

Climbing Mount Kinugasa: A Gentle Slope and Superb View

The trailhead for the Mt. Kinugasa climb is located at Lake Shirakumo, a 20-minute walk from the town of Unzen Onsen. The path is a broad, mostly gentle slope that is very family friendly, wending its way through a beautiful natural forest redolent with surrounding birdsong. The summit is an 879-meter-high peak overlooking the quaint little town and the steaming hot spring “hells” that have helped make it famous. The trek to the top can be done in less than an hour. At one time, flocks of sheep had reduced all the foliage on the mountain to grassland, making it an ideal location for watching Tachibana Bay reflect the rays of the setting sun, and earning it the name “Sunset Hill.” Today, a wooden lookout deck serves the same purpose, and the sheep are nowhere to be seen. (A campsite and boat rental service are located at the trailhead next to the lake.)