

Torrents of milky blue waters descend from the volcanic peaks of Mount Shirane and burst into Kusatsu Onsen's Yubatake *onsen* fields, creating clouds of steam that cover the town in a misty haze. This boiling water is then tamed by a centuries-old system of stirring the waters using paddles, in a ceremony called *yumomi*; cooling it just enough for visitors to take a dip and enjoy the therapeutic benefits of the hot springs.

Considered to be one of Japan's three most important *onsen* resorts, Kusatsu boasts so many bathing facilities you'll be spoiled for choice.

For an especially indulgent experience as you bask in nature, explore Sainokawara Rotenburo, a 500-square meter open-air bath surrounded by forest views. Each season offers a different view—snow-capped trees in winter, cherry blossoms in spring, deep green in summer, and vibrant reds, yellows, and orange in autumn.

For a taste of what Kusatsu was like in centuries past, head to Gozanoyu, a beautifully reconstructed bath facility that combines both Edo- and Meiji-period styles. This expansive facility boasts elegant Japanese architecture and views of the softly steaming Yubatake *onsen* fields in the town below.

Otakeinoyu gives bathers a chance to experience the traditional *amase-yu* bathing culture, where several baths are taken in turn, each hotter than the last. In the recently renovated bath, the wooden pillars reach up to the ceiling, resembling tall trees standing in the mist as the hot spring steam wraps around them, giving the feeling of being outdoors.

The hot spring's curative effects are also the stuff of legend. It is said that the waters at Kusatsu Onsen are able to cure any illness but lovesickness. The town's hot springs are also unrivaled in quantity, boasting the largest output of natural hot spring waters in Japan. With over 32,000 liters gushing out per minute, the waters do not need to be diluted or reheated. High in acidity, bacteria and fungi cannot survive in these piping hot waters, giving it an antibacterial effect that has furthered the belief in the hot springs' therapeutic effects over the centuries.

Immerse Yourself in Centuries-Old Bathing Tradition

As one of Japan's three most famous hot spring resorts, Kusatsu boasts a vibrant traditional *onsen* town atmosphere so you can experience centuries of Japanese tradition and culture intertwined with the hot springs.

Between baths, stroll down the town's main street basking in the retro romance as you browse shops laden with local souvenirs, glassware crafts, and more. Drop by one of the many charming confectionary shops to sample tasty *wagasbi* sweets that have been steamed in the therapeutic waters. Enjoy these warm, sweet buns as you stroll the narrow streets around the town, taking in the historic buildings swathed by swirling steam, a sight all the more remarkable when illuminated at night.

To make your visit even more authentic, rent a yukata at Gozanoyu and don it for your outing. A dressing service is available and you do not need to prepare anything yourself! Circle Yubatake and be enveloped in steam as you take in the view of milky blue waters gushing forth through the old pinewood tubs. Free footbaths let you to rest your feet while you enjoy the scenery.

Enjoying Your Visit!

To discover more of the wonders that await you at Kusatsu Onsen, be sure to explore the rest of this website. Here, you'll find countless tips on where to eat, drink, and stay to find the perfect spots for your visit to Japan's original resort town. There are also sightseeing suggestions for areas around the town to make the most of your stay here, and examples of popular souvenirs for that special someone at home. If you want to know more about Japanese bathing customs, there is a step-by-step guide available on the website, as well as plenty of information upon arrival to guarantee you turn into an *onsen* pro.

To make sure you enjoy the baths safely, although the baths have therapeutic effects, it is important to note that your body will sweat more while enjoying them, perhaps more than you may realize. Drink plenty of water between baths to stay hydrated—which you can do with Kusatsu's own natural mineral waters for an extra dose of well-being. Also, the acidity of some of the waters at Kusatsu Onsen is strong enough to cause silver to develop an instant patina, so be sure to remove all your jewelry before you bathe.

Finally, for guests from overseas, rest assured that the vast majority of Kusatsu Onsen inns and bath facilities are welcoming to those with non-gang-related body art. Travelers with tattoos can enjoy the healing hot waters here without any worries, and join the approximately three million annual visitors to this world-class hot spring resort.

We welcome you to Kusatsu Onsen, and we are sure you will be back time and time again!