

Seasons of Yamadera - Autumn

Morning mist rises from the forested mountains of Yamadera, and the leaves change from summer green to the blazing reds and golden yellows of autumn. Visitors can warm themselves with a hot bowl of *imoni*, a soup with taro potatoes, long onion, *konnyaku*, and beef, from one of the shops on the way to the temple. The cooler weather makes for a brisk journey up to the Godaido Hall, which offers views of the foliage across the surrounding valley.

The public is welcome to observe traditional Buddhist memorial services held at the Okunoin in the upper reaches of Yamadera during the week of the autumnal equinox. Monks in training at Yamadera must copy the Lotus Sutra in a time-consuming process that can take up to four years to complete. On November 28, during leap years, monks form a ritual procession to the Nokyodo sutra hall and present the completed sutras as an offering to Yamadera's founder, Ennin (794–864).