until March 31, 2021) 📍

多治見 土岐 瑞浪
**[TAJIMI·TOKI·MIZUNAMI]:
 THE ESSENTIALS**

GETTING HERE

- Tajimi:** JR Nagoya Station → [JR Chuo Main Line · 35 min · ¥670] → Tajimi Station
- Toki:** JR Nagoya Station → [JR Chuo Main Line · 41 min · ¥760] → Tokishi Station
- Mizunami:** JR Nagoya Station → [JR Chuo Main Line · 47 min · ¥970] → Mizunami Station

MAIN FEATURE

Mino Yaki

Tajimi, Toki, and Mizunami are the home of Mino *Yaki*, which is one of the most famous kinds of ceramic ware in Japan and boasts more than a 50% share of all the pottery goods made and sold in the country. Toki City, in fact, has the highest output of ceramics of any city in Japan. All of this makes it evident that Gifu Prefecture is one of the giants - if not *the* giant - of the entire industry. Walking around these three towns, you will come across many pottery workshops, ceramics museums, specialty shops, and even eateries that place a strong emphasis on the dishes they use to serve their food. There are many opportunities to get your hands on some masterpieces of pottery at very reasonable prices, so do keep an eye out for this kind of bargain when making your way here! Tajimi and Toki are also home to some of the largest ceramics festivals in the country - during both autumn and spring - where Gifu's high-quality pottery is available for cheap!



Located adjacent to one another, these three towns have many things in common. One of their shared elements is the climate, which is extremely hot in the summer and cold in the winter, though they do not see the amount of snowfall that other regions in Gifu Prefecture do. Tajimi City, in particular, is known for having recorded the hottest temperature (on one particular day) ever measured in Japan. Another bond - the most important one - shared between the cities of Tajimi, Toki, and Mizunami is that of Mino *Yaki* ceramic ware. As Mino City has Mino *Washi*, so too does this area in Gifu's Tono region have Mino *Yaki*, a type of pottery famous nationwide. Many pottery workshops still exist and are used in each of the three cities, which specialize in different products. Artisans in Tajimi largely make Western tableware, sake cups, and tiles; their counterparts in Toki make earthenware sake bottles and mortars as well as porcelain bowls; and those in Mizunami have brought forth a new brand of ceramic ware called Mizunami *Yaki*, which blends Japanese and Western styles into one.



1 Kokeizan Eiho-ji Temple (Tajimi)

Two of the structures on the grounds of this historic Buddhist temple are designated National Treasures, and the stunning garden - which features a pond, bridge, and waterfall - is a national Place of Scenic Beauty. This site is particularly beautiful during the fall season with the changing of the colors. It is said that crossing the bridge to the main hall symbolizes traveling to a place of enlightenment, so upon returning, be sure to take the long way around to the exit without crossing back over! **📍** 1-40 Kokeizan-cho, Tajimi City **🕒** 7 am ~ 5 pm **🚶** Tajimi Station → [Tohtetsu Bus on the Kukuri Line · 12 min] → "Kokeizan-guchi" bus stop → [7-minute walk] **☎** 0572-22-0351



2 Pottery-Making (Tajimi)

Aside from pottery displays and shops, the following ceramics studios also have spaces where visitors can try making their own clay masterpieces (**📄** from ¥3,000)!

Kobei-gama: A distinguished workshop whose 6th generation master was designated a Living National Treasure. **📍** 4-124 Ichinokura-cho, Tajimi City **🚶** Tajimi Station → [Tohtetsu Bus on the Shimo-hadagawa Line · 12 min] → "Minami Ichinokura" bus stop → [3-minute walk] **☎** 0572-22-0509 **🌐** <http://www.kobei-gama.co.jp> (JPN)

Kokei-gama: A picturesque studio whose atmosphere is distinctly Japanese. You can try painting ceramics as well. **📍** 2-29 Sumiyoshi-cho, Tajimi City **🚶** Tajimi Station → [Tohtetsu Bus on the Kukuri Line · 9 min] → "Kokeizan-guchi" bus stop → [3-minute walk] **☎** 0572-22-0129 **🌐** <http://kokeigama.jp> (JPN)

3 Making the Rounds of the Pottery Studios (Toki)

Each workshop goes about the creative process of making pottery in its own unique way, so going from one to the next, watching the craftsmen work their magic and comparing the final products, is a great way to enjoy the town. In particular, the Oroshi and Dachi areas of the city have many pottery workshops to explore.

Oroshi Ceramic Ware Cooperative

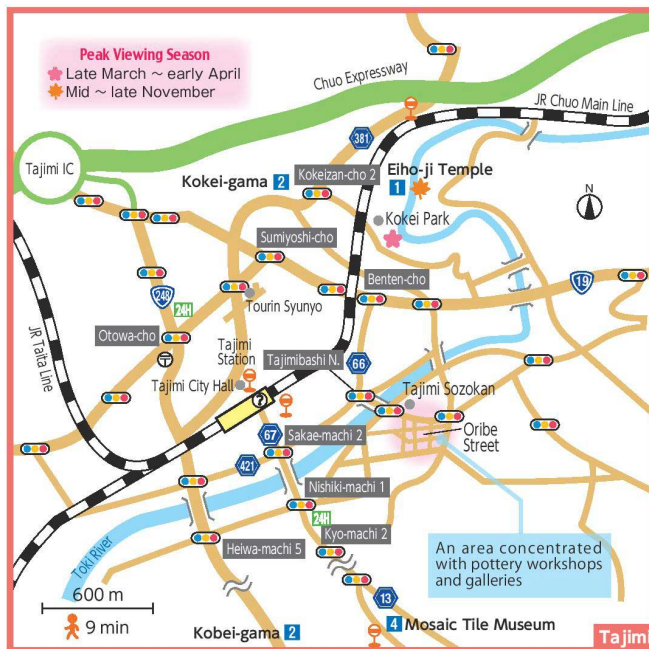
📍 Tokishi Station → [Tohtetsu Bus on the Toki=Oroshi=Dachi Line · 15 min] → "Oroshi" bus stop **☎** 0572-57-3528 **🌐** <http://www.kamamoto.jp/> (JPN)

Pottery Studios of Dachi

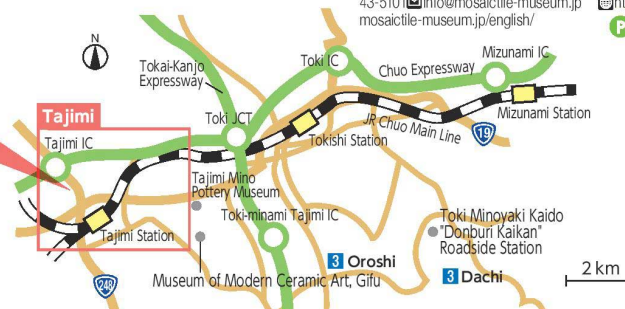
📍 Tokishi Station → [Tohtetsu Bus on the Toki=Oroshi=Dachi Line · 25 min] → "Dachi" bus stop **☎** 0572-59-4188 **🌐** <http://kamayanet.web.fc2.com/> (JPN)

4 Mosaic Tile Museum (Tajimi)

The Mosaic Tile Museum is located in Kasahara-cho of Tajimi City: Japan's number one area for producing mosaic tiles. The construction and design of the museum was lead by architect Terunobu Fujimori, and it showcases many unique art exhibits that were created from an enormous collection of domestically produced tiles. Some activities include workshops that allow you to create various mosaic-tiled items (such as picture frames or tape dispensers) and browsing the selection of mosaic-tile-themed merchandise in the gift shop. **📍** 2082-5 Kasahara-cho, Tajimi City, Gifu **🕒** Exhibition hall admission: ¥300 (free for high schoolers and younger), Tile item workshop: from ¥500 **🕒** 9 am ~ 5 pm **🗓** Mondays (if Monday is a national holiday, the closing day will be the following weekday), and the new year's holiday period **🚶** From bus stop 2 of JR Tajimi Station take a Tohtetsu Bus (Kasahara Line, around 20 min) and get off at the "Mosaic Tile Museum" bus stop **☎** 0572-43-5101 **📧** info@mosaictile-museum.jp **🌐** <http://www.mosaictile-museum.jp/english/>



<http://www.city.tajimi.lg.jp/sightseeing/index.html>



TAJIMI · TOKI · MIZUNAMI



[NAKATSUGAWA]: THE ESSENTIALS 中津川

<http://n-kanko.jp> (JPN)

GETTING HERE

JR Nagoya Station → [JR Chuo Main Line • 1 hr 30 min • ¥1,280] → Nakatsugawa Station

To Magome-juku:

Nakatsugawa Station → [Kita Ena Bus on the Magome Line • 25 min • ¥540 (¥270 for elementary school students)] → "Magome" bus stop

MAIN FEATURE

The Picturesque Post Town of Magome-juku

The 43rd station of the 69 along the Nakasendo in the Edo → Kyoto direction (refer to Minokamo City for more information about the Nakasendo), Magome was a thriving site of traffic and cultural exchange during the Edo period (1603 – 1868). Built on the mountainside, it is unique among the post towns of the Nakasendo because of its steep slope. Compared to the other stations constructed on level ground, Magome-juku has a very distinct ambience to it, and the slope makes it such that walking uphill towards Tokyo offers different scenery and a different experience than does walking downhill towards Kyoto!



