

Kunigami Forest Park

People of all ages are welcome at Kunigami Forest Park, where the subtropical wilderness of Yambaru National Park can be enjoyed in safety and comfort on daytime or overnight trips. The park is popular with families and tour groups, as it offers accommodation and cooking facilities along with a number of easy walks that require no hiking equipment.

As elsewhere in the forest, the most common tree is the *itajii* (*Castanopsis sieboldii*), an evergreen in the chinkapin family. Along the nature trails you will also see healthy populations of *urajirogashi* oak (*Quercus salicina*) and the flying spider-monkey fern, a living fossil from the late Paleozoic that can grow to 15 meters in height. Flowering plants include needlewood trees as well as camellias and related species.

The park is home to rhinoceros beetles, Okinawan tree lizards, the occasional wild boar, and other fauna. Hentona Lake at the park's center conceals an underwater seaweed forest inhabited by sword-tailed newts, while the observation deck offers panoramic views of the East China Sea. In Okinawa, this kind of peaceful, diverse natural environment is known as a source of *nuchi-gusui*, the “elixir of life.”

The park also offers a range of human-made attractions. The Yambaru Forest Toy Museum, located just behind this sign, displays wooden toys created by artisans from all over Japan. An astronomical observatory stands nearby. Elsewhere in the park are spaces for sports and games by day and star-watching and tent camping by night. Other accommodation options include a car-camping site, roomy wooden bungalows, and charming “treetop houses.”