

Shiobara Valley Trail: Yashio Trail

Distance: 3.7 km

Duration: 90 minutes (each way)

Nearest Bus Stops:

- West trailhead at Shiobara Onsen Visitor Center: Get off at Nanatsu Rock Suspension Bridge (300 m, 7-minute walk)
- East trailhead at the Hoki River Dam: Get off at Ooami (500 m, 8-minute walk)

Trail Overview:

Yashio Trail is an easy hike that follows the Hoki River, starting at the Visitor Center and continuing through the Fukuwata Onsen area to the Hoki River Dam. Together, Yashio Trail and Mikaeri Trail make up the 8.5-kilometer Shiobara Valley Trail.

The trail begins at the Visitor Center located near the entrance to Maeyama National Forest and continues to the left, where two paths form a T-intersection. After about 200 meters, the path continues to the right along Route 400. It crosses the Fukuwata Bridge, then turns right to follow the river, continuing to the Fukuwata Fudō Suspension Bridge and crossing the river again. The trail veers to the left after the suspension bridge and continues for some distance. It passes a camping area and the Nuno Falls observation deck. The trail ends at the Hoki River Dam.

Highlights:

Vegetation

The trail is named for the *yashio* variety of azalea, which blooms profusely in mid-April. Japanese beech and Japanese oak dominate the surrounding forests where many wild birds make their homes.

Bridges

The Fukuwata Bridge is an excellent place to observe Tengu Rock, which towers above the river. Hikers will also cross the Fukuwata Fudō Suspension Bridge, one of Shiobara's 14 suspension bridges.

Nuno Falls

The Hoki River flows through a narrow opening in the rock, and the resulting cascade is

said to look like cloth (*nuno*) hanging from the boulders. The observation deck along this trail is the best spot for viewing the falls up close.

Hoki River Dam

A narrow footbridge crosses the Hoki River Dam near the eastern trailhead