

Kehara Terraced Rice Paddies

Terraced rice paddies have been a part of the landscape in Kehara for centuries, and the history of this small mountain village dates to at least the Heian period (794–1185). Some of the approximately 600 rice paddies are extremely narrow due to the naturally steep terrain. A number of paths wind through the fields and past the one remaining thatched-roof house and the waterwheel. Near the top of the village, an observation deck offers sweeping views of the terraced landscape.

The village lies midway between the former capital of Kyoto and the Tango region, at the foot of the Oeyama mountain range, in an area known for legendary ogres (*oni*). The villagers have used their knowledge of agriculture and forestry to live a sustainable lifestyle here for centuries, and aspire to maintain the terraced rice paddies for at least another millennium. With only 13 houses remaining in the village, residents welcome visitors warmly and operate a rice terrace ownership system for new residents and those interested in rice cultivation.

In addition to the observation deck, there is one guest cottage, an Italian restaurant and wedding chapel, pick-your-own blueberry and blackberry gardens, a clothing shop and atelier, a brick pizza oven and traditional rice hearth that can be used with prior reservations, and a *doburoku* (unrefined sake) brewery.