

## **The Great Hirayu Waterfall**

The Great Hirayu waterfall is close to the Hirayu Onsen hot-spring village. The waterfall came into existence tens of thousands of years ago, when lava flowing down from the Yotsudake volcano solidified where it ran onto hard, sedimentary rock and created the two walls of rock from which the falls formed, along with a U-shaped basin.

Local legend says the hot springs of Hirayu Onsen were discovered by soldiers after their invasion of Hida Province (present-day Gifu Prefecture) during Japan's Warring States period (1467–1568). Exhausted after battle, the soldiers were gazing up at this waterfall when an old white monkey came down from behind the falls and led them to some nearby hot springs, which they used to bathe, rest, and soothe their wounds.

The waterfall measures 64 meters high and 6 meters wide, and was recognized in 1990 as one of the Top 100 Waterfalls of Japan.

The scenery changes with the seasons, from the bright greenery of fresh spring leaves to the brilliant reds and oranges of the fall foliage and the frozen cascade of the waterfall itself in winter.