

Hiroshima City Forest Park

Hiroshima City Forest Park is a family-friendly outdoor recreation area in the mountains east of the city about 20 minutes by car from Hiroshima Station. The park surrounds a central field popular for picnics in summer and the gentle hillside is perfect for sledding in winter. The large children's playground features a Tarzan swing and a giant red rope pyramid for climbing. In April, the cherry trees surrounding the playground blanket the area in pink blossoms, while in May the azaleas are in full bloom.

The Jabu Jabu River is a stretch of stream only 20 centimeters deep running through the park that is well suited for small children's play. The river also has a small waterfall. Around 1,000 Japanese maple trees grow in the area, and in autumn their leaves turn a fiery red. A 36-meter wooden suspension bridge spans the ravine over the river. There is also an eight-hole course for ground golf (similar to park golf) for adults and children. Use of the course is free and equipment can be rented from the park office.

Visitors can walk or take a small monorail train up to the park's highest point: the Yamajiro Observatory. The wooden tower is designed to resemble the old mountain castles (yamajiro) that were common when Hiroshima was founded in the sixteenth century. The observatory affords sweeping views of Hiroshima, the Seto Inland Sea, and Miyajima Island in the distance.

The park's insectarium has live displays of 50 different species—the largest collection in western Japan. Butterflies of roughly 500 different species flutter about inside the Papillon Dome.

Hiroshima City Forest Park is open from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. every day except Wednesdays.