

Lake Yamanakako: The Closest to the Mountain

Lake Yamanakako is the largest of the Fuji Five Lakes and the closest to Mt. Fuji. At nearly a thousand meters above sea level, slightly higher than the other four lakes, it is pleasantly cool even in the summer. It is the shallowest of the five, with a distinctive whale-like shape.

Just 90 minutes from Tokyo by car, Yamanakako Village is easily accessible. Its tourism industry is well established, as it has long been a place to escape the summer heat or visit for recreation. Many restaurants and hotels can be found in the areas surrounding Lake Yamanakako, and a cycling road makes an almost complete circuit of the lake's shore.

Striking views and the beautiful natural environment draw many high school and college sporting clubs to training camps in the village. It was even selected as the location for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics Cycling Road Race.

Swans and Marimo

During the summer months, visitors to Lake Yamanakako can enjoy sailing, wakeboarding, and other watersports. Graceful swans live on the lake year-round, and visitors can fish for black bass and freshwater smelt.

In 1956, Yamanakako was the site of a new discovery: Fuji *marimo*. These balls of velvety algae thrive in cold, still water and are usually associated with northern regions in Europe and Japan, such as Finland and Hokkaido. But Fuji *marimo* are now recognized as a distinct species inhabiting Lake Yamanakako as well as Kawaguchiko and Saiko.

Diamond Fuji

The “Diamond Fuji” phenomenon occurs for a few moments as the sun sets exactly on top of the flat peak of Mt. Fuji, glowing like a jewel. In the village of Yamanakako, this famous view can be seen from late October to mid-February each year.