

Shizukuishi Anekko Roadside Station (Michi-no-Eki)

Japan's roadside stations, or *michi-no-eki*, serve as convenient centers for travelers, offering services such as restaurants and takeout food, tourist information, gift items, and clean restrooms. Roadside stations often showcase regional specialties and features of the local area, and Shizukuishi Anekko is a particularly fine example of this.

The facility has four restaurants to suit all budgets and schedules, offering specialties like soba noodles, wasabi (Japanese horseradish), and dishes made with high-quality local beef. The Hitomebore soft-serve ice cream containing milk from Shizukuishi is very popular. There is also an expansive hot-spring facility that offers both Western- and Japanese-style baths to day visitors as well as people staying in the adjacent campground. A wide variety of locally produced crafts and food items can be purchased in the gift shops for souvenirs.

There is plenty of room for children to run around outside, and if time allows, it is worth taking a walk over the bridge leading to the campground for a view of the river. The word *anekko*—part of the name of the facility—is an affectionate term for a young woman in the local dialect. The bridge and the path to the camping area feature several mosaics of *anekko* based on characters from a regional folktale about five princesses.