

A Photographer's Guide to the Fuji Five Lakes

Mt. Fuji is a clear, startlingly close presence from almost anywhere in the Fuji Five Lakes region, but some locations offer particularly tempting opportunities for photographers.

The **Chureito Pagoda** in the city of Fujiyoshida has a nearby hill from which photographers can capture the five-storied pagoda, cherry blossoms or autumn foliage (depending on the season), and Mt. Fuji in the same composition. This exquisitely Japanese scene was relatively unknown until recently, but today it draws crowds of photographers from all over the world.

Getting there: The pagoda is a 20-minute walk from Shimoyoshida station, or a 15-minute walk from Chureito Iriguchi bus stop on the Mt. Fuji World Cultural Heritage Site Loop Bus (15 minutes from Kawaguchiko station), and up 398 stairs from Arakura Fuji Sengen-jinja Shrine.

Nagaike Water Park stretches along the northern shore of Lake Yamanakako, offering classic “mountain over the lake” compositions. At the right time of year, visitors can capture the “Diamond Fuji” view of the sun setting behind the peak.

Getting there: Take the Fujiyoshida/Oshino/Yamanakako Sightseeing Bus from Kawaguchiko station to Nagaike Shinsui Koen Mae stop (50 minutes).

The **Panorama-dai Observation Point** at Lake Yamanakako is located along the Mt. Mikuni Hiking Course, about 30 minutes from the trail head. As panoramic as the name suggests, the vista includes fields of miscanthus grass in the foreground, with the expanse of Lake Yamanakako below and Mt. Fuji rising beyond it. On a clear day you can see as far to the north as the Minami Alps.

Getting there: Take the Fujiyoshida/Oshino/Yamanakako Sightseeing Bus (F-Line) to Mt. Mikuni Hiking Course Entrance (50 minutes) followed by a 30-minute hike. Alternately, by car, turn toward Oyama-cho at Hirano Intersection, then drive up Prefectural Route 730 (Yamakita Yamanakako line) for 15 minutes.

Nijumagari Pass in the mountains of Oshino affords pastoral views of Mt. Fuji across rice paddies. This spot is less accessible than the others mentioned here, but is popular with hikers.

Getting there: Take the Fujikyuko bus from Fujisan station to the Tengusha stop (40 minutes), then hike for another 40 minutes.

Photographers who visit **Oishi Park** on the northern shore of Lake Kawaguchiko during the spring and summer months can capture the mountain across the waves, with vividly blooming flowerbeds in the foreground. Unoshima, the only island in the Fuji Five Lakes, will also be in frame.

Getting there: Take the Red Line bus from Kawaguchiko station to stop 20, Kawaguchiko Natural Living Center (25 minutes).