

Mt. Takamikura

Mt. Takamikura stands on the border between the cities of Kakogawa and Takasago in the Harima Alps. Since ancient times, this mountain has been considered sacred due to the exposed Tatsuyama stone, which is a precious local resource. At 304 meters above sea level, the summit provides climbers with excellent views of the surrounding area. In good weather it is possible to see as far as Awaji Island in the Seto Inland Sea, and even Shikoku.

The mountain, which can be climbed year-round, has a variety of trails for walkers of differing abilities. One of the most popular paths is the eight-kilometer Harima Alps Course, which starts at the parking lot of Kashima Jinja Shrine. This can be a challenging trail for beginners and offers little shade, so those climbing in mid-summer should take particular care.

Another popular option is the well-maintained Narui Course, which is the shortest way to the top of the mountain. This two-kilometer trail is suitable for beginners and families. It takes approximately one hour to reach Takamiyama Jinja Shrine on the summit.

Mt. Takamikura has attractions throughout the seasons. From mid-March to mid-April, cherry blossoms are in full bloom; then, in June and July, the rare *sasayuri* woodland lilies, native to Japan, are at their best. On New Year's Day, the Narui Course is illuminated for the convenience of the large number of climbers who wish to enjoy the first sunrise of the new year from the summit. The mountain has even been named the top sunrise-viewing spot in the region.