

Hiji Falls

The 26-meter Hiji Falls are the highest in Yambaru National Park. The forest around the falls has been popular among hikers and campers for generations. In olden times, when braziers were the main source of household heat, charcoal makers built kilns here, and pilgrims came to worship the river and mountain deities. A campsite just beyond the entrance has raised platforms to pitch tents on, and a well-maintained trail leads up to the falls. The round trip takes about 90 minutes.

There are several signposted spots where hikers can step into the river to cool off. It is also possible to wade upstream along the “River Course,” a route once used by local residents that rejoins the main trail about halfway to the falls. Please note that due to dangerous rapids after that point, all hikers must exit the river there.

The trail is rich with flora such as the evergreen ash and flying spider-monkey fern. Animals that may be spotted along the way include Okinawa woodpeckers, jewel-like Ryukyu damselflies, and Barbour’s eyelid skinks. A wooden suspension bridge marks the halfway point of the trail, offering excellent views of the lush valley from a height of more than 15 meters. Five or ten minutes beyond the bridge, you will see the low walls of an abandoned charcoal kiln, a silent reminder of earlier generations who utilized the resources of the forest and cared for it.

At the end of the trail, the spray of the roaring falls makes a perfect backdrop for photographs and picnics. Note, however, that entering the pool is prohibited.