

Audio Guide: Oito Jigoku and *Onsen* Eggs

Continuing along the path, you will pass several wooden structures where you can enjoy the hot springs in two memorable ways.

On your right are places to sit and feel the heat of the *jigoku* with your bare feet. Wooden planks are placed over stones that are heated naturally by the gas and water beneath you. Sometimes staff at the Information Center will close this area off because the planks get hot enough to burn your feet.

Are you hungry? On your left, steam from the *jigoku* is funneled through a clay pipe and used to cook *onsen* eggs. This delightful snack has been popular with tourists for more than 100 years. But make sure not to let the brave cats that live among the springs steal your meal!

Farther along the boardwalk is the Oito Jigoku or Oito Hell. According to local legend, there once was a wealthy woman named Oito who lived close to Shimabara Castle in the late 1800s. She was accused of murdering her husband with help from her lover. She was found guilty and was executed for her crime. At almost the same time as her execution, this *jigoku* came bubbling up from beneath the earth. The hot spring was given Oito's name as a reminder of what awaited adulterers and murderers in the afterlife.