

Where to Get the Full Onsen Experience in Kaga City



Located just 2 hours and 40 minutes from Tokyo by the Hokuriku Shinkansen, Kaga is known for its historical significance and seasonal cuisine. More importantly, it's home to some of the most distinctive onsens in the country. It's hard to pick a favorite among the three main onsen towns. One is a nature lover's paradise; another is a haven for history buffs, and the third is a feast for the eyes and stomach. If you asked the locals, each would proudly boast about their own onsen.

I intend to find out for myself. So, we'll begin at Kagaonsen Station Tourist Information Centre. You can purchase a helpful Onsen Passport there, and it gives you unlimited CANBUS rides and includes three Soyu (public bathhouse) vouchers, perfect for my investigation.



Exploring the Three Onsen Towns



CANBUS Kaga Tour Bus

You can discover Kaga with CANBUS. Starting from Kagaonsen Station, it makes a circuit of the sightseeing spots around the three onsen towns.

Yamashiro Onsen 21

Japan's connection to onsens goes back thousands of years. Emperors and monks believed hot spring water was sacred and medicinal. In fact, Yamashiro Onsen—like many others—is still believed to have healing properties. The Ko-soyu is a time capsule from the Meiji period (1868-1912), faithfully rebuilt based on the original 1886 bathhouse. With colorful glass panels and



Yamashiro Onsen Ko-soyu

Kutani-yaki porcelain tiles, it represents a blend of Japanese and Western architecture. However, such historical accuracy means there are no modern showering facilities. It's best to shower beforehand (either at your ryokan or a nearby bathhouse) or bathe directly in the onsen. I found the water just right.

Katayamazu Onsen 12



Katayamazu Onsen Soyu

There is a long-standing Japanese tradition of drinking coffee milk after a soak, but why not opt for a coffee set instead? At Katayamazu Onsen, you might mistake the bathhouse for a library. Designed by renowned architect Yoshio Taniguchi, the minimalist, brutalist structure offers private views of either the lake or the garden, depending on the layout that day. Despite its modern design, it feels just as authentic as any traditional onsen. I came for the soak but stayed for the cafe on the second floor.

Yamanaka Onsen 19

It's easy to forget that without nature, onsens wouldn't exist. Yamanaka Onsen, a traditional mountain village, symbolizes co-existence with nature. Whether through foraged mountain vegetables or hand-lacquered crafts, locals treasure the gifts of their environment. This is why the



bath at Yamanaka Onsen is so simple. With fewer distractions, you naturally slip into a meditative state. This stillness honed my patience, and the hot water grounded me. After 10 minutes, I found a deeper appreciation for the mountain.

Staying at a Ryokan to Fully Experience Onsen Culture

One city, three onsens, each unique and memorable. Yamashiro Onsen is a living historical landmark; Katayamazu Onsen is a futuristic bathhouse, and Yamanaka



Machi-Cafe (Katayamazu Onsen Soyu)

Writer / Model: Nejam Abderrahemane (Abdo)

Onsen is an indoor mountain retreat. It's hard to choose a favorite. I need more time. Perhaps a longer stay at a ryokan—relishing local cuisine and immersing myself in all that Kaga offers—is the only way to find out.



Yamashiro Onsen Soyu and Ko-soyu Public Bathhouse

Open: 6:00-22:00 / Fee: Soyu 500 yen (Ko-soyu 700 yen) / Closed: 6:00-12:00 on the 4th Wednesday of each month



Yamanaka Onsen Kiku no Yu Public Bathhouse

Open: Daily 6:45-22:00 / Fee: 500 yen / Closed: Occasionally, and on the 2nd & 4th Tuesdays (open on national holidays)



Katayamazu Onsen Soyu Public Bathhouse

Open: Daily 6:00-22:00 / Fee: 500 yen / Closed: Occasionally

Activities and Workshops in Kaga City

While enjoying the variety of hot springs, experience Kaga's traditional culture and mouth-watering food! Here, we have selected three of our recommendations, but there is an impressive range of activities throughout the area!

Traditional Crafts (Yamanaka Lacquerware)

Craftour クラフトツアー

Experience Yamanaka Lacquerware's artisanal history firsthand, through intimate private tours. Immerse yourself in a lacquerware production region once beloved by famous writers and artists.

Choose one of three tours (or a combination): Wood Turning, Lacquer decoration and Plastic coating.



Japanese Sweets

Sankaido Japanese Sweet Making Experience 上生菓子手作り体験

The Yamanaka Onsen-based confectionary store **Sankaido** was established back in 1905, and is an essential part of the townscape. Following the four generations of craftsmen in her family, Kuroda Asami works to inherit the business and spread the appeal of Japanese sweets. In her workshop welcome to international visitors, create Japanese sweets that appeal to all five senses!



Martial Arts

Fuden-Ryu Spear Technique Paired Forms Experience 風傳流蒼術体験

Fuden-Ryu is a spear-focused martial art originating in the Kaga area. This experience is an introductory program where participants can learn the movements of traditional spear martial arts. Rather than relying on brute strength, the focus is on distance, breathing, and body balance. You will be accompanied by a skilled instructor who will guide you through each step. All equipment is provided, and beginners as well as international visitors are welcome. Feel the spirit of the samurai and Japanese martial arts.



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