

Takasaki City

Takasaki City

In olden times Takasaki flourished as a post-station along one of Edo Japan's main roads. Today, the city is a strategic rail and expressway stop for Japan's high-speed transit system. Situated 50 minutes outside the Tokyo Metropolitan Region, Takasaki shows all the signs of a bustling commercial city. Takasaki is also home to the Gunma Symphony, making it one of only a handful of Japan's regional cities to have an orchestra. It is the site of numerous music events held at the Gunma Music Center as well as other venues. Takasaki is a city that's in touch with nature and has numerous onsens (hot springs) where you can relax and allow your body to recuperate.



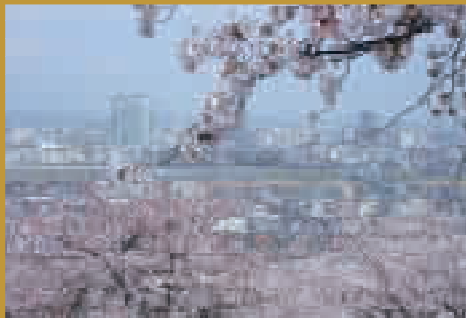
Kannon yama

Kannon Yama



In the Kannon-yama Hills spreading out to the west of the central city stands the Byakui Dai-Kannon, who smiles benevolently as she keeps watch over the streets of Takasaki. The Goddess's concrete statue is 41.8m tall (equivalent to a 9-story building) and weighs 6000 tons. You can visit her hollow interior and pay your respects to numerous Buddhist idols as you climb the stairs to her shoulder. From her shoulder you can see a sweeping view of the city of Takasaki. When the approximately 3000 Japanese cherry trees blossom in the spring, the entire hill becomes covered in pink.

Transportation: From JR Takasaki Station – 40 minute walk or 20 minutes by bus.
Fees: Statue Entrance Fee - ¥300 for adults



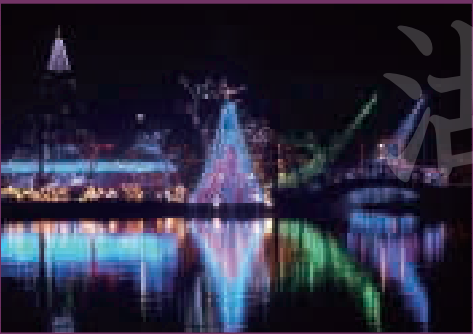
Lake Haruna

Lake Haruna



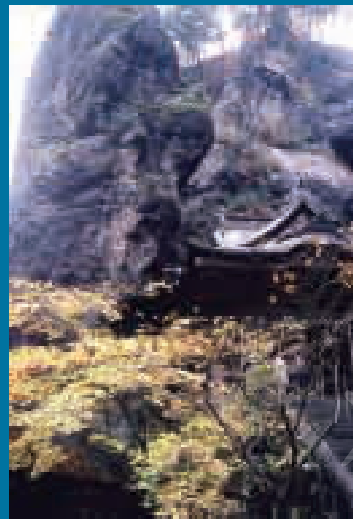
Lake Haruna is located near the top of Mt. Haruna, one of the most famous mountains in Gunma Prefecture. At an elevation of close to 1,100m and surrounded by mountains, the beautiful waters of Lake Haruna reflect the colors of each changing season. There are hiking trails maintained along the outer rim of the crater that surrounds the lake and various flowers can be enjoyed during each season from late April through late September. There are also fantastic light shows held by the lake during the winter.

Access: 90 minute bus ride from JR Takasaki Station



Haruna Temple

Haruna Shrine



Haruna Shrine stands amidst a majestic formation of strangely shaped rocks that rise straight from the earth. With an approximately 1,400 year history, the shrine has attracted the faithful throughout the ages. The shrine's historic buildings and a giant 600 year old tree provide numerous highlights, including pavilions that have been integrated with the rocks. You can also enjoy a bowl of Monzen Soba ("Before the Gate" Buckwheat Noodles), a specialty dish served at eateries in the town.

Access: 70 minute bus ride from JR Takasaki Station



Daruma

Daruma



Daruma dolls are a leading form of a good luck charm in Japan, and approximately 80% of the country's Daruma dolls are manufactured in Takasaki. Takasaki Darumas are characterized by their eyebrows, which are symbolized by cranes, and by their noses and moustaches, which are symbolized by turtles. Because they are modeled after these two animals, both of which are associated with long life, the faces are considered to be extremely auspicious. You make your wish to the Daruma by first filling in its right eye while you say a prayer for what you want (e.g. an uneventful year, etc.). When the wish comes true you fill in the other eye as a way of appreciation.

