

Mt. Hiyori

A twenty-minute hike through tall, green forests brings you to the summit of Mt. Hiyori. This peak not only offers a panorama of Toba's surrounding islands but also gives visitors an insight into the importance of this outlook at different points in history.

Until the latter half of the 1800s, sailboats would often stop at Toba harbor. While waiting for a favorable wind, members of the ship's crew would climb Mt. Hiyori, where the far-reaching views would allow them to forecast the following day's weather. A stone compass dating from 1822 still remains. There is also a stone carved with a haiku, a seventeen-syllable poem. This text was written by the famous seventeenth-century poet Matsuo Basho (1644–1694). He is considered a master of this style of poetry.

The trail up Mt. Hiyori can be accessed through the Kata Shrine—a ten-minute walk from Toba Station. Local lord Kuki Yoshitaka (1542–1600) visited this shrine before departing on a naval expedition in 1592 as commander of the Toyotomi Clan's fleet. He used cedar trees from the surrounding forest to build his boats. After returning to Toba safely, he planted one thousand cedars in thanks to the deities. Today, only one remains, situated to the left of Kata Shrine's *torii* gate.