

Daigahara-Juku Post Town

Daigahara-Juku is a post town located in Hokuto, Yamanashi, along the famed Koshu Kaido, a highway originally built to transport goods between Edo (present-day Tokyo), Koshu (present-day Yamanashi), and Shinshu (present-day Nagano). As a rest stop for travelers, Daigahara-Juku's numerous inns flourished throughout the Edo period (1603–1867).

Today, thanks to the efforts of residents, the streets and scenery of Daigahara-Juku have been preserved. Located close to the Minami Alps, the town has convenient access to some of Yamanashi's most treasured water sources. This makes Daigahara-Juku and surrounding areas an attractive location for drink manufacturers, breweries, and distilleries.

Shichiken Sake Brewery

One stalwart of Daigahara is the Shichiken Sake Brewery, founded in 1750. The brewery has been passed down from generation to generation of the Kitahara family. Sake was the alcoholic beverage of choice before the introduction of Western culture and institutions that swept through Japan in the Meiji era (1868–1912).

As brewers of some of the best sake in the country, the Kitahara family amassed great wealth and respect both within Yamanashi and throughout the country. In 1880, the Meiji emperor stayed at Shichiken for one night. The lodgings where he stayed have been turned into a museum and designated a cultural heritage site.

In 2017, the company won first prize in a sake competition held in Tokyo. Today, visitors can tour the Shichiken Brewery, go through the museum, and enjoy a sake tasting.

Kinseiken Daigahara Sweets Shop

The Kinseiken confectionary shop was first opened 1902 and is credited with inventing *shingen mochi*, today a popular sweet from Yamanashi.

While Kinseiken products are available at many souvenir shops across Japan, the Kinseiken Daigahara and Nirasaki shops are the only places where customers can try the fabled *mizu shingen mochi*, known as the Raindrop Cake in English. The CEO of Kinseiken, Ono Koichi, popularized the Raindrop Cake after tasting the spring water from Yamanashi's

mountains. The Raindrop Cake has garnered the attention of tourists both foreign and domestic and is only available during limited periods.

Ojiragawa Valley

Daigahara-Juku is located near the Ojiragawa Valley, now designated as part of a UNESCO Eco Park. The valley is part of the Minami Alps Biosphere Reserve and can be reached after a 10-minute drive from Daigahara-Juku. The valley is filled with granite that filters the water flowing out of the mountains. It is said that the waterfalls and rivers are so pure that visitors can drink the water straight from the source.

Restaurants and Accommodations

Daigahara-Juku has numerous cafes and restaurants, most of which offer dishes made with locally grown ingredients. While Daigahara-Juku is no longer a town filled with inns, there are many hotels in nearby Hokuto that offer accommodation.