

## **Taketa Onsen Hanamizuki**

The Taketa Onsen Hanamizuki complex on the edge of the former castle town of Taketa consists of a hot-spring bathhouse and a gift shop.

Hot springs, including at nearby Nagayu Onsen, have long been enjoyed by the people of Taketa, but Hanamizuki was the first bathing facility in the immediate vicinity of the former castle town when it opened in 2001. Its traditional-style architecture was inspired by the city's history, including its local industry. For instance, a small waterfall in the baths is shaped like the Hakusui Dam, a heritage-listed structure located outside central Taketa.

The bathhouse is on the second floor, while the first floor houses a shop selling a variety of local souvenirs. These include food products made with *kabosu*, a citrus fruit that resembles a lime. Saffron is another noteworthy souvenir; around 80 percent of the saffron produced in Japan comes from Taketa.

Taketa Onsen Hanamizuki is also the place to buy the Castle Town Passport, a ticket that includes discounted entry to five major attractions in Taketa, including the bathhouse, the Oka Castle Ruins, and the Taketa History and Culture Museum. It is valid for two days and costs ¥800 for adults and ¥500 for children of elementary or junior high school age.

Outside the main entrance of Taketa Onsen Hanamizuki is a free foot bath where visitors can soothe tired toes on weekends between noon and 5:00 p.m.