

Festivals and Events

Each season draws the community together
Where smiles and good spirits flourish
*Event dates are subject to change.

Feb	Third Sunday Late February	Kagihiki Festival at Nakatsu Shrine Takakuma Mountains Season Opening
Apr	First Sunday Mid-to late April Late April	Ondankora Festival Air Memorial in Kanoya Takatoge Azalea Festival Kanoya Rose Festival (Spring)
May	Early May	Tarumizu Kanpachi Festival
Aug	Mid-August Late April to early June	Tarumizu Fureai Summer Festa Kanoya Summer Festival
Sep	Mid- to late September	Early Autumn Takakuma Mountains Trekking
Oct	Mid-October Late October to mid-November	Lake Osumi Lakeside Festival Kanoya Rose Festival (Autumn)
Nov	Early November Late November Late November to mid-December	Tarumizu Fureai Autumn Industrial Festival Kanoya Autumn Festival Kanoya City Agricultural Festival Tour de Osumi Cycling Race Tarumizu Thousand Ginkgoes Festival
Dec	Early December	Winter Fireworks & Winter Festival

Tarumizu City Tourism Event  **Kanoya City Tourism Event** 

Takakumayama Prefectural Nature Park

Water and the Takakuma Mountains: Their Stories

Lake Osumi, nestled at the foot of the Takakuma Mountains, is a tranquil haven whose abundant waters nourish both the local community and the surrounding landscape. Scattered nearby are three major waterfalls — Shirataki, Mantaki (also called Kurotaki), and Akamatsutaki — each offering its own mix of force and calm. The dramatic meeting of water and forest creates vistas that captivate everyone who comes here.



Lake Osumi

Lake Osumi, nestled in the Kushira River basin, is a reservoir with a circumference of about 10 kilometers. Completed in 1967, it was built to provide irrigation water for the Kasaohara Plateau, a region blanketed in volcanic ash soil. Today, the lake's surroundings have been beautifully transformed into a park, celebrated for their seasonal splendor—cherry blossoms in spring and vibrant hydrangeas in early summer. For decades, Lake Osumi has been cherished as a serene getaway, offering local residents a place to unwind and visitors a peaceful escape amid nature's ever-changing colors.

The Three Great Waterfalls of the Takakuma Mountains



Shirataki, Mantaki, and Akamatsu falls lie in the gorges on the southern slopes of the Takakuma Mountains, each offering its own distinct expression of natural beauty and calm. Shirataki impresses with a dramatic 62-meter drop, Mantaki glides quietly over dark rock, and Akamatsutaki, framed by red pines, creates a scene that feels almost otherworldly. These three waterfalls make ideal resting spots along a hike—a place to pause, recharge, and experience the soothing presence of flowing water.

Another must-see beyond the three major waterfalls!

Tanida Falls

Tanida Falls is dotted with clusters of potholes, carved by nature into fascinating shapes over centuries. The gorge resonates with the sound of rushing water and stays refreshingly cool even in summer—a hidden gem cherished by locals. Here, water and stone weave a dreamlike landscape. *Please note that there are no safety railings in the area, so explore with caution.

Recommended Routes to Explore the Takakuma Mountains

Discover the Region's Rich Nature, History, and Culture

Enjoy the Water Landscapes

ROUTE 1 Sarugajo Gorge Area Route

From the sea to soothing hot springs, this journey celebrates the wonders of water through all five senses. Perfect for families, it offers moments of connection and discovery as you explore nature and history at a leisurely pace.

- Roadside Station Tarumizu Yuttarikan**
Restore body and mind with hot springs and local flavors—the journey begins here! Approx. 3 min
- Ushinefumoto Inari Shrine Buried Torii Gate**
Buried by the great eruption of Sakurajima, this torii tells a story of nature's force and the history left in its wake. Approx. 45 min
- Takatoge Tsutsujigaoka Park**
Takatoge's vibrant azalea-covered slopes offer a spectacular view alive with nature's energy.
- Lunch**
Approx. 40 min
- Sarugajo Gorge**
A popular spot for families to splash in the water, wander the trails, and enjoy nature at its best! Approx. 15 min
- Roadside Station Tarumizu Hamabira**
A fitting end to your journey: breathtaking views of Kinko Bay, delicious local fare, and time to find the perfect souvenir.

Enjoy the Green Landscapes

ROUTE 2 Shirataki Area Route

Led by the forest's quiet and its lush green embrace, this journey soothes the soul as you follow the crystal-clear waters of the falls. It's a serene escape where nature restores and calm comes naturally.

- Yukusa Osumi Umi no Gakko**
Take in the calm of the sea and let your nature-filled journey begin! Approx. 1 min
- Sugawara Shrine (Arahira Tenjin)**
Savor the incredible scenery at a shrine that feeds one with nature! Approx. 30 min (Park your car at Meinoo Ranch)
- Shirataki Falls**
Nestled in vibrant green, Shirataki offers a tranquil escape—its clear waters and calm surroundings inviting pure relaxation.
- Lunch**
Approx. 31 min
- Kanoya Air Base Museum**
The museum features exhibits that trace the history of aviation and inspire reflection on peace. On the same site
- Kanoya City Tourism and Local Products Center**
The shop offers a selection of local specialties and souvenirs, as well as Japan Self-Defense Forces-related goods.

