

Unkai: Sea of Clouds

Kinosaki Onsen is located close to a couple of excellent spots to experience the natural phenomenon of “sea of clouds” (*unkai*), in which the view above extensive banks of cloud or river fog gives one the feeling of floating above this spectacular natural phenomenon. The best time of year to catch *unkai* is between mid-October and late November, when the area achieves the perfect climatic conditions, which include moisture-radiative cooling, a high temperature difference between the day before and the day of viewing, and sunny weather on the viewing day itself.

Visitors can catch *unkai* at either Mt. Kuruhi or on the Hiyoriyama Coast along the Sea of Japan. Optimal viewing time is early morning just as the sun starts to rise. Mt. Kuruhi is just 40 minutes by car from Kinosaki Onsen, and you can take guided tours to the optimal viewing spot. *Unkai* on the Hiyoriyama Coast is formed by river fog generated around the Maruyama River, which runs into the Sea of Japan coast from the Toyooka Basin. One suggested viewing point is near the Ryugu-jo (“Dragon Palace”), located on an island near Kinosaki Marine World. When the clouds roll in, it seems as if the structures on the island are floating among them.