

Nestled between the ocean and mountains rich in geothermal activity, Beppu contains almost 2,300 hot springs, a number that is second only to Yellowstone National Park in the United States. The city has embraced this geothermal phenomenon, and a unique bathing culture has developed over the centuries.

Prior to Beppu's status as a global sightseeing destination, local farmers congregated at hot springs to relax and socialize. Such daily rituals helped create a sense of community based around the intimacy of shared bathing. The publicly operated baths in Beppu, such as the famed Takegawara Onsen in the Motomachi neighborhood, are also community centers with extra room for neighborhood meetings and events. For locals, the public bath is not only a space to bathe, but also a place for strengthening community bonds.