

Just a five-minute drive from the hot spring town of Kusatsu Onsen, this ski resort's powder snow and fun family activities have attracted visitors since 1935. From challenging hills with steep gradients to gentle runs perfect for beginners—and plenty in between—there's something for every skill level. The 2018–2019 season features the addition of a new forest trail, R292, which makes use of a roughly two-kilometer stretch of road that is closed to vehicular traffic during the winter.

Always evolving, the resort now offers snowshoeing, with two pleasant forested trails to choose from. For families, the Family Slope and Kids' Park offers skiing, sledding, slides, and bouncy castles, perfect for children.

One of the winter highlights is the Kusatsu Onsen Fuyu Hanabi fireworks show, held on the first Saturday of March (postponed in case of inclement weather). Over 1,000 fireworks light up the sky and the slopes. Coinciding with night-skiing events, fireworks aficionados can enjoy the Tenguyama Slope with fireworks bursting overhead.

2018–2019 season: December 15th to March 31st

Story of Kusatsu Onsen

The hot spring area of Kusatsu Onsen sits on a plateau 1,200 meters above sea level, with the mountains in the west of the region reaching elevations of more than 2,000 meters. Considered one of the top three hot spring resorts in Japan, the city is famed for its *yumomi* bathing culture that grew around a rather unusual way of cooling its piping hot water, and for the large volume of water that springs from its grounds—the highest in Japan at approximately 32,300 liters per minute.

For hundreds of years, a steady stream of bathers has made the journey to Kusatsu to soak in the acidic, sulfur-infused *onsen*. The water's antibacterial properties are said to cure every ailment outside of a broken heart! The healing waters were even transported cross-country to alleviate the afflictions of shogun samurai lords.

In the words of a local folk song, “*Kusatsu yoi toko; Ichido wa oide*,” “Come visit Kusatsu once in your life; you are in for a treat.”

History of Kusatsu Onsen Ski Resort

With ample amounts of powdery snow, and gentle winter temperatures, Kusatsu is the ideal location for a ski resort. In fact, Kusatsu was one of the pioneers in introducing skiing to Japan. Just two years after skiing was brought to Japan by Austro-Hungarian soldier Major Theodor Edler von Lerch (1869–1945) in 1911, the sport crossed the mountains from Niigata Prefecture to Kusatsu, where it quickly took off. In 1914, just one year after the first skiers took to the area's slopes, the town's first ski resort opened. That same year, Kusatsu's skiing club—the second one in Japan at the time—was established.

In 1935, Kusatsu Onsen Ski Resort—then called Rinkan Ski Resort and consisting of the Tenguyama Slope that still exists to this day—opened its pistes to the public. Since then, it has been home to a number of “firsts” in the development of skiing in Japan. Kusatsu was the first ski resort in Japan to open a chair lift in 1948 and also first resort to operate a ski school. It even hosted Japan's first ever ski tournament.

Along the way, Kusatsu Onsen Ski Resort has continued to add to its historic lineup, opening new trails, chairlifts, and activities. The latest addition is the R292 Trail, which was opened during the 2018–2019 season.

Skiing the hills of Kusatsu makes you part of the history of the sport in Japan. Visitors will carve up the same slopes as some of the first Japanese skiers did over one hundred years ago.

Kusatsu Quality

During the winter months, Kusatsu is blessed with fresh snowfall multiple times per week. The regular availability of fresh snow is just one of the joys of skiing and snowboarding in Kusatsu.

But beyond great snow, ski resorts also need to preserve the surrounding natural environment and wildlife habitats. Kusatsu Onsen Ski Resort is part of the Mt.6 (Mount Six) group of mountain resorts. Since 1999, this group has strived to preserve the culture of classic ski resorts while providing top-notch service to patrons, both on the slopes and in the nearby natural hot springs.

Fun for the Whole Family

Besides skiing and snowboarding down the slopes, Kusatsu Onsen Ski Resort offers many options to enjoy the snow and scenery. With a huge range of winter sports and activities, visitors of all ages and abilities are sure to leave with smiles on their faces. In addition to skiing and snowboarding, Kusatsu Onsen Ski Resort also offers snowshoeing, and for younger children, a sledding hill and an outdoor play park. Indoors, families ready for a break will find a playroom, as well as a supervised day-care center where parents can entrust their young children and enjoy some time alone on the slopes.

A Year-Round Resort

While most famous for its powder and soothing hot water, Kusatsu Onsen Ski Resort is not just a winter destination. During the green season, the resort is a paradise for outdoor enthusiasts. Kusatsu's natural scenery and the relatively cool summer climate make exploring the hiking routes and seasonal highland scenery a pleasure. Activities like grass skiing, mountain boarding, putter golf, and tennis are also popular.

In spring and summer, the hills are brightened by alpine flowers, while in autumn the mountainside is ablaze with autumn leaves. Breathe in the clean forest air, whether on the slopes and snowshoe trails in winter or hiking the hills during the green season.

Food and Drink

Nothing works up an appetite quite like fresh mountain air, and Kusatsu Onsen Ski Resort has plenty of options to satisfy the keenest skier. Located at the base of the main Tenguyama Slope you will find Tenguyama Main Restaurant, Tengu Cafe, and Tenguyama Lodge. Hungry skiers can choose from a wide variety of Japanese and international dishes, including ramen noodles and *katsudon* pork cutlet rice bowls, as well as favorites like pizza, beef stew, loco moco, and more. A Special Kids' Plate, complete with a drink and dessert, is available for younger guests. Be sure to try *maitake*, a type of mushroom considered a local delicacy!

Skiers craving a snack on the slopes can find high-altitude sustenance at Tenguyama Tenbo Cafe (coffee and light meals), Onari Lodge (hot drinks and snacks), and Aobayama Restaurant (homemade Chinese cuisine).

Relaxing Onsen Hot Spring

After a day on the slopes, soothe your muscles with a long soak in the local *onsen*. Kusatsu Onsen is considered one of the top three hot spring regions in the country, and is home to an extraordinary number of public baths and outdoor *rotenburo* baths, the vast majority of which accommodate

international visitors with body art. So do not be shy—ease your tired bones and aching muscles into an *onsen* and emerge from the restorative waters refreshed and ready to tackle the slopes again.