

## **Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park**

Hakone is part of Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park, which stretches from the slopes of Mt. Fuji to the Izu island chain in the Pacific Ocean. Designated in 1936 and expanded twice—the Izu peninsula was added in 1955 and the Izu islands in 1964—the park welcomes the largest number of visitors of any national park in Japan. All of its major features are either volcanoes or have geological features formed from volcanic eruptions.

National park status protects and preserves the natural landscape, and the level of conservation mandated varies by area. The strictest rules apply to Special Protection Zones where no structures may be built and visitors must refrain from taking rocks, plant specimens or anything else out of the zone. Special Protection Zones in Hakone include Mt. Kami, Mt. Shimofutago, Mt. Kintoki, Mt. Yusaka, the Sengokuhara wetlands, and the headwaters of the Sukumo River. Park rangers and volunteers clean and maintain the park, and signboards and roadside placards are required to meet certain aesthetic requirements. Even the signs for familiar convenience stores have a different color scheme here than elsewhere.