

Alps Kaidō Hirayu and the Hirayu Bus Terminal

This complex in the hot spring village of Hirayu Onsen is a rest area and key transport hub for the Gifu Prefecture side of the Northern Alps. Travelers can dine, shop, and visit several local points of interest before boarding a bus to continue their journey deeper into the mountains.

The ground-floor restaurant serves curry, ramen and udon noodles, and grilled Hida beef on rice (*gyūdon*); a bakery in the building sells fresh bread. The large souvenir shop has snacks, drinks, personal necessities and travel goods, and a wide selection of Hida-Takayama souvenirs. Among them are Sarubobo—protective charms in the shape of faceless red dolls that are said to ward off evil, foster good relationships, and ease childbirth. The shop also sells a range of sake produced in the nearby “sake treasure trove” towns of Hida-Takayama, Hida-Furukawa, and Hida-Kamioka.

Visitors can use the building’s free hot-spring footbath, open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Coin lockers and restrooms are also available. A short walk from the Alps Kaidō Hirayu parking lot is Hirayu Shrine, known for its healing powers. The 64-meter-tall, 6-meter-wide Hirayu Falls is about 30 minutes away on foot, or about 5 minutes by car.

Hirayu Bus Terminal is a main transport hub for the Oku-Hida region, with buses departing for popular destinations such as Kamikōchi, Mt. Norikura, the Shinhotaka Ropeway, and Takayama. Vehicle restrictions on the roads that lead to Kamikōchi and Mt. Norikura require travelers to park their private cars at the terminal, then board a bus or taxi to their destination. Highway express buses also connect the Hirayu Bus Terminal with the city of Matsumoto (1 hour 25 minutes) and with Shinjuku in Tokyo (4 hours 30 minutes).