

Chisuji Falls

A thousand thin strands of water, running down a moss-covered, irregularly shaped wall of volcanic rock 20 meters wide and 3 meters tall. A masterpiece of nature, Chisuji Falls was long known only to a handful of local residents, but that changed in the early nineteenth century. The founder of Mikawaya Ryokan, now one of the oldest continually operating hot spring inns in Hakone, was convinced that the beautiful waterfall near his establishment deserved more attention—attention that would inevitably also be directed toward Mikawaya. The innkeeper established a hiking path to the falls, even building a teahouse in the vicinity to attract additional customers. His efforts paid off: Chisuji became a popular attraction in the Taisho era (1912–1926), when seeing the falls was high on many a Hakone visitor's to-do list. While the scenery has changed somewhat since those days, with earthquakes in particular taking their toll on the relatively fragile rock, Chisuji Falls still makes for a sight worth the 20-minute stroll from Kowakidani Station. The scene is especially striking in autumn, when the seasonal foliage adds a touch of color to the scene.