



# KINOSAKI ONSEN

*Best Onsen Town*



# Best *Onsen* Town

According to Lonely Planet, Kinosaki Onsen, which is home to seven unique public bathhouses, is one of Japan's best places to experience the traditional *onsen* culture.







*Seven Ong*



# SEVEN *ONSEN* (hot springs)

Public bathing culture is deeply ingrained in the town's daily life, and seven *onsen* is the highlight of Kinosaki Onsen. The waters can aid in relieving symptoms such as muscle pain, poor digestion, and fatigue. If you are staying at one of the local *ryokan* (traditional Japanese inn) in the area, the *ryokan* will offer an *onsen* pass in which you can use to visit *onsen* as many times as desired until 3:30pm on the last day of your stay. Day-trippers can enter any *onsen* or purchase a day pass to try all seven. Many of the bathhouses are open as early as 7am and stay open until 11pm, meaning you can enjoy the hot springs throughout the day. The public bathhouses in Kinosaki Onsen are also open to guests with tattoos.

*sen*





## Satono-yu



The spacious three-story bathhouse is fitted with both Western and Japanese-style baths, featuring a relaxing jacuzzi, a sauna with herbal aromatics and a beautiful view of the surrounding landscape.

※Satono-yu will be closed for renovations starting April 1st 2024.



## Yanagi-yu →

Yanagi-yu, featuring a rustic interior made from Japanese cypress, is the smallest and deepest of Kinokasa Onsen's seven public hot springs.



## Kono-yu

Kono-yu, a quiet retreat, is said to be the oldest hot spring in Kinokasa Onsen. Legend has it, that a stork was found healing its wounds in the water at this location.



## Ichino-yu

Ichino-yu was named “number one bath” by a renowned doctor back in the Edo period. Soak away your troubles in the spacious bath sculpted from natural rock boulders and made to resemble a cave.



## Jizo-yu ↑

A popular bathhouse for families, this retro-style hot spring offers a children’s space as well as a private family bath.



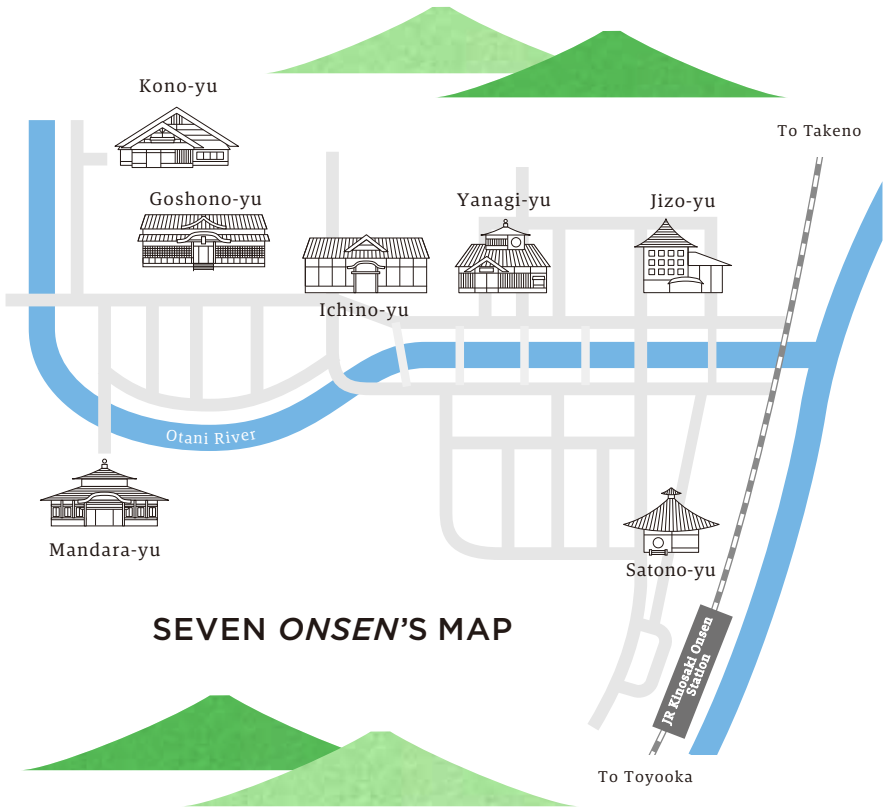
## Mandara-yu ↓

This particular *onsen*, located just off the main streets, is a quaint bathhouse where, according to legend, the hot spring water originally came forth.

## Goshono-yu ↑

Make sure to soak in the outdoor bath where a picturesque water-fall carries water into an *onsen* surrounded by lush greenery.





