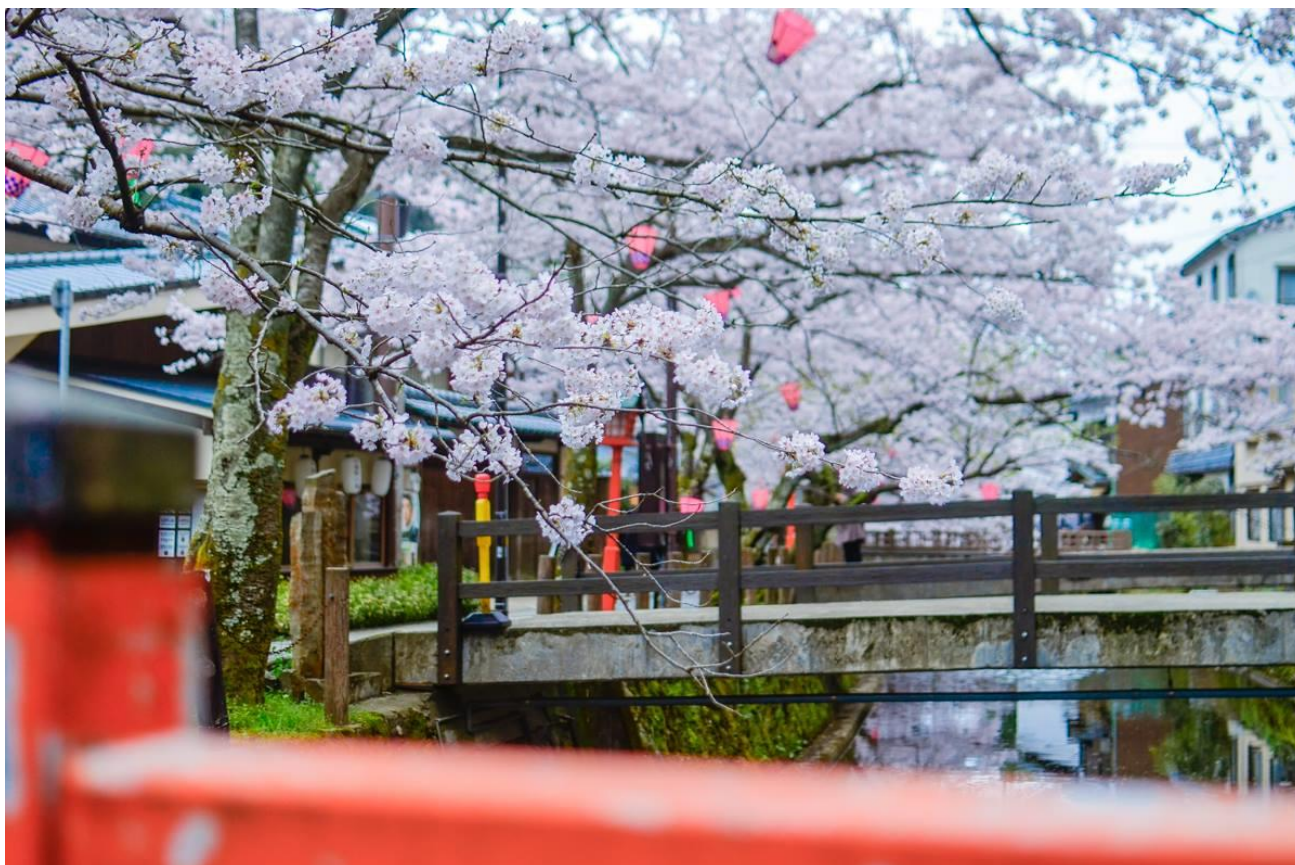


~Japan's Best Hot Spring Town, Kinosaki Onsen~

Cherry Blossoms off the Beaten Path

In just a few short months, winter in Japan will melt into spring, and reveal the coveted cherry blossoms, or sakura. Considered the national flower of Japan, sakura are prevalent in many forms of both Japanese traditional and pop culture, including music, coins, kimono, stationery, dishware, and manga. Visitors to Japan can see sakura all over, and Kinosaki Onsen and its surrounding areas are no exception.



