

The Four Seasons of Kinosaki Onsen

At Kinosaki Onsen, the changing seasons make for a fresh and memorable experience throughout the year. In spring, cherry blossoms bloom in picturesque profusion along the Otani River, making it a backdrop for pleasant strolling and savoring of the coming spring, especially when the trees are illuminated in the evenings. Every April, Kinosaki Onsen also hosts the Onsen Festival, which celebrates the town's respect and gratitude for its hot springs. Summer brings lush greenery, balmy weather, and fireworks, which are set off every week night from late July to late August, except during Obon, the few days of Buddhist observance in Japan when ancestors are honored (August 13–15). Catch the fireworks over the river when the colorful rockets are reflected on the water for a memorable sight. In autumn, the foliage of the surrounding hills is transformed into beautiful shades of color. October is the month of one of Kinosaki's largest celebrations, the Kinosaki Danjiri Festival. During the winter, the entire town turns into a snowy mountain scene. A visit to an outdoor bath (*rotenburo*) during this season can be magical; the cool, crisp air makes soaking in the heated waters all the more satisfying. Don't forget to dine on Matsuba crab, a specialty that hits its peak season during the winter.