

## **Kinosaki Onsen: Town of Seven Public Spas**

Kinosaki Onsen is a traditional-style hot spring (*onsen*) town where you can experience the atmosphere of a genuine hot-spring community. The station acts like the entrance to one big traditional Japanese inn, or *ryokan*, where the streets become the hallways and passages, the many nearby inns the rooms, and the *onsen* the baths. Among the top hot spring areas in the Kansai region, Kinosaki Onsen stands out in that it is home to seven *soto-yu* (public hot spring bathhouses), which are all located within walking distance from each other. The town is also situated close to both the sea and mountains, so there is plenty to enjoy at any time of year, from the warm, balmy days of summer near the sea, to the cold, sometimes snowy days of winter around the mountains. Kinosaki Onsen is located a two and a half hour train ride from Kyoto Station, but the area can also be accessed by air with flights from Osaka International Airport to Tajima Airport, which take just under an hour. From Tajima Airport, Kinosaki Onsen is just a 20-minute drive away.

You can get around Kinosaki Onsen by hiring a bicycle or taking a free shuttle bus from JR Kinosaki Onsen station, but it is also a very pleasant town for walking. Start your stroll on Eki Street, directly outside the station, which features a mix of local goods and food specialties and leads to the photogenic willow-lined, central Otani River, bordered on the north and south by Kitayanagi and Minamiyanagi streets. The many bridges over the river are ideal places to pause and observe the traditional wooden architecture of the town. During the day and at night, there are plenty of shops, restaurants, and snack bars open for visitors.