

Tenjoyama Park

Tenjoyama Park is one of the most popular sightseeing destinations in the Fuji Five Lakes area, attracting thousands of visitors daily. Located near the summit of Mt. Tenjo, a 1,104-meter peak east of Lake Kawaguchiko, the park has a triple-story observation deck with a panoramic, 360-degree view that includes Mt. Fuji to the south.

Although there is a hiking trail from the foot of the mountain, most visitors prefer to take the Mt. Fuji Panoramic Ropeway. The cable cars ascend over the forested slopes of the mountain, climbing 219 meters to the park's 1,075-meter elevation in just three minutes.

“Crackling Mountain”

The theme of the ropeway and the park is a Japanese folktale called “Mt. Kachi-Kachi” (*Kachi-Kachi yama*), about a rabbit who comes to the aid of a farmer menaced by a wicked *tanuki* (raccoon dog). At one point in the story, the rabbit uses a flint and steel to set fire to some wood the *tanuki* is carrying on his back. When the *tanuki* notices the crackling sound (*kachi-kachi*) of the burning wood, the rabbit shrugs it off, saying that it must be the sound of “Mt. Kachi-Kachi.” The *tanuki* only realizes he was fooled after being badly burned. In “Crackling Mountain,” a modern retelling by renowned novelist Dazai Osamu (1909–1948), the tale is specifically set on Mt. Tenjo.

Images from and references to the folktale can be found throughout the park, from colorful statues to a “Tanuki Teahouse” that sells souvenirs and snacks. There is even a genuine Shinto shrine called the Usagi-jinja (rabbit shrine). Other mini-attractions include the Tenjo Bell, which hangs in a heart-shaped frame with Mt. Fuji in the background, and a “plate-tossing” or *kawara-nage* range, where visitors can test their skill at throwing small ceramic plates through a loop of rope. Visitors seeking an unobstructed view of Mt. Fuji can climb the 7-meter-high Fujiyama Viewing Platform.

A Year-Round Attraction

Tenjoyama Park hosts special events throughout the year. In warmer months, yoga instructors hold dawn lessons on the deck under the watchful gaze of Mt. Fuji. In winter, there are fireworks displays and events featuring a *kotatsu* (a traditional heated table) on the observation deck. Visitors can sit under a blanket at a warm *kotatsu* and enjoy a mandarin orange while admiring Mt. Fuji, as if from the comfort of their own living room.

The view from the ropeway car changes with the seasons, from the lush greens of summer to the golds and reds of autumn leaves and the white expanse of the frequent winter snowfalls. When weather permits, many visitors choose to ride the ropeway up and then hike down through the forest. The summit of Mt. Tenjo is a 10-minute walk from the ropeway's upper station, and adventurous hikers can head northeast for Mt. Mitsutoge, about a three-hour hike away.