

KUSATSU
ONSEN

草津温泉

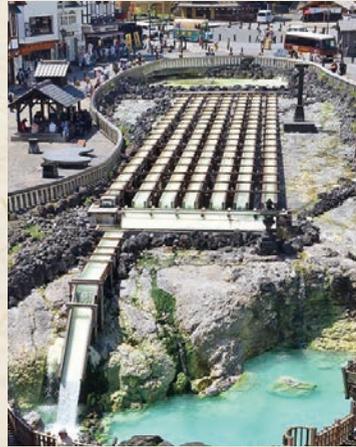
in JAPAN



Kusatsu Onsen's symbol- Yubatake

Overwhelming in scale, this is the Onsen mineral farm, Yubatake

Located at the heart of Kusatsu Onsen, mineral farm is the symbol of Kusatsu and the most popular tourist spot in the area. Workings of dozens of aqueducts carry out the hot water while cooling it to as many ryokan (traditional inns). Yubatake is surrounded by ryokan, hotels, restaurants and souvenir shops for tourists' delight.



Okumiage-no-yuwaku:

A square wooden frame sunk in the center of the Yubatake springs (Local important cultural property) This marks the site from where the three Tokugawa shoguns (Ieyasu, Yoshimune and Iyemasa) had Kusatsu Onsen water loaded into barrels and transported to Edo Castle so that they could bathe in it, according to written documents.

A one-of-a-kind Onsen visited by many shogun

It is a famous historical fact that Edo shoguns like Ieyasu (1st), Yoshimune (8th) and Iyemasa (10th) had the hot water transported to Edo so that they could enjoy bathing in Kusatsu Onsen water. Many other lords, warlords and writers also visited Kusatsu Onsen. Yubatake seems to have started around 1850 when barrels were installed to collect Yu-no-hana (mineral deposits). Its name comes from Yu-no-hana and 'hatake' (farm), which combined make Yubatake.

National designated cultural property "Scenic Yubatake"

"On October 13, 2017, this landscape was recognized as a ""Scenic Spot"" by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology." A natural hot spring located at the center of the city is an unfamiliar sight in Japan, but it is proof of how the area developed around the Onsen gradually attracting people from all over the country, and the town's unique landscape and the hot spring culture were generated. The unique ambience created by the hot steam flowing over the rocky edges from the wooden pipes has been recognized as a symbol of the distinctive Kusatsu Onsen culture. Also, in Sep 2017, won the prize in Asia Townscape Award hosted by UN.

Our pursuit to provide an authentic Onsen experience

"Water quality first"

At Kusatsu Onsen, we maintain exceptional water quality. We provide fresh hot water from the source, made possible by the large natural spring volume. Our hot water is highly acidic, with excellent therapeutic properties. We are proud to be one of the oldest and among the top 3 best-known Onsen in Japan. We offer the ultimate Onsen experience.

Kusatsu Onsen is

- Number one in Japan for natural spring volume
- Natural hot spring fresh from the source.
- Hot spring with highly sterilizing properties.



Yu-momi and Jikan-yu

Jikan-yu is a traditional bathing method in Kusatsu inherited from the Edo period

What is Yu-momi?

At their source, Kusatsu Onsen waters are extremely hot, reaching 50°C in temperature and making it impossible to bathe in as is. However, simply adding cold water to lower the temperature would also affect the quality of the Onsen. So back in the old days, people devised a way to bring down the source temperature by using long wooden planks (180cm) to stir the hot water. Other benefits of 'Yu-momi' are giving the hot water a smoother quality and exercising slightly before taking a bath. Currently, you can watch Yu-momi in Netsunoyu as show.

What is Jikan-yu?

By the end of the Edo era (1860s), people had adopted Yu-momi and other bathing methods such as 'coordinated' bathing, which involved a large number of people all entering and exiting the bath at the same time while trying to create a little movement of the hot water as possible. In the Meiji era (from 1870s), a new bathing method called Jikan-yu (timed bathing) was adopted, by which people entered and exited the bath at times marked by the command of an Onsen Master. Jikan-yu begins with Yu-momi before entering the bath and also requires pouring hot water over your head over 30 times with a small water pail to prevent hot flashes. At the command of the Onsen Master, everyone enters the bath together and soaks in for 3 minutes. Then everyone exits the hot water at the exit command. This is repeated four times a day. Currently, you can watch Jikan-yu in "Chiyonoyu."



