

Kuragaike Park

Kuragaike Park is a vast park in Toyota with a range of family-friendly outdoor activities. The sweeping view of the area makes it an ideal place to begin exploring the city.

Overlooking the park is the Kuragaike Parking Area, a highway rest stop along the Tokai Kanjo Expressway. Two of the area's tallest mountains, Mt. Sanage in Toyota and Mt. Rokusho in the Matsudaira area, are visible from the parking area's wheelchair-accessible observation deck. Toyota Stadium is also visible from there, and on a clear day it is possible to see all the way to Nagoya. The observation deck is particularly good for stargazing and watching fireworks at night.

The park has a restaurant and shop run by Snow Peak, an outdoor apparel brand. Further down the hill, in the heart of the park, are five rectangular mobile bungalows designed by Kuma Kengo (b. 1954), the architect behind Tokyo's National Stadium and French cultural center FRAC Marseilles. Kuma created these "Jyubako" ("living boxes") in collaboration with Snow Peak, and the trailers are available to rent for luxury accommodation in the park. There is also a regular campground nearby, and visitors can rent tents and camping equipment from the Snow Peak store.

The park gets its name from Kuragaike Pond, which sits roughly in the middle of the park and features koi carp, waterfowl, and paddle boats. Other outdoor activities include a free zoo and an old train from the Nagoya Railroad (commonly known as Meitetsu), which has been restored and set up in the park. There is also a children's play area and botanic gardens. Just beside the park is Toyota Kuragaike Commemorative Hall, a museum dedicated to the early history of Toyota Motor Corporation. The park is an excellent spot for picnics and is particularly popular in spring when the cherry blossoms are in full bloom.

The park is accessible by car from the Nagoya-bound side of the highway and by bus from Toyotashi Station.