

Rice Terraces of Kashihara

The terraced rice fields of Kashihara are between 500 and 700 meters in elevation and are some of the most famous in Japan. Features like the stone and earth walls or the bamboo irrigation gutters offer a living memorial to rich local history and a view into the traditional interplay between settlements and nature. They were selected for Japan's 100 Best Rice Terraces by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in 1999.

The rice terraces of Kashihara are divided into three distinct levels: lower, middle, and upper Kashihara. All offer striking views, however, lower Kashihara is the most scenic and is popular for taking pictures.

Most households in this settlement used a water wheel to polish rice as late as the early twentieth century. The watermills disappeared for a time, but one was restored in lower Kashihara in 1998. The sound of the watermill blends with the burbling of mountain streams and irrigation channels, the voices of farmers at work, and the chirping of wild birds to create a soundscape unique to the area.

Kashihara has the only terraces in Kamikatsu with public rest facilities, which can be found at the small rest house in middle Kashihara and at the rest area called Mineda in an old traditional house in upper Kashihara at the Mt. Yamainu hiking trail entrance. Lower Kashihara has the Asakage-tei soba restaurant, café, and guesthouse, as well.