

Mt. Adatara

Mt. Adatara is a 1,700-meter peak on the western edge of the city of Nihonmatsu in Fukushima Prefecture. Its distinctive profile, floral beauty, and ready accessibility have made it a symbol of the region and a popular destination for hikers during warmer months.

A Geothermal Powerhouse

Mt. Adatara is part of a group of volcanoes that also includes Mt. Minowa and Mt. Tetsu. The massif was formed by volcanic activity that began around 500,000 years ago. Mt. Adatara took its current form roughly 200,000 years ago, and remains an active volcano today. The last major eruption was in 1900.

This volcanism has given the mountain rich deposits of sulfur and

numerous hot springs. Both have attracted human interest for centuries, and neighboring towns like Dake Onsen still draw hot-spring water from the heights through many kilometers of pipes.

Beloved by Poets and Naturists Alike

Mt. Adatara is the northernmost mountain to receive mention in the eighth-century *Man'yōshū*, the oldest surviving anthology of Japanese poetry. More recently, it appeared in a celebrated 1927 verse by sculptor and poet Takamura Kotaro. Takamura's wife Chieko, an artist and feminist, was born in Nihonmatsu, and in the poem he relates her insistence that the only "real sky" is the sky above Mt. Adatara. Yakushidake Panorama Park is one of many scenic lookouts in Fukushima inviting visitors to admire this "real sky."

Mt. Adatara is not only cited as one of Japan's "Hundred Great Mountains," it was also included on a similar list of 100 mountains chosen

for the beauty of their flora. Rhododendrons and azaleas are particularly prominent on its slopes, with dozens of varieties blooming in colors ranging from pale yellow to bright red.

Climbing Mt. Adatara

The most popular climbing route up Mt. Adatara begins at the Okudake Trailhead. It is a moderate half-day round trip requiring no special equipment. The first half of the route, from the trailhead to Yakushidake Panorama Park, can be replaced by a 10-minute ride on the Adatara Mountain Ropeway. The ropeway is only open during the “green season” from April to November. Climbing in other months is discouraged for those without winter mountaineering experience. Yakushidake Panorama Park has views of Mt. Kago and Mt. Tetsu to the northwest, and the city of Nihonmatsu and the Abukuma River to the east.

The second half of the route is a 2.4-kilometer climb from Yakushidake

Panorama Park to the peak, taking about 75 minutes. The slope is gentle at first but steepens slightly after the Sennyodaira Fork, a landmark roughly at the halfway point. As the altitude rises, tall deciduous trees give way to spreading pines and low-lying bushes.

The rugged peak has unobstructed views of the surrounding landscape, including Mt. Osho to the south, Mt. Bandai and the Iide Range to the west, and the Azuma Range to the north. When the wind is not too strong, visitors can take another trail north to visit Numanotaira Crater and Mt. Tetsu before doubling back to return along the same route to the Okudake Trailhead.