

Onsen Town Sightseeing Walk

See the legend on the map for distances, durations, and modes of transportation.

Route Overview:

This is a route through Shiobara Onsen from the Visitor Center in the east to Nakashiobara in the west and back again, largely following the Hoki River. The recommended stops include points of historical and cultural significance, as well as a number of hot springs.

Highlights:

Shiobara Onsen Visitor Center

The Visitor Center has exhibits on Shiobara's hot springs, history, nature, and geology. Several hiking trails intersect nearby, and the Visitor Center is a departure point for Shiobara Valley Trail.

Yuppo no Sato

A uniquely designed footbath in the center of Shiobara Onsen, the bath is located along the inside of a circular gazebo that runs in a long ring around a central pool. The pool is separated from the bathers by an inner ring of floor-to-ceiling windows, and a second set of windows lines the outside of the gazebo. Bathers can either soak their feet while taking in the view of the placid inner pool or sit and gaze at the surrounding scenery through the outer windows.

Myōunji

Myōunji was founded by the nun Myōun (dates unknown) in 1194 and is a temple of the Rinzai school of Zen Buddhism. A number of stone monuments to literary figures dot the temple grounds. More than 3,000 tree peonies (*botan*) bloom within the temple precincts in mid-May.

Monzen

The area in front of Myōunji, known as Monzen, contains many hot springs. For centuries, Monzen has been popular with visitors who come to bathe and enjoy the festivals and other activities that are held at the temple. This is a good place to hear the clatter of wooden sandals (*geta*) and to see people wearing yukata, a type of cotton kimono.

Furumachi

Furumachi is the heart of Shiobara Onsen and has many venerable inns, restaurants, and souvenir shops. Shiobara's unique horse-drawn carriages, called *tote-basha*, run through this area. This is also the place to find *tote-yaki*, crêpes unique to Shiobara that are served with a variety of fillings.

Imagination Archives (Shiobara Monogatari-kan)

The Imagination Archives is a history museum that highlights writing from the many writers who visited Shiobara, particularly those who came between the 1880s and 1930s. The museum is a good place to take a break midway through the Onsen Town Sightseeing Walk. The second floor commands an excellent view of the Hoki River and the Kurenai Suspension Bridge. "Kurenai" means "red," a reference to the red maple leaves of autumn for which the area is famous.