The attractive *ishidatami* stone pavement of the road adds to the old-world vibe of the area, and to this day - despite Magome not being all that large - there is a disproportionate number of *ryokan* inns lining the route still in business. The specialty foods of the region include soba buckwheat noodles, *goheimochi* glazed sticky rice balls on skewers, and roasted chestnuts, so be sure to try these when traveling to Magome-juku! If you continue walking uphill on the Nakasendo past the last buildings that comprise the main stretch of the post town, you will come across an observation point from which you can enjoy a gorgeous vista of majestic Mt. Ena and the surrounding mountain scenery, so don't stop when you think you have reached the town limits!

<http://www.kiso-magome.com> (JPN)

SPOTLIGHT

The Kurikinton: A Luxury Confection

Called one of Japan's Three Great *Wagashi* (Japanese confection) Areas, Nakatsugawa City takes great pride in its *kurikinton*, a chestnut-based sweet that originated here - though Ena City makes the same claim! While there are many superb confections made in Nakatsugawa, the *kurikinton* tends to overshadow the others to some extent because of its status as a luxury item. It is made by boiling chestnuts with sugar, then mashing them, and finally wringing that dry with a tea towel, leaving the final product in a shape resembling that of a chestnut. The *kurikinton* has a smooth texture and refined flavor, and it goes beautifully with a cup of tea. Since times of old, the inhabitants of this area have eaten chestnuts in various forms, such as steaming and mixing them with rice. The *kurikinton* appeared as an item available in *wagashi* shops around the year 1900 and has been a beloved presence in peoples' lives ever since! It is available for purchase during the same period in which chestnuts are harvested, from September to January. Note, however, that *kurikinton* only last for a few days after being made; it is possible to preserve them for longer by refrigerating them, but you will want to eat them fresh while their taste is at its best. <http://kurikinton.info> (JPN)

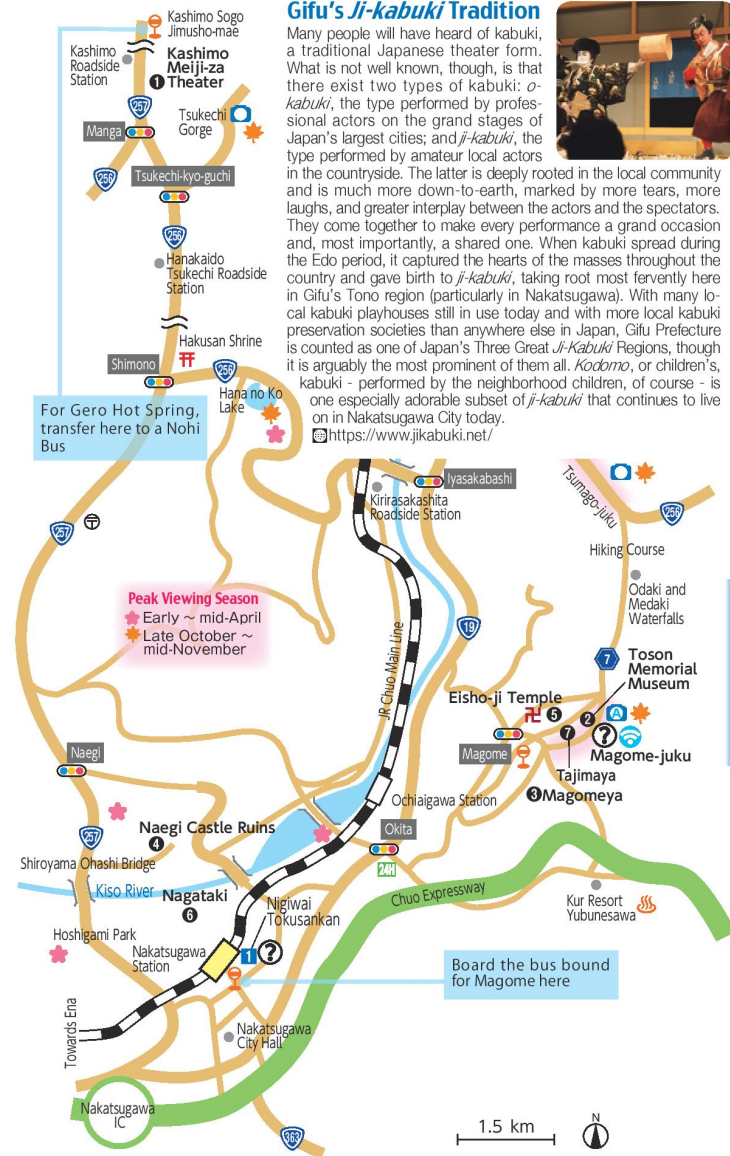


1 Get your hands on some at the Nigiwai Tokusan-kan: Located adjacent to Nakatsugawa Station, this facility also houses the city's Tourist Information Center, where you can make inquiries in English. 1-1 Sakae-machi, Nakatsugawa City 8:30 am ~ 6 pm X New Year's holiday season, The 3rd Sunday of February 0573-62-2277

Located at the southeastern edge of Gifu Prefecture, the city of Nakatsugawa borders Nagano Prefecture to the east. In fact, some districts of present-day Nakatsugawa were actually part of Nagano until relatively recently, making this a very unique area of Gifu with many foods and traditions that are not found elsewhere in the prefecture! It is a land blessed with pristine rivers and lush woodlands, and it is famous in Japan for its abundant harvest of chestnuts collected in the mountain foothills. Nakatsugawa is said to be the birthplace of *kurikinton*, an incredibly popular Japanese confectionary delicacy made using these chestnuts. Comfortably cool in the summertime, Nakatsugawa also boasts dazzling autumn scenery, specifically at Tsukechi Gorge, where serene waterfalls and clear emerald waters create an eye-catching contrast with the surrounding hot autumn colors. Finally, Nakatsugawa has preserved much in the way of traditional Edo period culture, in the form of both Magome-juku - a fabulous old post town on the Nakasendo route - and the theater of local kabuki.

Gifu's Ji-kabuki Tradition

Many people will have heard of kabuki, a traditional Japanese theater form. What is not well known, though, is that there exist two types of kabuki: *o-kabuki*, the type performed by professional actors on the grand stages of Japan's largest cities; and *ji-kabuki*, the type performed by amateur local actors in the countryside. The latter is deeply rooted in the local community and is much more down-to-earth, marked by more tears, more laughs, and greater interplay between the actors and the spectators. They come together to make every performance a grand occasion and, most importantly, a shared one. When kabuki spread during the Edo period, it captured the hearts of the masses throughout the country and gave birth to *ji-kabuki*, taking root most fervently here in Gifu's Tono region (particularly in Nakatsugawa). With many local kabuki playhouses still in use today and with more local kabuki preservation societies than anywhere else in Japan, Gifu Prefecture is counted as one of Japan's Three Great *Ji-Kabuki* Regions, though it is arguably the most prominent of them all. *Kodomo*, or children's kabuki - performed by the neighborhood children, of course - is one especially adorable subset of *ji-kabuki* that continues to live on in Nakatsugawa City today. <https://www.jikabuki.net/>



Detailed MAP ▶ <http://n-kanko.jp/docs/eigo0426.pdf>

[NAKATSUGAWA] 中津川



1 Kashimo Meiji-za Theater かしも明治座



A designated Important Tangible Folk Cultural Property of Gifu Prefecture, this local kabuki playhouse has been preserved by the locals and used as a stage for *ji-kabuki* ever since its construction in 1894. Visitors are able to explore the building, from the main hall to the basement used for manipulating the revolving stage. On the 1st Sunday of every September, Meiji-za plays host to the annual Kashimo Kabuki Extravaganza, a day filled with five shows - including *kodomo kabuki* - that will serve as the best possible introduction to *ji-kabuki*. **T** 4793-2 Kashimo, Nakatsugawa City **🕒** 10 am ~ 4 pm **🗓** Monday, New Year's holiday season

📍 Nakatsugawa Station → [Kita Ena Bus on the Tsukechi-kyo Line • 50 min] → "Manga" bus stop → [15-minute walk] **☎** 0573-79-3611 **🌐** <http://meijiza.jp> **P**

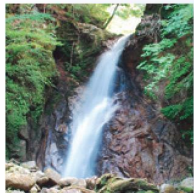


2 Toson Memorial Museum 藤村記念館



Magome was the birthplace of Japanese literary great Toson Shimazaki, whose bestselling historical novel *Before the Dawn* depicted the downfall of the Tokugawa shogunate and the early years of the Meiji Restoration during which Japan opened its doors to the west and began its transformation into the nation it is today. The Toson Memorial Museum in Magome-juku pays homage - in the very place where he grew up - to him and his work. **T** 4256-1 Magome, Nakatsugawa City **🕒** 9 am ~ 5 pm (December ~ March: 9 am ~ 4 pm); Last entry: 15 min before closing **🗓** December ~ February: Wednesday **👤** ¥500 (Middle and elementary school students: ¥100; Group discounts available for adults) **📍** "Magome" bus stop → [10-minute walk] **☎** 0573-69-2047 **🌐** <http://toson.jp> **P**

Walk the Nakasendo from Magome to Tsumago



The trail from Magome-juku to Tsumago-juku, the next post town over on the Nakasendo located in Nagano Prefecture, is one of the nicest and best maintained stretches of the entire route. You can enjoy the seven kilometer hike over the Magome Mountain Pass, which will take around three hours to complete. The countryside path is brimming with traditional Japanese charm and boasts beautiful *shidatami* stone-paved portions, waterfalls along the road, and scenic observation points. There is a baggage forwarding service available at the Tourist Information Office in either post town (times and price detailed below); just hand over your luggage in one town and it'll be waiting for you in the next! The map linked here is a great resource for those making the hike, which is said to be slightly easier in the Magome → Tsumago direction, as Magome is at higher elevation. Journey the Nakasendo and feel like a traveler of old! Luggage forwarding service: Bags can be forwarded from Magome's Tourist Information Office from 8:30 am to 11:30 am, and can be picked up at Tsumago's Tourist Information Office between 1 pm and 5 pm. **👤** ¥500 per bag **🗓** Winter season **🌐** <http://www.kiso-magome.com/image2/map/nakasendo-highway.pdf>