Visit our official website for more information

<https://visitkinosaki.com>



## Visit Kinosaki

Onsen town 2.5 hours from Kyoto





# Kinosaki Onsen : History

The history of Kinosaki Onsen dates back around 1,300 years. Kinosaki Onsen was established, thanks to the Buddhist priest Dochi Shonin who had been traveling the country looking for ways to help cure the sick. When he first came across the area in 717 A.D., Dochi Shonin was instructed by a local oracle to chant a Buddhist sutra for 1,000 consecutive days until hot spring water came forth. Legend has it that it was then, that the *onsen*'s healing powers were discovered, something that the locals still value to this day.

The scene of that first sighting of the hot spring source is now the site of Mandara-yu, one of the seven *onsen* of Kinosaki Onsen. Kinosaki Onsen has been enjoyed by many people throughout the years including a significant number of writers. Among these creatives was renowned Japanese novelist Naoya Shiga, who wrote a book titled "At Kinosaki" in 1917. In his writings he described his time in Kinosaki Onsen, which led to the town becoming even more well known nationwide.



# Strolling the Town in *Yukata*

The best way to experience Kinosaki Onsen is by wearing a traditional *yukata* (casual *kimono*) and *geta* (Japanese wooden sandals) while “*onsen-hopping*” your way through the town’s seven public hot springs. Guests staying in Kinosaki Onsen are provided with a *yukata* by their accommodation, to wear for the duration of their stay. Another highlight of the stay is listening to the click-clock of the wooden *geta* sandals as people make their way around the town. While strolling the streets between *onsen* dips, you can enjoy lovely shops, restaurants and bars. There is also a shop in the area which rents out colorful *yukata* with unique designs.









# More things to do in Kinosaki Onsen



## Stay in a *ryokan*

Kinosaki Onsen is home to traditional wooden *ryokan*. Many visitors stay there to experience Japanese hospitality and the unique traditions that go along with it.

*Ryokan* rooms are simple, understated and elegant, with *tatami*-style straw mats as flooring, *futon* mattresses for beds, a small table and floor cushions for seating. Little details like seasonal flowers or other objects relating to the current season can also be found in each room.

A typical dinner served at a *ryokan* is a

traditional *kaiseki* multi-course dinner. *Kaiseki* is an elegant cuisine focused on emphasizing seasonal ingredients and subtle flavors. The ingredients used in *kaiseki* are brought in from the surrounding land as well as the sea, and each dish is described as it's brought out so you can appreciate every bite you take.

# Onsenji Temple

No visit to Kinosaki Onsen is complete without a stop by the historic Onsenji Temple, known as the guardian temple of the hot springs. Located half-way up Mt. Daishi, the main temple hall can be reached either by taking the Kinosaki Onsen Ropeway or by trekking up around 500 stone steps. A visit to the temple used to be a necessary ritual before entering the sacred *onsen* waters: visitors would receive a special ladle that served as their entry ticket to the hot springs, and after bathing it would be returned to the temple.

Onsenji Temple was founded back in 738 A.D. to honor the Buddhist priest Dochī Shonin and it houses many important artifacts. One of these, the statue of the Buddhist deity known as Juichimen Kanzeon Bosatsu, or the Eleven-Faced Kannon, is designated a Japanese Important Cultural Property. This particular deity, known as the bodhisattva of compassion and mercy, is only on display for three years at a time every 30 years. When it is not shown, the sacred wooden statue is housed inside a box and only the top half is shown for two days a year when the Onsen Festival takes place every April 23rd and 24th.



## Kinosaki Straw Crafts

Kinosaki Onsen has a long history in the creation and production of *mugiwara zaiku* (straw craft). Approximately 300 years ago, a traveler came to stay in Kinosaki for a hot spring healing and compensated his hosts by making items using this unique detailed straw craft. Over the years, the straw craft evolved from small trinkets such as colored straw flutes and spinning tops to include larger items like intricate boxes and decorative pieces.

The technique of this handicraft involves using various strips of colored straw that are either woven together or cut and arranged in a particular pattern. These pieces of straw are then used to decorate and cover a number of different items including boxes, paper fans and even postcards. Currently, Kinosaki Onsen is home to the last remaining craftsmen of this local and unique art. Visitors to the area can try their hand at straw crafts at the regular workshops held at the Kinosaki Straw Craft Museum. A number of shops in the area also carry these beautiful items which make for great souvenirs and mementos from Kinosaki Onsen.



**SPRING**

Spring sees gorgeous cherry blossoms blooming along the Otani River, making it a picturesque spot for a romantic stroll with endless photo opportunities, especially when the trees are lit up during the evenings. Every April 23rd and 24th Kinosaki Onsen also hosts the Onsen Festival which celebrates the town's respect and gratitude towards the hot spring water with various rituals in the hopes of continuing its prosperity.

# Four Seasons of



**AUTUMN**

Autumn is the time of autumn leaves, when the lush foliage on the surrounding mountains such as Mt Daishi turns into varying shades of red, yellow and orange, while October 14th and 15th sees one of Kinosaki Onsen's largest celebrations, the Kinosaki Danjiri Festival, take place.