Shorinzan Daruma Temple

The temple where the Darumas originated. Takasaki Darumas can be purchased here, and many people come to buy them during the Daruma Market, which is open for 2 days every year on January 6th and 7th.

Transportation 20 minute bus ride from JR Takasaki Station
20 minute walk from JR Gunma-Yawata Station



Takasaki Festival

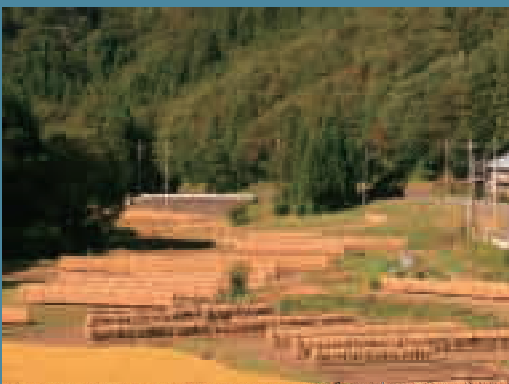
Takasaki Festival

The Takasaki Festival is held each year on the first Saturday in August. The central city roars to life as people dressed in Happis (workman's livery coats) carry Mikoshis (portable shrines) and pull floats through the streets. There is also a fireworks display on the Saturday night. Besides the Takasaki Festival, from late July to the end of August there are numerous other summer festivals held in various neighborhoods throughout the city.



Dousojin

Traveler's Guardian Deity



The Kurabuchi and Haruna areas in Takasaki's northwest have retained much of their natural beauty and atmosphere making them great places to enjoy mountain climbing, camping, and onsens (hot springs). You can also see many Soutai Dousojin (a type of Dousojin depicting a happily married couple) with unique shapes. Dousojin are stone markers or figures that are worshipped as deities. These deities are believed to protect the town, bless people with children, and watch over travelers during their journeys.

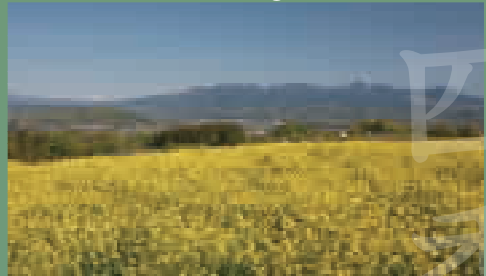


Flowers

Seasonal Flowers

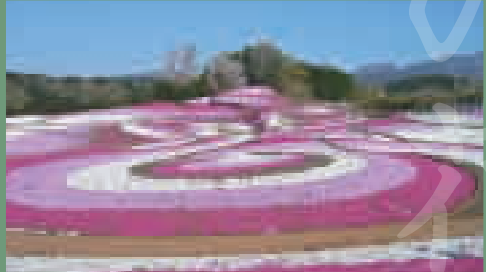
You can sense the seasons in Takasaki through the various flowers as they bloom. Each new season brings new flowers to be admired.

Hanadaka Viewing Flower Hills

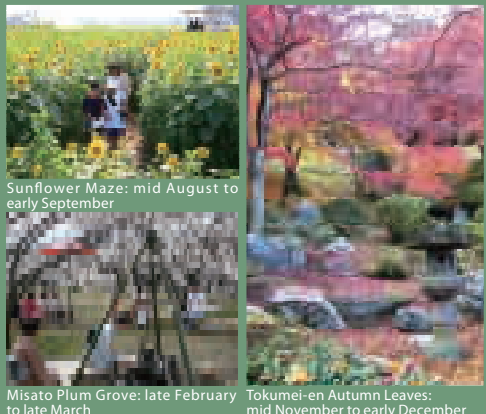


Visitors can enjoy looking out at the surrounding mountains and view over 15 types of flowers throughout the year, including rape blossoms (late April through late May) and cosmos (late September to early November).

Misato Moss Pink Park



Bands of red, pink, and white Moss Pink blossoms form waves and whirlpools as they undulate and eddy along the pathways and across the landscape. (mid April to early May)



Sunflower Maze: mid August to early September

Misato Plum Grove: late February to late March

Tokumei-en Autumn Leaves: mid November to early December