3 Magomeya まごめや

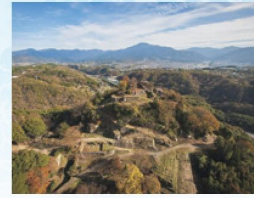


The area around Magome-juku is famous for its buckwheat noodles, and you can taste for yourself why this is the case here at Magomeya. One recommended dish, "*sato oroshi* soba," features grated daikon radish, perilla, and edible wild plants and is eaten with a dipping sauce brimming with the flavor of bonito fish! Hot soba dishes are also available. **T** 4571-1 Magome, Nakatsugawa City **🕒** 11 am ~ 2:30 pm **🗓** None **📍** "Magome" bus stop → [1-minute walk] **☎** 0573-69-1111 **🌐** <http://www.magomekan.co.jp> **P**

📁 One pair of Japanese cypress chopsticks for those who spend over ¥1,000 on their meal (Valid until March 31, 2021) **P**



4 Naegi Castle Ruins 苗木城跡



The Naegi Castle Ruins is a short hike - a round trip journey from JR Nakatsugawa Station will take about two hours - where you can enjoy a breathtaking view of the Kiso River, Mt. Ena, and the surrounding Nakatsugawa City spread out wide before your eyes. At various points along the hike it is possible to see cherry blossoms (in the spring), a beautiful sunset from atop a tall bridge, and the remains of abandoned railroad tracks. We recommend either exploring on your own, or taking a guided tour in English that also visits Magome-juku on the Nakasendo Highway. **T** 2799-2-1 Naegi, Nakatsugawa City, Gifu **📧** info@tono-cycling.com **🌐** <http://tono-cycling.com/en/inbound/>



5 Eisho-ji Temple 永昌寺



A Buddhist temple and inn that welcomes guests from around the world, Eisho-ji is a unique choice of accommodation that offers many things that traditional hotels and Japanese-style *ryokan* inns cannot match. The standard evening meal consists of Japanese cuisine suitable to the Western palate, but instead of this you can also request to be served *shojin ryori*, a type of vegetarian cuisine developed according to the dietary restrictions of Buddhist monks and thus containing zero animal protein. Guests are also able to experience Zen meditation here at the temple. Bookings and reservations for *shojin ryori* must be made at least 3 days in advance. **T** 5358 Magome, Nakatsugawa City **📍** 1 night + 2 meals: from ¥6,000 (¥8,000 if including *shojin ryori*) **📍** "Magome" bus stop → [10-minute walk] **☎** 0573-69-2051



A washcloth, good luck charm, or drawstring pouch (No expiration date) **P**

The Zen Meditation Experience

Zen meditation, or *zazen* in Japanese, is performed in order to rid oneself of the worldly desires one possesses and of everything that keeps one tethered to this world, from various troubles and sources of anxiety to anger. The point of this Buddhist training ritual is to stop thinking and to concentrate one's mind on one's breathing. At first, it may be difficult to refrain from moving while seated for an extended period of time, and there will surely be a stray thought or two (or many more!) passing through your head. Ultimately, however, you will calm down and be able to clear your mind, leaving you feeling refreshed when the meditation session has ended. At Eisho-ji Temple (see above), you can enjoy a one-hour lesson in *zazen*, though "enjoyment" of course partly defeats the purpose of the meditation! Regardless, *zazen* is a fundamental element of traditional Japanese culture and the Japanese spirit, so don't pass up this fantastic opportunity!



6 Nagataki 長多喜



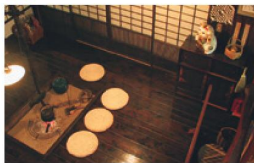
This unusual Japanese-style inn has six different old private houses on its 33,000-square-meter premises in which guests can lodge. Three of these are beautiful thatched roof houses that are the embodiment of traditional architectural techniques rarely seen in Japan (Gifu Prefecture is of course an exception to this, thanks to Shirakawa-go and the like). The seasonal *kaiseki* multi-course banquets are another appealing element of Nagataki. **T** 1649 Komaba, Nakatsugawa City **📍** 1 night + 2 meals: from ¥22,356 **📍** Nakatsugawa Station → [Taxi • 5 min] **☎** 0573-65-3133 **🌐** <https://www.booking.com/hotel/jp/nagataki.ja.html>



Complimentary confection or drink (No expiration date) **P**



7 Tajimaya 但馬屋



A 110-year-old inn with an atmosphere that harks back to the good old days in Japan, Tajimaya embraces both the old and the new. Guests can enjoy meals of home-grown rice and healthy foods around an *irori* hearth in the floor while soaking in the tranquil ambience. On the flip side, all guest rooms are equipped with Wi-Fi access. **T** 4266 Magome, Nakatsugawa City **📍** 1 night + 2 meals: from ¥9,200 **📍** "Magome" bus stop → [7-minute walk] **☎** 0573-69-2048 **🌐** <http://kiso-tajimaya.com/index.html?lang=e>



One pair of chopsticks made from Kiso *hinoki* cypress trees for every pair of guests (Valid until March 31, 2021) **P**



[ENA]: THE ESSENTIALS 恵那

<https://www.kankou-ena.jp/pdf/english.pdf>

GETTING HERE

JR Nagoya Station → [JR Chuo Main Line • 1 hr • ¥1,110] → Ena Station

MAIN FEATURE

1 Ena Valley: A Sight of Year-Round Beauty

Formed by the construction of the Oi Dam (the first hydroelectric dam built in Japan) downstream, Ena Valley is a man-made lake upon which sightseeing boats cruise, allowing visitors spectacular views of the wonderful scenery. The four seasons are clearly delineated here, with each showing off a different side of the area. In the springtime, around 200 sakura cherry trees bloom along with azaleas and wisteria flowers, bathing the lake in a sea of pink and purple. Verdant green abounds in summer, and the fireworks event held above the lake in late July brings people together in this place where they can all enjoy the cool of the evening. The reflection of the fiery red and golden yellow maple trees in the lake's surface makes Ena Valley one of the most well-known autumn foliage spots in Gifu. And finally, the wintertime sees many birds in the area, making Ena Valley a popular birdwatching site.

In addition to its distinct seasonal states, Ena Valley boasts a very unique element that sets it apart from other nature spots. This element is the presence of exceedingly unusual rock formations that grace the shoreline of the lake, having been carved into eye-catching shapes by erosion over time. Perhaps more stunning than the surrounding foliage itself, these rocks - named after animals and objects that they resemble - are truly a breathtaking sight. Note that the first cruise of the day is usually the best, since the surface of the lake will be still and undisturbed, adding yet another layer of idyllic beauty to this spot.

Ena Valley Sightseeing Boats

☎2709-104 Oi-cho, Ena City ☎April ~ November: 9 am ~ 4 pm, December ~ March: 10 am ~ 3 pm ¥1,280 (Children: ¥640) 🚏Ena Station → [Tohtetsu Bus on the Ena-kyo Line • 14 min] → "Ena-kyo" bus stop → [5-minute walk] ☎0573-25-4800 <http://www.tohsyoh.jp/tohsyohwp/wp-content/themes/tohsyoh/pdf/english.pdf>



Iwamura Castle Ruins

Along with Nara Prefecture's Takadori Castle and Okayama Prefecture's Matsuyama Castle, Iwamura Castle is considered one of Japan's Three Great Mountaintop Castles as well as one of its 100 best castles overall. And, impressively, this is in spite of the fact that no castle stands here today! Iwamura Castle was demolished during the Meiji era (1868 ~ 1912), but unlike Gujo Hachiman Castle, it was not then reconstructed afterwards. What remains is the original moss-covered stone base, a beautiful construction in itself that has been extremely well preserved. Although it was first built in the year 1185, Iwamura Castle did not take on the appearance of a "classic" Japanese castle - as people imagine them today - until the 16th century. At the time when it was extant, however, it was the highest "classic" castle in all the land, located at an elevation of 717 meters above sea level and thought to be exceedingly difficult to attack.

Iwamura Castle is also famous for being one of the few strongholds in Japanese history to boast a female castle lord. This woman was Oda Nobunaga's aunt and took charge of the castle when her husband, the former lord, died, leaving her widowed with no children. She met a sad fate in the end, but is remembered fondly by the Japanese today. Iwamura Castle also went by the name "Kirigajo" (the "misty castle") for two reasons. The first is that this area is draped in fog quite often. The second - and more interesting - reason harks back to a legend surrounding the castle; it is said that when snake bones were thrown into the "Kirigai" well located near the castle, mist would gush forth, shrouding the entire mountain in a blanket of fog and thus rendering any enemy attacks futile. With all of this fascinating history and legend behind them, the Iwamura Castle Ruins are well worth a visit! 📍Shiroyama, Iwamura-cho, Ena City 🚏Ena Station → [Akechi Railway • 30 min] → Iwamura Station → [40-minute walk]

Surrounded by mountains such as Mt. Ena, the city of Ena is an area blessed with a lush natural environment - including scenic Ena Valley - through which the beautiful Kiso and Agi Rivers flow. Ena is a veritable treasure trove of historical sites including Oi-juku, a post town on the Nakasendo; the ruins of Iwamura Castle, one of Japan's greatest mountain castles; and the Japan Taisho Village, which preserves the atmosphere of the early 20th century. It is home to a lookout point near Ibarma Station that offers what was chosen as the "Best View of Japan's Traditional Countryside Landscape" - a vista of Iwamura's basin region filled to the brim with picturesque rice paddies that will impress day or night, any season of the year! Finally, Ena City's local specialties, from *goheimochi* (glazed sticky rice on a skewer) to *hoba* sushi (sushi wrapped inside a magnolia leaf in order to keep it fresh and easily transportable) to *hoso-kanten* (thin strings of agar gelatin), are all old-fashioned foods that bring about nostalgic memories for the Japanese.