Go here for more information on the Netsu-no-Yu bath. →

Select a language from Japanese website.

Yu-momi experience

At the Netsu-no-Yu bath, you can see a show featuring the traditional Yu-momi and Yu-momi songs. You can also participate in Yu-momi yourself.

Shows

- 9:30, 10:00 and 10:30 am
- 3:30, 4:00 and 4:30 pm (6 shows per day)

Fees

600 yen/adult; 300 yen/child under 12
(People with disabilities and one attendant get a 50% discount upon presenting a Disability Certificate)



Four seasons at Kusatsu Onsen

Spring

Spring is the best time to see rhododendrons, the official town flower, and Japanese azaleas. Fresh green vegetation and colorful flowers stand out against the still snow-capped mountain peaks.



Summer

A cool breeze blows over the plateau at Kusatsu. The annual average temperature at Kusatsu Onsen is 7°C and 17.5°C in mid-summer (July through August) when temperatures rarely rise above 30°C. Summer is perfect for hiking and other outdoor activities.



Fall

Fall at Kusatsu is a tapestry of crimson and yellow. The contrast of vivid colors against the clear autumn sky creates a dazzling natural beauty that can heal the mind and body.



Winter

Completely covered in snow, Kusatsu becomes a monotone world in winter. With its frost-covered trees shimmering in the sunlight, winter nature offers its own delights to enjoy. For families, Kusatsu Onsen Ski Resort offers a fun Kids' Park.



Recommended tours

Yubatake & Sainokawara Walk
Time required: 1 day

① Kousenji Temple Time required: 20 min.

The tour begins with a visit to Kousenji Temple

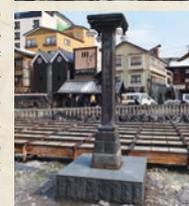
The Yakushi-Nyorai is the medicine and ailments Buddha ascetic enshrined in Onsen areas and it was believed that everyone can be pacified when entering an Onsen bath and pray. This belief continued until mid-Meiji era (1889-1904). The old Yakushi-do Temple used to stand where Kousenji Temple stands today. The Shaka-do (Buddha Temple) found on the grounds of Kousenji Temple is the oldest building in Kusatsu.



② Yubatake (Mineral deposit farm) Time required: 1-2 hours

The tour circles around Yubatake

See the Okumiage-no-yuwaku wooden frame and the stone that marks the place where Yoshimune, the 8th shogun, is said to have bathed. Also enjoy shopping and tasting various local foods at Kusatsu's many ryokan, hotels, restaurants or souvenir shops located around Yubatake. The tour includes two footbaths and the best location for taking pictures of Yudaki (Onsen waterfall). One hour will certainly feel too short for this tour offering everything from natural landscapes and shops, to culture, footbaths, and Yu-momi shows. At night, Yubatake is otherworldly. 365 days a year, from sunset to midnight, Yubatake lights up just for you. Don't miss Yubatake at night!



Memorial stone marking the place where shogun Yoshimune bathed



Yudaki (Onsen waterfall)

③ Sainokawara Street Time required: 1-2 hours

A walk along Sainokawara St.

This is the main street of Kusatsu, with lots of traditional Japanese sweets shops, souvenir stores and restaurants. Simply walking down the street does not take more than 10 minutes. However, if you try a bite of this and that, enjoy the scenery and have a look inside a few stores or have a leisurely lunch, one hour might not be enough.



④ Sainokawara Park Time required: 30 min.

A walk through Sainokawara Park

Located west of Kusatsu Onsen, the park covers an area where hot springs spring out virtually from every corner. The hot steam rising from each of these springs forms the so-called Yu-kawa, or Onsen Steam River. Tradition says that demons live here and the place was feared as the Demons' Springs because of the view, so when you are here, you are not supposed to shout or scream, as that would attract the demons. Place names such as Demon's Teapot and Demons' Sumo Ring are today's reminders of the old tales. 365 days a year, from sunset to 24:00, Sainokawara Park is brightened up by beautiful lights. Sainokawara Park is a must see at night.



