

Sasagawa Nagare

Sasagawa Nagare is an eleven-kilometer stretch of coastline north of central Murakami that is popular among swimmers in summer. The area's clear water and white beaches are in sharp contrast with its rugged natural beauty. This is a landscape of countless coves and inlets fed by mountain streams and brooks, sheer cliffs rising from the sea, and spiky rocks shaped by the waves. In many places, the outcrops are covered with squat pines and bushes bent into strange shapes by the incessant ocean winds.

Driving along the coastline on the winding National Road 345 is a good way to get an overview of the scenery. Another option is to board a 40-minute sightseeing cruise from Kuwagawa Port, where boats depart nine times daily between April and October, when the seas are comparatively calm. (Note that cruises are sometimes canceled due to strong winds.)

Winter brings frequent storms and raging waves, and the coves are sometimes filled with a froth of sea foam. The phenomenon occurs when

cold seawater that contains a high concentration of organic matter, such as plankton or dissolved algae, crashes violently against the rocks.

On the culinary front, Sasagawa Nagare is noted for the rock oysters that thrive along its coast. During winter and spring, the oysters grow plump as they feed on nutrient-rich water released into the sea by streams and brooks. Another local product is natural salt, which is boiled down from seawater in small factories. The traditional process can be observed at a salt workshop on the shore.