Peak Viewing Season
 🌸 Early ~ mid-April
 🍁 Early ~ mid-November

SPECIALTY PRODUCT
"Onna Joshu"
 Meaning "Lady of the castle" in Japanese and therefore named after the one-time lord of Iwamura Castle, who is said to have possessed otherworldly beauty, this sake brand has been well-received throughout the world. It is made with locally grown brewer's rice and well water selected as one of Gifu's "50 Remarkable Waters." Pick up a bottle or two of this fantastic sake symbolic of the region at the Iwamura Brewery. 📍342 Iwamura-cho, Ena City ☎9 am ~ 8 pm (Brewery tour: 9 am ~ 5 pm) 🚏Ena Station → [Akechi Railway • 30 min] → Iwamura Station → [20-minute walk] ☎0573-43-2029 <http://torokko.shop-pro.jp/> (JPN)

📦 Small sake cup (No expiration date)

[ENA] 恵那



1 Oi-juku Post Town on the Nakasendo 中山道 大井宿



As with the other post towns along the Nakasendo in Gifu Prefecture, Oi-juku (the 46th station from the Edo direction) was a place through which many people and goods passed. You can still see remnants of the Edo period character preserved in the appearance of many buildings throughout the town, first and foremost at the Nakasendo Hishiya Archives - a former merchant house that has been restored to its original state (¥200; Primary and secondary school students: ¥100). The main gate of Oi-juku's Official Inn and a provisional lodge built specifically in preparation for a visit from the Meiji Emperor (in the year 1880) are some of the other attractions in town that retain their old charm. **📍**Oi-cho, Ena City **🚉**Ena Station → [10-minute walk] **☎**0573-25-4058 (Ena City Tourism Association)



2 Hiroshige Museum of Art, Ena 中山道広重美術館



An exceedingly popular art form during the Edo period, *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints are highly recognizable in all parts of the world, partially because of the fame of Hokusai's "The Great Wave." Utagawa Hiroshige was one of the great masters of this *ukiyo-e* tradition who was active during the end of the Edo period, and this museum houses many of his masterpieces. In addition to appreciating the beauty of these works, you can also experience first-hand what print-making is all about by impressing blocks inked with different colors onto a print of your very own! **📍**176-1 Oi-cho, Ena City **🕒**9:30 am ~ 5 pm (Last entry: 4:30 pm) **🗓**Monday (Or the following business day instead when Monday is a holiday), New Year's holiday season **🎫**¥510, or ¥410 for groups of 20 or more; Admission to special exhibitions: ¥820, or ¥660 for groups of 20 or more (under 18 years old: free) **🚉**Ena Station → [3-minute walk] **☎**0573-20-0522 **🌐**<http://hiroshige-ena.jp/english>

🎁 Admission price discounted to the group rate regardless of number of people (Valid until March 31, 2021) **P**



3 Japan Taisho Village 日本大正村



The Taisho era of Japanese history (1912 ~ 1926) was a time of great cultural blending; after Japan opened its doors to the West in the latter half of the 19th century, Japanese and Western culture came together and brought forth a distinct atmosphere that pervaded the country. The architecture of this time, clearly different from what came before it, remains intact in the Japan Taisho Village. From the wooden post office to the Taisho Village Archives to the Toy Museum, there is much to see here as you walk around town (the latter two facilities are among the four covered by the museum pass). **📍**456 Akechi-cho, Ena City (Japan Taisho Village Tourist Information Center) **🕒**9 am ~ 5 pm (December 15 ~ end of February: 10 am ~ 4 pm)

🗓December 29 ~ January 3 **🎫**Multi-museum pass: ¥500 (Children: ¥300) **🚉**Ena Station → [Akechi Railway · 49 min] → Akechi Station **☎**0573-54-3944 **🌐**<http://www.nihon-taishomura.or.jp> (JPN) **P** **T** **W**



4 Akechi Railway 明知鉄道



Running southwest from Ena Station, the Akechi Railway takes you through the gorgeous highlands of Ena's countryside. From the rustic scenery of rice paddies to the majestic sights of the mountainous regions, beauty surrounds you endlessly along this local train route. There are also dining cars that are incredibly popular, where you can savor Japanese cuisine featuring seasonal ingredients - edible wild plants in the spring, sweetfish in the summer, mushrooms in the fall, and Japanese yam in the winter - while taking in the serene views. **☎**0573-54-4101 **🌐**<https://www.aketetsu.co.jp> (JPN)



5 Amakara あまから



A shop that specializes in *goheimochi*, Amakara utilizes a unique sweet and salty sauce made from sugar, soy sauce, sesame seeds, and walnuts, which is used to glaze the mashed rice grilled on skewers. With a tradition going back 53 years, this restaurant knows how to prepare this local specialty food just right in order to whet the appetites of everyone passing by! **📍**295-12 Funahashi, Oi-cho, Ena City **🕒**9:30 am ~ 6:30 pm **🗓**Monday (Or the following business day instead when Monday is a holiday) **🚉**Ena Station → [2-minute walk] **☎**0573-25-3029

🎁 One complimentary bottle of any non-alcoholic drink (Valid until March 31, 2021) **P**



6 Yamaoka-eki Kantenkan 山岡駅かんでんかん

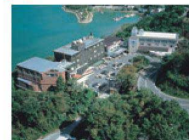


The town of Yamaoka boasts abundant production of *hosokanten*, vegetable gelatin cut into thin strings, which is an extremely healthy traditional Japanese food packed with dietary fiber. At Yamaoka-eki Kantenkan, you can enjoy *hosokanten*-based cuisine in an assortment of forms, from *kanten* soba to *kanten kaiseki* multi-course meals! **📍**3058-4 Tazawa, Yamaoka-cho, Ena City **🕒**8:30 am ~ 5 pm (November ~ end of March: 8:30 am ~ 4 pm) **🗓**Monday (Or the following business day instead when Monday is a holiday) **🚉**Ena Station → [Akechi Railway · 39 min] → Yamaoka Station **☎**0573-56-3140 **🌐**<https://www.kantenkan.net/> (JPN)

🎁 7 gram pack of *hosokanten* (No expiration date) **P**



7 Enakyo Grand Hotel 恵那峡グランドホテル



This hotel prides itself on the open-air hot spring baths from which guests can gaze over Ena Valley in all its glory. The *onsen* water here has very high salt content and will warm you to the core! **📍**2709-77 Oi-cho, Ena City **🗓**1 night + 2 meals: from ¥13,650 **🚉**Ena Station → [Tohetsu Bus on the Ena-kyo Line · 13 min] → "Kanpo no Yado-mae" bus stop → [5-minute walk] **☎**0573-25-5375 **🌐**http://www.enakyo.co.jp/en_top/index.html

🎁 Complimentary drink at the lobby coffee shop upon arrival (Valid until March 31, 2021)



8 Ena Sanso 恵那山荘

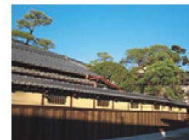


Standing among the lush nature of the highlands in Ena, Ena Sanso is an inn where you can take full advantage of the natural surroundings by going trekking, enjoying birdwatching, or engaging in any number of other activities. **📍**2390-165 Higashino, Ena City **🗓**1 night + 2 meals: from ¥7,500 **🚉**Ena Station → [Akechi Railway · 14 min] → Inuma Station → [Shuttle bus · 16 min · reservation required] **☎**0573-66-7773 **🌐**<http://enasansou.net/> (JPN)

🎁 Complimentary 300 ml bottle of cold sake at dinner for groups of two to four (Valid until March 31, 2021)



9 Ichikawa いち川



This 400-year-old traditional *ryokan* inn presents guests with top-notch Japanese cuisine and also offers meals conforming to the "macrobiotic" dietary approach, which emphasizes grains and locally grown vegetables. **📍**95-1 Oi-cho, Ena City **🗓**1 night + 2 meals: from ¥16,200 **🚉**Ena Station → [7-minute walk] **☎**0573-25-2191 **🌐**<http://ichikawaryokan.jp/> (JPN)

🎁 Complimentary cup of coffee (Valid until March 31, 2021)





[YORO]: THE ESSENTIALS 養老

A town located in western Gifu Prefecture on the edge of the Nobi Plain at the base of the Yoro Mountain Range. Yoro is home to breathtaking rural sceneries as far as the eye can see and the beautiful Tsuya River that flows from the groundwater beneath the mountainous regions of Yoro. The Tsuya is home to an endangered species of the freshwater stickleback fish and is considered a river with water of particularly exceptional quality. Other noteworthy locations include Yoro Waterfall situated deep within the massive Yoro Park, and Yakiniku Highway, where high-quality meat can be enjoyed for reasonable prices.

GETTING HERE

Ogaki Station → [Yoro Railway · 25 min · ¥410] → Yoro Station

MAIN FEATURE

Yoro Waterfall, the Spring of Legend

Deep in Yoro Park, roughly 50 minutes from Yoro Station on foot is the resting place of a waterfall which has been honored as one of Japan's finest. Over 30 meters tall and 4 meters wide, the area is stunningly beautiful throughout the four seasons. Particularly exquisite from the middle of November to the beginning of December, the park's autumn leaves bring in tourists from near and far. There exists a legend that tells of Yoro Waterfall's discovery in which long, long ago there was a man who, after stumbling upon a spring that smelled of sake deep in the mountains, had his elderly father drink from it and was amazed to see his almost immediate rejuvenation. The empress at the time, having heard this story, traveled to Yoro to test the water's healing properties for herself and, declaring "My skin has become smooth and what ails me has been cured. This, truly, is the fountain of youth," she dubbed the era of her rule "Yoro" in its honor.



