

Okuhida Onsengo Hot Springs

For visitors who want a longer experience of the natural wonders of Chubusangaku National Park, or perhaps just an early start on a mountain trek, there is no better “base camp” than the Okuhida Onsengo Hot Springs. Nestled at the foot of the mountains, it consists of five small hot-spring communities only a few kilometers apart, offering a variety of accommodations and plenty of baths to relax in. Visitors can soothe and recharge tired muscles, and the springs are even believed to heal certain ailments. Together, these villages have more open-air hot springs than any other similar area in Japan. A number of the baths are mixed gender, and bathing suits are permitted in certain cases.

Two of the villages, Hirayu and Shin-Hotaka, are in the national park itself, and there are three others nearby: Fukuji, Tochio and Shin-Hirayu. Each village has its own character (and distinctive mix of mineral components in its baths), and visitors are welcome to drop in and sample the waters without staying overnight. Overnight guests can choose accommodations from pensions and Western-style hotels to sprawling seventeenth-century traditional buildings. Many rooms have views of the surrounding peaks of the Northern Alps.

Not far from Shin-Hotaka is the lowest station of the Shin-Hotaka ropeway, with two sections making an ascent from 1,117 meters to 2,156 meters. The observation deck at the top has some of the finest views of the Northern Alps, a panorama of peaks, many over 3,000 meters high.