



## A Magical Winter In Kinosaki

### Snow-Covered Willow Trees And Mystic Hot Springs



During the colder months in [Kinosaki Onsen](#), the clip-clop of *geta* (wooden clogs) mingles with the soft crunch of fresh snow as wintertime visitors brave the chilly breeze on their way to one of Kinosaki's [Seven Mystic Hot Springs](#). As the first dusting of powdery snow floats down onto the willow-lined streets of Kinosaki, the hot spring town sheds its vibrant greenery for frosty tree branches and snow-capped mountain views.



A leisurely walk through Kinosaki's snowy town center presents travelers with scenery and activities unique to a Japanese hot spring town. Pedestrians clad in a *haori* (winter coat for kimono) with a [winter-themed yukata](#) (light cotton kimono) underneath can escape the cold for [cozy cafes](#) with toasty beverages or try their hand at a traditional shooting game in one of the local arcades. Before entering one of the public bath houses for a hot spring dip, visitors

can also warm their feet in one of the free foot baths dotted throughout the town.

After a [relaxing stroll](#) through the center of town, those interested in venturing out into Kinosaki's nearby forested winter wonderland are welcome to visit tranquil and secluded [Onsenji Temple](#), a Buddhist place of worship enveloped by snow-capped trees in the winter. In the past, visitors to Kinosaki Onsen would first pay their respects at Onsenji Temple before entering any of Kinosaki's hot springs. Travelers who don't mind the brisk mountain wind are encouraged to continue this tradition!



## A Vintage Winter Wonderland And A Warm Meal

To the south of Kinosaki lies a town that residents refer to as "Little Kyoto." [Izushi](#), Kinosaki's nearby castle town, is the perfect winter day trip just 50 minutes by bus from Kinosaki Onsen Station. Visitors are welcome to admire the snow-dusted vintage architecture of [Izushi Castle Ruins and Shinkoro Tower](#), a traditional Japanese clocktower considered to be one of the oldest in Japan.

After exploring the town, travelers can pop into any of the countless [soba](#) (buckwheat noodles) restaurants lining the town streets for a hot meal, cozy atmosphere, and conversation with warm and friendly locals.



## Skiing Under The Stars

[Nighttime skiing](#) in the highland countryside town of [Kannabe](#) is a yearly pastime attracting adventurous tourists from neighboring towns and prefectures. Just 40 minutes by car from Kinosaki Onsen, visitors can either spend a night in one of Kannabe's quaint and inviting inns as a side trip from Kinosaki or take a nighttime drive back to their Kinosaki *ryokan* (inn) after an evening of skiing under the stars. Those who would rather experience a daytime adventure in Kannabe are welcome to try skiing during the day or even [snowshoeing](#)!



## A Cozy Night In A Rural Farmhouse

Looking for an off-the-beaten-path, one-with-wilderness destination? [Zen](#), a farmhouse *minshuku* (homestay) tucked away amongst the snow-capped mountains in [Tanto](#), is the perfect accommodation for nature-lovers and those longing for the ultimate wintertime Japanese homestay. In the spirit of a do-it-yourself experience, guests can heat their own bath water, cook their meals on a traditional stove with chopped wood for fire, and sit on *zabuton* (Japanese cushions) while eating around an *irori* (sunken hearth). Depending on the amount of snow, guests can even build a snowman before heading back inside for a night's sleep on a comfy futon.



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[Kinosaki Onsen](#) is a town of time-honored hot springs dating back 1300 years ago. It is home to seven public bathhouses, all located within walking distance of each other and the train station. Guests are encouraged to wear yukata and geta, stroll through the town, and go onsen-hopping.

[Toyooka](#) is a downtown area home to the Oriental White Stork, a bird that was revived from extinction in this very town. The city's efforts restored the Oriental White Stork population, and now over 260 fly the skies of Japan. Toyooka is also known for the Genbudo Caves.



[Izushi](#) is the resident castle town, popular for its nostalgic atmosphere of Edo-era Japan. It is home to many interesting attractions such as castle ruins, a samurai house, a kabuki theater, and a clock tower. The town's specialty is Izushi Sara Soba, buckwheat noodles served in small portions on small plates.

[Kannabe](#) is a mountainous area with fun activities year-round. In the winter, one can go skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, and sledding. In the warm months, one can go camping, paragliding, fishing, tree climbing, and more. Kannabe is the perfect destination for adventurers.



[Takeno](#) is a quaint fisherman town that is a hidden gem among the northern coast of Hyogo Prefecture. The beach has clear, blue waters while the mountains surrounding it offer great hiking opportunities. It is encouraged to stroll through the peaceful town, where one can find small shops and traditional landscapes.

[Tanto](#) is a quiet countryside town with magnificent nature—including a giant field of tulips in the spring and brilliant red-leaved trees in the fall.

