

History of Oku-Nikko (1868–Present)

The dramatic landscape and mild summer climate of Oku-Nikko began to attract foreign residents and travelers in Japan during the Meiji period (1868–1912). Ernest Satow (1843–1929), a British diplomat, traveled to Lake Chuzenji from Yokohama in spring 1872. He praised the lake, describing it as picturesque, and was charmed by the region. He constructed a villa in Nikko, and in 1875 wrote *A Guide Book to Nikko*, the first English-language guide in Japan. British writer and traveler Isabella Bird (1831–1904) was greatly interested in the Yumoto Onsen area, a hot spring district in Oku-Nikko, and included it in her travel chronicles. Thomas Glover (1838–1911), a prominent Scottish businessman in Japan at the time, released river trout from North America into the Yugawa River, and later helped build Oku-Nikko's reputation for fly fishing. The area flourished during this time and saw the development of many foreign embassy villas. The beautiful landscape and many outdoor activities including hiking, watersports, and skiing, continues to attract many visitors to Oku-Nikko.