

Koyodai, Sankodai, and Mt. Ashiwada: Mt. Fuji from the Tokai Nature Trail

The Tokai Nature Trail, which extends 1,697 kilometers from Tokyo to Osaka, crosses all kinds of terrain, but the stretch through the hills south of Lake Saiko is short, scenic, and gentle enough for a family outing. The hike passes the Koyodai (“Autumn Foliage Observation Point”) at 1,164 meters and the Sankodai (“Three Lakes Observation Point”) at 1,202 meters. Hiking to the 1,355-meter peak of Mt. Ashiwada and back takes around 90 minutes.

Up the Slopes

The first point of interest, about 10 minutes from the entrance to Koyodai, is the *Man'yo no kahi*. This stone monument is engraved with a famous paean to Mt. Fuji from the eighth-century *Man'yoshu*, the earliest surviving collection of Japanese poetry.

The next stop, a 20-minute hike away, is the Koyodai. The observation deck on the roof of the Koyodai Rest House offers magnificent panoramic views of Mt. Fuji across the Aokigahara Jukai Forest. Seen from this height, the flat expanse of the forest contrasts sharply with the surrounding mountains, underscoring its origins as a molten lava flow from the Jogan Eruption of 864.

The Sankodai, or “Three Lakes Observation Point,” is another 20-minute hike up the trail. Despite the name, it offers views of only two lakes: Saiko and Motosuko. An hour beyond that is the peak of Mt. Ashiwada, with a distinctive observation deck built of logs. This is the highest point on the trail, and the view is worth the hike.