1 Kikusui Spring



Situated on the grounds of Yoro Shrine, it is said to be the spring of beauty in which Empress Gensho bathed. Kikusui Spring was designated by the Ministry of the Environment as one of Japan's 100 finest bodies of water in 1985.

Peak Viewing Season

- ★ Late March ~ early April
- ★ Mid-November ~ early December



<http://www.kanko-yoro.jp/docs/2015091100711/files/2.pdf> (JPN)



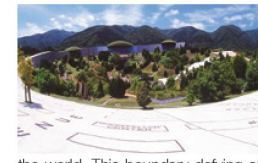
2 Yoro Park

A location of massive scale, Yoro Park encompasses everything from Yoro Waterfall and the Site of Reversible Destiny to Kikusui Spring and "Children's Country," an exciting playground that makes full use of the area's geographical features. One with nature, this park is unlike any other and is a popular location that sees upwards of a million visitors a year.

📍 1298-2 Takabayashi, Yoro-cho, Yoro-gun 🕒 9 am ~ 5 pm
🆓 Free (Parking : Free) 🗓 Monday (Or the following business day instead when Monday is a holiday), December 29 ~ January 3 🚶 Yoro Station → [10-minute walk] ☎ 0584-32-0501 (Yoro Park Office) 🌐 <http://www.yoro-park.com/> (JPN)

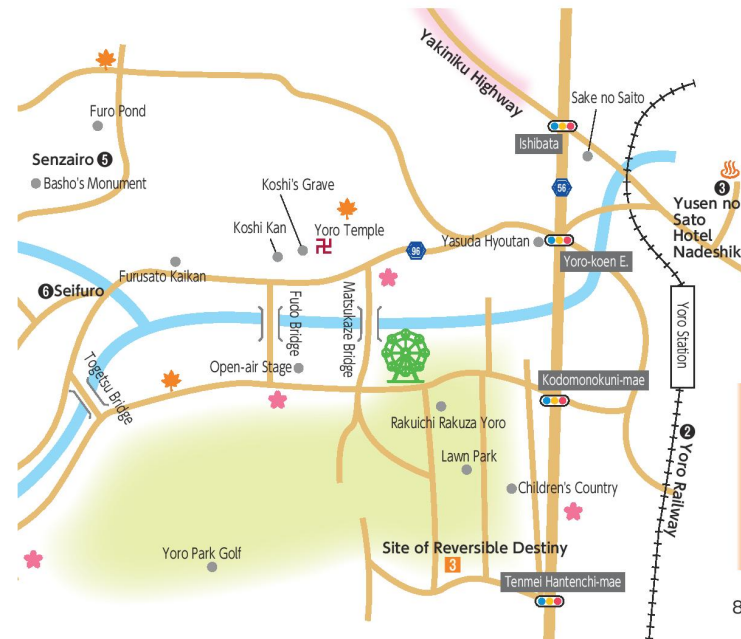


3 Site of Reversible Destiny - Yoro Park



The brainchild of famed artist and architect Shusaku Arakawa and poet Madeline Gins, the Site of Reversible Destiny is truly a park like no other. It is a conceptual art project revolving around the theme of "encountering the unexpected." Through its various installations that cause one to lose all sense of perspective and balance, the park invites visitors to rethink their spiritual and physical orientation to the world. This boundary-defying art/architecture features wildly undulating terrain, so it is best to wear comfortable clothes and shoes so that you can move about easily. Located at the mouth of Yoro Park, the Site of Reversible Destiny should be added to any itinerary that includes a trip to the Yoro Waterfall!

🕒 9 am ~ 5 pm (Last entry: 4:30 pm) 🎫 ¥750 (High school students: ¥500, Middle and elementary school students: ¥300) 🌐 <http://www.yoro-park.com/facility-map/nantenchi/> (JPN)



[YORO] 養老



養老公園の桜と紅葉

1 The Cherry Blossoms and Autumn Leaves of Yoro



Boasting an approximately two-kilometer stretch of beautiful cherry blossoms from the end of March to the beginning of April and stunning autumn leaves from the middle of November to early December, this area is a sight to behold regardless of season. The changing colors can also be seen around Yoro Waterfall, and many come in autumn to bask in the beauty of the changing leaves while enjoying a nice stroll.



2 Yoro Railway 養老鉄道



Running for 57.5 kilometers between Kuwana and Ibi Stations, the Yoro Railway is another of the old-fashioned trains that travels through the marvelous Gifu countryside. The railroad company proactively innovates ways to make the ride unique for customers, such as by offering a "Chinese food therapy train" in which you can enjoy a lunch featuring cuisine that adheres to the principles of Chinese medicine. To make the most of your journey, consider purchasing the Yoro Tetsudo Free Kippu ("Yoro Railway Free Ticket"), a one-day pass which lets the holder ride the Yoro Railway as much as they like for ¥1,500 (Children: ¥750). ☎0584-78-3400 🌐http://www.yororailway.co.jp/ (JPN)

LOCAL SPECIALTY

Hyoutan and Sake Made from Yoro's Waters

Hyoutan

According to the legend of Yoro Waterfall, wherein a filial son retrieves water from a spring and takes it home to his father, he is said to have collected the water in a gourd, called *hyoutan* in Japanese. As a result, the *hyoutan* has become Yoro's signature souvenir. While sake is said to become even more delicious if drunk from a *hyoutan*, they are nowadays sold primarily as interior decorations. Many souvenir shops along the road from Yoro Station to Yoro Waterfall sell *hyoutan*, but Yoshida and Yasuda Hyoutan in particular specialize in the sale of *hyoutan* created from locally grown gourds.

Yasuda Hyoutan

☎723-1 Kashiwao, Yoro-cho, Yoro-gun ☎9 am ~ 6 pm 📍Yoro Station → [5-min walk] ☎0584-32-2310 🌐http://yasudahyoutanten.web.fc2.com/ (JPN)

Gourd cultivation can be observed from June to September.

Yoshida

☎1283 Yoro Koen, Yoro-cho, Yoro-gun ☎9:30 am ~ 4:30 pm 📍Yoro Station → [20-min walk] ☎0584-32-0404 🌐http://hyoutangallery.sakura.ne.jp/ (JPN)



Reisen

Reisen is a local brand of sake created with great care by the Gyokusendo brewery in Yoro. Prepared using subsoil water from the Yoro mountain range, this sake can be purchased in the town of Yoro at stores like Sake no Saito.

Sake no Saito - Yoro

☎382-6 Myotoku, Yoro-cho, Yoro-gun ☎9 am ~ 6:00 pm 📍Tuesday 📍Yoro Station → [20-min walk] ☎0584-32-1230 🌐http://www.osakeosake.com/ (JPN)



3 Yusen no Sato Hotel Nadeshiko ゆせんの里 ホテルなでしこ



This inn's pride and joy are its natural hot springs, with water drawn directly from the spring's source. Enjoy a relaxing stay in a comfortable space designed to reproduce the style and atmosphere of a southern European villa. There are multiple types of rooms to choose from, including Japanese and Western style rooms as well as specialty suites.

☎1522-1 Oshikoshi, Yoro-cho, Yoro-gun 📍1 night + 2 meals: from ¥12,900 📍JR Ogaki Station → [Free shuttle bus] ☎0584-34-1313 🌐http://www.natural-co.com/ (JPN)



Free one-time use of stone sauna (Valid until March 31, 2021)



4 Takimotokan Yuki no Sato 滝元館 遊季の里



Located right near the Yoro Waterfall, this *ryokan* inn abounds in traditional Japanese charm. There are only 11 guest rooms here, which means that the staff at Takimotokan Yuki no Sato are able to pay that much more attention to their guests' every wish and need. This hospitality is the pride of the inn, and the open-air *onsen* baths as well as the Kyoto-style *kaiseki* banquets served here allow guests to enjoy the "luxury of doing nothing" aside from relaxing and treasuring time with friends and family. Only accepts guests 12 years of age and older. ☎1290-167 Yoro Koen, Yoro-cho, Yoro-gun 📍1 night + 2 meals: from ¥28,600 📍Yoro Station → [Taxi • 10 min] or [Courtesy car • reservation required] ☎0584-32-3111 🌐http://www.yukinosato.co.jp/english

☎0584-32-3111 🌐http://www.yukinosato.co.jp/english



Commemorative photograph (No expiration date)



5 Senzairo 千蔵楼



A historical establishment founded back in 1764. Experience the beauty of the four seasons in this deeply traditional tea ceremony-styled inn. This place of rest is remarkable for its sincere, heartfelt seasonal cooking and deep cultural significance.

☎1079 Yoro Koen, Yoro-cho, Yoro-gun 📍1 night + 2 meals: from ¥16,800 (¥16,300 in the case of reservations made by phone) 📍Yoro Station → [Taxi • 5 min] ☎0584-32-1118 🌐http://www.senzairou.com/english.html



Single serving of Yoro's local "Taki Beer" (No expiration date)



6 Seifuro 清風楼



A small inn nestled in the beauty of the Yoro Mountain Range. Cooking with only the most carefully selected ingredients, the dishes served here soothe the hearts of those who visit. Enjoy a relaxing stay, and bask in the gradual shifting of the seasons.

