

Visiting a hot spring, or onsen in Japanese, is the highlight of many people's visit to Hakuba Happo-one, but keep in mind that there are several rules to follow. The first thing foreign travelers may be surprised about is the strict prohibition of people with tattoos entering the water. If your tattoo is small enough to be covered up, you can bring skin-colored, waterproof stickers, but otherwise you won't be permitted entry.

Upon entering the onsen facility, you should take off your shoes before stepping into the changing and bathing area. Before entering the bath, wash yourself thoroughly using the facilities provided. The washing area is usually located inside the bathing area. Please remember that swimwear is not allowed in hot spring facilities.

Avoid jumping into the water, since the tub is not deep enough and it may disturb other visitors. Keep in mind that your towel shouldn't touch the bathing water, or be wrung out into it—it's seen as dirtying the water. Instead, place it on your head or the side of the bath. This is an area for quiet soaking and contemplation, not swimming or splashing about. After you've enjoyed the hot spring water, dry your body carefully before heading back to the changing room, otherwise the floor may get slippery.

It's absolutely prohibited to take photos inside the bathing area, and also please refrain from bringing any alcoholic beverages into the bath. Observe these simple rules and you are in for a rejuvenating soak like no other.