

The Mt. Amakazari and Itoigawa City Area

This section of the Amatomi Trail winds westward through rugged mountains and beech forests, concluding with a view of the Sea of Japan from the city of Itoigawa. One route requires a steep climb up Mt. Amakazari, with the reward of a secluded hot spring and views of both the ocean and the Northern Japanese Alps. For hikers who may have difficulty with this climb, there is an alternative route around the mountain.

Myoko-Togakushi Renzan National Park, along with much of the Kanto region, lies on a lowland rift known as the Fossa Magna. This is Latin for “great crevasse.” A variety of geological processes took place here over millions of years, including tectonic plate movements, underwater volcanic activity, and landslides. This resulted in the diverse shapes of the mountains clustered around the Amatomi Trail, from the sharp-peaked Mt. Amakazari to the conical stratovolcano Mt. Myoko. The Fossa Magna Museum, near the trail, provides a deeper look into the area’s complex geography.

The Amatori Trail connects to the Shio-no-michi Trail, a historic trading route used to carry salt from seaside Itoigawa to the inland city of Matsumoto. The Shio-no-michi Trail continues to Itoigawa Station, which has bullet train access as well as a train museum and displays about local geological history. Hikers can choose to begin the long trail here in Itoigawa after having picked up these insights about the mountains that lie ahead.