

Rice Terraces of Ichiu

The rice terraces of Ichiu are found at elevations of 450 to 700 meters, where mountain ridges can be seen at eye level. The picturesque landscape and the soothing sound of water trickling down the mountain give Ichiu a distinctive atmosphere.

The high quality spring water in Ichiu is safe for drinking and is also used for farming. There are public water fountains: the Tenjo no Izumi (Heavenly Fountain), Tenku no Izumi (Sky Fountain), and Furusato no Izumi (Hometown Fountain).

Rice is not the only produce of the terraces. Only 6 percent of the total land area of Ichiu is occupied by rice paddies. Fruit trees and plants for the Irodori decorative garnish business account for a larger percentage—over 24 percent and 13 percent, respectively. Buckwheat is also a popular crop, and the terraces turn into flower beds when the plants are in bloom.

The scenery includes magnificent views of the mountains and traditional Japanese homes that seem to be outside the passage of time, and one local farm guesthouse is famous for such views. The drive uphill from the terraces has many excellent, if unmarked, overlooks along the roadside above the rice terraces.

Seasonal events allow participants to transplant rice seedlings in May, make Awa Bancha tea in July, harvest rice in September, and pound mochi in December.