Activities

Here, the mountains, the water, and the sky all welcome you like old friends.

- Sarugajo Gorge**
Sarugajo Gorge Mori-no-Eki Tarumizu
The nature-rich Sarugajo Gorge is shaped by crystal-clear waters that tumble through a landscape lined with unusual granite formations and massive boulders. Right beside the gorge, Mori-no-Eki Tarumizu offers a wide range of activities—from canyoning and rainbow trout fishing to tent saunas and e-biking. With cottages and camping facilities on-site, it serves as a well-rounded destination for both outdoor adventure and relaxation.
- Yukusa Osumi Umi no Gakko**
This experiential accommodation was created by renovating Sugawara Elementary School in Kanoya, once known as "Japan's closest school to the sea." Guests can stay in repurposed classrooms unique to the former school, enjoy the on-site campground, and take part in activities held in the gymnasium and on the sports field. Just beyond the grounds lies Kinko Bay, where visitors can kayak, explore the tide pools, and experience the natural beauty of Osumi up close.
- Kihoku Uwaba Park**
Kihoku Uwaba Park sits atop a 550-meter plateau, offering a sweeping 360-degree panorama that includes Sakurajima, the Kirishima mountain range, the Pacific Ocean, and the Takakuma Mountains. Taking full advantage of its nature-rich setting, the park is home to the Kihoku Tenkyukan observatory—recognized for having Japan's best stargazing—as well as Fureai no Mori, an area with an athletic playground and walking trails. Camping facilities and bungalows are also available, providing a variety of ways to enjoy the outdoors.
- Relax in the soothing hot springs** A hot spring culture intertwined with the region's nature and daily life
After a day of hiking and outdoor activities, unwind and reset both body and mind in the local hot springs. In Kanoya, you can soak in mountain springs, while in Tarumizu, the baths offer spectacular views of the sea. Surrounded by nature, relax and reflect on the day's adventures—one of the true pleasures of the journey.

Takakumayama Prefectural Nature Park

See all featured locations on Google Maps! 

- 1 Kihoku Tenkyukan**
Located within Kihoku Town's Kihoku Uwaba Park—renowned for offering Japan's best stargazing—this observatory houses a 65-centimeter telescope that allows visitors to observe stars and planets both day and night. Inside, you can explore space-themed exhibits and videos, and on weekends, stargazing programs are held. It's a place where you can experience the beauty of nature and the night sky firsthand.
- 2 Ushinefumoto Inari Shrine | Buried torii gate**
This torii gate was buried during the great Taisho eruption of Sakurajima in 1914. In February 2012, it was designated a Natural Monument by Tarumizu City. The earthquake triggered by the eruption shifted the gate's pillars slightly to either side of their center, yet even after more than a century, they remain firmly joined without separating. Because of this, the gate is regarded as a symbol of marital harmony—a pair that stays close and steadfast.
- 3 Takatoge Tsutsujigaoka Park**
In spring, from late April to early May, the entire mountain is blanketed in shades of red and pink as native Sata azaleas come into bloom. From the observation deck, you can take in a sweeping panorama: the Kirishima mountain range to the north, Shibushi Bay to the east, the Takakuma Mountains extending to the south, and below, a stunning view of Kinko Bay, Sakurajima, and the Satsuma Peninsula.
- 4 Ohno ESD Nature School**
Centered around the former Ohno Elementary and Junior High School, this experiential learning facility takes full advantage of Takakuma's natural surroundings. It offers a wide range of outdoor activities—camping, crafts, and stream trekking—all available by reservation. Indoors, the gymnasium provides ample space for games and activities, no matter the weather.
- 5 Tarumizu Thousand Ginkgoes**
Created through the shared dedication of its husband-and-wife owners, this "Golden Paradise" spans 4.5 hectares and is home to roughly 1,200 ginkgo trees. Climb the steps to the hilltop and you'll be rewarded with a sweeping view of Tarumizu's cityscape.
- 6 Kannonbuchi Medieval Memorial Tower Cluster**
Inside a natural cave—shaped over centuries by groundwater and measuring about 8 meters high, 16 meters wide, and 30 meters deep—stand a group of memorial towers dedicated to those involved in local land development and to lives lost during periods of conflict. Fresh-spring water seeps from the rock, long known as some of the area's finest, and many people visit to draw it.
- 7 Meinoo Ranch**
Situated at an elevation of 500 meters, this city-managed pastureland is a wide, open expanse where Holstein cattle graze freely. Set against the Takakuma mountain range, the sweeping meadows and the ranch's distinctive red, pointed roof create a picturesque landscape often referred to as the "Alps of the East."
- 8 Sugawara Shrine (Arahira Tenjin)**
Also known as Arahira Tenjin, Sugawara Shrine is a historic seaside shrine dedicated to Sugawara no Michizane, the deity of learning. At high tide, its torii gate appears to float on the sea, creating a strikingly atmospheric scene, while the crystal-clear water offers a sense of calm. On clear days, you can even see Mount Kaimon in the distance. Long cherished as a spiritual landmark, it remains one of the region's most beloved places for its strong sense of sacred energy.