

Lake Unagi

A short distance east of Lake Ikeda—Kyushu’s largest lake and home of a legendary lake monster—lies Lake Unagi. Smaller and more remote than its neighbor, azure Lake Unagi is tranquil and unspoiled, surrounded by lush green vegetation.

Nearby Unagi Onsen is a laid-back retreat with retro flair that was once patronized by Saigo Takamori (1828–1877), Japan’s “last samurai,” who once enjoyed a long stay here to take advantage of the health benefits of its hot springs. Saigo was one of three warriors who led the Meiji Restoration and remains a major figure in popular culture. His beloved dog became the mascot of Unagi Onsen; numerous statues of the two can be seen around town.