

A Timeless Hot Spring —
1,300 Years of Peace and Relaxation, for Samurai,
Peasant and Weary Traveler Alike.

Asama Hot Spring

In Matsumoto, Central Japan



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浅間温泉

Right in the heart of Japan at the foot of the beautiful Japan Alps lies the ever popular castle town of Matsumoto. Featuring its famed 17th century castle it also hides another treasure, the hot spring resort of Asama Onsen.

Next ➞



Onsens, natural hot spring baths known well for their therapeutic properties, form an integral part of the Japanese experience, dear to hearts of all Japanese. For over 1,300 years Matsumoto has been blessed by nature's healing spring waters, flowing from the earth in its northeastern foot hills.

This resort was made even more popular in the 17th century by a Samurai Lord who whilst building Matsumoto's famous castle, also concerned himself with constructions of peace and comfort and constructed a bathhouse.

You can still feel that history in the impeccable hospitality of a traditional Japanese hotel and as Samurai once did, savor soaking in its hot, mineral rich waters in each of Japan's four vividly distinct seasons.

On long **summer** evenings, bathe and listen, as the chorus of cicadas fades to be replaced with a throng of frogs in the surrounding paddy fields, as the sun sinks behind the alps.

Or on an **autumn** night, bathe away the body's aches in the healing soothing pools, surrounded by a collage, of red and golden leaves, on the trees, on the ground, and perhaps on the water, floating around.

Be cleansed, in the magic of **winter**, sitting in the steaming water with snow on the rocks at the pools edge, a white carpet of purity all around.

Or perhaps on a crisp Japanese **spring** morning, amidst the graceful glory of cherry blossoms blooming across the valley, be renewed once again as you, with nature in the hot spring water take a deep breath as a new cycle of life begins.

Asama Hot Spring



History

Asama Onsen has a very long history that dates back 1,300-odd years or more.

Also nearby Asama Onsen, lies an ancient tomb that is believed to have belonged to one of a group of immigrants from present day Korea, who are believed to have settled in this area as early as the 5th Century. A gold-coated copper crown was found in this tomb.

In the Edo period (1603-1867), the then feudal lord while constructing Matsumoto Castle also made a bathhouse for himself. Part of it still remains today as a bathing facility.

Many nearby samurai lords also built themselves cottages in this area. As such, this district was considered as a place of retreat for Matsumoto.

After the Edo Period, the area became known as a favorite destination for many famous novelists, poets and artists.





The 7 sources of the onsen (hot spring) water have continuously flowed from the earth for over a thousand years at a temperature of about 50°C. The volume of the water flowing from the onsen is second or third most abundant amongst the onsens of Nagano Prefecture.

Onsen Bathing in the hot spring waters of Asama has been known to improve neuralgia, muscle pain, joint aches, stiff shoulders, motion paralysis, bruises, digestive disorders, poor circulation, recovery from sickness, tiredness, and to improve overall health and well-being.

Therapeutic Attributes / Benefits

Day-trip bathing facility “Hot Plaza”

Hot Plaza offers both large indoor and outdoor bathing areas, a sauna, a cold-water bath and also a large 115m² lounge area where visitors can relax.

- ◆ Fees: **Adults ¥630 Children ¥350**
- ◆ Opening hours: **10:00 – 24:00** (Last entry: until 23:00)
- ◆ Closed: **Tuesdays** (or Wednesdays if Tuesdays are national holidays)
- ◆ An *ashiyu* (foot spa) is also freely available to all in front of the entrance of the building.



Hiking

In Asama Onsen, there is a hiking route of approximately 30 mins each way. This hiking route features a number of historical sites you can view as you bathe in the scent of the woods along the way. The route makes its way up to an observation point at which visitors can enjoy a great view of the Japan Alps and the Matsumoto Basin.





Sightseeing spots around Asama Onsen

Matsumoto Castle MAP 1

Matsumoto castle is amongst the oldest of a few remaining original castles in Japan having been built about 400 years ago during the Sengoku Period (Warring States Period). In April, 300 *sakura* (cherry blossom) trees bloom at their peak, whilst snow covered mountains stand proudly across the valley as a backdrop. At night as the blooms of the *sakura* are lit up and in the light of the moon above, visitors can participate in the experience of a traditional Japanese tea ceremony as Japanese traditional music played from the castle's moon viewing room resonates into the night.



