

Hirogawara

From logging center to climbing center

Hirogawara was an important logging center during the Edo period (1603–1867) due to the number of large old trees in the surrounding mountains.

Once felled, the trees were floated down the Norogawa River, into the Hayakawa and then into the Fujikawa, which reaches the sea at Shizuoka.

Such was the quality of Hirogawara timber that it was used to repair the buildings of Edo Castle, the shogunal palace in Tokyo (then known as Edo), in 1834. In modern times, Hirogawara has established itself as the trailhead for climbing Mt. Kitadake. It is located at an altitude of 1,550 meters, some 1,643 meters below the mountain's summit.

Visitors who want to take a closer and more leisurely look at the distinctive forestscape of Mt. Kitadake than they are likely to get while scrabbling up the mountain should cross the river beside the bus rotary and make a quick circuit through Hirogawara Park on the far bank. Since Hirogawara is near

the top of the montane zone, the park features a mix of conifers, such as the Nikko fir, and deciduous trees like the katsura and beech—a combination that makes for particularly vivid color contrasts in autumn.

Visitors alert for signs of deer damage will notice the close cropping of the forest-floor cover and the occasional tree denuded of its bark by deer rubbing their antlers against it.