☎1285 Yoro Koen, Yoro-cho, Yoro-gun 📍1 night + 2 meals: from ¥17,000 📍Yoro Station → [Taxi • 5 min] ☎0584-32-0509 🌐http://www.yoro-seifuro.jp (JPN)



Family bath service & gift of green tea and sweets upon arrival (No expiration date)

Yakiniku Highway



Receiving its name from the sheer number of *yakiniku* barbecue establishments in the area, Yakiniku Highway refers to a string of shops that run alongside Prefectural Road 56 in Yoro. Having originally been home to an incredible amount of butcher shops, it has become a place where delicious *yakiniku* can be had for reasonable prices, and it is not unusual to see large lineups at popular restaurants for multiple days in a row.

YORO



大垣 関ヶ原 [OGAKI・SEKIGAHARA]: THE ESSENTIALS

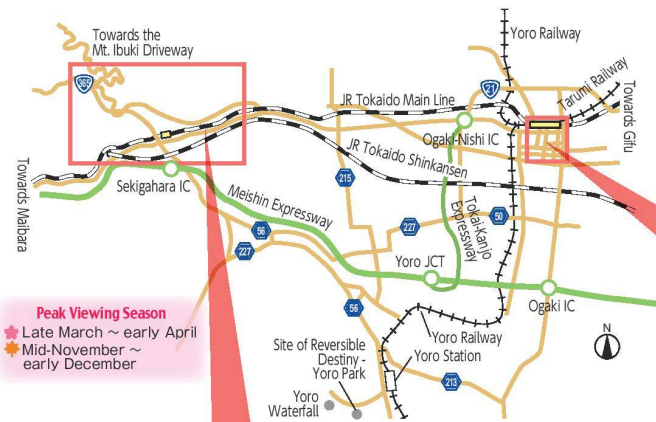
GETTING HERE

- Ogaki:** JR Gifu Station → [JR Tokaido Main Line · 10 min · ¥240] → Ogaki Station
- Sekigahara:** Ogaki Station → [JR Tokaido Main Line · 15 min · ¥240] → Sekigahara Station

MAIN FEATURE

Ogaki, the Water Capital

With beautiful spring water and many rivers flowing within the city limits, Ogaki has long been known as the "water capital" of the region. The scenic views of this former river port town almost always feature water in some shape or form, such as those that you can enjoy during the river cruises along the Suimon River that are available during festivals in the spring and autumn. Visitors are also free to make use of the dozen or so natural springs that well up from the ground around the city and taste the purity of Ogaki's water for themselves! Without this water, none of the local specialties that make use of it - from *mizu manju* jelly cakes to tofu to lemonade - would be possible!



Peak Viewing Season
 ☆ Late March ~ early April
 ★ Mid-November ~ early December

<http://www.kanko-yoro.jp/> (JPN)



[Ogaki] The central hub of Gifu's Seino region, the city of Ogaki is famous as a "water capital," a place with pristine water to rival that of Gujo Hachiman. It once flourished as the castle town that sprang up around Ogaki Castle, and today there are various festivals and events each season that make it a worthwhile visit. There are must-see destinations scattered throughout the city, so it is a great place to enjoy a walk or a ride on a rental bicycle getting to and from all of these places.

[Sekigahara] This town is the site of the most famous and most important battle in all of Japanese history, the Battle of Sekigahara. Those interested in samurai and in the history of Japan will not want to pass up a visit here. A variety of samurai-themed paraphernalia are available, as are rental bicycles that can be used for exploring the beautiful area.

OGAKI・SEKIGAHARA



Historic Sekigahara Battlegrounds

Pitting Tokugawa Ieyasu - the victor who would later be recognized as one of Japan's three great unifiers - against Ishida Mitsunari, the Battle of Sekigahara saw 158,000 samurai fighting it out for control of the realm. Far removed from the commotion of that fateful day in 1600, the battlegrounds today are a tranquil place offering beautiful views of the Japanese countryside. Flags and stone monuments remain to indicate where the military encampments of the Eastern and Western Armies stood. A bicycle ride is surely a great way to enjoy this vast area.



2 Oku no Hosomichi Musubi no Chi Memorial Hall

Here at this museum celebrating the tradition of the great poet Matsuo Basho and his connection to Ogaki City, you can watch a 3-D film tracing the path of his journeys. There is also an area that acts as a tribute to the many greats who contributed to the history, culture, and art of the city as well as a section where you can get information on the tourist sights of Ogaki. **📍**2-26-1 Funa-machi, Ogaki City **🕒**9 am ~ 5 pm **🎫**¥300 (18 years old and younger: free admission) **🗓**New Year's holiday season **📍**Ogaki Station → [16-minute walk] **☎**0584-84-8430



1 Sekigahara Town History & Folklore Museum

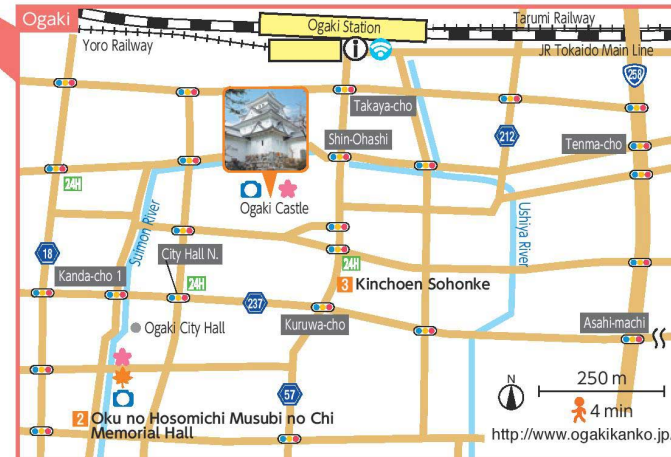
This museum's permanent display boasts an impressive collection, from a breathtaking folding screen that depicts the Battle of Sekigahara to a variety of items such as armor, cannons, matchlock guns, and more. Another must-see is the large-scale diorama that utilizes lights and recorded commentary to show the positions of both armies during the battle, as well as how the battle unfolded. A host of items found only here can be obtained at the gift shop, including t-shirts, mugs, and miniature battle standards. After learning about the area, delve even deeper into the experience by visiting the old battleground for yourself! **📍**894-28 Oaza Sekigahara, Sekigahara-cho **🕒**9 am ~ 4:30 pm (November ~ March: until 4 pm) **🎫**¥350 (Middle and elementary school students: ¥200) **🗓**Monday, December 29 ~ January 3 **📍**Sekigahara Station → [8-minute walk] **☎**0584-43-2665 **🌐**<http://rekimin-sekigahara.jp/english/index.html>



LOCAL SPECIALTY

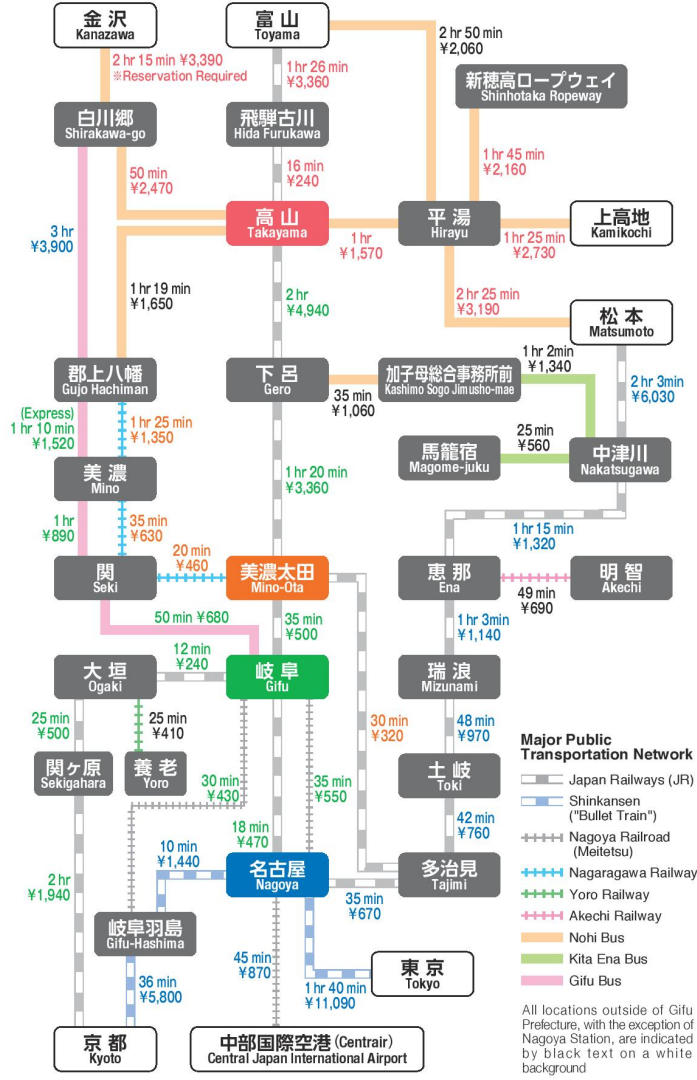
3 Mizu Manju

A Japanese *wagashi* confection representative of Ogaki City, *mizu manju* are jelly cakes filled with adzuki bean paste and served in ice-cold Ogaki water. Perfect for combating hot weather, these sweets are available only in spring and summer. **Get some at the Kinchoen Sohonke confectionery** **📍**2-10 Kuruwa-machi, Ogaki City **🕒**8 am ~ 8 pm **🎫**None **☎**0584-78-2022 **🌐**<http://www.kinchoen-sohonke.co.jp/index.html> (JPN)

