

Hitoyoshi Hot Springs

Hitoyoshi has been popular as a hot spring (onsen) town since the 1940s, but people have enjoyed hot-spring bathing in the area since at least the late fifteenth century. Records indicate Sagara Tametsugu (1447–1500), the twelfth Sagara lord of Hitoyoshi Kuma, bathed in a hot spring at a local temple for his health. While there, he composed a waka poem recording his experience and expressing reverence to Kannon, the bodhisattva of compassion.

Each of the bathing facilities in Hitoyoshi has its own hot-spring source. The water from these springs tends to be slightly alkaline and may contain carbonates, which is a combination said to leave the skin feeling silky smooth. There are around 30 hot-spring facilities ranging from large open-air pools in garden surroundings to lively neighborhood baths in rustic bathhouses. Some have private baths that can be reserved for a fee. Public baths are segregated by gender, and bathing is without swimsuits. Some facilities have policies prohibiting tattoos, so please check in advance.