

## Yunokami Onsen

This picturesque hot spring (*onsen*) village lies in a valley along the Okawa River, and people have been coming to relax and soak in its waters since the Edo period (1603–1867). The traditional-style inns (*ryokan*) and private homes in the area are supplied with hot water directly from the source of seven different hot springs.

The bathing facilities of many establishments are open to day visitors, but an overnight stay is the best way to fully experience the hospitality of a Japanese inn. Visitors have a choice of more than 30 accommodations, making the village an ideal base for sightseeing in the area.

### *Community Spirit*

Yunokami Onsen Station has a traditional-style thatched roof and is half transportation hub and half community center. It provides a comfortable space inside for visitors to relax, with books, magazines, and tourism pamphlets available to browse, and a sunken hearth (*irori*). In the colder months, residents and visitors alike gather around the warmth of the fire burning in the stone-lined *irori*.

A variety of local souvenirs and food products, including fresh vegetables, are sold at the station. In the morning, it is common to see proprietors of the local inns stopping by to purchase produce for their guests' evening meals. There is a natural hot spring foot bath next to the station. It is open to anyone free of charge, and small towels to dry your feet can be purchased inside the station. The area around the station is a popular spot for viewing cherry blossoms in the spring.

Note: Some *onsen* may not accept guests with tattoos, so visitors are encouraged to check in advance. In some cases, small tattoos may be covered with a patch before entry, or it may be possible to reserve a private bath.