

Mount Takaiwa Medium Course

The 30-minute walk from town to the trailhead leading to 881-meter-high Mt. Takaiwa passes the Kojigoku Onsen. It has been open since the first half of the eighteenth century (and is a great spot to relax on the return journey). The trailhead of this beginner-level trek is located at the Hobaru Azalea Garden, which is enveloped in blossoms from the beginning of May. From there, the trail rises slowly for a while through cedar forests, and one unforgettable stretch passes through a series of weather-worn *torii* gates. On a sunny day, the beams of sunlight breaking through the forest on the ancient wood pillars create quite an ethereal atmosphere. The trail steepens as it approaches the higher slopes, and craggy cliffs and massive rock outcroppings become more prevalent—hints of the reason this mountain also goes by the name “Rocky Hill.” A small shrine sits near the peak, where from ancient times farmers have come to pray for a good harvest.