**Kinosaki Onsen: The *Soto-Yu***

Enjoying the various *onsen* (hot springs) around Kinosaki is about more than simply taking a bath. The *soto-yu* (public bathhouses) are deeply ingrained in the town’s daily life as local inhabitants tend to use them frequently, and are one of the main reasons to visit this *onsen* town. The waters are said to help relieve symptoms such as muscle pain, poor digestion, and fatigue. The best way to experience Kinosaki Onsen is to relax in a traditional *yukata* (casual kimono) and *geta* (Japanese wooden clogs) while o*nsen*-hopping your way through the town’s seven public hot springs (*soto-yu*). Another charming ambience of the town is the clatter of wooden clogs as people (visitors and locals alike) make their way around the streets.

Since Kinosaki’s public bath water may be too hot (around 42°C) for some people, it is wise to stay in the hot water for just a short period (up to five minutes) at each public *onsen* rather than spending a longer time at a single venue. That way you can experience each bathhouse and its unique features.

If you are staying at one of the local *ryokan*, the accommodation will provide you with *yukata* and *geta* to wear around town. Each inn will also offer an *onsen* pass that you can use to try out each *soto-yu*. While strolling the streets between dips, a variety of street snacks will enhance the experience. Day-trippers may also enter any of the *soto-yu* or purchase a day pass to try all seven. Many of the bathhouses open as early as 7 a.m. and stay open until 11 p.m.