

Hamanokawa Spring

Springs are abundant across the city of Shimabara, but few continue to be as integrated into daily life as Hamanokawa Spring.

Hundreds of years ago, this spot was actually underwater. In 1792, catastrophe struck: a powerful earthquake caused a huge part of Mt. Mayuyama (819 m) to collapse and tumble into the sea, expanding the coastline. Springs that had been under the ocean prior to the mountain's collapse began to bubble up in the newly created land.

The waters of Hamanokawa Spring are pure. Even though it is close to the sea, the spring has a different source: cracks in the volcanic earth filter and redirect rainwater from the mountains. Ever since it was created, locals have taken full advantage of this blessing born of disaster. Strict rules are in place to maintain the freshness and purity of the water. The spring is split into four terraced pools: the first and highest for washing food, the second for rinsing dishes and food, the third for washing dishes, and the last for laundry. You can drink the water by scooping it up with a cup from the channel before it enters the first pool.

The water of Hamanokawa Spring is so famous that it was named one of Japan's "One Hundred Remarkable Waters" by the Ministry of the Environment in 1985. It is also an essential ingredient in *kanzarashi*, a local delicacy of soft mochi rice cakes topped with syrup.