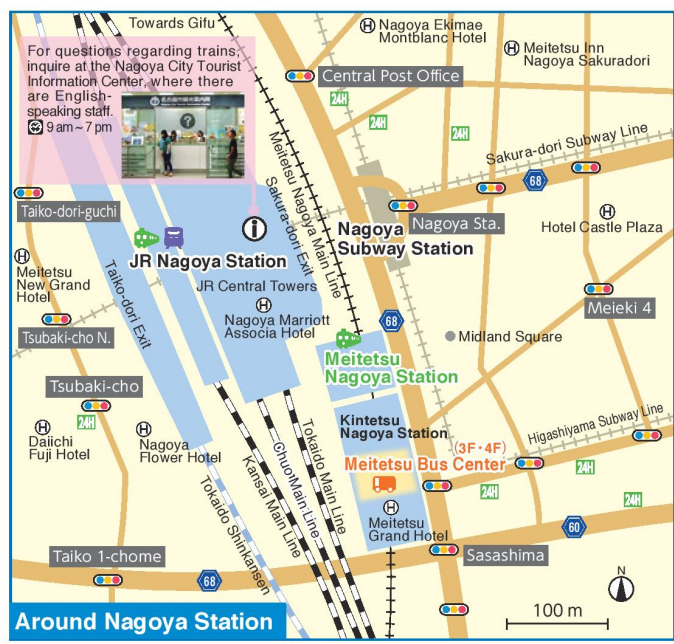


Major Public Transportation Network

With a few exceptions, place names are used in the transportation map below. For the exact names of the train stations and bus stops (for example, Mino-shi Station in Mino), refer to the relevant pages in this book.



Regarding the required travel times and fares noted above:
 Black text indicates the time and amount of money required for that designated interval
 Blue text indicates the total time and amount of money required from Nagoya Station
 Green text indicates the total time and amount of money required from Gifu Station
 Red text indicates the total time and amount of money required from Takayama Station
 Orange text indicates the total time and amount of money required from Mino-Ota Station



Discount Passes and Packages in and Around Gifu

TRAIN

JR Central and JR West

Takayama-Hokuriku Area Tourist Pass



Details: This pass grants the holder unlimited access to all express, rapid, and regular JR trains (except for sleeper trains and all Shinkansen but the Hokuriku Shinkansen) from Kansai International Airport → Osaka, Osaka → Kanazawa, Kanazawa → Toyama, and Toyama → Nagoya. Also, with the exception of the Hokuriku Shinkansen and the "Haruka" express, you can make seat reservations on regular trains up to 4 times. You are also eligible for unlimited passage on express buses such as the Nohi or Hokutetsu buses from Shirakawa-go → Kanazawa, or the World Heritage Bus operated by Kaetsuno Railway. The pass is valid for 5 days.

- **Price:** ¥14,000 (Children 11 and under: ¥7,000)
- **Where to Purchase:** Please purchase the pass through selected travel companies overseas and receive a voucher that can be exchanged for the pass upon arrival in Japan.
- **For More Information:** http://touristpass.jp/en/takayama_hokuriku/



JR Central

Hidaji Furi Kippu (Rail & Okuhida Bus Course)



Details: This package includes round-trip tickets on the Limited Express Wide View Hida rapid between JR Nagoya or JR Gifu Station and Hida-Furukawa Station, in addition to unlimited passage on all non-rapid JR trains running between Hida-Kanayama and Hida-Furukawa. You can also enjoy unlimited passage on the Nohi Bus Hirayu/Shinhotaka Line, which takes you as far as the Shinhotaka Ropeway. Tickets valid for a 3-day period.

- **Price:** ¥12,140 for 1 person (More savings with more people - total for a group of 4 people: ¥30,650); For comparison: a 1-way trip from JR Nagoya Station to Hida-Furukawa Station normally costs ¥5,830, and a 1-way trip from Takayama to the Shinhotaka Ropeway normally costs ¥2,160
- **Where to Purchase:** Major JR stations in the Tokai area (Gifu, Aichi, and Mie Prefectures) or at a travel agency
- **For More Information:** <http://railway.jr-central.co.jp/tickets/hida/JPN>



Tateyama Kurobe Alpine Ticket



Details: The Tateyama Kurobe Alpine Route has garnered much attention internationally for its towering snow walls and stunning mountain scenery. This round-trip package covers your trip from the Nagoya-Gifu area to Toyama or Shinano-Omachi, across the Alpine Route, and then back along a different route. Choose the Hida Course and enjoy the sights in Gifu as you make your way to or from the Alpine Route! Valid for an 8-day period.

- **Price:** ¥18,610 (Children: ¥9,360); For comparison: a 1-way trip from JR Nagoya Station to Toyama normally costs ¥7,450, a trip across the Alpine Route costs ¥10,850, and a trip from Shinano-Omachi back to Nagoya costs ¥6,480 (for a total of ¥24,780) → 25% savings!
- **Where to Purchase:** Major JR Stations operated by JR Central or at a travel agency
- **For More Information:** <http://en.go-centraljapan.jp/expedia/pdf/alpine-modelcourse.pdf>



Note: JR Central does not have its own regional Japan Rail Pass like some other regions in Japan do. Those interested in unlimited travel on JR lines in central Japan must therefore purchase the nationwide Rail Pass.

BUS

Meitetsu Bus

Shoryudo Free Bus Ticket

Details: The "Takayama · Shirakawa-go · Kanazawa Course," "Wide Course," and "Matsumoto · Magome · Komagane Course" (hereafter referred to as "TSK Course," "Wide Course," and "MMK Course" respectively) grant the ticket holder free use of various express bus routes. The TSK Route allows for travel to and from Nagoya, Takayama, Shirakawa-go, Kanazawa, and Toyama, and 2 one-way tickets from either Nagoya → Central Japan International Airport, or Kanazawa → Komatsu Airport. The Wide Course variant expands on this to include access to express buses bound for Takaoka, Hirayu, Gero, Kamioka, Shinhotaka, and Matsumoto. The MMK Course allows for express bus use to Nakatsugawa (Magome), Takayama, and Shinhotaka, in addition to some other sightseeing destinations in Nagano. All three courses could possibly save you up to around 50% from the normal price that you would pay for regular fares, and on top of that, there are additional discounts you receive for various sightseeing spots like the Shinhotaka Ropeway!

- **Price:** TSK Course: ¥7,500; Wide Course: ¥13,000; MMK Course: ¥7,000
- **Where to Purchase:** On the web, through travel companies that are partnered with Meitetsu World Travel. To learn more, contact Meitetsu World Travel's Media Office in Nagoya (052-583-1959).
- **For More Information:** <http://www.meitetsu.co.jp/eng/ticket-info/shoryudo.html>



Takayama · Shirakawa-go · Kanazawa Course 3-Day Pass



Wide Course 5-Day Pass



Matsumoto · Magome · Komagane Course 3-Day Pass



Nohi Bus

Alps WIDE Free Passport Shinshu/Hida

Details: This fantastic pass, valid for 4 consecutive days, covers bus lines running between Takayama, Shirakawa-go, Gero Hot Spring, Hida Furukawa, the Okuhida Hot Spring Villages, Mt. Norikura, Kamikochi (Nagano Prefecture), and Matsumoto (Nagano Prefecture), giving you full access to the regions of Hida and Shinshu! See linked flyer for more details.

- **Price:** ¥10,290 (Small children: ¥5,150); For comparison: might cost ¥17,000 normally (e.g. Day 1: Gero → Takayama → Furukawa → Takayama [city bus], Day 2: Takayama → Shirakawa-go → Shinhotaka, Day 3: Shinhotaka → Kamikochi → Hirayu, Day 4: Hirayu → peak of Mt. Norikura → Matsumoto) → 40% savings!
- **Where to Purchase:** Any bus center along the various routes
- **For More Information:** [http://www.alpico.co.jp/access/ticket/pdf/panf006\[2\].pdf](http://www.alpico.co.jp/access/ticket/pdf/panf006[2].pdf)



Takayama & Shinhotaka 2-Day Open Ticket

- **Details:** Use this pass to travel on the Hirayu/Shinhotaka Line an unlimited number of times during a consecutive 2-day period.
- **Price:** ¥4,110 (Small children: ¥2,060); For comparison: a 1-way trip from Takayama to the Shinhotaka Ropeway normally costs ¥2,160
- **Where to Purchase:** Takayama Nohi Bus Center

Navigating Gifu in a Rental Car

Gifu Prefecture boasts a wealth of expressways (all of which are toll roads) and national highways that are exceptionally well-maintained and comfortably wide, making it an incredibly easy area in which to drive, even for foreign travelers. Easy to access from all directions, Gifu is the perfect choice of destination for a self-drive vacation!

Be aware that cars in Japan drive on the left-hand side of the road, so drivers who are used to the opposite must pay extra care to turning into the left lanes.

For detailed rules of the road: https://www.npa.go.jp/koutsuu/kikaku/trafficsafety/traffic_safety_en.pdf

Required Items for Driving in Japan

- An International Driving Permit (in most cases)
- Your driver's license from your home country

Using a Rental Car

[Major Rental Car Agencies that Offer English Language GPS Devices]

TOYOTA Rent a Car <https://rent.toyota.co.jp/eng/>

Times Car Rental <http://www.timescar-rental.com/>

● The Convenient Functions of GPS Navigation Systems: No Japanese Required!

Inputting a Destination by Map Code

Based on latitude/longitude coordinates, map codes are six to ten-digit numbers that will direct you exactly to any point in the country. They are the most reliable way of getting where you want to go, but must be procured ahead of time from the internet or other sources.

