

## Tateyama

The town of Tateyama in Toyama Prefecture is the starting point of the Tateyama Kurobe Alpine Route, a sightseeing course that traverses the Northern Alps. Along the route, travelers are treated to sweeping views of snow-covered peaks, deep valleys, and the massive concrete arch of the Kurobe Dam. In early spring, the highlight of the route is the snow corridor, a roadway flanked by walls of snow up to 20 meters high.

The area around Tateyama Station, the terminus of the Toyama Regional Railway, functions as a base for travelers on their way to the Alpine Route. Facilities include several restaurants, hotels, and traditional *ryokan* inns, as well as a museum that focuses on Tateyama's geological and cultural history. Conveniently accessible from the station is the 350-meter-high Shomyo Falls, the tallest waterfall in Japan.

Tateyama, however, is much more than the gateway to the Alpine Route. This municipality of some 25,000 people extends along the Joganji River, from the central parts of the fertile Toyama Plain all the way to the Hida mountain range. Towering over Tateyama is the three-peaked Mt. Tate (3,015 m), for which the area is named. The mountain has been considered sacred for millennia and is a well-known destination for both pilgrims and recreational climbers.

Traditional religious faith and practices related to these mountains can be explored in the village of Ashikuraji, the former epicenter of Tateyama-related beliefs, situated along the Joganji River downhill from Tateyama Station. There, the Tateyama Museum of Toyama offers an in-depth introduction to the area's social, religious, and environmental history.

On the edge of the Toyama Plain lies the village of Iwakuraji and in it Oyama Shrine, which enshrines the deity of Mt. Tate. A 20-minute drive from Iwakuraji is Green Park Yoshimine, a family-friendly woodland space with camping grounds, a hot-spring bathhouse, gardens, children's playgrounds, and a variety of sports facilities.