

Fukiware Canyon

Steep walls of exposed rock rise high above the swirling water on either side of the Katashina River at Fukiware Canyon, around 30 minutes northeast of central Numata by car. The deep gorge has several waterfalls, including Fukiware Falls, a cluster of intertwined cataracts up to 7 meters high that plunge through cracks in the rock caused by the flow of the river over millennia. The effects of erosion can also be seen elsewhere around the falls. For example, in several giant potholes formed by pebbles caught in circular currents wearing away at the rock, and along the sheer cliffs, one of which has eroded into a shape resembling a Noh mask. Paved walking paths run along the river and there is access to the rocky banks in some places.

Fukiware Canyon is most dramatic from mid-April through early May, when meltwater from the nearby mountains fills the river to the brim and water rages over the falls, past fresh greenery and blooming wildflowers on

the riverbanks. The canyon also shines in autumn, when vibrant seasonal foliage contrasts with the dark rocks and white water. After the long rains that often linger in Numata in late October and November, red and orange maple leaves collect underneath some of the waterfalls, occasionally forming a colorful carpet. Winter brings a serene, snow-covered landscape. The riverside walking paths are closed during the winter, and the view is best taken in from the Rokkakudo, a gazebo high above the river that is partially obscured by vegetation in warmer seasons.