

【Kaede no Yu】

Kaede no Yu, a public hot spring facility just steps from Yudanaka Station, is an excellent example of Japanese public baths known as *sentō*. In the days before most private residences had plumbing, public baths were a common fixture of both towns and cities, and *sentō* are still a cherished part of Japanese culture.

Kaede no Yu contains an indoor and outdoor bath for each gender, a tatami-floored lounge that looks out at the train tracks, and an external footbath where weary travelers can soak their feet for free. The hot spring supplies about 100 liters of water per minute, which emerges from the source at 91.7 degrees Celsius. The baths are cooled to between 42 and 43 degrees—cool enough to soak for several minutes, but still hot enough to soothe aching muscles, improve circulation, and ease chills. The spring water is naturally rich in sodium chloride and sodium sulfate, both of which are said to be effective in remedying cuts, nerve pain, and chronic indigestion.

One bathing area features an indoor bath made with Japanese cypress wood and an outdoor bath built with smooth, flat andesite stones. In the second bathing area, the indoor bath is made of granite, and the outdoor bath is constructed from iron andesite. The gender designations are swapped each month so that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy both bathing areas. Additionally, on the 26th of the month, the staff prepares a seasonal bath infused with aromatics such as apples, lavender, or peach leaves.