SUMMER



Summer brings lush greenery, balmy weather and fireworks, which are set off every week-night from late July to late August (except the Obon period on August 13-15) for both guests and locals to enjoy. Make sure to catch the dazzling reflections off the river when the colorful rockets shoot up into the air.

# Kinosaki Onsen



WINTER

During winter, the entire town turns into a snowy mountain village covered in a blanket of white. A visit to an outdoor bath during this time is magical as the cool, crisp air makes lounging in the warm waters all the more satisfying. Don't forget to fill up on Matsuba crab, a specialty that hits peak season during winter.



## Matsuba Crab

Matsuba crab is the flesh of male snow crabs caught off the shores of the Sea of Japan and is a popular winter specialty. Winter is peak season, when visitors come to the area from far and wide just to get a taste of this special crab. Matsuba crab can be served in a variety of ways, including *sashimi*, grilled, *shabu-shabu* style, and also in a hearty *nabe* hot pot.

If you'd like to get a taste of this delicacy, you'll find that numerous restaurants and *ryokan* in the area serve and sell crab from early November until March.

# Cuisine



## Tajima Beef

Known for its exceptional quality of marbling and superior taste, Tajima beef is a particular kind of meat that originates in Tajima, otherwise known as the northern part of Hyogo prefecture. In fact, almost all black cattle in Japan, including revered brands like Kobe beef, have their roots in this area, as Tajima beef of superior quality is exported around Japan. Tajima beef can be found

year-round and is one of the two delicacies you'll find in Kinosaki Onsen and Toyooka, served and sold at restaurants and food shops around town. It is often served as steak, roast beef on top of rice, *shabu-shabu* style in a simmering broth or *yakiniku*-style, in which various cuts are grilled at the dining table.

# Izushi Sara Soba

Izushi sara soba is a specialty item in Izushi, where almost 50 restaurants serve these delicious buckwheat noodles. So what makes Izushi soba different from other types of *soba*? The difference is in the way it's served. Izushi soba is arranged in small portions on small plates (generally five per order), a style that's unique to this area. Part of the reason for this is to showcase Izushi porcelain ware, characterized by its silken texture and uniform white color. Izushi Sara Soba is eaten with chilled Japanese soup stock called *dashi*. *Daikon* (radish), *negi* (Welsh onion), *wasabi* (Japanese horseradish), *tororo* (grated mountain yam), and a raw egg can be added to the *dashi* to taste.

When the noodles are done, a container filled with warm water which was used to boil the *soba* is served, and when poured into the dipping broth, makes for a delicious soup and a perfect end to the meal.



# Stork Natural Rice

Toyooka is the producer of a tasty rice known as “Stork Natural Rice”. In order to reintroduce the storks, which had once become extinct, back into the wild, the city changed its agriculture methods to an eco-friendly farming structure. As a result, you can now purchase this pesticide-free rice as a souvenir, which is good for the environment, your health, and also supports local efforts to reintroduce this endangered species back into the eco-system.





Tradition



# Best *Onsen* Town



Wellness





Culture



Cuisine





## 01 Genbudo Park

🕒 20 minute rental bike ride from Kinosaki Onsen

This natural monument within the San'in Kaigan UNESCO Global Geopark was formed nearly 1.6 million years ago by volcanic activity in the area. The park contains five caves, which feature unique hexagonal columns of basalt rock. It used to be a quarry and the basalt rocks were used for various purposes, including river bank protection in Kinosaki Onsen. In 1931, the Genbudo Cave became a National Natural Monument, making it one of the most popular sightseeing spots in the area to this day.

## 02 Hyogo Park of the Oriental White Stork

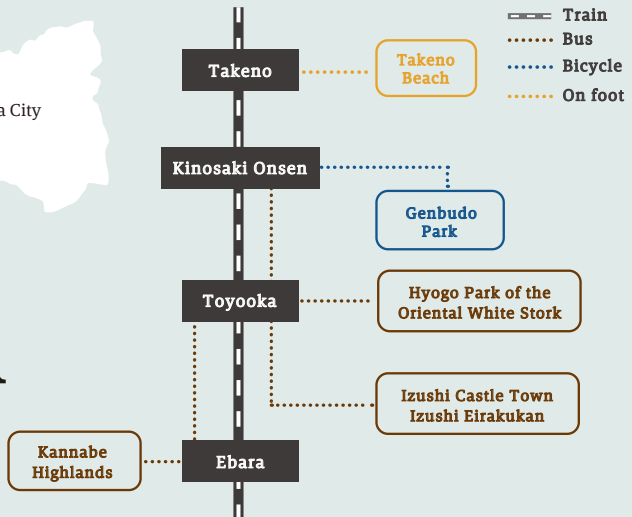
🕒 10 minute train ride from Kinosaki Onsen + 15 minute bus ride

The *kounotori*, better known as the oriental white stork, is an endangered species and has been designated a special natural treasure. Visitors hoping to catch a glimpse of these impressive large birds can visit the Hyogo Park of the Oriental White Stork, the nature preserve where the stork was saved from extinction. Here you can learn about the incredible story that brought the storks back into the wild and changed the local agriculture to an eco-friendly farming structure. Keep an eye out on the rice fields and open areas around Toyooka too, as you might be lucky enough to spot a stork feeding in the fields or flying through the sky.