Sakura trees will bloom depending on the temperature, weather and type of tree. Normally the trees in Kinosaki Onsen, Takeno, Izushi, and Tanto will bloom earlier than the ones at the higher elevations in the mountains of Kannabe. On average they tend to start to bloom anywhere from the last week of March to the first week of April and will bloom for about one week before falling to the elements. It is currently predicted that the cherry blossoms in Kinosaki Onsen will begin to bloom on March 31st, and will reach full bloom on April 4th.

One great place to see the sakura both during the day and at night is in Kinosaki Onsen along Kiyamachi Street near Ichino-Yu, one of the town's seven public onsen. Sakura line the small canal and create a soft pink canopy for nearly 1 kilometer, stretching all the way back to the ropeway. At night the pink lanterns glow softly, creating a romantic atmosphere perfect for an evening stroll between onsen and shop visits.

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To spread out a sheet under the cherry blossom trees and enjoying the flowers while eating a packed lunch is a traditional pastime in Japan, and is called hanami or flower-viewing. One excellent place to partake in this hanami tradition is in Izushi, our castle town. The sakura trees decorate the perimeter of the Izushi Castle ruins. Participating in hanami under the sakura trees at the foot of castle ruins is a uniquely Japanese experience that you will never forget.



Takeo, a quiet fishing village and beach area, also has many trees that blossom. Just five minutes on the JR train from Kinoshiki Onsen, walk 20 minutes from Takeo Station down to the beach to witness the pinks of the sakura mixing with the blues of the Japan Sea. Hike up to the top of Mt. Jajayama to see a view of the town and the ocean bordered by cherry blossoms.



Visitors to Kinoshiki Onsen can enhance their experience amongst the sakura with a yukata rental and/or a professional photoshoot activity. Although most ryokans in town offer their own yukata included in a guest's stay, the town's yukata shop & rental IROHA offers a wider variety with many different colors and designs. IROHA is a chic yukata rental and sales shop located in the heart of Kinoshiki. Guests can choose from a wide selection of stylish yukata (both women's and men's) to rent for the day. Click [here](#) for more details about this activity.

In addition to this, visitors can capture their favorite memories with Kinoshiki's cherry blossoms by getting professional photos taken in their yukata. Guests meet up with a professional photographer in Kinoshiki Onsen and choose some scenic spots for a photoshoot. Click [here](#) for more details about this activity.





[Kinosaki Onsen](#) is a town of time-honored hot springs dating back 1300 years ago. It is home to seven public bathhouses, all located within walking distance of each other and the train station. Guests are encouraged to wear yukata and geta, stroll through the town, and go onsen-hopping.

[Toyooka](#) is a downtown area home to the Oriental White Stork, a bird that was revived from extinction in this very town. The city's efforts restored the Oriental White Stork population, and now about 140 fly the skies of Japan. Toyooka is also known for the Genbudo Caves.



[Izushi](#) is the resident castle town, popular for its nostalgic atmosphere of Edo-era Japan. It is home to many interesting attractions such as castle ruins, a samurai house, a kabuki theater, and a clock tower. The town's specialty is Izushi Sara Soba, buckwheat noodles served in small portions on small plates.

[Kannabe](#) is a mountainous area with fun activities year-round. In the winter, one can go skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, and sledding. In the warm months, one can go camping, paragliding, fishing, tree climbing, and more. Kannabe is the perfect destination for adventurers.



[Takeno](#) is a quaint fisherman town that is a hidden gem among the northern coast of Hyogo Prefecture. The beach has clear, blue waters while the mountains surrounding it offer great hiking opportunities. It is encouraged to stroll through the peaceful town, where one can find small shops and traditional landscapes.

[Tanto](#) is a quiet countryside town with magnificent nature—including a giant field of tulips in the spring and brilliant red-leaved trees in the fall.