Utsukushigahara Highlands MAP 2

The name means “the beautiful plain”, and is a highland on the eastern side of Asama Onsen, at an altitude of 2,000 m above sea level. Visitors can access an area very close to its highest point by car or bus. Its 360° panoramic scenery enables visitors to see Mt. Fuji when the weather is fine.

The highland with is home to a rich variety of Alpine plants, amongst which red Japanese azaleas famous as they bloom from late June to early July.

Also famously Cows roam a highland farm area there where their fresh milk and butter can be enjoyed too along with a large open-air art museum with works from both Japanese artists and around the world.

Kamikochi MAP 3

Kamikochi, visited by 2 million tourists and Alpine enthusiasts every year is a place well noted for its stunning scenic beauty. Lately, it has also been gaining in popularity amongst nature loving visitors from around the world. In order to protect and maintain this environment of pristine beauty the entire area is off limits to private vehicles. From a well-paved walkway, visitors can experience first hand the Japan Alps capped with snow throughout the year reaching up to the sky and heights of over 3,000 m. A beautiful collage of golden autumn leaves are seen from mid to late October, as the trees colors change.



Norikura Highlands MAP 4

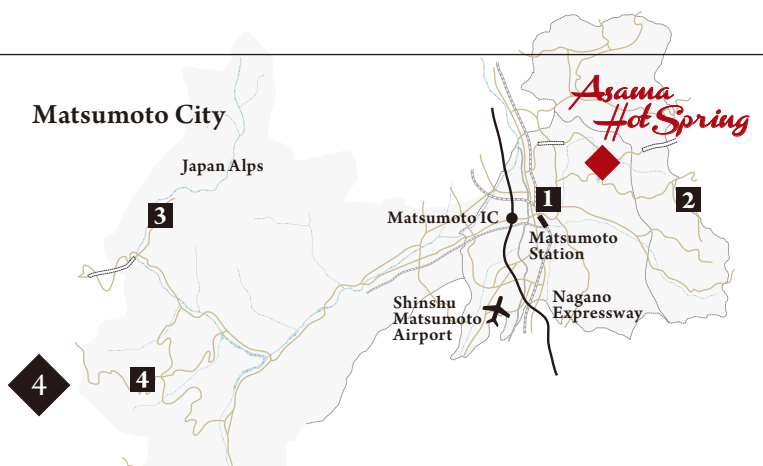
This is a highland area spreading out at the foot of 3,026 m high Mt. Norikura. There runs the highest altitude road in Japan, whereby visitors can reach as high as 2,702 m above sea level by bus. There is also a year around snow blanketed valley where people can enjoy summertime skiing and playing in snow until mid August, and from mid May to mid June people can take a walk between snow walls which tower up to heights of 5 to 10 m on either side.

The famed October foliage ablaze in autumn color follows the beauty of the flowers and lush rich greenery of spring and summer.

These after the crisp winter, when visitors can indulge in skiing, for which Norikura is a popular tourist destination throughout the year. Featuring its hot springs with their milky colored onsen water bubbling from the earth, this area is ideal for families.

Other Sightseeing Spots

- ◆ Wasabi Farm
- ◆ Japan Ukiyo-e Museum
- ◆ Matsumoto Museum of Art
- ◆ Nakamachi and Nawate Dori Streets
- ◆ Apple Orchard (apple picking), Winery (grape picking)



Access



Narita Airport (Tokyo) — Narita Express 1 hr 20 min — Shinjuku — Azusa (Limited Express) 2 hr 30 min – 3 hr — **Matsumoto**

Central Japan Airport — Meitetsu 30 min — Nagoya — Shinano (Limited Express) 2 hr — **Matsumoto**

Kansai Airport — Haruka (Limited Express) 50 min — Shin-Osaka — Tokaido Shinkansen 50 min — Nagoya

Matsumoto — Bus or Taxi 25 min or 15 min — **Asama Hot Spring**



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