IN  
THE  
AREA

Toyooka City







## 03 Izushi Castle Town

🕒 50 minute bus ride from Kinokasa Onsen

Take a step back in time and walk through the ancient streets of Izushi Castle Town, an area steeped in tradition and history. The layout of the streets has remained unchanged for around 400 years and the town still exudes a quaint, calm atmosphere with many historical landmarks such as a *samurai* house and one of the oldest clock towers in Japan. Izushi is also home to the last craftsman of traditional willow crafting, as well as a traditional *sake* brewery active for 14 generations.

## 04 Izushi Eirakukan

🕒 50 minute bus ride from Kinokasa Onsen

Built in 1901, Izushi Eirakukan is the oldest *kabuki* theater in the Kansai region. Its guests used to enjoy plays and later on movies, until the theater closed in 1964. However, Izushi Eirakukan has been wonderfully preserved over the years and it was fully restored in 2008. Nowadays visitors can tour the historic building and see the behind-the-scenes areas, including the mechanism of the revolving stage. Today the theater is mainly used for local community events as well as an annual *kabuki* performance with nationally renowned actors.



## 05 Takeno Beach

🕒 10 minute train ride from Kinokasa Onsen +  
15 minutes on foot

A hidden gem along the northern coast of Hyogo Prefecture. This beautiful beach is among the best and ranked in the top 100 beaches of Japan. Its crystal-clear waters stretch along clean, soft, sandy beaches. Takeno is a quiet fishing town with beautiful nature, friendly residents and traditional houses. The town features great hiking spots with views of the ocean and the entire town, as well as canoeing and swimming in the summer.

## 06 Kannabe Highlands

🕒 20 minute train ride from Kinokasa Onsen +  
25 minute bus ride

The Kannabe Highlands are a popular destination for outdoor activities such as trekking, mountain biking, grass skiing, paragliding, and hiking. The Kannabe Highlands are also known for three major ski resorts that are ideal for skiers and snowboarders of all levels. Other winter activities include guided snowshoeing courses, banana boat snow rafting, and sledding down the hills.

Kinosaki Onsen is considered to be one big *ryokan*, where the station is the entrance, the streets are the hallways, the various *ryokan* the guest rooms, and the *onsen* the bathrooms.



## Visit Kinosaki Homepage



English <http://visitkinosaki.com>



## Visit Kinosaki Facebook



<https://www.facebook.com/visitkinosaki>



## Visit Kinosaki Instagram



<https://www.instagram.com/visitkinosaki>



Kinosaki Onsen is located roughly a two and a half hour train ride from Kyoto or Osaka. A JR Pass can be used to reach Kinosaki Onsen, and you can also get here via highway bus from Kyoto, Osaka or Kobe.

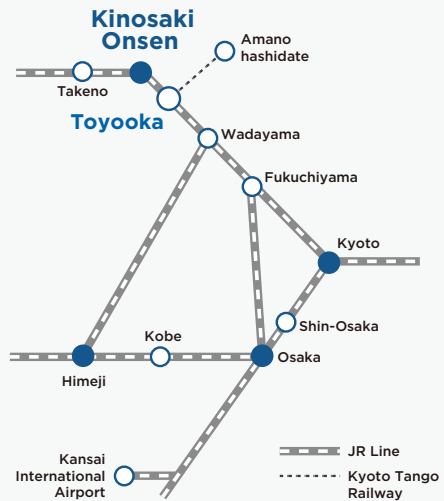
## Access to Kinosaki Onsen

From Kyoto Limited Express train: 2h30min  
Zentan Express bus: 3h35min

From Osaka Limited Express train: 2h40min  
Zentan Express bus: 3h

From Kobe Limited Express train: 2h30min  
Zentan Express bus: 3h

From Himeji Limited Express train: 1h40min



## Information

Tourism Division, Toyooka City  
2-4 Chuo-machi, Toyooka City, Hyogo, 668-8666, JAPAN  
Tel: +81-796-21-9069 Email: [travel@city.toyooka.lg.jp](mailto:travel@city.toyooka.lg.jp)  
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Visit Kinosaki

Onsen town 2.5 hours from Kyoto