

Springs of Hakone

Besides an abundance of hot springs, Hakone has many “cold” springs that provide easy access to the area’s abundant groundwater reserves. Most of these have been used by local residents for centuries, but are often hidden in unlikely places and can be hard to spot. While no one quite knows how many springs exist throughout Hakone, there are at least five you can visit without much effort. Three of these are in Hakone-Yumoto: the Shugakudo spring, named after the adjacent liquor store’s *sake*; Hakusan Shrine, where spring water flows directly into the basin used for *temizu*, the purification rite performed before praying at a shrine; and on the grounds of the Tenseien hotel, the Tamadare spring, whose water is associated with longevity. In Kiga, up a small but steep hill from Gora Station, you will find the Eiju spring in front of the Hanakotoba shop. While it specializes in *wagashi* (traditional sweets), this store also sells bottled water from its own well head. Last but not least, the Ryujin (“dragon god”) spring is at Hakone Shrine, where it flows into a basin through the mouths of nine dragon statues. You can buy a plastic bottle at the shrine and fill it up on the spot.