

Kagamidaira Plain

Kagamidaira means “mirror plain,” and the area is most likely named for the way the clear waters of its numerous ponds reflect the surrounding mountains. The largest of these ponds is appropriately called Kagami-ike (“mirror pond”). On windless days, its waters reflect the surrounding Hotaka mountain range and Mt. Yarigatake. The plain is also covered with a variety of subalpine trees such as firs, beeches, and Japanese rowans, a deciduous tree with a rounded crown and bright red, berry-like fruit. This mix of natural features has led many seasoned hikers to name Kagamidaira as the most scenic spot in the Japanese Alps.

Camping on the plain is prohibited, but overnight stays at the Kagamidaira-sanso lodge can be arranged with advance booking. Guests can enjoy the privilege of viewing the mountain in the late evening and early morning.

Kagamidaira Plain stands at 2,300 meters above sea level, and is accessible from the Koike Shindo Trail which connects Shin-Hotaka Onsen with Mt. Sugoroku. Hiking to the plain from Shin-Hotaka takes around five hours.