



## A River of Blossoms: Springtime in Kinosaki



### A Series of Beginnings

As dustings of pink buds scatter across Kinosaki's trees, eager townspeople flock to the narrow paths alongside the Otani River for a glimpse of one of Kinosaki's most magical sights of the year: the blooming of the cherry blossoms. Cherry blossoms are recognized across Japan as an optimistic symbol of rebirth and fresh beginnings, and this sentiment rings especially true for the locals of Kinosaki Onsen. From its beginnings as a small hot spring resort over one thousand years ago to its struggle to rebuild and reconnect with tradition after the [1925 North Tajima Earthquake](#), and even in the modern day as new cafes and stores become part of the [1300-year-old townscape](#), Kinosaki Onsen undoubtedly has had its share of rebirth and new beginnings. In the midst of constant change and development throughout the centuries, Kinosaki's cherry blossoms, blooming every year in April, are a consistent reminder that no matter how much change time brings to Kinosaki Onsen, the traditional beauty and ambience of the town will be ever-present for [locals and visitors alike](#).



## Must-Try Experiences in Kinossaki Onsen: Cherry Blossom Edition

### *Sozoro Aruki and Hanami*

[Sozoro Aruki](#), literally meaning to wander aimlessly, is one of the best



A cherry blossom-themed manhole on Kinossaki's streets.

ways to truly immerse oneself in the relaxing atmosphere of Kinossaki during springtime.

After [donning a colorful floral yukata \(light cotton kimono\)](#), strolling through the willow and cherry blossom-lined streets of town is an unforgettable experience. Many businesses decorate their storefronts with cherry blossom decorations, and visitors should be

sure to keep an eye out for the many hidden blossom-themed sights scattered throughout town, including intricately designed bridges and even manholes.



### Mugiwara Zaiku: Straw Craft Keepsakes

Kinossaki Onsen is home to [Mugiwara Zaiku \(Straw Craft\)](#), a 300-year-old traditional artform with only four master craftsmen alive today. Pieces of straw are dyed, cut,

and placed in intricate designs on wooden boxes, jewelry, chopsticks, and more. Mister Kamiya, one of these remaining craftsmen and the owner of [Kamiya Mingei](#), creates and sells cherry blossom straw craft works every year during springtime. Portraits, keychains, and other unique products are available to bring home as a souvenir.



### Springtime Sweets

Traditional springtime sweets across Japan are usually created with a *mochi* base made from a mixture of water and rice. Cherry blossom

treats including *sakura mochi* (sweet rice cake with a red bean filling and pickled cherry leaf) and other Japanese confections like *ichigo daifuku* (fresh strawberries wrapped inside a sweet *mochi* and white bean coating) and can be found in many of the gift stores and food vendors lining Kinossaki's streets, such as [Minatoya](#), a locally



*Ichigo daifuku*, available from November to May



Japanese confectionery inspired by springtime flowers

run souvenir shop. It's recommended to enjoy some of these sweets after a stroll around town, and before a soak in the hot springs!

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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.

