

Hida-Osaka Ecotourism

Lava flowing from an eruption of Mt. Ontake around 54,000 years ago hardened to create the distinctive topography of the Hida-Osaka area of Gero. The area is filled with lush forests, rocky gorges, and more than 200 waterfalls. Today, ecotourism activities in Hida-Osaka allow travelers to explore the area safely with professional guides who can share their knowledge of the landscape.

Hiking in springtime introduces visitors to flora such as white-flowering anise magnolia and purple *mitsuba tsutsuji* azaleas. “Shower climbing” is a popular activity in summer. Participants wade through rivers and scale waterfalls using specialized equipment and wearing wet suits. In autumn, the red and gold foliage is especially striking around Kannondaki Falls and in the forest of Harahaccho.

Snowshoe tours in winter offer a chance to explore the terrain of Hida-Osaka and enjoy views of Mt. Ontake and the northern Japanese Alps. Some waterfalls freeze over during the colder months and form striking curtains of blue and white icicles. Ecotourism highlights the distinctive features of Hida-Osaka and its geological history while conveying the importance of conservation.