

Despite the chilly weather blanketing the country, Japan is open with destinations at the ready to welcome back eager tourists to bustling city sights and rural gems alike.

While the cozy hot spring town of Kinosaki Onsen has traditional inn owners and restaurant staff buzzing with preparations for the late winter guests, <u>Visit Kinosaki</u>, the local destination management organization, has recently begun the sale of a convenient new sightseeing pass for money-minded visitors.

# Leave the Planning to Us

The <u>Kinosaki Must-Visits Pass</u> is a one-way pass to the ultimate hot spring town experience. A catch-all for the best of Kinosaki Onsen, the Kinosaki Must-Visits Pass is available for purchase online on visitkinosaki.com and klook.com and can also be bought in-person at <u>SOZORO</u> Tourist Information Center near Kinosaki Onsen Station.

Carefully curated with Kinosaki Onsen's most popular activities at the forefront, the Kinosaki Must-Visits Pass is an insider go-to for all of Kinosaki's must-see attractions and shops. Pass holders receive a roundtrip ticket on the



Kinosaki Onsen Ropeway up to <u>Onsenji Temple</u> (the guardian Buddhist temple of Kinosaki Onsen) with admission to temple grounds and the adjacent <u>Kinosaki Museum of Art</u>. At Kamiya Mingei (Kinosaki's straw craft workshop) in the town center, guests take a craft break and learn the artform of *mugiwara zaiku* (straw craft), a traditional Japanese craft that is only found and experienced in Kinosaki Onsen.

# Mugiwara Zaiku – Kinosaki Onsen's Traditional Artform



Straw craft, called "*mugiwara zaiku*" in Japanese, is a unique, traditional handicraft with vibrant colors and intricate patterns that, in all of Japan, is only produced in Kinosaki Onsen. Approximately 300 years ago a traveling craftsman named Hanhichi came to stay in Kinosaki Onsen. To make money to

pay for his lodging expenses, Hanhichi sold bamboo flutes

and spinning tops decorated with colored straw. After this, the straw craft was also used to decorate chests, boxes, and wooden prayer plaques. Kinosaki Onsen is proud to be the only place in Japan which continues the traditional production of straw craft, and Kinosaki Must-Visits Pass holders can try their hand at making their own straw craft bookmark in a workshop activity.





#### **Pass-Exclusive Shopping Deals**

Special gifts and discounts are also on the menu for Kinosaki Must-Visits Pass holders when the Pass is shown to shop staff at certain local businesses.

Those who stop by <u>Kinosaki Gelato Cafe Chaya</u> and purchase 500 JPY worth of goods will also be gifted with a free *onsen tamago* boiling experience. *Onsen tamago*, known as "hot spring eggs" in English, are eggs boiled in natural hot spring

water and a must-try during any visit to a hot spring town in Japan.

At <u>Chanoyu</u>, hot spring hoppers strolling past this quaint teashop can pop in for a free cup of tea by simply showing their Must-Visits Pass.



# Kinosaki Onsen + Japan Railways

Kinosaki Onsen is excited to announce its partnership with Japan Railways. Who doesn't love a bundle? <u>The Kinosaki Must-Visits Pass purchased through klook.com</u> can now be packaged together with a five-day JR Kansai WIDE Area Pass, providing access to Japan's western far-flung treasures. After a night or two in one of Kinosaki Onsen's classy and tranquil inns, travelers are encouraged to use the far-reaching benefits of the JR Kansai WIDE Area Pass to the fullest.

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## KINOSAKI ONSEN: A COZY HOT SPRING TOWN FOR THE MOST AUTHENTIC JAPANESE EXPERIENCE



<u>Toyooka</u> 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 over 250 fly the skies of Japan. Toyooka is also known for the Genbudo Caves.



<u>Kannabe</u> 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.



<u>**Tanto</u>** 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.</u>







<u>Kinosaki Onsen</u> 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.



<u>Izushi</u> 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.



<u>Takeno</u> 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.

