

## Winter in Obanazawa

As one of Japan's snowiest regions, Obanazawa is known for its beautiful winter landscape. Freshly fallen snow blankets the traditional-style inns. The warm, gentle light of gas lamps illuminates guests wearing *yukata* (light cotton kimono) bundled up in overcoats, moving through the narrow streets of the towns. Swans soar gracefully through the air, on their annual journey to the frozen shores of Lake Tokura.

At Lake Tokura, the nearly two-month-long Tokurako Snowland event offers sledding, snowmobiling, and other activities. Skiers and snowboarders can enjoy the three slopes of nearby Hanagasa Kogen Ski Resort. Hanagasa no Yu's natural hot springs offer relaxation and relief from the cold.