Inputting a Destination by Telephone Number

Much easier to find than map codes, telephone numbers can also be input into the GPS system in order to set the destination. This will perhaps be the most frequent input method you will use, but note that because you are providing a telephone number and not a precise point on a map, there are (rare) occasions when this input method proves to be slightly less accurate.

Taking a Breather at One of Japan's Fabulous Rest Stops!

● Service Areas (SA) and Parking Areas (PA) are placed at regular intervals along Japan's expressways, and government-designated Roadside Stations (*Michi no Eki* in Japanese) are similarly located along the national highways. Most of these facilities boast - aside from restrooms and vending machines - restaurants, souvenir shops, and other leisure-centered attractions that make them destinations unto themselves! Just in terms of the Roadside Stations, Gifu Prefecture has a whopping 54 of them, the most of any prefecture outside of Hokkaido!



Central Nippon Expressway Pass

● Developed by Gifu Prefecture and NEXCO Central, the operator of the expressway system in central Japan, the Central Nippon Expressway Pass (CEP) makes driving in the general area affordable and easy! When you rent a car from Toyota or Mazda, add on this fixed price plan (for a designated number of days from 2 to 14) and get an ETC (electronic toll collection) card inserted into the car. With this, you can enjoy unlimited use of the entire (usually expensive) highway network administered by NEXCO Central and can pass through toll gates without having to stop and pay. The CEP offers drivers unprecedented freedom of movement in central Japan and will even cover the trip to Tokyo!

For More Information: <http://global.c-nexco.co.jp/en/>

We're Not Done Yet! Points of Interest in Gifu Easily Accessible Only by Rental Car



A Usuzumi-zakura Cherry Tree

The second oldest sakura in all of Japan (over 1,500 years old), the Usuzumi-zakura is one of Japan's Three Great Cherry Trees. Said to have been planted by the Keitai Emperor himself, the tree displays blossoms that are pink, then white when at full-bloom (early ~ mid-April), and finally a pale gray when they scatter to the ground. **Map Code:** 477 463 471



B Mt. Tanigumi Kegon-ji Temple

An old Buddhist temple over 1,200 years old, Kegon-ji Temple is esteemed for its beautiful entrance path lined with cherry trees as well as for its autumn foliage. Its statues of the Bishamonten, a god of warfare, and Kwannon, a goddess of mercy, are designated national Important Cultural Properties. **Map Code:** 242 718 074

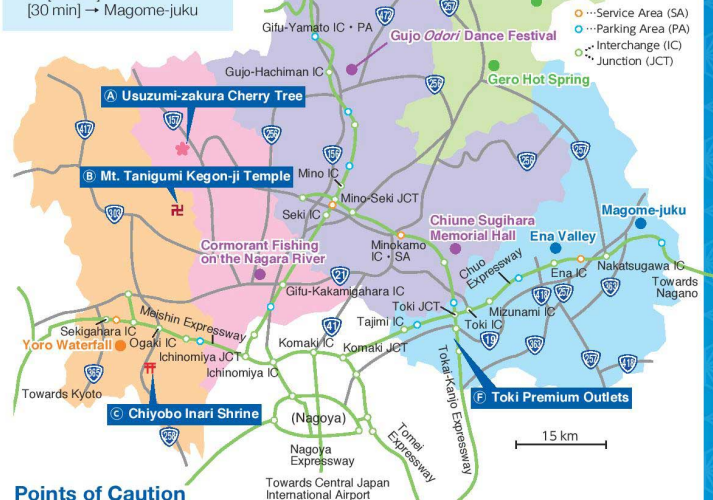


C Chiyobo Inari Shrine

As a shrine that bestows upon visitors the blessing of thriving business, Chiyobo Inari Shrine is the destination of many worshippers every year. It is considered by some to be one of Japan's Three Great Inari Shrines that celebrate Inari Okami, the Japanese god of rice, fertility, and foxes. Munching on local snacks while strolling the area is a recommended way to enjoy it. **Map Code:** 28 033 213

Estimated Time Required When Traveling via Expressway

- Central Japan International Airport → [50 min] → Nagoya → [30 min] → Gifu → [40 min] → Gujo → [1 hr] → Takayama → [50 min] → Shirakawa-go
- Gifu → [2 hr 15 min] → Gero → [1 hr 20 min] → Takayama → [1 hr] → Okuhida Hot Spring Villages
- Nagoya → [45 min] → Tajimi → [25 min] → Ena → [30 min] → Magome-juku



Points of Caution

- Northern areas of Gifu Prefecture see heavy snow in the wintertime and even during months not usually considered "winter." For this reason, cars should be rented equipped with studless tires from November to April. Cars without appropriate tires may not even be allowed to drive on the roads in the northern region during that time, so it is better to be safe than sorry by including studless tires in your reservation.
- All expressways charge a fee, so unless you have purchased a package with an ETC ("Electronic Toll Collection") card included, you will need to take a ticket at the entry gate to the expressway and pay at the exit gate with cash or a credit card. For more information: <http://global.c-nexco.co.jp/en/>



D Rail Mountain Biking

With bikes set on railroad tracks that are no longer in use, Rail Mountain Biking allows you to experience a wholly different kind of cycling. While gazing at the gorgeous scenery all around you, feel the vibration and sound of the tracks as you speed along them, almost as if you were a train yourself! **Map Code:** 191 832 815



E Bokka no Sato

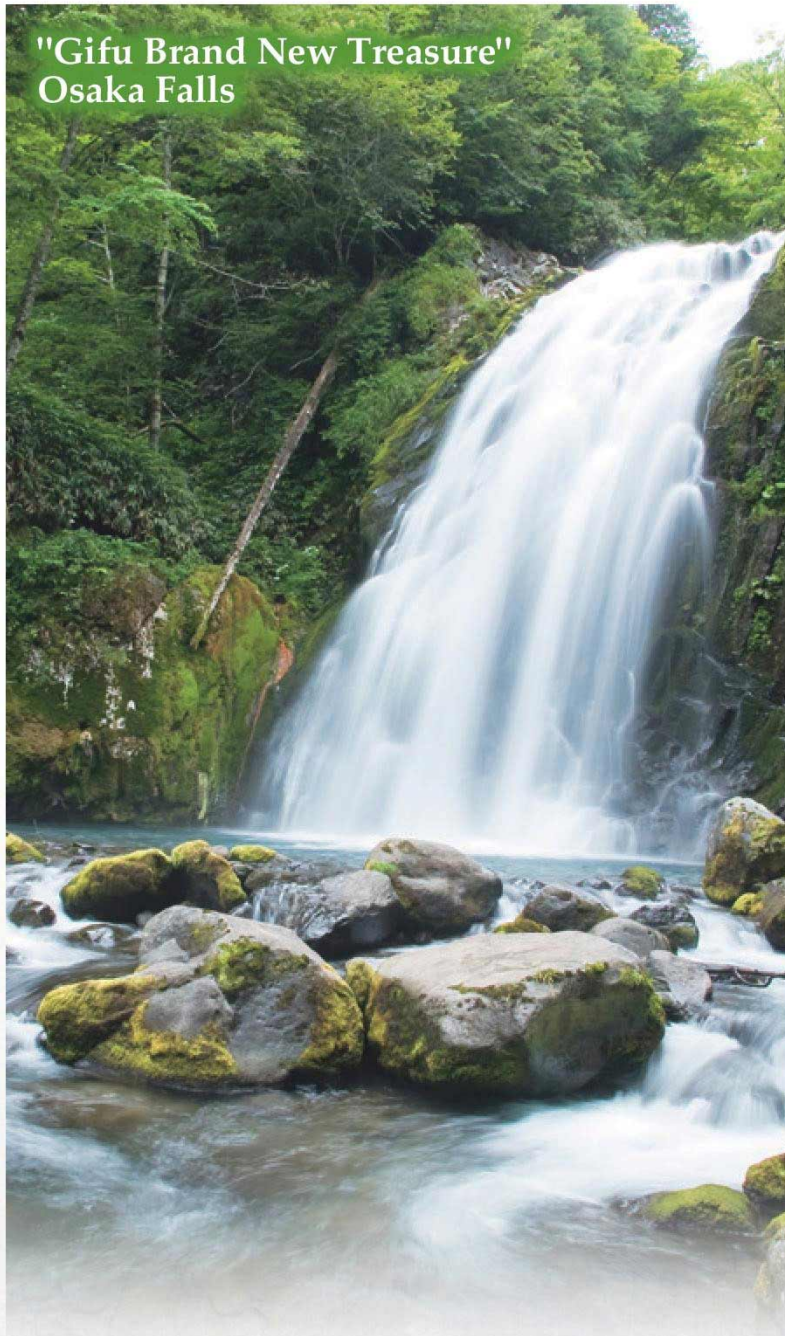
A relaxing space in the highlands of Gujo City, Bokka no Sato boasts many flower gardens that bloom seasonally, farm animals that visitors can interact with, and workshops in which to try one's hand at crafts. A perfect destination for families, it emphasizes and facilitates getting in-touch with the natural world around us. **Map Code:** 403 831 705



F Toki Premium Outlets

Reimagining the streets of beautiful Colorado, USA, the Toki Premium Outlets are a mall where 183 of the top domestic and foreign brand names have come together to open shop. From fashion apparel to cosmetics to interior decorating goods, there is no end to what you can find here at discounted prices. **Map Code:** 98 305 491

"Gifu Brand New Treasure" Osaka Falls



Welcome to GIFU, the Land of Clear Waters !



For more on the wonders of Gifu Prefecture ~

- Official Tourism Website: <http://travel.kankou-gifu.jp/>
- Blog: <https://gogifu.wordpress.com/blog/>
- "Go Gifu" Facebook Page:
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