

Accommodations in Shizukuishi

Shizukuishi offers a variety of styles of accommodation. With information about what is available, visitors can make the most of their stay.

Hotels

Visitors coming primarily for snow sports may view proximity to the ski slopes as the main priority. Some of the large hotels are located with convenience in mind. Western-style beds, private bathrooms, and relative freedom around dining choices are further advantages for those who prefer to set their own schedules. However, other lodging choices may offer more chances to interact closely with Shizukuishi residents.

Pensions

These are small privately run hotels or inns, usually furnished in Western style. The term pension comes from the French for “boarding house,” but this accommodation is closer to the style of a bed-and-breakfast. The rooms are typically quite simple, with beds, a closet, and a TV; bathroom facilities are usually shared with other guests. Some pensions have a communal lounge for relaxing and socializing, perhaps with tea- and coffee-making facilities and even books for guests to read. Breakfast is included, but dinner is normally optional, depending on the plan selected. Meals usually feature local ingredients and tend to be Western-style.

The charm of pensions is that each one is unique, based on the interests and style of the owner. Interiors range from simple and cozy to elegant and modern. In one, the owner’s collection of guitars might be put proudly on display for guests to admire; in another, a host who studied in Paris might be offering French cuisine.

While Shizukuishi’s pensions do not offer hot-spring baths, guests can visit one of the many local facilities that welcome day visitors. For travelers who prefer the familiarity of a bed and Western food but would like to experience hospitality from a local family, a pension could be an excellent choice.

Ryokan and Minshuku

These are both Japanese-style accommodations; the main difference is size. A *ryokan* is probably what comes to mind when most people think of a classic Japanese inn. The building may be historic or modern, but the interior is always of traditional Japanese design. The emphasis is on hospitality and treating guests with the highest level of service possible.

Minshuku are also Japanese in style, but are smaller and simpler, with a more homelike atmosphere. The meaning of *minshuku* is “people’s inn,” as they are generally family homes that accept guests. *Minshuku* are found mostly in smaller rural areas like Shizukuishi.

In both types of lodging, guests will sleep on traditional futon bedding laid out on the floor and dine on Japanese-style dishes. Both *ryokan* and *minshuku* generally serve both breakfast and dinner, using fresh local ingredients in a wide variety of dishes. *Ryokan* menus in particular often feature house specialties, which are proudly offered to guests.

Guests are typically served in their own room, and eat at low tables while sitting on the tatami mats, but some accommodations also offer Western-style chairs and tables. After dinner is cleared away, staff will lay out the futon, as the focus is on anticipating guests' needs without being asked.

In Shizukuishi, both *ryokan* and *minshuku* feature Japanese-style baths. Many use water from local *onsen* hot springs, but the baths at *ryokan* are typically more luxurious, and there may even be more than one kind. Those sorts of details aside, both *ryokan* and *minshuku* allow their guests to experience aspects of traditional Japanese life, fresh seasonal food, and a relaxing warm bath.