

## **Sandankyo: Sarutobi Rock, Nidandaki Falls, and Sandandaki Falls**

Sarutobi Rock is the entrance to Nidandaki Falls (lit., “two-tiered falls”), a “hidden” waterfall located about a 30-minute walk from Mizunashi Gate in the center of Sandankyo Gorge. Mizunashi Gate is about two and a half hours on foot from Sandankyo Front Gate, or 30 minutes by the shuttle buses that run once a day on weekends and every day in November. The waterfall can also be reached by water. A small boat, operating on weekends and holidays from mid-April to late November, and every day during the fall foliage season, leaves from a wooden platform on the river. The boat takes visitors to Nidandaki Falls in about 5 minutes; the operator guides the boat through the narrow passageway of Sarutobi Rock using cables suspended from the cliffs.

The passageway is about 2 meters wide, which is narrow enough for passengers to reach out and touch the moss-covered, 20-meter-high cliffs. As the boat travels through the passage opening, passengers will notice how the cliffs’ shadows contrast with the scenery of leafy green trees in summer and fiery red leaves in autumn. Nidandaki Falls is like a hidden secret; it cannot be heard, seen, or felt until the boat emerges from the natural passageway and into the waterfall’s majestic pool. The water turns from aquamarine to a rushing white when the boat clears the passageway, and the roaring of Nidandaki Falls can then be heard.

The boat is anchored at a platform showered by water gushing over the falls. Visitors can walk onto the platform to see the waterfall up close and feel its splash. Originally a “two-tiered” cascade, the first rock wall was torn away by torrential rains in 1988. Standing on the platform in the middle of the pool offers the chance to feel totally immersed in nature.

Another destination on the trail from Mizunashi Gate is Sandandaki Falls. This three-tiered, 130-meter waterfall is one of the most remarkable sights along the entire trail. The cascade tumbles down the three levels of the waterfall into a calm turquoise pool below. Sandandaki Falls is surrounded by untouched forest that is picturesque through summer and autumn.