Demons' Sumo Ring



Sainokawara Park light-up



Anamori Inari Shrine

⑤ Sainokawara Outdoor Bath Time required: 30 min.- 1 hour

Relax at Sainokawara Outdoor Bath

The men's and women's baths together occupy an area of 500m², which makes this outdoor bath one of the biggest in Japan. Relax soaking in big bathtubs filled with hot water, surrounded by the forest, and forget all daily worries and stress. Feel the cool plateau breeze touching your skin. Enjoy the beauty of scenery that changes with every season- the fresh green of early summer, the crimson of fall or white of winter snow. Soaking in an outdoor bath at night is a unique experience too.



Sainokawara Outdoor Bath at night
Enjoy the view of the mountain behind Sainokawara Park (Mt. Maruyama) lit up at night from this outdoor bath.

Select a language from Japanese website.

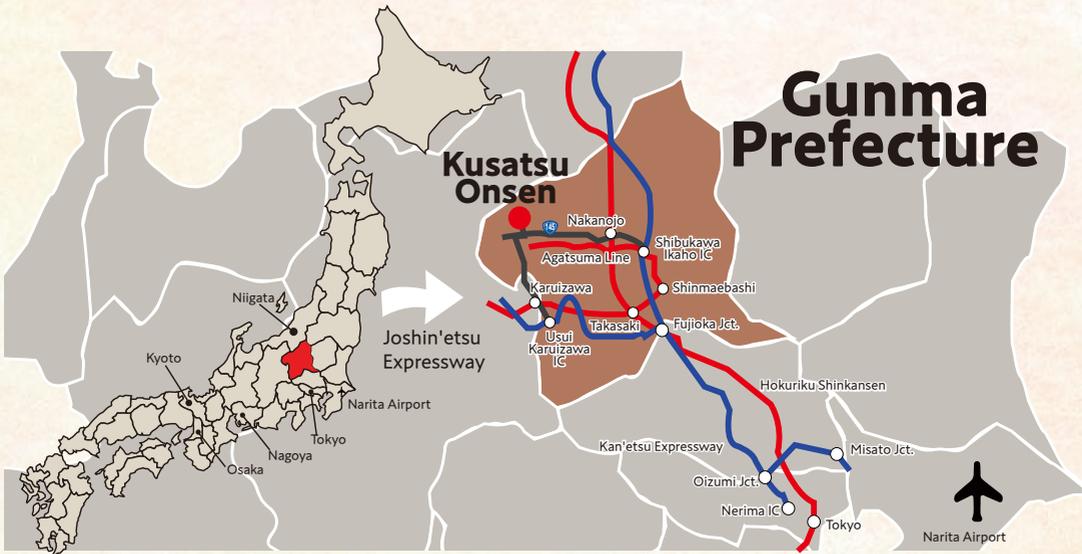


The Yubatake & Sainokawara Walk tours are here



For information on other recommended tours, go here

Information



Expressway ——— **Train** ——— **General road** ———

Kusatsu Limited express + JR bus

* Limited express charges for reserved seats vary by season



Limited express Kusatsu About 2h 33 min. * Non-reserved normal car seat 4,750 yen

JR bus 25 min. 700 yen * Reserved normal car seat 5,270 yen *

Shinkansen + Kusakuru Kotsu or Seibu Kanko buses



Hokuriku Shinkansen About 1h 10 min. * Non-reserved normal car seat 5,390 yen

Reserved normal car seat 5,910 yen *

Kusakuru Kotsu or 1h 18 min. - 1h 55 min.

Seibu Kanko buses * Kusakuru Kotsu bus 2,200 yen
* Seibu Kanko bus (3,880 yen in summer and 2,200 in winter)

Express bus



Kusatsu Onsen Non-stop

About 4h 7 min.

* Regular fare 3,450 yen *

* The fare may vary during busy seasons



Via Karuizawa

About 4h 40 min.

* One-way fare 3,500 yen

* Tokyo Bus



For sightseeing and traffic information, see here

The bus timetable is here

Kusatsu-machi Town Office Tourism Division

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Contact for inquiries about sightseeing

Kusatsu Onsen Tourism Association TEL +81-279-88-0800 E-mail you-love@kusatsu-onsen.ne.jp

Contact Cooperative Kusatsu Onsen Ryokan for inquiries about accommodations

Kusatsu Onsen Hotel Association TEL +81-279-88-3722